

SHAMANISM IN SIBERIA

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Russian Records of Indigenous Spirituality

by

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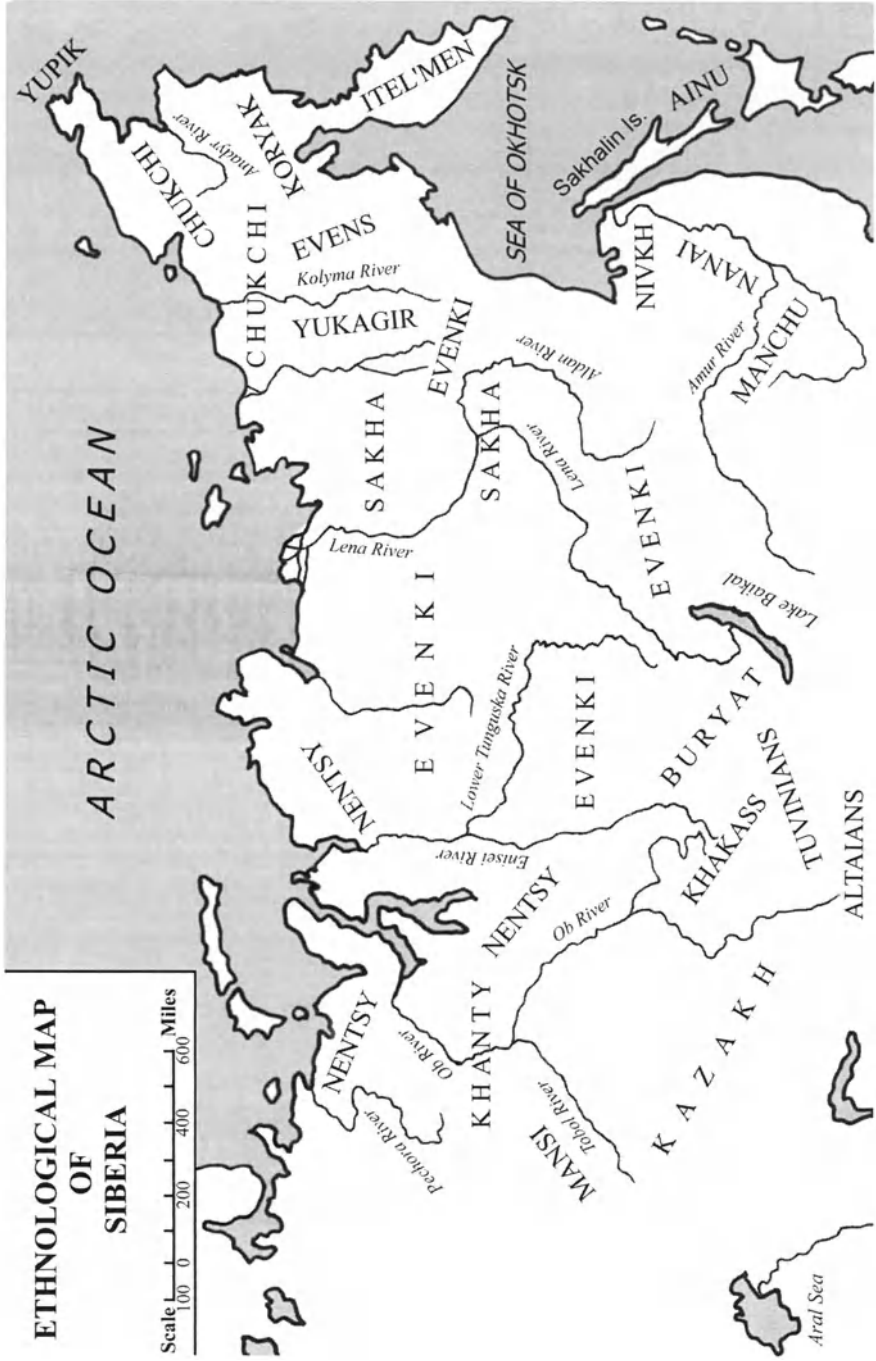
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Russian and Soviet Perceptions of Siberian Shamanism: An Introduction

The shaman, in an ecstasy, climbs the magical tree in order to reach the upper world where he will find his true self. By climbing the magic tree, which is at the same time a tree of knowledge, he gains possession of his spiritual personality. Carl Jung¹

Reference books usually mention that the word “shaman” originated from the Tungus (Evenki) “saman” and was introduced to the Western usage through Russian, where it was employed to describe native spiritual practitioners in Siberia. Although my book samples Russian and Soviet records of indigenous shamanism, I would like to start not with Russia but with Germany to underscore specifically how the expression “shamanism” was introduced into Western and Russian *belles-lettres*. Originally, German observers transmitted knowledge about shamanism from Siberia to the West, including the Russian reading public.² This was natural because the first educated people to explore and record Siberian shamanism on a regular basis were predominantly eighteenth-century German and German-speaking explorers. Commissioned by the Russian government, which lacked an educated cadre, these explorers traversed the Siberian wilderness mapping vast tundra and taiga areas, searching for mineral resources, collecting and recording exotic specimens and antiquities, and registering Siberian populations.

Second, German academic tradition literally created Russian science and humanities in the eighteenth century and continued to “nourish” them in the nineteenth century. Eventually, Russian and German academic and intellectual traditions became so intertwined that it was sometimes hard to separate one from another. Moreover, in the nineteenth and even the first half of the twentieth century, much information on Siberian shamanism recorded by Russian observers was processed and made available to Western audiences through German digests and translations, although by the turn of the twentieth century, there were a few Russian ethnographies translated into English and French. Mircea Eliade’s classic impressionistic study of shamanism on a global scale made good use of all these sources.³ Although in his sections dealing with Siberian shamanism Eliade made references to a few relevant Russian

ethnographies, the way he refers to them makes it very clear that he did not know Russian, and relied heavily on German translations,⁴ digests and reviews of these works.⁵ I stress this not to add my own barb to the current fashionable criticism of Eliade, but simply to underline the way information about Siberian shamanism was disseminated in the West.⁶

Returning to the early observations of shamanism, the story of how the Khanty shamanism was originally recorded prevents us, strictly speaking, from speaking about Russian writings on indigenous shamanism, at least in the eighteenth century. It is known that the earliest source on Khanty beliefs is a manuscript titled *Kratkoe opisanie o narode ostiatskom* (*Short Description of the Ostiak People*) by Count Novitsky (1715), which became known to students of Siberia as late as the 1820s. At the same time, the major known source on the Khanty for Russian authors of the eighteenth and nineteenth century was the study *Das Leben und die Gewohnheiten der Ostiaken* (*Life and Ways of the Ostiak*) by I. B. Müller.⁷ Müller was a prisoner of Russians and traveled along with Novitsky to accompany the first official missionary to the Siberian tribes, Philopheus Leshchinskii. Müller read the Novitsky manuscript and included it in his own work without mentioning Novitsky, which was common practice at that time. Thus, the Novitsky materials were introduced to the Western and Russian audiences in German. A Russian anthropologist, V.A. Boiko stresses that since the Novitsky manuscript was published in Russian only in 1884, it is impossible to generalize about the continuity of Russian ethnographic observations of the Khanty, because between the Novitsky text and the first comprehensive ethnography of the Khanty by Fr. Beliavskii, there is only the Müller German text.⁸ Furthermore, the general Russian reading public received their first glimpses of Khanty shamans from Johann Georgi's popular book of his travels to Siberia, which was translated from German into Russian in 1776. Although the Novitsky story is certainly not typical and was not replicated in each particular case of early observations of Siberian shamanism, I simply want to underscore a visible trend: Siberian shamanism was originally screened through "German eyes." Another example of a similar type is Petrus Simon Pallas, a German Enlightenment observer of Siberia, who recruited a Russian student, Vasilii Zuev, to collect information on customs and mores of native people. Pallas processed the collected ethnography and made it available to the German and Russian educated public, whereas the Zuev manuscript remained unknown to scholars until 1947.⁹ An exception is Krashchennikow's comprehensive account of the Itel'men shamanism.¹⁰

Along with minerals and plant and animal species, Georgi, Pallas, and many other German or Western European explorers of Siberia, who worked in the German academic tradition, diligently catalogued and pigeonholed indigenous populations including such a “bizarre” superstition as shamanism. Being first of all scientists-collectors, they were unavoidably skeptical about indigenous spiritual “delusions.” This assessment fully corresponded to the general rationalistic and skeptical approach practiced by Enlightenment observers of native beliefs. It was no surprise that many explorers dismissed shamanic séances as blatant frauds.

Even those eighteenth-century observers who, like the famous Gerhard Müller, German-turned-Russian historian, came to Siberia not only for minerals but specifically for observations of “geography and antiquities of the area, and the history of its peoples,”¹¹ looked with a large dose of skepticism at such manifestations of local folklore. In the northern Altai among the Shor tribe, which he calls the Tatars and the Teleut, Müller had a chance to observe a shamanistic séance. The whole performance did not impress him: “It suffices for me to say that all of them [séances] are basically similar. Nothing miraculous happens. The shaman emits an unpleasant howling, while jumping about senselessly and beating a flat drum which has iron bells attached inside to intensify the din.”¹² Müller stressed that these shamans were miserable deceivers worthy of condemnation: “It does not take long, however, to be convinced of the futility of the farce, of the deceit by those earning their living in this way. Shamanistic ceremonies are like a trade passed from parents to children.” Having finished the description of the ceremony, Müller even asked his readers to excuse him for distracting their attention from his main narrative. The explorer explained this digression as his obligation as a diligent observer to record everything he saw.¹³ Johann Gmelin, who like Müller had a chance to observe a shaman in action, went farther and even suggested that these “mediocre performers” who “cheated their fellows” be punished by exile to silver or copper mines.¹⁴ In the works of other German observers of native shamanism, especially in the first half of the eighteenth century (Daniel Messerschmidt and George Steller), we find the same approach, which was intended to demystify and debunk native spiritual practitioners.¹⁵

Although skeptical about shamanic practices, Enlightenment observers, especially in the second half of the eighteenth century, tried to explore the origin of this “delusion” and soon came to generalize about shamanism as a religion. Thus, Müller and Georgi came to the conclusion

that shamanism might have been the early form of universal religion. In his *Istoriia Sibiri (History of Siberia)* Müller speculated that shamanism had appeared in India and gradually spread all over Asia.¹⁶ By the end of the eighteenth century, there were signs of a shift in the assessment of indigenous beliefs. Thus, in the 1760s, describing a shaman from the northern Altai, Johann Peter Falk stressed that the man was “dressed very foolishly.” Yet, on the other hand, the explorer admitted that the shaman knew how to handle a drum and generalized about native spiritual practitioners as priests. Moreover, Pallas considered shamanism a form of healing and tried to investigate the origin of the shamanic gift. This explorer also disapproved the desecrating of what natives considered sacred and even showed some sympathy toward shamans. In a similar manner, Georgi stressed that shamans were creators and keepers of native traditions.¹⁷ Finally, Johann Gottfried Herder, one of the early Romantic scholars, who disavowed Enlightenment science for its excessive determinism, signaled the change toward the valid study of indigenous beliefs. In one of his works, *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Geschichte der Mencheheit* (1784), he brought together everything that was reported by travelers to Siberia about shamanism, attached ethnographic data from North America, and acknowledged shamanism as a religion. Moreover, Herder argued against calling native spiritual practitioners “deceivers” and considered shamanism an important tool in organizing early human societies, in which shamans acted as creators of order from chaos.¹⁸

The changing attitude of German and Russian audiences toward native shamanism became reflected in travel narrative, in which Enlightenment skepticism became tinged with Romantic colors. A Baltic German scientist, Alexander von Bunge, who visited the Altai mountains in 1826 in search of plant and mineral specimens, exemplifies this type of observer. On the one hand, like Müller and his contemporaries, Bunge called native shamans skillful “deceivers.” On the other hand, he informed his readers that for some unknown reason, he became instinctively drawn to native rituals including shamanic séances. As a matter of fact, he made it clear that although his formal goal was to collect information about the botany and geology of the area, he frequently made long detours to observe indigenous life and manifestations of native folklore. Even when he was not particularly welcomed by the Altaians, Bunge tried to attend séances to “witness a festivity,” especially when he heard the “captivating sounds of a shaman drum.” Not only was Bunge drawn to native séances, but also in the course of his journey he himself was becoming a “doctor” when word

about his successful treatments of natives spread among local indigenous communities. For the sake of his botany and geology research, Bunge did adopt the “rules of the game” and, like a native “doctor,” accepted gifts of furs for his healing “séances.” Once Bunge even became involved in an exchange of experiences with a native shaman, who came to examine his European “colleague” and then performed for Bunge a soothsaying séance using a ram’s shoulder blade.¹⁹

Travel accounts of F. Beliauskii (1833), who visited the Khanty and the Nentsy and M. F. Krivoschapkin (1865), who worked as a physician in Khanty country, are similarly tinged with Romantic colors to which both of them add Gothic shadings. Like Bunge, Beliauskii stresses that spiritual practitioners use various tricks to deceive members of their communities. At the same time, Beliauskii admits that they are respected members of their communities: “simple-minded folk view these raging madmen with tender emotions.” Describing the character of people who were inducted into the shamanic vocation, both Beliauskii and Krivoschapkin portray them as creative personalities, who have penetrating minds, strong will, and rich imagination combined with self-confidence. Yet these “native geniuses,” as Beliauskii calls them, are people of “tragic fate” because their artistic and creative talents are wasted in the barren northern land in daily routine. Moreover, Krivoschapkin who fully shared the romantic allegories about “native geniuses,” compares natives, who were predisposed to shamanism, with the tragic characters from the poems of Alexander Pushkin and Mikhail Lermontov. He stresses that not having any other outlets to channel their creativity, such spiritually charged natives attach themselves to practicing shamans, who captivate their attention with unusual behavior, and eventually they fulfill themselves by inheriting the craft of their elder colleagues. Beliauskii explains that when they feel “slight sparks of shamanic abilities,” these “native geniuses” train their minds and spirits by fasting. Through constant replication and perfection of the behavior of old shamans, young apprentices develop their sensitivity to such an extreme that they are capable of quickly immersing themselves into the state of a “dream-like ecstasy” upon necessity. Beliauskii also perceives the shamanic séance as theater or as a grand show and even uses theatrical expressions in his description of séances.²⁰

Although judgmental assessments continued to dominate descriptions of native shamanism, observers gradually became interested in systematic collecting and recording of shamanism rather than simply describing the emotions they felt when observing séances. For example, geographer and

geologist Petr Chikhachev, who visited the Altai in 1842, and who became a witness of a shamanistic séance for an ailing native, describes shamans and shamanesses in a neutral manner without using the standard cliché of “deceivers” or depicting them as “tragic characters.” The explorer stresses that after conducting their spiritual performances, shamans usually returned to their regular lives and actually did not differ from other people, for they “did not demand any honors” and did not consider themselves superior to the other members of their communities.²¹ During the same years, N. Shchukin, who wrote a review of Siberian shamanism for a popular Russian literary magazine, similarly portrayed shamans as ordinary people who rationally controlled their behavior during séances, “remained sane and did not get into ecstasy and did not lose their minds like pythians who inhaled carbon fumes.” Although Shchukin did not miss a chance to expose the tricks of Siberian spiritual practitioners, at the same time, he called them only “partially deceivers, who might sincerely believe in the power of their chants.”²²

Those Russian authors who wrote on Siberian shamanism in the first half of the nineteenth century also tried to pin down its sources. Following contemporary Romantic Orientalism, some of them downplayed the indigenous origin of shamanism and depicted this “religion” as drawn from classic Eastern civilizations. Such views reflected not only the ideas of this Romantic scholarship but also a popular stance that “crude” Siberian natives could not create a religion of their own and simply had to borrow religious ideas from civilizations of classic antiquity. Historian of Siberia P.A. Slotsov believed that shamanism was the remnant of some ancient religion that originated in India.²³ One of the first Russian Orientalists, Nikita Bichurin, asserted that Siberian shamanism was a distorted version of Asian Buddhism: “Nomadic Siberian shamans studying rites of shamanism through oral tales, in the course of time, unavoidably distorted shamanistic rituals with their crude innovations and additions, which originated from their ignorance.”²⁴ Strange as it may sound, some scholars still insist on the “Indian connection” in Siberian shamanism.²⁵

The most blatant version of the “distortion” thesis is presented in a book by an armchair traveler, I. Zavalishin (1862), who speculated on the origin of the Altaian shamanism. Stressing that native shamans provide members of their communities with “strikingly effective treatment,” Zavalishin ascribed these skills to their knowledge of “Tibetan legends of Lamaist medicine” and to their oral culture “that was transmitted from generation to generation and that originated from Buddhism.” Moreover,

Zavalishin insisted that the legends of the Altaians showed “their direct origin from India and partially from Egypt.”²⁶ Apparently to underscore the “crude” distortion of the “classic tradition,” Zavalishin did not hide his negative attitudes in describing a typical shamanic séance of the Altaians. To him, a typical séance started with the “torture of a sacrificial horse in the most disgusting manner” and ended with “devouring” meat of this sacrificial animal and with a “drinking spree.” He insisted that during a séance all participants danced, imitating various animals, and women particularly produced “lustful movement.”²⁷

Numerous records of Siberian shamanism also can be found in missionary journals, simply because shamans acted as major competitors of clerics. It is hard to expect from these accounts an objective description of indigenous religions. Although missionary records do contain ethno-graphic observations of shamanism, most of them are more informative about how missionaries themselves perceived native religions and, to some extent, how native shamanists reacted to Christian dogmas. Despite their biases, missionary writings vary in their depth and quality.²⁸ In an attempt to denigrate their competitors, many missionaries insisted that shamans were pathological deceivers, who lived off their trade and exploited their patients, an assertion that later was picked up by Soviet propagandists, “red missionaries,” who began crusading against shamanism in the 1930s. At the same time, there were a few clerics who produced ethnographies that hardly differed from their contemporary secular analogies, for example, observations of Khakass shamanism recorded by Podgorbunskii (1892).²⁹ His works are totally devoid of judgmental Christian jargon and treat shamanism as a historically conditioned mental deviation, which fit well the then-popular interpretations of shamanism. Yet, more often than not, missionary observers screened shamanism through their own Judeo-Christian tradition. It was hardly surprising that such a stance made them conclude, as in the case of the bishop of Yakutsk, Meletii, that a large number of native beliefs “contradict any common sense.”³⁰ During his practical work, this missionary was also stunned by natives’ arguments that the “supreme god” was a neutral being who neither punished nor rewarded human behavior.

A good example of a Christian theological rereading of native spirituality is the writings of Vasiliĭ Verbitskii, who produced several valuable ethnographies of Altaian tribes (1870, 1893). Posing a question about the manner in which novices were inducted into the shamanic vocation, Verbitskii insisted that it was neither a madness nor a fraud, but

the manifestation of evil spiritual power that penetrated “unprotected” souls of natives. Christians, who enjoyed “genuine” divine help, had tools to fight back “evil spirits,” whereas poor natives, who had no such tools, became victims of these beings who “live like lions in a desert, and like bandits, in every way tried to harm people with their intrigues.”³¹ Sampling a native shamanic séance, Verbitskii described an annual sacrificial ceremony in honor of Ülgen. The activities and chants of a shaman during the séance are not only described without references to a source, which was a common practice at that time, but also are portrayed as standard. As a result, instead of a combination of individual impromptu rituals and chants, the reader receives a picture of shamanism as “primitive religion” with its standard rituals and “prayers,” the opposite of Christianity.

In addition, Verbitskii reduces the multifaceted shamanic pantheon of Altaian tribes to two opposing deities, Ülgen and Erlik, which are portrayed as analogies of “good” and “evil.” Ülgen, the “supreme god,” was supposedly “benevolent to the very extreme” unlike his younger brother, “evil” Erlik, who was always obsessed with bringing various misfortunes to people. Verbitskii’s chapter on Altaian beliefs characteristically starts with a statement: “According to general Altaian beliefs, two sources rule the world: Ülgen, the good source, and Erlik, the evil source. Both of them supervise numerous spirits, the first one ‘clean’ spirits or *aru-neme*, and the latter unclean ones or *kara neme*.”³² Although by the end of the nineteenth century, under the influence of Christian missionaries and Tibetan Buddhism, there was a tendency toward monotheism, as late as the beginning of the twentieth century, many Altaians were not familiar with the dualism ascribed to them by clerics. Neither did they treat Ülgen as their tribal “supreme god.”³³

Ülgen did serve as a “supreme god” for a few clans, whereas other ones had their own “supreme” deities such as Diajilgan, Kogo-Monko Adaz, Baktigan, and Karshit. The truth is that Ülgen was not a supreme deity, but *tös*, whom several clans considered their deified ancestor.³⁴ The monotheistic “ülgenization” of the spiritual pantheon reached considerable proportions among the Teleuts, the most assimilated and dynamic group of the Altaians, whose representatives acted both as Orthodox proselytizers to native Altaians and major sources of ethnographic information for Russian missionaries. What Verbitskii and many other missionaries did was to extend the ethnographies collected among heavily Christianized Teleuts to other Altaian groups. In this case, it is hard to accept a statement made by one historian who praised Verbitskii as the

keenest observer of native culture and stressed that “religious activities of Verbitskii did not affect his scholarly work whatsoever.”³⁵

In all fairness, many secular observers of Siberian shamanism similarly screened native beliefs through Christian metaphors and usage, although not to such an extreme as missionaries. For example, S. Shashkov, the author of the first comprehensive review of Siberian shamanism, notes that Siberian tribes believed that they were constantly besieged by “legions of spirits” and “satans,” which eventually prompted natives to identify among themselves spiritually charged people who could appease these awesome forces. According to Shashkov, natives expected that “tortures of demons” would continue not only in earthly existence but also in the afterlife. His general conclusion is similarly wrapped in Christian metaphors: “While hell is the environment of the shamanist, devils are his *idée fixe*.”³⁶

The first scholar who attempted to examine shamanism on its own ground and without judgmental clerical assessments was the university-educated native Buryat Dorji Banzarov (1822-1855). A native insider schooled in the spirit of German Orientalist scholarship, he was in a unique position to provide an indigenous perspective of Siberian spirituality. Drawing in his magisterial thesis *Black Faith or Shamanism Among the Mongols* (1846) on Alexander Humboldt’s *Naturphilosophie*, Banzarov stressed native sources of inner Asian shamanism and criticized those who insisted that Siberian and Mongol spiritual practices were a “bastardized” version of Tibetan Buddhism.³⁷ In his popular review of Siberian shamanism N.S. Shchukin had such high expectations about this indigenous scholar that he optimistically wrote, “It might be assumed that everything which still remains unresolved in Siberia [Siberian ethnography] will be examined by this young learned native Buryat.”³⁸ Unfortunately, Banzarov did not meet these expectations. Torn apart by a cultural clash, he soon discontinued his studies of native culture and drank himself to death.

The academic who attempted the first comprehensive research of Siberian shamanism proper and whose study greatly affected Western perceptions of Siberian shamanism was Wilhelm Radloff (1837-1918), a German Orientalist who moved to Russia, renamed himself as “Vasilii Vasilievich Radlov” and later became one of the deans of Russian anthropological scholarship. To some extent, the role Radloff played for Russian ethnography can be compared with the role of another German, Franz Boas, for American anthropology. Accompanied by his young wife and an interpreter, Radloff, a fresh graduate of Berlin University, eagerly

explored the uncharted linguistic and ethnographic terrain of southern Siberia in the 1860s. His published ethnographic letters (1860s), which he later reworked into *Aüs Sibirien* (1884), became an ethnographic classic for many Russian and Western students of Siberian shamanism.³⁹

During his first field trips to the Altai, Radloff, who persistently sought a chance to see a native shaman in action, had no opportunity to observe a shamanistic séance and accumulated only indirect evidence. At some point, he wrote in his journal in frustration, “Shamans, who could become our sole reliable source in this matter, usually are afraid to expose their secrets. They always surround themselves with an air of mystery, which is so important in their vocation.” Finally, he was able to meet two former shamans who had converted to Christianity and briefly conversed with them. Again he hoped that these spiritual practitioners would dictate to him at least parts of the chants they sang during their sessions. No luck. Instead, one of the shamans responded, “Our former god is already furious at us for leaving him. You can imagine what he can do if he learns that we, on top of everything else, betray him. We are even afraid more that the Russian God might find out how we talk about the old faith. What will save us then?”⁴⁰ The only séances Radloff was able to record were a short thanksgiving prayer shared with the ethnographer by a Teleut shaman from the Bachat village and a ceremony of the spiritual cleansing of a dwelling after a death in a family. During the latter rite, Radloff did finally get a chance to enjoy something that resembled a classic “Gothic-like” shamanic séance about which he had read in the writings of German and Baltic German travelers to Siberia. The cleansing ceremony contained elements of the famous shamanic “ecstasy” that in the twentieth century became the established scholarly metaphor. Radloff could hear “wild shouts,” which were accompanied by “gigantic leaps” and saw how, after a fierce dance, an exhausted shaman fell to the ground: “This wild scene, magically illuminated by fire, produced on me such a strong impression that for awhile I watched only the shaman and completely forgot about all those who were present here. The Altaians were also shocked by this wild scene. They pulled out their pipes from their mouths and for a quarter of hour there was a dead silence.”⁴¹

Despite these two accidental encounters with the Altaian shamanism, Radloff had to admit that in addition to “fragmentary utterances of adherents of shamanism and shamans themselves,” his information on native spirituality was primarily derived from “hints,” “legends, fairy tales, stories, and songs.”⁴² Still, unlike his missionary contemporaries,

Radloff noted the impromptu nature of indigenous shamanism. He wrote that even with enough data, there was no way to build an exact picture out of the spontaneity of tribal shamanism. As soon as “we start to describe details of shamanism, contradictory information only distorts the general picture and eventually almost completely destroys it.”⁴³ Unlike clerics and many secular observers, Radloff placed shamanism on the same level with Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam and concluded, “Shamans are no worse than clerics of other religions.” Legitimizing shamans in the eyes of his European audience, “Vasilii Vasilievich” wrote, “Poor shamans are not as bad as they are usually perceived. They are carriers of the ethical ideals of their people.”⁴⁴

A description of a shamanic séance in honor of Ülgen, whose record Radloff borrowed from one of Verbitskii’s essays,⁴⁵ was translated in German and remained for a long time the only available complete record of a shamanic session, which made it an oft-quoted classic in literature on Siberian shamanism and shamanism in general. The record of the séance was “canonized” and, in a full or an abridged version, started its independent “journey” in the literature on shamanism from Mikhailovskii (1891) and Czaplicka (1912) to Mircea Eliade (1951, 1964) and Nora Chadwick (1969).⁴⁶ As a result, a regular annual shamanic séance performed by an unknown shaman to a clan deity named Ülgen and recorded somewhere in the 1840s by an anonymous Russian missionary eventually acquired universal pan-tribal proportions and eventually became “a great religious drama” performed to honor “Bai Ülgen, the greatest of the gods, who dwells in the highest Heaven.”⁴⁷ An example of how Radloff affected Western perceptions of Siberian spirituality can be a 1924 review of Siberian shamanism prepared for an English-speaking audience by I.M. Casanowicz, who built his text exclusively on abridged excerpts from *Aüs Sibirien*.⁴⁸ From the 1860s to the 1880s, Radloff’s works, which were published in Germany, European Russia, and Siberia, provided a necessary link that established the topic of shamanism as an integral part of Western anthropology.

As for Russian observers proper, no less or perhaps even more important in drawing an educated audience to the topic of Siberian shamanism were cultural activities of Siberian regionalists, who were headed by writer and folklore scholar Grigorii Potanin (1835-1920). Being inspired by geographers Alexander Humboldt and Carl Ritter as well as by Radloff, Potanin and Siberian-based authors had their own reasons for the fascination with the “primitive spirituality.” Regionalists, who sought to upgrade the cultural and social status of Siberia in the eyes

of European Russia, found it important to demolish household images of this area as a huge “dumpster” for convicts. Seeking to prove that Siberia was a land with its own rich and unique culture, which was no less significant than the European Russian tradition, they devoted intense attention to collecting native antiquities and ethnography. The very language they frequently used in their ethnographic observations points to the goals they pursued. Nikolai Iadrntsev, one of the leaders of regionalism, in his travel notes about the Altai constantly compared this region with ancient Greece. To him, as in ancient Greece, the Altai’s surrounding landscape was filled with “mythological creatures,” the nature itself “spoke its own language” and “endowed its secrets on childish hearts of savages.”⁴⁹

In their search for the cultural uniqueness of Siberia, regional scholars and writers could not bypass shamanism for two reasons. First, being to the Europeans the most exotic and attractive aspect of native culture, shamanism was also the most visible trait of the ancient indigenous tradition.⁵⁰ Second, because of their negative attitude toward the Russian Orthodox Church, regionalists were naturally drawn to native spirituality.⁵¹ After his first trip to the Altai in 1880, Iadrntsev excitedly reported to his friend in Switzerland, “Mores and customs of local savages are extremely interesting. Their religion is shamanism. But what is shamanism? This is pantheism. In a nutshell, the Altai is Greece, where everything is animated: rivers, mountains, stones; here one can hear thousands of legends and what legends they are!”⁵²

When Iadrntsev witnessed a shamanic séance, it produced on him such an “an unforgettable impression” that he left a poetic description of the whole session: “I remember that night when I had to stop at that place. That mysterious beautiful night with thousands of bright stars spread over the awesome mountains full of savage beauty and poetic charm. I saw the shaman in a fantastic costume decorated with rattles and snake-like plaits. Feathers were sticking from his helmet, and in his hands he held a mysterious drum. At first, the shaman circled around the fire. Then he jumped out of the shelter of bark into the open air. My ears still can hear his magnificent howling, his call for spirits, and the wild mountain echo that responded to his invocations.”⁵³

Reflecting on shamanic music, Andrei Anokhin (1869-1931), another member of the regionalist circle, stressed that because “shamanism represents the top of expressive skills of Altaian singing, people with weak nerves are not able to withstand the power of the feelings which are transmitted through a shaman.”⁵⁴ To this scholar, the power of the

“shamanic mystery plays” and “prayers” resembles that of Hebrew psalms: “the same incorruptible sincerity that reflects a simple, but deeply sensitive soul, the same metaphors, and the same magnificent pictures of surrounding nature.”⁵⁵ For some well-known regionalists, fascination with a spiritual “music” of shamanism became a long-term commitment, which resulted in the publication of comprehensive ethnographies and articles on shamanisms of specific Siberian tribes. The present volume features reviews of some of these works, including the classic ethnography of Altaian shamanism by the aforementioned Anokhin and comprehensive observations of Khanty shamanism by ethnographers and public spokesmen M.B. Shatilov and V.I. Anuchin.

The attempts of Siberian regionalists to retrieve ancient spiritual heritage and to interweave it into the Siberian culture added to their ideology an element of cultural sensitivity. In his program work *Siberia as a Colony*, Iadrintsev underlined the value of each culture, which would attach “unique elements to the future civilization.”⁵⁶ He also indicated that native people’s “historical services to Russian people in Siberia are still not appropriately appreciated” and stressed, “Who knows how much we might gain from the revival of these peoples, provided they have favorable conditions for manifestations of their talent and intelligence? Many Asiatic peoples forwarded teachers of the humankind and created unique civilizations. Therefore, traditions of other tribes included into world civilization and spiritual life will unavoidably benefit everybody.”⁵⁷

Potanin, Iadrintsev’s colleague and friend, eventually took this “cultural relativism” to the extreme. The leader of Siberian regionalism subjected his voluminous ethnographic books to one goal: tracing the origin of the entire Judeo-Christian spiritual heritage from indigenous inner Asian tradition. Drawing wide and arbitrary parallels between Hebrew, Russian, early Christian and European medieval mythologies on the one hand and shamanic legends from Mongolia and southern Siberia on the other Potanin insisted on their genetic similarity and coined his “Oriental hypothesis.”⁵⁸ Very much like later scholarly celebrities Eliade or Joseph Campbell, Potanin totally disregarded local traditions in his attempts to reduce the complexity of world mythology to a few universal pillars. Thus, Potanin came to the conclusion that the polytheistic nature of southern Siberian and Mongol shamanism was an illusion. In reality, as he stressed, the names of all spirits were related to one mythological character, “Erke,” whose image simply became dissolved in nature and encompassed the entire universe.⁵⁹

Potanin's letters vividly show how he used each opportunity to attach new evidence to his hypothesis. When native Chevalkov, an Orthodox missionary, described to Potanin a shamanic session devoted to Erlik, "the prince of the underworld," the scholar immediately pointed to a "parallel" with Russian fairy tales. As early as 1879, before he formulated his "Oriental hypothesis," Potanin wrote, "I am inclined to believe that Christianity originated from southern Siberia."⁶⁰ It is clear that in trying to raise the cultural significance of the periphery in his own and public eyes, Potanin acted as a typical regionalist haunted by an inferiority complex. His desire to overcome the inequality between the center and the periphery resulted in advocating the cultural superiority of the periphery over the center. Despite the skepticism of his colleagues from European Russia, Potanin persisted in his final days. Articulating the basics of his "Oriental hypothesis" for a St. Petersburg scholarly audience in 1911, Potanin continued to stress, "We clearly see that it is the central Asian shamanic legend that lies at the foundation of the legend about Christ, and that the image of Christ himself was shaped according to the image that had existed many centuries earlier in inner Asia."⁶¹

Professional scholars in European Russia totally ignored the "Oriental hypothesis." Moreover, Eurocentrism, which was common in social scholarship at that time, only enhanced a negative attitude toward such a strange concept. At the same time, in Siberia, Potanin's theory did affect a number of scholars and writers. Gavriil Ksenofontov, a Sakha native ethnographer, who matured in Tomsk under the strong influence of Potanin's ideas, released a book (1929) in which he similarly insisted on the genetic origin of Christianity from Siberian shamanism and on the special role of inner Asian nomads as cultural heroes.⁶² Elaborating on Potanin's hypothesis, Ksenofontov labeled Jesus Christ the first shaman and pointed to relevant parallels. To Ksenofontov, Jesus acted as a healer who was able to perform shamanic miracles, while the induction of a Sakha native into a shamanic vocation resembled the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. Moreover, the slashing and chopping and then putting back together a would-be shaman's body was nothing less Christ's death and resurrection.⁶³

We find a literary version of this analogy in *Strashnii Kam (Scary Shaman)* (1919) by Viacheslav Shishkov, who started as a regionalist writer and a member of the Potanin circle. The persecutions inflicted on an Altaian shaman Chelbak, the major protagonist of this modernist novel, are compared here with Christ's sufferings. In the novel, which is based on a true story, an enraged crowd of Russians stones shaman

Chelbak to death for performing a shamanic session. Shishkov clearly designed the detailed description of the Russians' conveying Chelbak through a village as a metaphor for the Savior carrying the cross. In their loyalty to the official church, those who torture the shaman betray the idea of genuine compassionate Christianity. The spirit of the shaman wanders around, gradually drains vitality from his executioners, and finally wipes them out with diseases. The sounds Chelbak's magic drum continue to resonate in the ears of the villagers: "The invisible drum rumbles around. Villagers open their mouths, make the sign of the cross and run away."⁶⁴ An old peasant woman, Feodosiia, is the first to realize that what the Russians did violated genuine Christianity and therefore appeals to the spirit of the dead shaman in a Christian manner, "I am a sinner, I am a sinner, forgive me, father Chelbak."⁶⁵

In addition to their literary and scholarly constructs, regionalists also used shamanic tradition to enhance the public display of the Siberian identity. In 1909 Potanin, Anokhin, and Adrianov brought Mampüi, an Altaian shaman from the Katun river area, to the city of Tomsk. Mampüi was to play the core part in an "ethnographic evening" designed to introduce the Tomsk "cultured society" to the life of Siberia.⁶⁶ The native participants of the "evening," who represented such tribal groups as the Altaians, Sakha, Buryat, Tatar, and Khanty, were dressed in their traditional garb, displayed scenes from their life, played native music and recited short excerpts from their epic tales. The scenes of the "live ethnography" were set amid a background that replicated native dwellings, household items, and sacred shrines. Moreover, the walls of the Tomsk's hall for public gatherings (*dom obshchestvennogo sobrania*), where the regionalists held the "ethnographic evening," were decorated with the skins of Siberian animals. The portrayal of the Siberian landscape was topped off by a decoration that depicted a polar night and a huge block of ice.⁶⁷

Large crowds of spectators filled this Siberian "house of culture." The attention of public was concentrated on Mampüi. Working together to digest the essence of shamanism for a general audience, Mampüi and the regionalists divided the shamanic "session" into a few "acts." First, in a "poetical manner" Mampüi described the meaning of shamanism and symbolism of his shamanic costume. Second, the shaman showed how he was putting on the costume and addressing a fire. Then, in a "whirling dancing manner," Mampüi addressed his ancestor shaman Kanym, the spirit of the Altai, and then consecutively Erlik, Ülgen, earth, water, Teletsk Lake, and finally the "foundation of the earth." At the end of the

ceremony Mampüi took off his costume and in “a singing manner” explained the meaning of the whole ceremony.⁶⁸

The emphasis placed by Potanin and his friends on recording and displaying native shamanism as an attractive element of living Siberian heritage unavoidably drew the attention of native intellectuals, some of whom came to share ideas of regionalism. Encouraged by regionalists, some of these native intellectuals turned to the collecting of shamanic lore and artifacts and writing about shamanism. For example, Matvei Khangalov,⁶⁹ from the Buryat tribe, and Ksenofontov, from the Sakha tribe, later became well-known students of shamanism.⁷⁰ In a letter to Potanin, an Altaian artist, Grigorii Choros-Gurkin, pointed to the inspiration he received from his Russian friend and colleague: “Your cause is my cause, and I always listen to your advice.”⁷¹ It was no exaggeration. Not only did Potanin and Anokhin draw Choros-Gurkin to the ideas of Siberian regionalism, but they also triggered his interest in the ethnography of his own people, especially spiritual culture and shamanism.⁷² Choros-Gurkin, whom Potanin and his junior colleague Adrianov also promoted as the first genuinely Siberian landscape artist, not only wholeheartedly worked to retrieve ancient Altaian religion, but idealistically dreamed about building among the Altaians a common “national cult,” a shamanic ideology that embraced the “pagan past, when human beings were free and worshipped only invisible forces of nature”⁷³

In addition to regionalist writers, indigenous shamanism attracted attention of educated political exiles who were culturally affiliated with European Russia. Such scholars as Waldemar (Vladimir) G. Bogoraz (Bogoraz) (1865-1936), Waldemar Jochelson (1855-1937), Dmitrii Klementz (1848-1914), I.A. Khudiakov (1842-1876), V.F. Troshchanskii (1846-1898), Waclaw Sieroszewski (1858-1945) and Lev (Leo) Shternberg (1861-1927) became ethnographers during their involuntary “field experience” in Siberia, where they had been relegated for their anti-governmental activities. It is quite possible that the status of these people as political marginals within the Russian empire drew them closer to indigenous people, who were ethnic and cultural marginals of Siberia.⁷⁴ One may also assume that in “crude” Siberia there existed many things that could insult the intelligence of enlightened people. Under these circumstances, recording native ethnography became one of a few available outlets to maintain and nourish educated minds in this desolate area.⁷⁵ Whatever engaged them into studying native ethnography, several of the abovementioned intellectuals produced works that similarly affected later Western perceptions of shamanism in general.

One of the major channels of such influence was the activities and subsequent publications of the Russian-American Jesup North Pacific Anthropological Expedition, which, under direction of Boas, conducted complex field research of native cultures of the northeastern Siberia and the northwestern coast of North America from 1897 to 1902. Upon a recommendation of Radloff, to perform the Siberian part of this research, Boas recruited Bogoras, Jochelson and Shternberg. Eventually, first two scholars produced seminal ethnographies of Chukchi and Koryak tribes.⁷⁶ Published in English, these “Jesup” monographs introduced into Western scholarship the variety of field materials on Siberian spirituality along with the assessment of indigenous shamanism as a form of neurosis. Furthermore, this expedition that approached Northern Pacific Rim as the interlinked cultural area eventually gave rise to the academic metaphor of the “shamanistic complex” that anthropologists began to use to describe spiritual practices of native populations of Siberia and North America. American scholars, who rarely operated with the definition of shamanism prior to 1900, now increasingly began to juxtapose Native American spiritual practitioners against their “classic” Siberian analogies.⁷⁷

On the whole, the turn of the twentieth century saw a dramatic increase in collecting native ethnographies. Like their colleagues in North America, who rushed to record traditions of the “vanishing Americans,” Russian ethnographers sought to record disappearing shamanic tradition and to pin down its most “archaic” and “authentic” elements. Moreover, Potanin (1880), N.N. Agapitov (1883), Shternberg (1914), and N.A. Vitashevskii (1918) composed detailed guidelines for professional and amateur ethnographers on how to collect shamanism. Unlike present-day highly sensitive anthropologists, who try to mute their opinions in order to speak with a “native voice,” at that time ethnographers approached native spirituality with crude positivist tools by “dismembering” indigenous beliefs into categories and elements. Those guidelines indicated how to catalogue shamanic rituals and paraphernalia and pointed out to potential observers what was worthy of recording and what was “insignificant” in Siberian shamanism. For example, instructions alerted ethnographers to look for “black” and “white” shamans, which reduced varieties of tribal shamanisms to the artificial dichotomy that later acquired all attributes of an established scholarly metaphor. Incidentally, materials collected by Troshchanskii in the 1880s specifically on the evolution of “black shamanism” among the Sakha natives, show how the ethnographer literally became a prisoner of this dichotomy trying to separate “black” and “white” shamans.⁷⁸

Abundant ethnographic information on Siberian shamanism accumulated by the turn of the twentieth century prompted generalizations and hypothesis about the essence of shamanism. As in other countries, by the turn of the twentieth century, Russian observers speculated about shamanism as a mental disorder, which was rather natural. The fact that initiations of shamans into their profession were accompanied by a painful physiological transformation (“mental fits”) and shamans’ “unruly” behavior during séances appeared to outsiders as proof of a mental deviance. Finally, such designations resonated well with popular psychological theories about the origin of individual and mass hysteria in peasant and primitive societies.⁷⁹

Scholars and writers commonly treated shamanism as a mental illness conditioned by social or geographical environments or by both. Bogoras summarized such assessments in his paper “Toward Psychology of Shamanism among the Tribes of Northeastern Asia” (1910), where he particularly stressed, “Studying shamanism, we encounter, first of all, entire categories of men and women who either suffer from nervous agitation or who are obviously not in right mind or completely insane. It is especially noticeable among women, who are generally more prone to neurosis.” Based on this view of shamanism, Bogoras concluded that shamanism was a “form of religion that was created through the selection of mentally unstable people.”⁸⁰ In the beginning of twentieth century many scholars frequently linked the “insanity” of shamans with so-called “arctic hysteria.” They stressed that native societies in northern Eurasia, which were doomed to survive in inhospitable “dull” and “grim” arctic environments, were inherently prone to hysteria and therefore naturally bred religious practitioners who manifested “hysterical qualities” in the extreme.⁸¹

Although in appearance distinct from this simplistic view, the interpretation of shamanism as a sexually charged spiritual empowerment, which was offered by Shternberg, similarly fit the popular contemporary psychological interpretations. Offering the “sexual interpretation” of shamanic initiation, Shternberg drew the origin of shamanism from the nature of relationships between shamans and their patron spirits, which assisted shamans in their struggle against hostile spirits. For Shternberg, the cause of an “intimate” connection between shamans and their patron spirits was their symbolic sexual relations, where both sides acted as “husbands” or “wives.” Shternberg came to this conclusion as early as 1910, after he had a friendly conversation with a Nanai shaman, who did not tell the ethnographer too much about his spiritual vocation, but

reported that he was assisted in his séances by his “spirit wife” and “spirit children.” Shternberg suggested that such “sexual cooperation” was characteristic not only for the Nanai tribe, but also for all other Siberian natives, and even for shamanism in general. Later research showed that shamanic worldview of the Nanai people was more nuanced in contrast to what Shternberg ascribed to them. As it turned out, among this tribe there was a custom to name shamanic and non-shamanic spirits by kin words such as “father,” “mother,” “husband,” and a “wife.”⁸²

In the beginning of the twentieth century, some ethnographers increasingly began to express concern that recording exterior manifestations of shamanism with their positivist tools did not allow them to pin down the meaning of shamanic chants and the inner world of shamanism. Anokhin and Vitashevskii became very frustrated that they could not get inside shamans’ minds and present more or less legible texts of shamanic chants. Incidentally, one of the reasons Potanin insisted on a greater involvement of native intellectuals in collecting native folklore and shamanism was his realization that Russian observers could not grasp the inner meanings of native spirituality. In an attempt to make insights into the shamanic world, a few ethnographers started practicing what today is called the participant-observation method. Sergei Shirokogoroff (1887-1939), who is more known to Western scholarly audiences than Russian, not only observed Evenki and Manchu shamanic séances, but also on a few occasions acted as an assistant to a shaman.⁸³ Another person of the similar caliber was Anokhin, who, on the contrary, remains unknown to the Western audience. A church cantor by training, self-taught anthropologist and ethnomusicologist who worked closely with Potanin and Radloff, Anokhin gained an incredible rapport with native residents of the Altai. In the process of his long-time visits to this area (1908-1931), where he eventually settled, as a “participant observer,” the ethnographer was able to master the native language and so immerse himself into native culture that Russian visitors occasionally treated him as a “native.”⁸⁴ Although, like many observers of the period, his assessment of indigenous spirituality was affected by the “neurosis thesis,” Anokhin’s writings on native spirituality clearly carry a romantic spin, best exemplified in his opera “Erlík,” which is centered on Erlík, the spiritual master of the underworld and one of the deities in Altaian shamanism. This aesthetic approach to shamanism might be explained not only by Anokhin’s background as a musician but also by his contemporary intellectual milieu.

In the beginning of the twentieth century the general cultural climate enhanced deep insights into non-Western spirituality. At that time, frustrations about Western progress went hand-in-hand with the romanticization of “primitives,” which became reflected in attempts to appropriate and transplant “primitive” images into Euroamerican art, music and literature.⁸⁵ In Russia one could observe manifestations of such aesthetics in the oeuvre of Aleksei Remizov (literature), Igor Stravinsky (music) and Nicholas Roerich (art), who attempted to “retrieve” the pagan heritage of ancient Russia going back to the “Scythian” age. Poet Nikolai Voloshin labeled this trend as “the new barbarism” and insisted that, at least for art, this was “the only path” in the future. All in all, as Richard Taruskin informs us, in the beginning of the twentieth century in the West, “primitive man and primitive religion were objects not only of depiction but of emulation.”⁸⁶ In the case of Roerich, the “new barbarism” path led him to artistic experiments with Siberian “primitive” art and spirituality. Poet Andrei Bely recited his verses as “shaman in ritualistic ecstasy.”⁸⁷ Famous painter Wassiliy Kandinsky, who actually had an experience of ethnographic field research among the indigenous people of the Volga-Kama area, read the writings of Radloff and Potanin and became fascinated with the symbolism of the shaman drum, the shamanic “world tree,” and the shaman journey, which he incorporated in his paintings.⁸⁸

The impromptu nature of indigenous shamanism was quite attractive to the aesthetics of primitivism that praised anarchy and creative spontaneity in contrast to Western rationalism and logic. Literary critic Julii Aikhenvald clearly articulated this approach in his introduction to *Iazichniki (Pagans)* by Pavel Nizovoi, a fictional story that is grounded in the Siberian natural landscape. Aikhenvald compared “native paganism” with natural forces, which would eventually overpower “artificial” layers of “civilization” and Christianity: “One cannot avoid nature. Our cradle and our grave, the beginning of everything and the end of everything. Alpha and omega of the book of life, nature keeps our bodies and souls with its cosmic power. In this sense, people, who are the parishioners of nature’s vast temple, belong to the same religion that is paganism. Nature’s religion is the natural law, which nobody can avoid. One might not be a Christian, but one cannot stop being a heathen because nature is heathen.”

1917 did not initially bring too many changes in this aesthetic. In the ambivalent Russian and Soviet cultural environment of the 1920s, writers still could prophesize ideas colored in “primitive” aesthetic, while

ethnographers could travel and collect shamanism. Moreover, Siberian “primitives” even gained from the demolishing of the Russian Empire. In the 1920s Bolsheviks treated borderlands’ natives as victims of Russian imperialism who should be “reimbursed” for historical injustices committed in the past.⁸⁹ Therefore, at first Communists and their sympathizers rarely crusaded against shamanism, preferring Christianity as the object of their attacks. In such a climate not only practicing shamanists felt relaxed, but also many natives, who had been baptized, returned to shamanism. It is notable that during the meetings of local branches of the Union of Militant Godless, native shamanism issues were hardly raised.⁹⁰ At the same time, as P.N. Il’akhov’s paper on the repressions against the Sakha shamans suggests, such leeway could also originate from the sheer weakness of Bolshevik power in peripheral areas and attempts to court local mass support.⁹¹

All in all, in the 1920s, native shamanism, which released itself from such powerful competitor as the Russian Orthodox Church, temporarily flourished, and observers enjoyed good opportunities not only for collecting shamanism, but also for direct participant observation. As a matter of fact, in 1927 Leonid Potapov, later one of the stars and “scholar bureaucrats” of Soviet anthropology, ideologically did not find it odd to assist in a ceremony of a shamanic sacrifice that included the strangling of a sacrificial animal. In contrast to his earlier view of shamanism as an environmentally conditioned insanity, Bogoras (1923) began to engage the theory of relativity for the discussion of tribal beliefs and argued that shamanic spiritual realm, including flights to heavenly spheres, visions and dreams, was simply another way of seeing the surrounding world, which was no better and no worse than Western positivism. Moreover, Bogoras declared that “the difference between real and imagined knowledge disappears because the relativity of being makes pointless any speculations about objectivity.”⁹²

In the 1920s ethnographers and tourist observers could afford to be picky while collecting native shamanism. In 1924, while conducting her field research in the Altai searching for “traditional” native spirituality and artifacts, anthropologist L.A. Karunovskaia occasionally complained about the “quality” of shamanic séances and paraphernalia. Once she found a séance demonstrated for her “not so ecstatic” simply because a shaman’s clothing was not so impressive and all his movements were “very weak and did not excite us a single minute.” Even his drum was not “dry enough.” In frustration Karunovskaia left and later found more impressive performers, who could offer “genuine ecstasy.”⁹³

Another observer, reporter Zinaida Richter, who also visited the Altai in the 1920s, at first became frustrated that she did not get a chance to glimpse a shamanic séance, the “stone age” ceremony. She rejected the attempts of her guide Amyr-Sana to substitute a “real” shamanic session with a paper chart of a shamanic journey, which he had prepared in advance for potential visitors. After a feverish search, the guide located a shaman who agreed to perform a session for her for a brick of tea and tobacco. However, like Karunovskaia, Richter was frustrated because the séance she saw did not match the image she had absorbed from the books she read. Instead of ecstatic movements, the shaman was just sitting and singing. Searching for a “real shaman” the same evening, she and her guide visited another spiritual practitioner. Finally, Richter satisfied her curiosity for a “genuine séance.” The young shamaness who performed for the reporter was impressive with her voice and a dance around the fire.⁹⁴

What strikes in such popular observations of shamanism is the omission of the causes of shamanic séances. The crudest version of this approach is reflected in the abovementioned fictional story *Iazichniki* (*Pagans*) by Nizovoi, who profanes a shamanic séance by describing an accidental visit of Russians to a shaman’s dwelling, where the host welcomes visitors in broken Russian, “Good day! Guests comes? To pray to our god? Good, good!” After a few shots of homemade alcohol, the shaman suddenly takes a drum and starts his séance for no reason.⁹⁵ Even anthropologists tended to describe shamanic séances as artifacts, stripping them of their holistic meaning.⁹⁶ Travelogues of short-time visitors such as reporters are especially notorious for such “prostituting” of native shamanism as an exotic object pulled out from a context and turning it into a quick “intercourse” between an observer and shaman, who entertained a visitor for a fee. For some natives, who resided in the vicinity of tourist routes, this money was a helpful supplement to their incomes. In her 1924 field diary, anthropologist Karunovskaia vividly describes a fierce argument between an Altaian shamaness and her husband, who demanded his share of the fee for drying her drum for an arranged séance.⁹⁷

Not many natives were able to object to this misuse of their spirituality. At the end of the 1920s, reporter Mariia Shkapskaia, accompanied by native Luka Kumandin, an Orthodox missionary-turned Soviet official, visited the Altai and induced a local shaman to display his “art.” The shaman initially refused to shamanize for no reason, because it could upset his spirits. Still, for a small fee, the “fellow in rugs” agreed to

break the rule: “and he already stood in front of us in all his savage glamour.”⁹⁸ In thirty minutes, after the “whirlwind of small bells and plait snakes,” the shaman “again put back on his worn-out and dirty rags,” took a “green ruble bill” and was gone. After the “whirl-wind” séance was over, cynic Kumandin ironically threw to the reporter, “Do not forget to get a receipt.”⁹⁹ Unlike Shkapskaia, who bought her “glimpse of ecstasy” for a ruble bill, writer Dmitrii Stonov (1930) hunted for a naturally-set séance. As soon as the writer identified a shaman, he began to stalk him as a prey: “I was stubborn and ready for everything. Like an experienced hunter, I planned all my strategy in advance. I set up nets, traps, snares and dug pits, where the animal was to get in. So there was no way for him to escape or to crawl out.”¹⁰⁰ At first, Stonov surprised the native with his marked disinterest in native spirituality. Then, pretending he was going to sleep, the writer ordered his native guide to simulate a cold to provoke the shaman to perform a healing séance. Along with his friend, an anthropology scholar, who earlier had narrowly escaped from the crowd of natives while trying to steal a drum from a shaman’s grave, Stonov was peeking out from a small hole in the tent and eventually became rewarded with a genuine performance.¹⁰¹

Despite their hunt for native exotic, the 1920s’ accounts became increasingly critical of shamanism. Still, unlike the period of the 1930s when shamans became labeled as “class enemies” and “enemies of the people” selected for complete eradication, in the 1920s, shamanism was more often criticized from the position of modernity. Observers of shamanism tended to underscore the “backward” and “traditionalist” nature of native spiritual and healing practices, which contradicted new Soviet modernity. Therefore, major critical utterances centered on the issues of medical care, health, and hygiene. Sometimes such criticism could be expressed in a crude assessment of shamans as “walking germs,” people who were allegedly infested with all kinds of contagious illnesses. Thus, Richter wrote, “The majority of the shamans are sick with the quite widespread venereal disease among the nomads. These spiritual and body doctors spread the infection and because of this they often find themselves in a court.”¹⁰² Incidentally, the “link” that was established by earlier ethnographies between shamanism and the mental illness turned out to be very handy in promoting such assessments.

Shamans also could be viewed not only as agents of “traditional ignorance” blocking the advancement of modern medicine, education and technology, but also as its pitiful victims. Stonov describes an Altaian shaman as a typical epileptic with “feverish, unhealthy luster in small,

deeply set eyes,” a “high cheek boned puffy face,” and “purple shadows around the eyes,” “pale brown color of the skin.” All these marks told Stonov that the person sitting in front of him was “familiar with moments of epileptic madness, minutes of wild, uncontrolled ecstasy, and creative frenzy.” When the shaman tried to smile, his smile “turned into an ugly mask.”¹⁰³ Having said that, Stonov pronounces his firm verdict: shamans are “clearly sick individuals suffering from epilepsy,” and, as such, they are “possessed” not with spirits, but “with their own sick fantasies.”¹⁰⁴ Therefore, such people were more victims than culprits. That is how writer Sof’ia Zarechnaia in her *Chernaia Shamanka (Black Shamaness)* (1929) portrays a major protagonist, an old Buryat shamaness Adai. Adai is not a deceiver, but rather a victim of indigenous traditionalism, who additionally suffers from gender abuse. Repeatedly beaten by her husband, Adai “lost her mind” and eventually turned to shamanizing. Another character, who is portrayed as a carrier of communist ideas, even feels sympathy for this poor woman.¹⁰⁵

The portrait of shamans drawn by such writers as Stonov and Zarechnaia, who described native spiritual practitioners both as a challenge to the Soviet modernity and simultaneously as mentally sick individuals, suggests another trend in Soviet approaches to shamanism in the 1920s. At this time, observers frequently merged the popular psychological and medicinal interpretations of Siberian spirituality with vulgar Marxist assessments of shamanism. In his paper “Cult of Insanity in Ural-Altaiian Shamanism” (1928), native ethnographer Ksenofontov tried to blend a Marxist economic interpretation of native spirituality with the earlier established view of shamans as neurotics. According to Ksenofontov, the development of native Siberian shamanic beliefs depended directly on periodic shifts in their nomadic economy from reliance on one category of draft animals to another. Native communities, which routinely screened these shifts through the eyes of religious experience, socially sanctioned the “insanity” of shamans who imitated the behavior of these draft animals.

Later, at the turn of the 1930s, the scholarly “proven” thesis about the “insanity” of shamans provided a good excuse for Soviet attacks on native Siberian beliefs. Thus, physician D.A. Kytmanov (1930), who explored the Evenki natives, used the concept of the “arctic hysteria,” which he labeled as “functional neurosis,” for the justification of Soviet modernization that was to reshape “dull” and “primitive” life that bred neurotics, who provided excellent “recruits” for the shamanic profession. In his interpretation, shamans disseminated and perpetuated mental

illness in their isolated societies, which created a “vicious circle of madness” and resulted in regular outbursts of mass hysteria. Yet Kytmanov believed so much in the direct link between geographical and social environment, on the one hand, and spiritual life, on the other, that he spoke against any active measures against shamanism. In his view, the advance of Soviet modernity would automatically eliminate the social sources of “hysterical” behavior and shamanism would naturally die out. Those remaining youngsters who might still manifest elements of shamanic illness would “become patients of psychiatric hospitals.” Even Shternberg’s “divine election” hypothesis could be reconfigured and used to “unmask” native traditionalism. Thus, ethnographer I.M. Suslov, one of the participants of socialist construction among native northerners, sharply criticizing Shternberg’s “Freudian” concept, explained that the “sexual election of shamans” could be explained by a widespread practice of late marriages among native males. Suslov reasoned that the inability of many Siberian men to forward a customary dowry for their brides bred sexually frustrated individuals who commonly experienced “psychic misbalance.” The “misbalance” manifested itself in nervous ailments, fits, and hallucinations, which almost always were centered on sexual visions and images of an opposite gender. Suslov’s underlying idea was that once Soviet modernity eradicated the unhealthy environment, the native social life would be balanced.

Sakha historian Il’akhov believes that the Soviet government began applying “active measures” against shamans at the turn of the 1930s, when the general Soviet modernization drive was supplemented by militant collectivization and cultural revolution promoted by advancing Stalinism. While Kytmanov preached a natural death of shamanism as a result of the advance of modernization, the ethnologist I. Kosokov and anti-religious propagandist P. Khaptaev began to speak out against the “harmful” political effects of the “natural disappearance” thesis. Correctly pointing out that Siberian shamanism not only survived but also flourished, both writers called for a militant crusade against the native religion. Moreover, anthropologist Sergei Ursynovich sought to portray shamans as agents of the “rich indigenous aristocracy” exploiting poor “native masses” and took on those colleagues who still refused to define native spiritual practitioners according to the class-based grading scale.¹⁰⁶ It is notable that in his atheistic brochure on shamanism, another anti-religious propagandist, A. Dolotov, who similarly advocated a militant crusade against shamanism, extensively used analogies which Ksenofontov had earlier drawn between Christianity and shamanism to

show that Siberian shamanism represented an organized religion just like Christianity.¹⁰⁷ As such, it was certain to be targeted for total eradication. It was clear that such publications sought to alert anti-religious activists who still neglected shamanism as a social and political “evil” and also to inject into Soviet anthropology and religious studies an aggressively negative stance toward shamanism.

Il’akhov believes that an 1932 article published in the magazine *Sovetskii Sever* (*Soviet North*) by leading Soviet anthropologist Bogoras made a strong argument against native traditional spirituality and supplied a scholarly justification for attacks on shamanism.¹⁰⁸ Now secret police (GPU) targeted shamanism as an organized religion and unleashed total and merciless repressions against its practitioners. Soviet writings on native shamanism were naturally centered on denunciations of shamans as “class enemies,” who exploited their fellow tribesmen. During this decade and thereafter, Soviet observers of Siberian shamanism sought to prove that shamans lived off working masses, charging regular fees for their “fraudulent performances,” which placed them into a social class of exploiters, a native analogy for *kulaks*, well-to-do peasants in the Russian countryside.

To be exact, the class-based nature of shamanism was not a theoretical speculation that was suddenly brought to life after 1917. As early as pre-Revolutionary times, several ethnographers hypothesized about the link between shamanism and changes in social structure of primal societies. They ascribed the origin of shamanism as a profession to the evolution of native societies from primal egalitarian system to early class relationships. For example, Bogoras articulated such ideas as early as 1910 in his paper on northeastern Siberian shamanism. Viewing contemporary Siberian tribes as fragments of different stages of human evolution, Bogoras tried to single out among these tribes the most ancient and later versions of shamanism. To him, the archaic spiritual practice was egalitarian, whereas modern shamanism was based on class inequality and male domination. Thus, Bogoras described the Chukchi “family” shamanism, in which all adults could act as shamans, as the most ancient and democratic version of indigenous shamanism. This “open” egalitarian shamanism stood apart from the elaborate “aristocratic” Southern Siberian spiritual practices, in which shamans evolved into a semi-professional group that officiated at all major rituals. In contrast to the Chukchi-type shamanism that frequently assigned leading roles for native women, in “aristocratic” shamanism the spiritual

life was concentrated primarily in the hands of individual male spiritual practitioners.¹⁰⁹

Notes of M. Khangalov (1916), the native student of Buryat shamanism, show that other ethnographers were even more explicit about matriarchal sources of shamanism. Thus, Khangalov reworked a few of his field notes into a short manuscript, "Female Community and Shamanism," to support the above-mentioned thesis.¹¹⁰ He stressed that a few Buryat legends suggest that the first shaman was a woman who had received her shamanic powers from an eagle upon the order of the supreme deity and that several native communities viewed the goddess named Khan Hyhap as the patron of a shamanic initiation. Drawing on these and other facts, Khangalov suggested that in "ancient times there existed primordial female community, in which female clan leaders acted both as original mothers and shamanesses-magicians."¹¹¹ The ethnographer underlined that male deities became attached to primordial "female pantheons" much later, which reflected a transition to patriarchal society.

Bogoras, Khangalov and similarly-minded scholars reasoned that when egalitarian primitive communities disintegrated, patriarchy replaced matriarchy, and when the first rudimentary class ranks were shaped, women were squeezed out from the ritual life. As a result, individual male shamans came to dominate spiritual and ritual life. This conceptual stance, which goes back to Lewis Henry Morgan's and Frederick Engels' social evolutionism, was later absorbed by Soviet anthropology and became one of its pillars. The assessment of shamans as self-serving opportunists serving the interests of the rich continued to dominate Soviet anthropology scholarship until the end of the 1950s. One may find explicit modern versions of this approach in the works of native Buryat students of shamanism, Taras Mikhailov and Manzhigeev. The latter emphasized that, being a clearly defined group with its "morbid cults" centered on illnesses, shamans emerged when primitive communism, with its collective and democratic worship of nature, began to disintegrate.¹¹²

It should be mentioned that in the 1960s, the politically conditioned militant attitude toward shamans in scholarship generally subsided, and ethnographers renewed their studies of native spirituality. Still, the evolutionary stance ingrained in Soviet humanities and social scholarship affected students of shamanism. Soviet scholars continued to pay considerable attention to the origin and evolution of shamanism. A common technique of such studies was an attempt to pin down the most

archaic roots of Siberian shamanism, and the most popular methodology was the building of global archaeological, ethnographic, linguistic and mythological parallels, which allowed scholars to link elements from different cultures or to classify shamanism and its paraphernalia. One of the most recent examples is D.S. Dugarov's study (1991) of the origin of the "white" (benevolent) shamanism among the Buryat. Operating with broad folklore and linguistic parallels between Buryat spirituality and neighboring cultures, he linked the origin of Buryat shamanism to the resettlement of ancient Indo-European peoples.¹¹³ It appears that the general popularity in Soviet anthropology of the "ethnogenesis" concept, which sought to reconstruct the origin of ethnic groups, enhanced the research on archaic sources of Siberian shamanism and its specific attributes and artifacts.

Another popular debate in Soviet shamanism studies evolved around whether or not shamanism was a religion. Like some of his Western colleagues, the student of Chukchi ethnography I. Vdovin argued that shamanism represented only a system of beliefs, while the ethnographer of the Altaians, Potapov, took on such views and insisted that shamanism was a religion with its own specific oral "theology." In addition, in the 1970s and 1980s, a few Soviet students of shamanism went far beyond Marxist interpretation of shamanism. Among the most interesting were Novik's attempt of structuralist rereading (1979) of shamanism, Revunenkova's interpretation (1974) of shamanism as a creative inspiration, or Kenin-Lopsan's analysis of rituals and folklore of Tuvian shamanism (1987). At the same time, such long-time students of shamanism as S. Vainshtein (1990) considered shamanism a culturally sanctioned mental disorder, a view that goes back to the turn of the twentieth century.¹¹⁴

The collapse of communism and its Soviet modernity accompanied by a quick and disappointing flirtation with Western civilization produced in all post-Soviet states a spiritual vacuum that became filled with esoteric and alternative teachings.¹¹⁵ In the new cultural milieu, the "wisdom of shamanism" and analogous practices appeared as attractive alternatives. In addition, in native autonomies, indigenous intellectuals began to include shamanism and shamans in their ideological toolkits, which were used for ethnonationalist construction. In Tuva, one of Siberian native autonomies, shamanism was propelled to the status of an official religion along with Tibetan Buddhism and Orthodox Christianity. Reinvented shamanism also occupies a significant place in the cultural baggage of present-day Sakha republic.¹¹⁶

Shamanism suddenly found itself in the spotlight of Siberian urban culture, Russian *belles-lettres* and new age. The best metaphor that underscores the transition in the attitude toward shamanism can be found in a semi-fictional book *Mysteries of Siberian Shamans* by G.N. Timofeev. In one of his stories Timofeev brings together unusual characters: Leon Trotsky, a leader of the 1917 Russian Communist revolution, and a Mansi shaman named Sandalov. Trotsky, who is depicted escaping from his 1907 Siberian exile, encounters the native spiritual practitioner. Sandalov immerses the Marxist revolutionary into the ocean of “native wisdom,” exposes him to “some unexplainable power” during a shamanic séance, and eventually makes Trotsky cast a shadow of doubt on his materialistic convictions. Timofeev’s Trotsky eventually concludes, “Probably Jean-Jacques Rousseau was right when he called people to return to nature.”¹¹⁷ The story conveys a clear message: Soviet modernity with its Marxist ideology shudders under the healing effect of native shamanism.

The fertile environment in Russia for alternative spiritual practices produced burgeoning popular and scholarly literature on shamanism. By now such major scholarly and literary and new age shamanism classics such as Eliade, Holger Kolwright, Carlos Castaneda, John G. Neihardt’s *Black Elk Speaks* and Kenneth Meadows have been translated into Russian, some of them as paperbacks in mass circulation.¹¹⁸ Like their Western colleagues, Russian authors of esoteric works on shamanism advertise the healing power of indigenous spirituality and issue practical advice based on “ancient wisdom” of Siberian natives. I would like to stress that some of these writings are based on meticulous study of available literature and do provide a good description of Siberian shamanism in addition to self-designed “practical instructions.” Others appear to be instantly cooked narratives, attempts to ride the tide of popularity of all things esoteric. An example of the first is Olard Dikson, who apparently widely traveled to Siberia and combed major sources on Siberian shamanism. In contrast, the book produced by a “folk healer” and “shaman” Yuri Zakharov, represents a “how-to” self-praising manual in which the author advertises the so-called Ülgen Dance and blatantly promises to “literally stop the process of aging.”¹¹⁹

For others, who were “burned” and “drained” by the bureaucratic reality of communism and do not believe in anything, metaphors drawn from “Siberian shamanism” serve to justify their elitism, cynicism, and even materialism. A good example is semi-fictional *Put’ Duraka (The Way of the Fool)* by Sotilian Sekoriiskii, a spiritual “guru” from

Novosibirsk. Tailoring his text in the Russian “holy fool” tradition, Sekoriiskii merges Siberian “shamanism” with urban “yoga,” and takes his readers on an auto-biographical journey through Soviet high school, army service, a psychiatric hospital, drug experiences, and finally to his apprenticeship with an Altaian shaman.¹²⁰ This book, which underscores that high spiritual wisdom is available only to selected few rather than to a “dirty crowd,” is heavily peppered with self-degrading pornography and street talk. All in all, it is a telling example of post-communist cynicism and the spiritual void rampant in present-day Russia.

“Siberian shamanic wisdom” is now increasingly advertised and offered for consumption of the Western audiences. The popularity of semi-fictional *Entering the Circle* by Russian psychiatrist Olga Kharitidi suggests that there exists a significant publication and commercial venue in this direction. Written, formatted, and promoted specially for the Western book market as a Siberian analogy to Castaneda, *Entering the Circle* blends together urban Russian-Siberian esoterism (mysterious Belovodie cult), recent discoveries in Siberian archaeology, and the “wisdom” of Siberian shamans.¹²¹ On the other hand, we have *Chosen by the Spirits* by Julie A. Stewart, an American who at first studied with “Cherokee” shamans and then “converted” herself into a practicing Buryat-Mongol shaman Sarangerel. This interesting text, which went almost unnoticed, stands out not only because in a popular esoteric manner it brings to light the poorly covered topic, but also because of its thorough research of all major sources available on southern Siberian shamanism in Russian, English and German.¹²²

Several native and Russian students of shamanism, who formally belong to academic community, openly side with an esoteric tradition drawing their inspiration from Kabbala, Theosophy, Occult Philosophy, mystical Christianity, Carlos Castaneda, Helen Blavatsky, and Georgii Gurdjieff or using psychological constructs of Carl Jung and Stanislav Grof.¹²³ On the whole, present-day Russian mainstream “shamanology” heavily relies on the methodologies drawn from psychology and ethnopsychology.¹²⁴ At the same time, there are scholars such as the late anthropologist A.M. Sagalaev who discuss Siberian shamanism as a broadly defined philosophy of nature (*Naturphilosophie*), which they view as the way of indigenous understanding of surrounding world.¹²⁵ Others, like their Western and especially American colleagues, are more skeptical about broad generalizations, preferring to discuss tribal versions of shamanism, including contexts of séances and surrounding circumstances. Dmitrii Funk, one of the leading Russian experts on

Siberian spirituality, describing the shamanistic pantheon of the Teleut, stresses that the native “universe” did not have “canonized” “deities,” and that spirits of this pantheon with the same names could be interpreted in a different manner by representatives of different kin groups and by individual shamans. Indigenous worldview, continues Funk, cannot be reduced to universal concepts such as the “world tree” or “three-layered universe.”¹²⁶ Funk’s approach resonates well with the ideas articulated by such scholars as Jane Atkinson and Caroline Humphrey,¹²⁷ who speak about the necessity to study shamanisms instead of shamanism. It might be assumed that this stance reflects a post-modern disillusionment in all kinds of generalizations.

Browsing books and articles on shamanism in English, one immediately notices that the larger part of this literature deals with Native American shamanism, which is natural, because influential American anthropology rose as a discipline studying native cultures of North America.¹²⁸ Later, especially when in the late 1960s Castaneda’s fictional stories about his apprenticeship with Don Juan made native spirituality below the Rio Grande a part of cultural and academic usage, Latin American indigenous beliefs became increasingly included into shamanism studies. Moreover, tribal religions from other areas of the world were added to the growing field of “shamanology.” Still, native Siberian shamanism is considered a “classic” form of shamanism against which researchers and popular writers juxtapose their concepts and characters.¹²⁹ At the same time, the bulk of literature that describes native spirituality in Siberia, the “heart of shamans’ country,” largely remains unknown to Western scholars and “lay” audiences. It is not only that Siberia, once a part of the Soviet empire, was long closed to Western observers, but there is also a significant language barrier.¹³⁰

For those readers who are familiar with Russian, a good start will be consulting the bibliography by A.A. Popov, which was published both in Russia (1931) and Germany (1990) and which provides the most complete list of books and articles on Siberian shamanism published in Russia prior to 1930.¹³¹ Furthermore, a French student of Siberian shamanism, Laurence Delaby, composed a comprehensive bibliography of Russian literature on the Tungus (Evenki) shamanism as a supplement to her study of the Tungus shamanism. Unfortunately published only in French, this source remains largely inaccessible to the English-speaking audience.¹³² My first goal in this volume is to furnish all interested people a reference guide that might help them make insights into shamanism in its “core” area. For this reason, my bibliography has slightly different

format. On the one hand, I did not want to commit myself to reproducing excerpts from relevant works or to rendering entire texts into English. On the other hand, I did not want to turn this volume into simply a list of books with brief annotations, which do not provide any significant information to a person who does not know Russian and therefore cannot consult original sources. As a result, I selected a “golden medium” approach, turning my annotations into summaries and digests of relevant books and articles. The reader will discover that my summaries include both information on theoretical views of individual authors and interesting stories, which authors of the reviewed works have to share with us. Putting together this collection I capitalized on the work of my predecessors, first of all Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer, who was the first scholar to make Siberian shamanism accessible to English-speaking audience on a regular basis by releasing anthologies of translations and by publishing *Anthropology and Archaeology of Eurasia*.¹³³ The latter regularly samples writings of Russian and indigenous authors. Second, I would like to note Mihaly Hoppal, whose series of finely-produced volumes of *Bibliotheca Shamanistica* brought to English-speaking audiences first-rate Siberian ethnographies. Incidentally, Hoppal and his predecessor Vilmos Dioszegi put together a collection of articles, *Shamanism in Siberia* (1978), which now can be considered a modern classic in the field.¹³⁴ This book might also serve as a good start for anyone interested in Siberian shamanism. I consider my book a continuation of the aforementioned projects.

At the same time, I designed the present volume not only as a pure bibliography or a reference ethnography. My second goal is to illustrate how Russian observers recorded Siberian shamanism and also how their perceptions of indigenous spirituality evolved over time. As a historian, I want to illuminate how cultural milieu as well as academic and general intellectual fashions affected observers of shamanism. By now, scholarship has accumulated a large amount of ethnographic information about Siberian shamanism. It is clear that this literature not only reconstructs shamanism as it existed or exists but also tells us much about the individuals who wrote or write these accounts. I am not the first one who tries to link the ethnography of shamanism with Western intellectual culture. Gloria Flaherty’s pioneering study *Shamanism in the Eighteenth Century* shows how Enlightenment ideas affected observations of Siberian and Native American shamanism. Furthermore, a recently published anthology, *Shamans Through Time*, includes excerpts of Euroamerican travel and academic observations of indigenous shamans in

all corners of globe from the 1500s to the present. Although the collection places much emphasis on Latin American shamanism, which coincides with the research interests of the compilers, it provides a good glimpse of Western perceptions of shamanism. So far the best succinct review of Western and Russian perceptions of Siberian spirituality was produced by Ronald Hutton. Hutton has brought together all major writings on Siberian shamanism published primarily in English and unfolded a fascinating picture of Western romance with the native “primitive” ecstasy since the 1550s to the present.¹³⁵ My book draws attention to those records of Siberian shamanism that have not yet come into the research spotlight, specifically, Siberian regionalists’ ethnographies and the Soviet portrayal of native shamanism.

The present collection is unavoidably selective. Of the wide variety of books and articles, I tried to choose those that, in my view, are the most representative. With a few exceptions, they were not translated or rendered into English. The titles included in this bibliography are not only ethnographies and anthropological studies, but also travel narratives, popular and fictional books, and magazine articles from pre-Revolutionary and present-day Russian periodicals. All in all, I tried to flash a gallery of authors who wrote on the topic of shamanism in Russian. They are Russians and natives, explorers and missionaries, outsiders and insiders, ethnographers and esoteric writers. Chronologically the reviews cover the literature published in nineteenth and twentieth century Russia/Soviet Union. Reviewing all these sources, I tried not only to digest and render their content, but also to maintain some of their contemporary usage and style.

NOTES

1. From an interview to *Die Weltwoche* (1957): *C.G. Jung Speaking: Interviews and Encounters*, ed. William McGuire and R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 356.
2. Gloria Flaherty, *Shamanism and the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 6-7; Ronald Hutton, *Shamans: Siberian Spirituality and the Western Imagination* (London and New York: Humbledon and London, 2001), 47.
3. Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964).
4. Adolf Friedrich and George Buddrus, eds., *Schamanengeschichten aus Sibirien* (Munchen and Planegg: O.W. Barth, 1955).
5. Uno Harva (Holmberg), *Die Religiösen vorstellungen der Altäischen Völker* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1938); George Nioradze, *Der Schamanismus bei den sibirischen Völkern* (Stuttgart: Strecker und Schröder, 1925); Åke Ohlmarks, *Studien zum Problem des Schamanismus* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1939).
6. I think that in criticizing Eliade for his reliance on secondary sources and romanticizing of non-Western beliefs, we should not forget that Eliade “legitimized” the topic of shamanism in the eyes of a scholarly audience and showed that the beliefs of non-Western “others” or “people without history” could be discussed just like “classic” world religions.
7. This work was printed in the form of a supplement to Friedrich Christian Weber, *Das veränderte Russland* (Frankfurt: N. Förster, 1721). For the English edition of this work, see Friedrich Christian Weber, *The Present State of Russia* (London: W. Taylor, 1723, repr. London: Frank Cass & Co., 1968), vol. 2, 76-92.
8. V.A. Boiko, “Khantyiskoe shamanstvo v russkoi etnograficheskoi literature,” in *Narody Sibiri: istoriia i kul'tura*, ed. V.M. Kulemzin (Novosibirsk: institut arkheologii i etnografii SO RAN, 1997), 12.
9. Ibid.
10. Stepan P. Krashennnikov, *The History of Kamtschatka*, trans. James Grieve (Richmond: Richmond Publishing Co., 1973).
11. J. L. Black and D. K. Buse, *G.-F. Müller and Siberia, 1733-1743* (Kingston, Ontario and Fairbanks, AK: The Limestone Press, 1989), 49.
12. Ibid., 85.
13. Ibid., 86.
14. Jeremy Narby and Francis Huxley, eds., *Shamans Through Time: 500 Years on the Path to Knowledge* (New York: Putnam, 2001), 28.
15. Gloria Flaherty, *Shamanism and the Eighteenth Century*, 46-59
16. Boiko, “Khantyiskoe shamanstvo v russkoi etnograficheskoi literature,” 13. For more on Müller’s descriptions of Siberian shamanism, see A.Kh. Elert, “G.F. Miller kak isledovatel’ sibirskogo shamanizma, in *Nemetskii etnos v Sibiri*, ed. V.I. Molodin and N.N. Pokrovskii (Novosibirsk: Izd-vo Novosibirskogo universiteta, 1999), vol. 1, 44-52.
17. Flaherty, *Shamanism and the Eighteenth Century*, 69-72, 74, 85-86.

18. Ibid., 139, 147-148.
19. K. F. Ledebour, A.A. Bunge, K. A. Meyer, *Puteshesvie po Altaiskim goram i Dzhungarskoi Kirgizskoi stepi* (Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1993), 164, 173-174, 200-201, 203, 216.
20. Frants I. Beliauskii, *Poezdka k Ledovitomu moriu* (Moskva: v tipografii Lazarevykh instituta vostochnykh iazykov, 1833), 111-122, 116; M. F. Krivoshepkin, *Eniseiskii okrug i ego zhizn'* (St. Petersburg: v tipografii V. Bezobrazova, 1865), 315-316.
21. Petr Chikhachev, *Puteshestvie v Vostochnyi Altai* (Moskva: Nauka, 1974), 59-60.
22. N.S. Shchukin, "Shamanstvo u narodov Severnoi Azii," *Biblioteka dlia chtenia* 92 (1849): 36-37.
23. Berthold Laufer, "Origin of the Word Shaman," *American Anthropologist* 19 (1917): 163; N.S. Shchukin, "Shamanstvo u narodov Severnoi Azii," *Biblioteka dlia chtenia* 91 (1848): 26.
24. O. Iakinf [N. Ia. Bichurin], "O Shamanstve," *Otechestvennye zapiski* 6 (1839): 73.
25. For the names of specific scholars, see Joan B. Townsend, "Shamanism," in *Anthropology of Religion: A Handbook*, ed. Stephen D. Glazer (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 430-431.
26. Ippolit Zavalishin, *Opisanie Zapadnoi Sibiri* (Moskva : Izd. Ob-va rasprostraneniia poleznykh knig, 1862), 207, 211, 223.
27. Ibid., 208-210.
28. The major missionary periodical where one can find materials on Siberian shamanism is *Pravoslavnyi blagoviestnik* (*Orthodox Wellwish Messenger*).
29. See the review of his work in the present volume.
30. See the review of his work in the present volume.
31. V.I. Verbitskii, *Altaiskie inorodtsy* (Gorno-Altai: Ak-chechek, 1993), 64.
32. Ibid., 61.
33. Leonid P. Potapov, *Altaiskii shamanizm* (Leningrad: Nauka, Leningradskoe otdelenie, 1991), 248; V.A. Maitueva, "O kosmogonicheskikh predstavleniakh altaitsev," in *Problemy izucheniia kul'turno-istoricheskogo naslediiia Altaia*, ed. V.N. Elin (Gorno-Altai: Gorno-Altaiiskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 1994), 90.
34. L.I. Sherstova, "Traditsionnyi panteon altaitsev," in *Arkheologiiia i etnografiia Iuzhnoi Sibiri*, ed. Iu.F. Kiriushin (Barnaul: Altaiskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 1984), 148.
35. N.S. Modorov, *Rossiiia i Gornii Altai: Politicheskie, sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie i kul'turnie otnosheniia (XVII – XIX vv.)* (Gorno-Altai: Gorno-Altaiiskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 1996), 282.
36. For the review of his work, see the present volume.
37. Dorji Banzarov, *Chernaia vera ili shamanstvo u Mongolov* (St. Petersburg: tip. Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk, 1891), 5.
38. N.S. Shchukin, "Shamanstvo u narodov Severnoi Azii," *Biblioteka dlia chtenia* 92 (1849): 41-42.
39. Wilhelm Radloff, *Aus Sibirien: lose Blätter aus dem Tagebuche eines reisenden Linguisten* (Leipzig: T.O. Weigel, 1884), 2 vols. For an abridged Russian translation of this work, see V.V. Radlov, *Iz Sibiri* (Moskva: Nauka, 1989).
40. Radlov, *Aus Sibirien*, vol. 2, 2.
41. Ibid., 55.
42. Ibid., 3.
43. Ibid., 14.
44. Ibid., 58.

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45. *Ibid.*, 19-50. Incidentally, Verbitskii himself did not observe this séance but borrowed its description, which was recorded by an anonymous cleric, from the archives of the Altaian Orthodox mission.
 46. V.M. Mikhailovskii, *Shamanstvo: sravnitel'no-etnograficheskie ocherki* (Moskva: t-vo skoropechati A.A. Levenson, 1892), 67 or V.M. Mikhailovskii, "Shamanism in Siberia and European Russia," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Society* 24 (1894): 74-78; Marie Antoinette Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia: A Study in Social Anthropology* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press and Oxford University Press, 1914), 298; Eliade, *Shamanism*, 190-197; Nora Chadwick and Victor Zhirmunsky, *Oral Epics of Central Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 243-249. As a standard example of a Siberian shamanic session the Ülgen séance is used by other authors, who not necessarily write on shamanism. See, for example, Marie-Louise von Franz, *C. G. Jung: His Myth in Our Time* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Co., 1975), 101-102.
 47. Chadwick and Zhirmunsky, *Oral Epics of Central Asia*, 237-238, 245.
 48. I.M. Casanowisz, "Shamanism of the Natives of Siberia," *Annual Reports of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution (1924)* (Washington, DC) GPO, 1925): 416.
 49. N.M. Iadrintsev, "Otchet o poezdke po porucheniu Zapadno-sibirskago otdela Russkago geograficheskago obshchestva v Gornii Altai, k Teletskomu ozeru i v vershiny Katuni v 1880 g.," *Zapiski Zapadno-sibirskago otdelenia Russkago geograficheskago obshchestva* 4 (1882): 41.
 50. For example, in an attempt to trace a continuity between contemporary native shamanism and indigenous antiquity of southern Siberia, Potanin analyzed the drawings on shaman drums and compared them with inscriptions found on the "runes." In an 1878 letter, the father of Siberian regionalism instructed his friend Iadrintsev, who was about to embark on an expedition to the Altai, to "carefully examine each drum and copy its drawings." *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, ed. A.G. Grum-Grzhimailo (Irkutsk: iz-vo Irkutskogo universiteta, 1989), vol. 3, 132.
 51. Ia.R. Koshelev, *Russkaia fol'kloristika Sibiri* (Tomsk: iz-vo Tomskogo universiteta, 1962), 127-128.
 52. "N.M. Iadrintsev to Alexandr Khristoforov, 6 December 1883," in *Vol'naiia Sibir'* (Prague) 2 (1927): 184.
 53. N.M. Iadrintsev, "Altai i ego inorodcheskoe tsarstvo: ocherk puteshestvia po Altai," *Istoricheskii viestnik* 20, no. 6 (1885): 628. See a similar poetical description of a shamanic session made by another regionalist Naumov (1870), Nikolai Naumov, "Gornaia idilliia," in *Altai v khudozhestvennoi literature*, ed. A. Rozin (Barnaul: Altaiskoe kraevoe izdatel'stvo, 1951), 99-100.
 54. B. Shul'gin, "A.V. Anokhin i muzikal'naia kul'tura Altaiatsev," *Kan Altai* (1994): 9.
 55. Andrei Anokhin, "Shamanizm sibirskikh tiurkskikh plemen," Arkhiv Muzeia antropologii i etnografii, St. Petersburg (Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography Archive, thereafter MAE), f. 11, op. 1, ed. khr. 144, 17ob.
 56. N.M. Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kaka kolonia* (St. Petersburg: tip. M. M. Stasiulevicha, 1882), 124.
 57. *Ibid.*, 123-124.
 58. He articulated his "Oriental hypothesis" in the following works: Grigorii Potanin, *Vostochnie motivy v srednevekovom Evropeiskom epose* (Moskva: tipo-litografiia tovar. I.N. Kushnerev, 1899); idem: *Saga o Solomone: vostochnie materialy k voprosu o proiskhozhdenii sagi* (Tomsk: izd. Sibirskago t-va pechatnago diela, 1912); idem: *Erke: kul't syna neba v Sievernoi Azii* (Tomsk: izd. A.M. Grigor'evoi, 1916).

59. *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, vol.3, 180; Andrei M. Sagalaev and Vladimir M. Kryukov, *G.N. Potanin: opyt osmysleniia lichnosti* (Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1991), 188-189.
60. *Pis'ma G. N. Potanina*, vol.3, 166.
61. Potanin, "Proiskhozhdenie Khrista," *Sibirskie ogni* 4 (1926): 131. In the same paper Potanin argued that the Bible was essentially a fiction based on stories that originated from the mythology of primal people of the inner Asia.
62. A.N. Diachkova, "Predislovie," in G.V. Ksenofontov, *Shamanizm: izbrannie trudy (publikatsii 1920-1929 gg)* (Iakutsk: Sever-iug, 1992), 8, 19.
63. G.V. Ksenofontov, "Shamanizm i Khristianstvo," in G.V. Ksenofontov, *Shamanizm: izbrannie trudy*, 115-137.
64. Viacheslav I. Shishkov, *Strashnyi kam: povesti i rasskazy* (Moskva and Leningrad: Zemlia i fabrika, 1926), 50.
65. *Ibid.*, 44.
66. E.L. Zubashev, "Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin: vospominaniia," *Vol'naia Sibir'* (Prague) 1 (1927): 62.
67. "Muzikal'naia etnografiia i shamanstvo na 'Sibirskom vechere' v Tomske," *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 1 (1909): 134.
68. *Ibid.*, 136. A student of Buryat shamanism, Bergard Petri, continued the practice of bringing shamans to Siberian cities (1923) for public séances. G. Ksenofontov, "Legendy i rasskazy o shamanakh u Yakutov, Buryat i Tungusov," in G. Ksenofontov, *Izbrannie trudy* (Iakutsk: Sever-iug, 1992), 98.
69. For the review of this work, see the present volume.
70. Potanin personally sought to open new publication and scholarly opportunities for such native intellectuals. G.N. Potanin to S.F. Oldenburg, 24 April 1908, Arkhiv Rossiiskoi akademii nauk, St. Petersburg (Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg), f. 208, op. 3, ed. khr. 480, l. 17.
71. G.I. Pribytkov, *Choros-Gurkin* (Gorno-Altaiisk: Gorno-Altaiaskaia respublikanskaia tipografiia, 2000), 61.
72. Interestingly, Anokhin himself was inducted in the study of shamanism by both Potanin and Radloff. Pribytkov, *Choros-Gurkin*, 43; N. Shatinova, "A.V. Anokhin-etnograf i folklorist," *Altaiiskii folklor i literatura*, ed. A.I. Alieva et al. (Gorno-Altaiisk: Gorno-Altaiiskii nauchno-issl. in-t istorii, iazyka i lit-ry 1982), 107.
73. "G.N. Gurkin to Ia. Kh. Dovtian, 5 July 1924," Prilozhenie k delu 18255 po obvineniu Gurkina G.N, Arkhiv noveishei istorii respubliki Altai (Archive of Modern History of the Altai Republic), f. R-37, op. 1, ed. khr. 579, vol. 14, l. 14ob. For more on shamanic motives in Gurkin's works, see Pribytkov, *Choros-Gurkin*, 7, 10, 13.
74. Hutton, *Shamans*, 35.
75. Still, it did not always work. At least in the case of Khudiakov recording native ethnography did not save the exile from going insane. V.G. Bazanov and N.V. Emel'ianova, "I. A. Khudiakov i ego 'Kratkoe opisaniie Verkhoianskogo okruga'," in I.A. Khudiakov, *Kratkoe opisaniie Verkhoianskogo okruga* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1969), 32.
76. Waldemar Bogoras, *The Chukchee* (Leiden: E.J. Brill; New York: G. E. Stechert, 1904-1909), 2 vols; Waldemar Jochelson, *The Koryak* (Leiden: E.J. Brill; New York: G.E. Stechert, 1908). For more on the work of the Jesup expedition and its legacy, see Igor Krupnik, "Jesup Geneology: Intellectual Partnership and Russian-American Cooperation in Arctic/North Pacific Anthropology," *Arctic Anthropology* 35, no. 2 (1998): 199-226.
77. A good example of such approach is Roland Dixon's paper delivered as a presidential address to a meeting of American Folklore Society. Roland Dixon, "Some Aspects of the American Shaman," *Journal of American Folklore* 21 (1908): 1-12. Comparing Native

American spiritual practitioners with Siberian shamans, Dixon, who was a participant of the Jesup Expedition, argued that North American shamanism, which was more centered on vision quest, manifested a “democratic” version of shamanism, whereas Asian spirituality, which was based on the hereditary transmission of shamanic power, was more “aristocratic.” About this Ake Hultkrantz perceptively remarks, “In reading Dixon’s evaluation of North American shamanism one receives the impression that this was the New World answer to the Old World ideas of the elitist role of the shaman.” Ake Hultkrantz, “The Specific Character of North American Shamanism,” *European Review of Native American Studies* 13, no. 2 (1999): 2.

78. It is notable that Khudiakov, another exile, who had a chance to observe Sakha shamanism in the 1860s, does not draw such drastic divisions between “black” and “white” shamans. Khudiakov, *Kratkoe opisanie Verkhoianskogo okruga*, 27, 307, 357. For the review of Troshchanskii’s book, see the present volume.
79. N. Vitashevskii, “Iz oblasti pervobytnago psikhonevroza,” *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 88-89, no. 1-2 (1911): 180-228; P. I. Iakobii, “Religiozno-psikhicheskie epidemii: iz psikhiatricheskoi ekspertizy,” *Vestnik Evropy* 10 (1903): 732-758; 11 (1903): 117-166. As early as 1865, portraying Siberian shamans as tragic romantic characters, physician Krivoshapkin simultaneously sought for “physiological” and “pathological” explanation of their behavior. He surmised that “genuine shamanism” was an ailment akin to so-called female “hysterical demonomania” (*hysteria cum demonomania*). Krivoshapkin, *Eniseiskii okrug i ego zhizn’*, 321, 326. Christine D. Worobec stresses that by the middle of the 1890s it became common for Russian psychiatrists to link the cases of hysteria among Russian peasants to inhospitable environmental conditions. There was also an agreement that biologically women were more prone to hysteria than men. Christine D. Worobec, *Possessed: Women, Witches and Demons in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001), 167.
80. V.G. Bogoraz, “K psikhologii shamanstva u narodov Severo-vostochnoi Azii,” *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 1-2 (1910): 6. For the review of this work, see the present volume.
81. The Polish-English anthropologist Marie Antoinette Czaplicka and the Swedish scholar Åke Ohlmarks, who were very well versed in relevant Russian literature and who extensively used Bogoraz’s and Jochelson’s materials in their works, planted the “arctic hysteria” and neurosis theses in Western shamanism studies, which maintained these concepts until the 1960s. To illustrate his speculations, Ohlmarks even drew a map that highlights the distribution of the “arctic hysteria” in Siberia and North America. The northernmost areas of this map are marked as the zones of the “severe” forms of shamanism. For more on the psychiatric interpretation of shamanism, see Philippe Mitrani, “A Critical Overview of the Psychiatric Approaches to Shamanism,” *Diogenes* 158 (1992): 145-164.
82. Leo Shternberg, “Divine Election in Primitive Religion,” in *Congres International des Americanistes* (Göteborg, 1925), vol. 2, 475-487. Anthropologist Sergei Kan thoroughly examined Shternberg’s interpretation of shamanism in “‘Divine Election in Primitive Religion’: Ethnography and Evolutionist Theory in Lev Shternberg’s Interpretation of Shamanism,” Paper Presented at the American Society for Ethnohistory Conference, Quebec City, Canada, October 17, 2002.
83. S.M. Shirokogoroff, *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus* (London: Kegan Paul, 1935); a new reprinted edition: Berlin: Reinhold Schletzer Verlag, 1999. See also his earlier articles and brochures, which Shirokogoroff later incorporated in that seminal study:

- “General Theory of Shamanism among the Tungus,” *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 54 (1923): 246-249; idem: “What is Shamanism,” *The China Journal of Science & Arts* 2, no. 3 (1924): 275-279; 2, no. 4 (1924): 368-371; idem: *Opyt issledovania osnov shamanstva u Tungusov* (Vladivostok, 1919); for the German translation of the latter work, see S. M. Širokogorov, “Versuch einer Erforschung der Grundlagen des Schamanentums bei den Tungusen,” *Baessler-Archiv* 18, no. 2 (1935): 41-96.
84. Sergei Mar, “Obnovlennii plemena,” *Nashi dostizheniia* 1 (1929): 127. For the reviews of Anokhin’s major work, *Materialy po shamanstvu u Altaitsev* (1924) and one of his manuscripts, see the present volume.
 85. For a discussion of this process as applied to the United States, see Helen Carr, *Inventing the American Primitive: Politics, Gender and the Representation of Native American Literary Traditions, 1789-1936* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 197-237.
 86. Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), vol. 1, 855.
 87. Ibid. In Russia neo-primitivism was associated with the general upsurge of an educated public’s interest in occult and mysticism during so-called Silver Age (1890-1914). Maria Carlson, “No Religion Higher Than Truth”: *A History of the Theosophical Movement in Russia, 1875-1922* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 3-14.
 88. Peg Weiss, *Kandinsky and Old Russia: The Artist as Ethnographer and Shaman* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995).
 89. For more on this aspect of the Bolsheviks’ nationalities policies, see Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001).
 90. Taras M. Mikhailov, *Buryatskii shamanizm: ego istoriia, struktura i sotsial’nie funktsii* (Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1987), 206-208; Andrei Anokhin, “Lektsii po altaevedeniu v rabfak [1921-1925],” MAE, f. 11, op. 1, ed. khr. 178, l. 113; “Protokoly konferentsii chlenov Soiuza voinstvuushchikh bezbozhnikov g. Ulala (1931),” Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv respubliki Altai (Altai Republic State Archive, Gorno-Altai), f. 193, op. 1, ed. khr. 3, l. 1-2.
 91. N. Il’akhov, “Repressii protiv severnikh shamanov (1920-1935),” in *Istoriko-etnosotsial’nie issledovania: regional’nie problemy*, ed. V.N. Ivanov. (Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1998), 91. For the review of this work, see the present volume.
 92. V.G. Bogoraz-Tan, *Einshtein i religii: primenienie kontseptsii otositel’nosti k issledovaniu religioznikh iavlenii* (Moskva and Petrograd: Frenkel’, 1923), 116. For the English translation of this work, see Waldemar Bogoras, “Ideas of Space and Time in the Conception of Primitive Religion,” *American Anthropologist* 27, no. 2 (1925): 205-266.
 93. L.A. Karunovskaia, “Polevoi dnevnik ekspeditsii na Altai, 1927,” MAE, f. 15, op. 2, ed. khr. 26, l. 43.
 94. Zinaida Rikhter, *V strane golubikh ozer: ocherki Altaia* (Moskva and Leningrad: Molodaia gvardiia, 1930), 98, 102, 104.
 95. Pavel Nizovoi, *Iazychniki* (Chita: Utes, 1922), 69.
 96. See, for example, an entry in a field diary of Karunovskaia for 1924. L.A. Karunovskaia, “Polevoi dnevnik, ekspeditsiia na Altai, 1924,” MAE, f. 15, op. 2, ed. khr. 23, l. 52ob.
 97. Ibid., l. 54.
 98. Mariia Shkapskaia, *Sama po sebe* (Leningrad: izd-vo pisatelei v Leningrade, 1930), 284.
 99. Ibid., 286.

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100. Dmitrii Stonov, *Povesti ob Altae* (Moskva: Federatsiia, 1930), 47.
 101. *Ibid.*, 48-49.
 102. Zinaida Richter, *V strane golubikh ozer*, 8.
 103. Stonov, *Povesti ob Altae*, 47.
 104. *Ibid.*, 59.
 105. For the review of this book, see the present volume.
 106. I. Kosokov, *K voprosu o shamanstve v Severnoi Azii* (Moskva: Bezbozhnik, 1930); P. Khaptaev, "Izuchenie shamanstva na novom etape (po povodu knigi Kosokova)," *Antireligioznik* 12 (1931): 69-70; Sergei Ursynovich, *Religii tuzemnikh narodnostei Sibiri* (Moskva: Bezbozhnik, 1930), 34-35;
 107. A. Dolotov, *Shamanskaia vera* (Moskva: Bezbozhnik, 1930), 30.
 108. Il'akhov, "Repressii protiv severnikh shamanov," 94.
 109. Bogoraz, V.G. "K psikhologii shamanstva u narodov Severo-vostochnoi Azii," 9-10.
 110. M. N. Khangalov, "Zhenskaia obshchina i shamanizm," in *Tsentral'no-aziatskii shamanism: filosofskie, istoricheskie, religioznye aspekty*, ed. Irina S. Urbanaeva (Ulan-Ude: Buryatskii institut obshchestvennikh nauk, 1996), 38-42.
 111. *Ibid.*, 39.
 112. I. A. Manzhigeev, *Buryatskie shamanisticheskie i doshamanisticheskie terminy* (Moskva: Nauka, 1978), 41. For the review of this work, see the present volume.
 113. D. S. Dugarov, *Istoricheskie korni belogo shamanstva (na materiale obriadovogo fol'klora Buryat)* (Moskva: Nauka, 1991). For the review of this book, see the present volume.
 114. For more on Soviet Shamanism studies, see: I. S. Vdovin, "The Study of Shamanism among the Peoples of Siberia and the North," *The Realm of the Extra-Human: Agents and Audiences*, ed. Agehananda Bharati (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), 261-273; Caroline Humphrey, "Theories of North Asian Shamanism," in *Soviet and Western Anthropology*, ed. Ernest Gellner (London: Duckworth, 1980), 242-251; V. N. Basilov, "The Study of Shamanism in Russian Ethnography," in *Shamanism in Eurasia*, ed. Mihaly Hoppal (Göttingen: Herodot, 1984), 46-63; Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer, "Introduction," in *Shamanic Worlds: Rituals and Lore of Siberia and Central Asia*, ed. Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer (Armonk, NY: North Castle Books, 1997), xiii-xxxii.
 115. This resulted in emerging popularity of literature on magic, occult and shamanism. For more on this, see Valentina G. Brougher, "The Occult in Russian Literature of the 1990s," *Russian Review* 56, no. 1 (1997): 110-111.
 116. About the present-day renaissance of native shamanism in Siberia, including urban shamanism, see: Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer, "Two Urban Shamans: Unmasking Leadership in Fin-de-Soviet Siberia," in *Perilous States: Conversations on Culture, Politics, and Nation*, ed. George E. Marcus (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 131-164; Mihaly Hoppal, "Shamanism in Siberia Today," in *Shamanic Cosmos*, ed. Romano Mastromattei and Antonio Rigopoulos (Venice and New Delhi: Venetian Academy of Indian Studies and D.K. Printworld Ltd., 1999), 107-116; Caroline Humphrey, "Shamans in the City," *Anthropology Today* 15, no. 3 (1999): 3-11; Andrei Vinogradov, "'After the Past, Before the Present': New Shamanism in Gorny Altai," *Anthropology of Consciousness* 10, no. 4 (1999): 36-45; N.L. Zhukovskaia, "Buryatskii shamanizm segodnia: vozrozhdenie ili evoliutsiia?" in *Proceedings of the International Congress Shamanism and Other Indigenous Spiritual Beliefs and Practices*, ed V.I. Kharitonova and D.A. Funk (Moskva: institut etnologii i antropologii, 2001), 162-176;

- Judith Matloff, "Russia Hard Times a Boon to Native Peoples," *Christian Science Monitor*, 20 November 1998, 7-8.
117. G.N. Timofeev, *Tainy sibirskikh shamanov: iz istorii shamanizma Iugorskogo kraia* (Surgut: Iugra, 1996), 59. For the review of this work, see the present volume.
 118. Holger Kalweit, *Shamany, tselitely, znakhary* (Moscow: Sovershenstvo, 1998); Kenneth Meadows, *Shamanskii opyt: prakticheskoe rukovodstvo po sovremennomu shamanizmu* (Moscow: Grand, 1999); *Chernii Los': otkroveniia Chernogo Losia*, trans. Aleksandr Vashchenko and Andrei A. Znamenski (Moscow: Sfera, 1997); M. Eliade, *Shamanizm: arkhaischeskie tekhniki ekstaza* (Kiev: Sofia, 2000).
 119. Olard Dikson, *Shamanskii uchenia klana Vorona: istoriia, teoriia i praktika korennikh shamanskikh traditsii* (Moskva: Refl-buk, 2000); idem and Ivan Iadne, *Shamanskii praktiki v klanakh Vorona i Malogo lebedia* (Moskva: Refl-buk, 2001); Yuri Zakharov, *Sistema shamana-tselitelia* (Moskva: Iauza, 1998), 8.
 120. Sotilian Sekoriiskii [Konstantin Rudnev], *Put' duraka: ezotericheskii triller* (St. Petersburg: Dean, 2000).
 121. Olga Kharitidi, *Entering the Circle: the Secrets of Ancient Siberian Wisdom Discovered by a Russian Psychiatrist* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1996).
 122. Sarangerel [Julie A. Stewart], *Chosen by the Spirits: Following Your Shamanic Calling* (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 2001).
 123. Irina S Urbanaeva, "Shamanizm Mongol'skogo mira kak vyrazhenie tengrianskoi ezotericheskoi traditsii Tsentral'noi Azii," in *Tsentral'no-aziatskii shamanizm: filosofskie, istoricheskie, religioznye aspekty, materialy mezhdunarodnogo nauchnogo simpoziuma*, ed. I.S. Urbanaeva (Ulan-Ude: Buriatskii institut obshchestvennykh nauk, 1996), 48-64; for the review of this work, see the present volume; V.V. Maikov, "Shamanskaia psikhoterapiia: vzgliad transpersonal'nogo psikhologa," in *Proceedings of the International Congress Shamanism and Other Indigenous Spiritual Beliefs and Practices*, ed V.I. Kharitonova and D.A. Funk (Moskva: institut etnologii i antropologii, 2001), 81-92;
 124. See, for example, such works as M.I. Gomboeva, "Etnopsikhologicheskaiia identifikatsiia v shamanistskoi praktike aginskikh Buriat," *Gumanitarnii vektor* (Chita) 2 (1998): 55-64; for the review of this work, see the present volume; A.M. Kuznetsov, "Shamanizm kak antropologicheskoe iavlenie," *Lichnost', kul'tura, obshchestvo* 2, no. 4 (2000): 34-49; E.A. Faidysh, "Vselennaia shamana: vospriatie mira v 'shamanskom' sostoianii soznania," in *Izbranniki dukhov: traditsionnoe shamanstvo i neoshamanizm*, ed. V.I. Kharitonova (Moskva: institut antropologii i etnologii, 1999), 217-250.
 125. Andrei M. Sagalae, "Naturfilosofskie nachala Sibirskogo shamanizma (k postanovke voprosa)," in *Metodologicheskie i istoriograficheskie voprosy istoricheskoi nauki* (Tomsk) 25 (1999): 118-128. For the review of this work, see the present volume.
 126. Dmitrii A. Funk, "Zametki o shamanistskom panteone Teleutov: bozhestvo Töö-kaan," in *Problemy etnicheskoi istorii i kul'tury Tiurko-mongol'skikh narodov Iuzhnoi Sibiri*, ed. D.A. Funk (Moskva: institut etnologii i antropologii, 1996), 155; idem: *Teleutskoe shamanstvo: traditsionnie etnograficheskie interpretatsii i novie issledovatel'skie vozmozhnosti* (Moskva: institut etnologii i antropologii, 1997), 33, 100-101.
 127. Jane Monning Atkinson, "Shamanisms Today," *Annual Reviews of Anthropology* 21 (1992): 307-330; Caroline Humphrey and Urgunge Onon, *Shamans and Elders* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
 128. Shelley Anne Osterreich, *Native North American Shamanism: an Annotated Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998).

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129. Hutton, *Shamans*, viii-ix.
130. A notable exception is a Hungarian scholar Vilmos Dioszegi, who somehow was able to conduct field research in southwestern Siberia in the 1950s and 1960s, and, on top of this, to serve as an inspiration for his Russian and indigenous colleagues. Mihaly Hoppal, "Tracing Shamans in Tuva: A History of Studies," in Mongush Kenin-Lopsan, *Shamanic Songs and Myths of Tuva*, ed. Mihaly Hoppal (Budapest and Los Angeles: Akademiai Kiado and International Society for Trans-Oceanic Research, 1997), 128. For Dioszegi's experiences in Siberia, see: Vilmos Dioszegi, *Tracing Shamans in Siberia: The Story of an Ethno-graphical Research Expedition* (Oosterhout: Anthropological Publications, 1968) and *Shamanism: Selected Writings of Vilmos Dioszegi*, ed. Mihaly Hoppal (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1998).
131. A.A. Popov, *Materialy dlia bibliografii shamanstva u severo-aziatskikh narodov* (Leningrad: Institut narodov Severa, 1931); idem: *Materialien zur Bibliographie der russischen Literatur über das Schamanentum der Völker Nordasiens* (Berlin: Reinhold Schletzer Verlag, 1990). There is also a comprehensive bibliography on Buryat shamanism. T.M. Mikhailov and P.P. Khoroshikh, *Buriatskii shamanizm: ukazatel' literatury, 1774-1971 gg.* (Ulan-Ude: Buriatskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1973).
132. Laurence Delaby, *Chamanes toungouses* (Nanterre: Service de publication, Laboratoire d'ethnologie et de sociologie comparative Universite de Paris X, 1977), 159-235. I want to use the opportunity to thank Professor Roberte Hamayon who drew my attention to this important bibliography that is literally "buried" as an attachment to this book.
133. Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer, ed., *Shamanism: Soviet Studies of Traditional Religion in Siberia and Central Asia*, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1990); idem: *Shamanic Worlds: Rituals and Lore of Siberia and Central Asia* (Armonk, NY, and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1997).
134. Vilmos Dioszegi and Mihaly Hoppal, eds., *Shamanism in Siberia* (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1978).
135. Flaherty, *Shamanism and the Eighteenth Century*; Narby and Huxley, *Shamans Through Time*; Hutton, *Shamans*. In Russian scholarship, V.A. Boiko examined the evolution of perceptions of the Khanty shamanism in nineteenth-century Russian travel accounts and ethnographies. Boiko, "Khantyiskoe shamanstvo v russkoi etnograficheskoi literature XIX v."

Chapter 1

Recording Shamanism in Old Russia

Agapitov, N.N. and M.N. Khangalov. “Materialy dlia izucheniia shamanstva v Sibiri: shamanstvo u Buryat Irkutskoi gubernii [Materials for the Study of Shamanism in Siberia: Buryat Shamanism in Irkutsk Guberniia].” *Izvestiia Vostochno-sibirskago otdela Russkago geograficheskago obshchestva* 14, no. 1-2 (1883): 1-6.

This was one of the first comprehensive works on Buryat shamanism. The summarized German translation of this paper introduced it to the Western scholarly audience (Stieda, L. “Das Schamanenthum unter den Burjaten,” *Globus* 52, no. 16 (1887): 250-253). Agapitov, a native Buryat, was one of the heads of the Eastern Siberian branch of the Russian Imperial Geographical Society. In 1880, his fellow tribesman named Khangalov, who at that time worked as a teacher, sent to Agapitov a “thick manuscript” that described initiations and funerals of Buryat shamans. Agapitov became interested in this work and joined Khangalov in a special field study of Buryat shamanism in 1881. The paper deals with various aspects of the Buryat religion: a hierarchy of their deities, rites and sacrifices, sacred images and concepts of the soul and the afterlife. A special section deals with shamanic paraphernalia, initiations, and the funerals of shamans.

Among the Buryat, shamans usually inherited their powers from their shamans-ancestors. Yet, theoretically, anybody could become a shaman. To become shamans, “regular” natives who did not have any shamans among their ancestors needed to be stricken by a lightning bolt. A person killed in this manner was considered chosen by deities. As such, this individual was recognized as a shaman, so to speak, posthumously. A descendant of the person “killed by thunder” acquired a shamanic lineage and could become a shaman. Such shamans who originated from ancestors killed by a lightning were called *nerjer-utkhatai* (44-45). Shamans were divided into two groups: “white” and “black” shamans. “White” ones worked only with benign deities and spirits. “Black” shamans interacted with hostile spirits who harmed people and sent illness and death. Therefore, “black” shamans could use the power of

their “friends,” hostile spirits, to kill people or inflict illness on people (46).

Agapitov and Khangalov stress that the contemporary costume of a Buryat shaman does not differ from ordinary Buryat clothing, which they view as a sign of the decline of shamanism. However, at shamans’ graves, both authors frequently found pieces of shamanic clothing and decorations that had remained from old times. In the past, a mandatory part of the shamanic costume had been a robe called *orgoi*, which later was used only to cover the body of a deceased shaman. In form, the *orgoi* resembled a regular robe. It was manufactured from silk or cotton material of white color for “white” shamans and of blue color for “black” shamans. What made the *orgoi* different from everyday wear were their decorations: metallic pendants in the form of discs, human beings, animals, or birds. Shamans also wore caps made of a lynx fur with tassels on the top. An experienced shaman, who had been through five initiations, received an iron cap in the form of a crown that was decorated by two iron antlers. It is notable that the paper hardly mentions shaman drums (*khese*), which were already out of use by the early 1880s. In his trips over the Irkutsk province, Agapitov was able to locate only one shaman with a drum. The Buryat of the Kuda area even changed the meaning of the word *khese*, which now described a ritual bell that was “more convenient” and that “squeezed the drum out of use” (42). In their descriptions of shamanic paraphernalia, Agapitov and Khangalov are sometimes vague about the periods when specific items were used. Although Agapitov notes that all collected materials were verified with experienced shamans and elders, it is not always clear if the authors describe paraphernalia that was already out of use or the items that were still in use in the 1880s. For Agapitov and Khangalov, one of the major sources on Buryat shamanism sources was the items they took from shamanic graves.

On the eve of a first initiation, shamans usually received two “horse staves.” It appears that staves were used by shamans in the 1880s. A staff was decorated with a horse head carved on its top and a horse hoof carved on its bottom. A few small bells were attached to this stick as well as braids of different colors, furs of small animals, and small stirrups, which made the staff resemble a horse. Like the drum, the staff symbolized a horse, which a shaman used to journey to the underworld, middle world, and upper world. The staves were made from fresh birch wood. While cutting wood for staves, the Buryat tried not to damage the trunk of the birch tree. If the birch tree that provided wood for the staff

withered and died, it was considered a bad sign for a would-be shaman. For clairvoyance purposes and for summoning spirits, Buryat shamans used a musical instrument called *khur*. The *khur* was manufactured from a piece of steel of a bent rectangular form. Shamans kept all their shamanic items in special wooden boxes called *shire* (42-43). It appears that when Agapitov and Khangalov were doing their fieldwork, the *khur*, the fur shamanic caps, and wooden horse staves were “live” paraphernalia widely used in shamanic practices.

Natives who prepared themselves for the shamanic vocation were to go through an initiation. It was believed that an initiation would enlighten the minds of shamans and open them to the secrets of spirits and deities. Before the first initiation, shamans were to perform a purification by water. An experienced shaman (“father shaman”), who was selected for this rite, and his nine assistants (“sons of the shaman”) brought and consecrated spring water by throwing juniper, thyme grass (*chebrets*, *thymus serpillum*), and silver fir bark into it. They also cut small pieces of hooves, horns, and fur from the ears of a goat designated for a sacrifice and threw them into the same water. Then the goat was slaughtered with a knife plunged into its heart. The “father-shaman” added a little of the goat’s blood to the pot with the same water. One of the assistants of the “father-shaman” soaked piles of birch sprouts in the consecrated water and flogged the naked back of the would-be shaman with these wet sprouts. The purification by water was not used only for initiation purposes. Shamans tried to perform this ceremony each year for cleansing purposes. If shamans accidentally touched “impure” items, they similarly tried to clean themselves with the consecrated water (47).

Some time after the purification by water, a would-be shaman went through the ceremony of the first initiation, which made a novice a full-fledged shaman. There were people among the Buryat who occasionally shamanized “on the side” but never dared to go through this ceremony, which required from an initiated individual a full commitment to the shamanic profession. Those who passed the first initiation later could choose to go through nine more initiations. Yet in real life, this rarely happened. Each initiation ceremony was a very elaborate and expensive procedure, which required not only the initiated individuals but also their communities to raise money to buy alcohol, sacrificial animals, and other necessary items. For this reason, in the 1880s, when Agapitov and Khangalov conducted their research, Buryat shamans restricted themselves to one, two or, in rare cases, three initiations (47). Each initiation was marked by acquisition of specific shamanic paraphernalia.

During the first initiation, shamans received the horse staff, *khur*, and drum. The *orgoi*, the iron staff, the crown, and additional drums were received during subsequent initiations. Shamans who were able to pass through all nine initiations had complete sets of shamanic items, including nine drums (52). A characteristic feature of the first initiation was the use of a few dozen birch trees and one pine tree, which were freshly cut or pulled out with their roots intact. The trees were taken from the forest located near a communal cemetery. The whole procedure of procuring the trees was accompanied by sacrifices. One of the birch trees, which was dug out along with its roots, was brought into a yurt and placed inside the dwelling with the top of the tree coming out of the smoke hole. The tree symbolically opened for the would-be shaman an access to the celestial deities. This birch tree usually was kept in the yurt after the initiation ceremony was over. Thus, the dwelling of a shaman was easy to recognize by such birch trees coming out of smoke holes. The rest of the trees were positioned in front of the yurt. During an initiation ceremony, each tree had a name and a specific function. People used trees either to hang shamanic accessories and decorations or to tie sacrificial animals. One of the birch trees was used by the would-be shaman, who climbed it and shamanized on the top, summoning deities and deceased shamans-ancestors (49-51).

The ceremony of a shaman's funeral was solemn and also rather elaborate. After shamans died, their bodies were washed with water consecrated by juniper and thyme grass (*chebrets*, *thymus serpillum*), and dressed in specially prepared funeral *orgoi*. Yet Khangalov and Agapitov stress that such use of the *orgoi* was practiced only by the Buryat of the Kuda area. People also selected nine young Buryat to act as "shaman's sons." The job of the "sons" was to glorify the deceased shaman by singing ritual chants during the funeral. Shamans' funerals usually attracted many people, including their "spiritual children" (*nazhin*), or in other words, all those whom they had tried to protect from hostile spirits and for whom deceased shamans had performed sacrificial ceremonies. "Spiritual children" usually delivered all items necessary for a funeral ceremony, such as a sacrificial animal, and also raised money. Horses that were used to transport bodies of the deceased were usually decorated and covered with large pieces of blue silk, if the deceased had been a "black" shaman, or with white calico, if the deceased had been a "white" shaman. Such covers were also called *orgoi*. The deceased were placed on these decorated horses and were held from behind. The delivery of the body to its burial place usually turned into a large procession (53). At the

burial place, the body was burned in a special shamanic grove on a pyre made from freshly-cut pine logs. After the body was burned, people killed and burned the horse that had carried the shaman and hung the drum of the deceased and other sacred items on nearby trees. Horse staves, the shamanic cap, and the *khur* were put into a small wooden box, which was placed high up in one of these trees. Then relatives collected the bones remaining from the burned body and stored them in a specially carved hole in the trunk of a pine tree. The hole was covered with a wooden lid and nailed tightly. Those who were not knowledgeable of Buryat shamanic rituals usually could not distinguish such a burial tree from other trees. The trees selected for shamans' ashes were to remain untouchable. They were considered shamans' residencies and were called "shamanic pines." The Buryat believed that any individuals who would dare to cut such a pine would immediately die, along with their entire families. The "shamanic groves" where shamans were burned and buried were similarly considered untouchable places, where people were forbidden to cut trees. Ideally, each shaman was expected to be buried in a separate grove.

Buried shamans themselves became spirits worshipped by people along with other deities. It was believed that with the smoke of the pyre, the soul of a shaman rose to the sky, where it enjoyed a pleasant life, which resembled people's lives in all respects. The shamans' souls who resided in the heavenly sphere fed on sacrifices their relatives and admirers brought them from time to time. They also rode the horses that people sacrificed during their funerals and wore the clothing that they had on during the funeral. As residents of this "heaven," deceased shamans took care of the living relatives who remained "down below" by protecting them from hostile spirits. Yet, to secure the benevolence of the ancestral spirits, clan members were expected to deliver regular sacrifices (55).

Anfilov, V. "Shaman-khristianin (iz poezdki v Bol'shezemel'skuiu tundru) [Christian Shaman: Notes From the Trip to the 'Big Land Tundra']." *Priroda i liudy* 39 (1902): 631-633.

This essay is a lively story about Anfilov's meeting with a remarkable Samoyed (Nentsy) shaman. Anfilov provides short background for his story. On a business trip visiting the town of Arkhangelsk, Anfilov and his friend, named as Viktor Ivanovich V., became involved in a

conversation with a local Russian about life ways of native populations. During the conversation, to their surprise, they learned that although the Samoyed were officially Christians, they still remained shamanists. As an example, the new Russian acquaintance gave them the name of a native friend, Nigalai (from distorted Nikolai). Although baptized, Nigalai was a practicing shaman who inherited sacred powers from his ancestors. Curious about the Christian shaman, Anfilov and his friend decided to pay a visit to Nigalai.

Anfilov describes in detail the meeting with the shaman and particularly his costume. The costume was a long robe made of white suede, which was decorated with red, blue and yellow broadcloth on the edges. Across the chest and the back, circling the entire upper part of his body, there was a wide suede stripe with attached fringes. The fringes included thin long cords hanging lower than the hem of the robe touching the ground. The chest and back of the costume were decorated with "metal images of most peculiar shapes. The images depicted birds, snakes, various animals, curved stars; there were some discs with holes, copper and tin pipes, crudely made nails, hooks mixed with thin stripes of red and blue broadcloth." In one hand the shaman held a wide drum with blue and red designs crudely painted on the skin of its cover. The entire drum frame was decorated with iron bells, metal plates, thin wires, small wooden sticks, and pieces of fabric of various colors. In his other hand, the shaman kept a drumstick, which resembled "a small wooden shovel" (631).

Anfilov, who personally witnessed a séance performed by Nigalai, describes how the shaman conversed with his invisible spiritual interlocutors. The shaman constantly "lent his attentive ear to something." Then, "having nodded his head a few times, Nigalai quietly moved his lips, and then again was all attention. Again nodding his head gladly, he loudly said some phrase, which looked as if he responded to somebody. Having made a low bow, Nigalai stepped in a slinky manner, and looking at one spot, he anxiously started speaking and moving his drumstick. Having interrupted his speech, the shaman again lent his ear, nodded and moved his head, saying short phrases as if talking to some invisible person. As the 'conversation' continued, the shaman was getting more and more excited and his speech resembled an argument. Nigalai tried to prove something, argued, and stretched out his hands as if trying to detain his interlocutor, following him and trying to shout something. The shaman kept on raising his voice to the very extreme. Finally, he fell silent and lifted his hands in dismay. Heavily breathing, he again lent his

ear to something. It seemed that, being unable to hear anything, he began beating his drum sharply and impatiently, occasionally interrupting the beating and listening to something. It looked like his invisible interlocutor left the chum completely.” The failure of the shaman to attract the attention of his spiritual interlocutor made Nigalai “totally crazy.” “He ran around from one side to other, beating his drum with a wild anger and shouting something that we could not comprehend.” Finally, he “suddenly flung his drum to the ground, dropped by the hearth, and started to howl in a inhuman and piercing voice. In fear we jumped and ran to him. The shaman writhed in convulsions, feverishly tearing away from his chest metal trinkets and cutting his hands with them” (632).

Thinking that Nigalai experienced epileptic fits, the Russian observers tried to help the shaman, but the native audience had to evict them literally by force, warning that “now Nigalai is going to cut everything with his knife!” After they dragged Anfilov and his friend out of the dwelling, the Samoyeds themselves scattered away in panic, hiding from the “crazy shaman.” When the two friends were at a safe distance from the chum, they learned from a native who happened to be around that Nigalai indeed ran outside with a knife and cut the throat of a reindeer, then he cut to death a nearby dog that he ran across and tried to stab one of the natives. As it turned out, it was not the first time when the shaman “went mad.” The Samoyed who escaped the knife of the shaman later told them, “Last year the same thing happened. If he cannot learn anything [from spirits] during his flight, Nigalai goes mad. But if he learns something, he is all right.” Both friends surmised that when spirits did not unveil anything to the shaman, Nigalai lost control of himself and experienced a fit.

What surprised Anfilov most was that after such “wild fits,” Nigalai tried to repent passionately in a Christian manner. From the same native, the one who had avoided being stabbed, Anfilov and his friend learned that after his “fits,” the shaman “prays and cries day and night in Russian language, making the sign of a cross and calling the Mikola (Nicholas) the Wonderworker. Next day the shaman again prays, and then bows to everybody and leaves. He goes far away, absolutely alone. Last year he left with four reindeer. In two weeks he came back on foot: no reindeer, no sled, all skinny himself.” To their surprise, the native informed the friends that despite all his “crazy fits,” Nigalai is an “all right man”: “He is all to give away, go ahead and take, and doesn’t drink vodka, and talks good about Mikola the Wonderworker” (633).

Anfilov notes with regret that he was “unable to get acquainted closely with this Christian shaman, a wonder of the distant tundra.” Yet from what he and his friend saw and heard they concluded that Nigalai is a typical person practicing double-affiliation (*dvoeverie*): “Remaining a shaman, he passionately maintains the rites of paganism, igniting the flame of this faith in his supporters. He is definitely not a charlatan and ‘shamanizes’ sincerely. Having plunged himself in a ‘shamanic trance,’ he genuinely loses his mind. By giving himself up to mysterious spirits, he loses contact with all earthly things. He drives himself to the extreme of madness and cuts with his knife whatever he sees. Yet at the same time he is a good Christian, humble and honest. He gives away to his neighbors whatever he has, venerates St. Nicholas, telling surrounding natives about the life of this saint, and therefore propagates good moral life. He immerses himself into Christian piety, which captivates his soul. He is aware of his wild and cruel actions, cries bitterly, and makes the sign of a cross, trying to repent his sins” (633).

Anokhin, Andrei V. “Shamanizm sibirskikh tiurkskikh plemen [Shamanism of Siberian Turkic Tribes (1910)].” *Anokhin Papers, Archive of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography [Künstkamera], St. Petersburg, fond 11, register 1, file 144. 1-16back.*

In this unpublished manuscript, ethnomusicologist Anokhin (1869-1931) deals with shamanism among the Altaian and Tuva people, who speak similar Turkic dialects. First, Anokhin addresses the origin of shamanism. Surrounded by unpredictable and severe nature, in ancient times, human beings had noted two sources of nature: a good source and a hostile source. “Helpless” people, who were petrified by the powers of nature, animated these forces. The Altaians labeled the good sources of power as *Ülgen*, while the hostile ones became known as *Erlık*. Thus, the Altaians developed a dualistic worldview (1back). *Ülgen* is viewed as the Supreme Being, who created the entire universe, including *Erlık*, the master of the underworld. Despite his secondary status, *Erlık* occupies the most important place in Altaian shamanism. “The entire existence of shamanism is associated with the name of *Erlık*” (2). This is natural, writes Anokhin, because in real life, people usually encounter evil more often than good. *Erlık* symbolizes all hostile forces, which should be appeased. Folk fantasy pictures *Erlık* in “bright colors” with a “poetical adoration.” For the Altaians, *Erlık* plays the same role as Satan for the

Hebrews, Mefisto for the Germans, Lucifer for the French, and the Demon for peoples of Caucasus. Erlik is a family man who has seven sons and three daughters. Shamans usually use Erlik's sons as "middlemen" when they try to establish a dialogue with him during a séance (2back). In addition to Ülgen and Erlik, shamanism recognizes less significant spirits: the masters of mountains, of water, fire, and other localities and elements. These spirits are endowed with the ability to "steal" material well-being from people, destroy their hunting luck, and to inflict petty intrigues on people like making them quarrel or lose their directions or stock. For example, a spirit called Aina inflicts epidemic diseases such as typhus, scarlet fever, measles, anthrax, and syphilis. A death from one of these epidemics is usually explained by the "greediness" of Aina. In such cases the Altaians would say, "Aina ate." *Ababys* is the spirit without any specified function. The Altaians believe that in ancient times *Ababys* was equal in his power to Erlik, but then he lost his power because of a quarrel with Erlik (3). Finally, there is so-called *körmös*, which is the "regular Satan," whose name the Altaians frequently use when they curse like Russians (3back).

The Altaians are terrified of the power of spirits. In all surrounding nature they see manifestations of this power: "Through centuries the fear of the awesome dark power of spirits, the fear for personal well-being and the well-being of relatives strained the nerves of savages and put their bodies and minds into the state of disorder. I believe that this feeling of fear was primarily responsible for the spread among the Turkic tribes a nervous disease called *belinchi*. People who are sick with this ailment are called *belinchi-kizhi*, which could be rendered as the 'possessed'"(4). *Belinchi-kizhi* usually experience fits and are prone to hypnosis. They frequently run away to woods and wander there for days. *Belinchi-kizhi* are easily to manipulate, and they instinctively imitate the behavior and voices of other people. Anokhin thinks that *belinchi* is a special form of epilepsy. This and similar "ailments" are considered spirit calls from an internal force called *tös* that signals to a chosen individual to accept the shamanic vocation. People believe that the *tös* is the spirit of an ancestor that "presses" an individual to shamanize (4back). When Russian missionaries demand that shamans quit their "pagan" vocation, spiritual practitioners usually say that it is simply impossible because "they would be crushed by the *tös* power and would die" (5). An old shamaness named Uituk, from the Chibit village, complained to Anokhin that after Altaian Burkhanists (native religious reformers) burned her drum and shamanic costume, she could not shamanize. As a result, "satans"

(*körmös*) constantly “pressed” her and forced her to continue her vocation. She added that when she was alone in her yurt, these spirits attacked her and “chewed” her legs and hands. She stressed, “Oh, such a poor woman I am, if I do not continue my work, I will die.” A few shamans, who suffered similar abuses, even appealed to Russian officials asking them to protect spiritual practitioners against these reformers (6back).

“The professional goal of the shaman is to act as a middleman between human beings and spirits. He cures spiritual and bodily ailments. The curing consists of performing bloody sacrifices and applying to a sick person the power of prayers, which are addressed to specific spirits” (7-7back). During their séances shamans usually overcome numerous obstacles traveling to the land of spirits and to the country of Erlik. On reaching the country of Erlik, they begin to talk to him. The goals of the “journey” vary. Shamans might ask to cure a sick individual, to ward off an imminent misfortune, or to predict a future event. If spirits decide to satisfy a request (7back), they usually ask for gifts in return, which means animal sacrifices. Upon return from their journeys, or better to say, upon completing their séances, shamans inform their audiences about the “will of spirits.” Among the Altaians, the shamanic vocation is usually transmitted in the same kinship group. The most important artifacts of inherited profession are metal buttons and small pieces of iron produced by a lightning strike in the ground (8). These artifacts are usually called *tenerenin kylyzhi*, which means the “sky sword,” and considered to be heavenly items. The “sky sword” is transferred within the same lineage group to a person who is “called” to become a shaman. Shamans are convinced that the “sky sword” allows them to light their paths and protects them from attacks of hostile spirits during their journeys to the country of Erlik. The earliest known age when Altaians shamans begin their séances is twelve years (8back).

From a poetic point of view, shamanic prayers are filled with an “uninterrupted lyricism.” They are centered on requests forwarded to spirits or praises of the virtues and powers of specific spirits. “A characteristic feature of all these prayers is an absolute lack of any dogmas and established pillars.” Although different in their meaning, the form of shamanic prayers is reminiscent of ancient Hebrew psalms. Comparing shamanic prayers with psalms, Anokhin notes many similarities: “One can see here the same innocent sincerity that emanates from a simple but deeply sensitive soul. One can see the same symbolism and the same magnificent pictures of surrounding nature. In these prayers

one also feels warmth and power. No doubt, such prayers, which produce a strong effect on impressionable savages, eventually reach their goals” (9back). As an example, Anokhin quotes a prayer forwarded by a shaman to Erlik: “My father, Erlik! Why do you harm your people so much, why do you wipe people out! Father Erlik, you who have a carbon-black face and who is grim like coal, I will never forget to honor you with my sacrifices through centuries. May you be forever the honored master for every clan and for all generations” (10). All shamans and shamanesses have their own individual chants and prayers. “Therefore, all prayers recited during a *séance* represent improvisations. Shamans never specially learn them from anybody and do not teach them to others. Rehearsals practiced by new shamans are usually restricted to rituals. As for prayers, shamans always compose them on their own.” Eventually, through frequent repetitions during *séances* shamans themselves and people who surround them learn these prayers (10back). Anokhin adds, “One can imagine how strong the creative power of shamans must be if their *séances* frequently last for seven nights in a row” (10back-11).

As an ethnomusicologist, Anokhin discusses the melody of shamanic chants and prayers. Since shamanism is the most archaic manifestation of religious life, the music of shamanism consequently represents the most ancient form of musical art. Shamanic music and prayers are closely connected. It is hard to separate one from another because shamans do not compose music separately from the words of their prayers, and the words are not viewed separately from music. Anokhin believes that interpenetration of music and words is not only a characteristic feature of shamanism, but also natural for all “primitive folklore,” including Russian folk vocal music. (11back). He even calls shamanic music a “verbal music” (12). At the same time, being simple and “primitive,” shamanic music does not express all nuances of feelings and emotions that spiritual practitioners go through during their *séances*. A shamanic melody has its own specific features. Thus, almost always it starts with an exclamation “Hey,” “Oi,” or “U.” It is interesting that shamans sing high and long notes on these interjections. If one wants to comprehend visually the fluctuations of a shamanic melody with high and low notes, its chart will resemble a line that goes from a head to a spinal cord, the back and a tail of an animal. Textually, a shamanic melody consists of two types of phrases: short utterances and long musical phrases (12back). All in all, “it is an archaic music. Shamanic melodies are products of elementary musical culture and rudimentary feelings. Essentially, all shamanic melodies are constructed in a childish elementary manner.”

Shamanic melodies never include all intervals found in modern European and Russian music.

Anokhin argues that the lack of rhythm in the culture of Turkic tribes and Asian people in general affected shamanic rituals. According to Anokhin, the rhythms of the shaman drum are “rather inconsistent” and remind of rhythms of horses’ trotting (15). The typical shamanic melody is built on the basis of an “ancient Chinese scale,” which has only five basic tones and does not contain any half-tones. “An Asian ear is not used to half-tone intervals.” To this “Asian ear,” European music with its half-tones is hard to comprehend. It sounds alien and unpleasant. Speculating about the origin of this “Asian stance,” Anokhin thinks that it might be “the sense of limitless sadness, which they [Asian people] have had to live with since ancient times that developed the specific musical forms. Their musical scale is serious and sorrowful. In this scale one will not find any other feeling except melancholy” (15back). Arguing that Asian people are fully aware of this “characteristic feature of their musical scale,” Anokhin quotes the words of an unnamed Chinese sage, who supposedly said, “Your European music tends only ears but does not touch hearts, whereas our music through ears penetrates to the very heart of an individual.” Indeed, surmises Anokhin, “although devoid of a variety, a shamanic melody does get deep into human hearts and irresistibly affects nerves of listeners.” In conclusion, Anokhin stresses that it is not only a shamanic melody that casts melancholy over people, but also shamanism as a whole. “The entire environment, foundation and elements of shamanism are infested with a deep pessimism, the feeling of supplication, and the insignificance of people before the awesome power of Erlik and his spirits” (16).

Anokhin, Andrei V. *Materialy po shamanstvu u Altaitsev* [*Materials on Altaian Shamanism*]. Gorno-Altaiisk: Ak Chechek, 1994. 32+vii+147 pages.

This is a reprint of a 1924 edition. In this book, ethnomusicologist Andrei Anokhin brings together materials of his field research among the Teleut and the Altaians from 1910 to 1912. Although the ethnography was approved for publication in 1914, it was released ten years later because of the turmoil caused by the First World War and two revolutions. The reprint edition of the book has an introduction written by Leonid Potapov, a renowned Marxist student of Siberian shamanism. In his introduction,

Potapov argues that Altaian shamanism represented an indigenous religion (3). The reprint edition also has a second introduction entitled “The Chosen by Spirits” by Todosh Brontoi, a native Altaian writer, who rereads the Anokhin ethnography from the viewpoint of the resurgent Altaian nationalism. Brontoi considers Anokhin’s death from pneumonia in 1931 to be a symbolic landmark, the sign of a time “when the natural current of the Altaian spiritual life” was discontinued by the Bolshevik regime (9). What came after 1931 was a “spiritual vacuum, “spiritual degeneration,” and the “moral degradation of society” (10). According to Brontoi, though a Russian, Anokhin acted as the keeper of the Altaian heritage. In his works, the ethnomusicologist reflected the “spirit of the Altai”: “Anokhin is one of those rare students of the Altaian spiritual culture who really was able to catch its sacred innermost essence” (31). Due to his “extraordinary interconnection with the life-ways and nature of the Altai, and his special relationship with Altaian shamanists,” this Russian ethnographer acted “not simply as an anthropology scholar, but as a genuine intellectual shaman, who was able to grasp the very essence of the phenomenon called shamanism.” Brontoi stresses that the Altaians “have not yet discovered Anokhin for themselves” (12). In addition to the abovementioned introductions, the book has a third one written by S.E. Malov, a contemporary of Anokhin and the scholar who prepared the work for publication. Devoid of any ideological speculations, Malov places Anokhin’s research in the framework of contemporary studies of Siberian shamanism (i-vii).

The value of the Anokhin ethnography is its detailed record of Altaian shamanism before it was wiped out by the Bolshevik regime. In the first chapter, Anokhin discusses the spiritual pantheon of the Altaians. First, there is a category of “black” (hostile) spirits: Erlik, “the master of the underworld” and one of the major deities of the Altai, and his subjects. Second, Anokhin describes “clean” benign spirits headed by Ülgen, who is treated by some Altaians as the major deity, the creator of the world (1-17). Thus, spirits can be “clean” (*aru*) and “black” (*kara*) ones. Second, the Altaians also rank their spirits by origin: (1) *tös* spirits or spirits of ancestors and (2) *nama* spirits, which means “something created” or “later spirits.” Consequently, spirits can be “clean” *tös* spirits, “black” *tös* spirits, “clean later spirits” and “black later spirits.” The latter two categories of spirits are simply labeled as *körmös*. “In reality, the *körmös* represent the souls of shamans and shamanesses who died long ago.” Yet the Altaians sometimes use the word *körmös* to define “black” *tös* spirits.

Thus Erlik, who occupies the central place in Altaian shamanism, belongs to that “black” *tös* category.

For the Altaians, Erlik is associated with great misfortunes, such as epidemics of measles, typhus, and stock epizootics. It is believed that Erlik inflicts diseases on people and stock in order to extort sacrifices. If people do not respond with gifts, Erlik kills them. The Altaians believe that when people die, Erlik takes their souls to his underworld domain, where he “judges” them and turns them into his servants. Sometimes Erlik sends a soul back to the earth to harm people (1-2). Usually the petrified Altaians avoid mentioning Erlik by name and prefer to describe him as “something black” (*kara nama*). Despite their fear, the Altaians never miss a chance to deceive this hostile deity. For example, they try to sacrifice to Erlik sick or crippled stock. Sometimes natives place sacrificial animals near dog roses or sea-buckthorn bushes, which scares Erlik (2-3). In their chants, shamans usually call Erlik *kaira khan*. These chants also provide a vivid description of Erlik’s appearance. He is portrayed as an old man of an athletic build with black eyes and eyebrows and a forked beard that reaches his knees. His fang-like mustaches are so long that Erlik keeps them behind his shoulders. Erlik’s horns look like the roots of a tree, and his hair is curly. Erlik lives in a palace made of black dirt. According to another version of the same legend, Erlik lives in a palace made of black iron with a fence (3). The path leading to Erlik’s domain is filled with numerous obstacles. This is the path that shamans usually take during their séances. Shamans are the only ones who can reach Erlik’s home and converse with him (4). According to shamanic legends, Erlik has seven or (in another version) nine sons, who act as supervisors of the army of hostile spirits. The Altaians frequently compare the functions performed by Erlik’s sons with the role of Russian administrators. Therefore, natives sometimes call Erlik’s sons “police marshals” (*stanovoi pristav*). The Altaians believe that hostile spirits controlled by Erlik are scattered everywhere. At the same time, the hostile spirits do not represent a disciplined army. They frequently quarrel with each other and even organize war parties against each other. All hostile spirits are extremely greedy. They can devour an entire human being in a second. Because of their greedy nature, hostile spirits might be harmful not only for human beings but also for their master, Erlik. Thus, these beings might eat up a human soul without sharing it with the master of the underworld (6-7). In addition, Erlik has nine daughters who manifest excessive sexuality (“with vaginas as cracks in the grounds,” “with breasts like hills,” “with twisting bare butts and breasts”) and who



Khakass Shamaness from Krasnoyarsk Area. From Johann G. Georgi, *Opisanie vsiekh obitaiushchikh v Rossiiskom gosudarstvie narodov* (St. Petersburg: Izhdiveniem I. Grazunova pri Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk, 1799), vol. 3, pp. 154-155. Courtesy of the Rare Book & Special Collections, Library of Congress.

usually try to seduce shamans who journey to the domain of their father (9).

Unlike Erlik, Ülgen is a benign deity who resides beyond the sun higher than the stars. The path to Ülgen lies through seven or (in some versions) nine obstacles. While all shamans and shamanesses are allowed to visit and converse with Erlik, shamanesses are not permitted to perform séances addressed to Ülgen. Ülgen lives in a golden palace with golden gates. In his appearance, Ülgen looks like an ordinary human being. While addressing Ülgen, people and shamans call him “the white lightness,” “light khan,” “thunder carrier,” “lightning carrier,” and “the one who might burn” (9). Ülgen is viewed as the creator of the sun, moon, rainbows, and the rest of the world, including human beings. The séances addressed to Ülgen are not so frequent as the ones addressed to Erlik, simply because Ülgen is good anyway and does not need to be appeased. In addition, the séances addressed to Ülgen are usually more solemn. They are conducted at a certain time of summer or in spring and draw many people (11). According to shamanic legends, Ülgen has seven sons and nine daughters who are also benign and pure beings like their father.

In addition, the Altaian spiritual pantheon numbers a host of earthly spirits who are also called mountain spirits. These spirits are related neither to Erlik nor to Ülgen. Natives view them as the beings who are able to grant people material possessions, and, as such, they reside in the same earthly sphere (14-15). Individual Altaian clans have their own spirits and deities. When people from different clans marry each other, they bring together their spirits, which increases the spiritual power of a clan. According to simple logic, writes Anokhin, such practice should dramatically increase the number of spirits in each clan, but it actually never happens because the Altaians regulate the number of spirits in their pantheon by simply “deleting” those spirits who become irrelevant or do not provide any assistance (23-24). Benign spirits (*aru-körmös*) usually help a shaman to combat hostile *körmös*, the servants of Erlik. Each shamanic séance is essentially a reenactment of a struggle between *aru körmös*, who assist a shaman, and hostile spirits. During their séances, shamans summon *aru körmös* and hear what they have to say. Inquiring about what *aru körmös* say is so natural for the Altaians that those natives who did not understand Christian services usually asked Anokhin, “What do your spirits say when a priest prays?” (29). Assisted by *Aru körmös* shamans overcome all obstacles during their journeys. Yet the chief spirits crucial for all shamans are the spirits of their ancestors-shamans,

who form their “armor” (29). Although *aru körmös* are a lower type of spirits in comparison with Ülgen, Erlik, their sons, and the spirits of mountains, *aru körmös* are not servants of these higher spirits at all (30). One of the versions of the Altaian creation myth points to the origin of the shamanic vocation. Ülgen began creating human beings by putting a blue flower in a golden cup. Erlik, who was actually Ülgen’s brother, stole part of the flower and began creating his own people as well. Ülgen became angry and damned Erlik’s creatures by saying, “My white people will go to the sunrise, and the black people you made will go to the West.” After this, “black people” covered the “circle” (drum) with a skin and started to shamanize (18).

One of the most interesting and extensive parts of the book is chapter five, which describes shamans’ costumes and paraphernalia (33-65). The descriptions of elements of shamanic paraphernalia and its manufacturing are accompanied by numerous drawings. These descriptions are so detailed and comprehensive that this chapter serves as a “how-to” manual. Shamanic costumes, called *manjak*, are sewn not according to the personal wishes of shamans, but in fulfillment of instructions issued by ancestral *körmös* spirits, who visit shamans in their dreams. Although they have a similar basic design, all shamanic costumes differ greatly from one another (33). For well-to-do shamans, it usually takes from two to three months to manufacture their costumes. For poor shamans, the same procedure takes from one to three years. Women and girls from shamans’ families and neighboring camps perform the work of tailoring and sewing. The ones who make shamanic costumes are forbidden to exhibit any “indecent” behavior. When the costume is ready, a shaman holds a special séance without any sacrifices. The purpose of this séance is to present the costume for inspection by shaman’s ancestral spirit. During a séance, a patron spirit carefully examines the costume and then either approves it or recommends changes (35-37). Shamans use their costumes when they perform séances addressed to earthly spirits, Erlik and his sons, clan spirits and other *körmös*. Séances addressed to Ülgen and his sons are conducted without any costumes; shamans wear regular robes, to the backs of which they attach three white ribbons reaching the ground (38). Anokhin next describes parts of the costume: a back side of the costume, a belt, the lower part of the costume, side parts, loin parts, shoulder-straps, and a shamanic cap. The robe, a major part of the costume, is usually made of sheep or mountain goat skins (39-49). In a similar manner, Anokhin provides a meticulous description of Altaian shaman drums (49-65). Because shamans enter their profession

involuntary, following calls of their ancestors-shamans, they are not free to design their drums as they wish. Drums are manufactured according to the instructions issued by those ancestors. In their forms and decorations, drums of new shamans usually imitate the drawings on the drums of their ancestral spiritual patrons. Sometimes new drums are framed and designed according to instructions of the spirits of mountains. Such drums are treated as the most honored gifts, and shamans do not miss a chance to report to their audiences that a drum was received from a mountain spirit (49).

Chapter six includes a few texts of shamanic chants in Altaian with Russian translations (65-107). Anokhin recorded the texts from Polshtop, a thirty-two year-old shaman who lived on the right bank of the Katun' river, and Mampüi, whom Anokhin befriended, brought to Tomsk, and asked to reenact shamanic sessions for scholarly and ordinary audiences. It appears that Anokhin tried to record some chants in the middle of Mampüi's performances, which was hard to do, even for Anokhin, who was fluent in Altaian dialects. The ethnographer reproduces these texts with special reservations. Thus, he stresses that the published chants are only a "patchwork" of a shaman's utterances during a séance. He adds that the texts are unfinished, hardly understandable, and therefore cannot be considered complete. Unfortunately, the reader will not find a description of an Altaian shamanic session from the very beginning to the very end. The shamanic texts are not situated anywhere. They primarily represent invocations of specific spirits who were to help a shaman during a séance or sacrificial ceremonies.

Finally, chapter seven covers biographies and genealogies of a few Altaian shamans Anokhin met personally or heard about (108-148). Among these people, one finds individuals who enjoyed considerable power and prestige as well as those who refused to take the shamanic vocation and fought back the calls of their ancestral spirits. During his travels, Anokhin even met a seven year-old boy named Sapsyr, whose shamanizing was restricted to simple unintelligible screaming and beating a drum. He stresses that Sapsyr's community was raising the boy for the future shamanic vocation (121). Anokhin also indicates a specialization of these Altaian shamans. Some of the material in this chapter appears in the form of unedited field notes, for example: "Shaman Kadamai, twenty-five year old, clan Tonus. Have shamanized six years without a costume. Delivers sacrifices only to 'clean' *tös* spirits: Ülgen, his sons, spirits of the maintains and to his shaman ancestors" (108); or "Sapyr is a shaman with a *manjak*. Shamanizes to all *tös* spirits. During a séance strikes fire

from his drum by a drumstick. Shamanists assume it is the sky fire. Can spit out iron objects: pipes, pendants, sometimes sneezes out snakes from his nose. Sapyr is a very popular shaman. Performs public séances upon request. Sapyr is educated” (135). Anokhin notes that the shamanic profession brings hardly any profit. Shamanizing distracts spiritual practitioners from their daily and seasonal occupations, and shamans usually do not make good providers. Hence, people are not usually thrilled to have shamans in their families. Anokhin was a witness to an incident in which an angry husband disrupted a sacrificial ceremony performed by his shamaness wife and took her home back to her “female” chores (35).

Anuchin, V.I. “Ocherk shamanstva u eniseiskikh ostiakov [An Essay on Enisei Ostiak Shamanism].” *Sbornik Muzeia antropologii i etnografii* 2, no. 3 (1914): 1-89.

From 1905 to 1908, commissioned by the Russian Committee for the Study of Central and Eastern Asia, Anuchin lived and worked in the Turukhansk area to study ethnography, anthropology, and the language of the Enisei Ostiak (the Ket). Simultaneously, he had an assignment from the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Künstkamera) in St. Petersburg to collect native artifacts. In addition to shamanism, Anuchin covers many other aspects of the worldview of the Ostiak people. This book-length work represents a purely descriptive ethnography without any generalizations. It also contains numerous illustrations of shamanic paraphernalia. At first, Anuchin reviews religious views of the Ostiak. The natives believe that the creator of the universe, benevolent heavenly god *Es* (the sky), prefers not to interfere in earthly life and problems. As an embodiment of good forces, *Es* is opposed by the source of all “evil,” goddess Khosadam, who feeds on human souls and supervises numerous hostile spirits that harm people (3-5). A human being has seven souls. The major one is called *ulvei*. According to the Ostiak worldview, people become ill when their *ulvei* leave their bodies. Essentially, human beings themselves can never be sick with physical illnesses. It is their *ulvei* that become ill, which affects human bodies. If an *ulvei* twists a foot, a human being consequently feels the pain in his or her foot. If an *ulvei* drops into a cold place, a human being gets cold as well. If hostile spirits beat an *ulvei*, an individual immediately feels body aches. If an *ulvei* stays out of a human body for a long time, the human being faints. Therefore, when

Ostiak people become ill, they always approach shamans, whose job is to retrieve an *ulvei*, find out what happened to it, and to take necessary “measures,” for example, winning back an *ulvei* from a hostile spirit or releasing an *ulvei* if it is stuck somewhere. The Ostiak believe that people die simply because the “evil” goddess Khosadam catches and devours their *ulvei*. Yet eventually, an individual *ulvei* comes out from Khosadam’s body along with excrement and “moves” into another human host (10-11).

In the Ostiak spiritual pantheon, one can find not only deities but also deceased human heroes. These people who live in heavenly spheres became deathless for their heroic deeds. Great shamans also belong to the same category of humans-turned-deities. The most important among these great shamans is Doh. Doh and other great shamans of the past had performed miracles and even resurrected the dead. Now all of them reside in heavenly spheres. The Ostiak credit Doh, who is an object of numerous legends, with the creation of “customary law,” various “philosophical utterances,” and moral code. The most interesting legend is about Doh leaving the earth. Once Doh performed a séance and had to ascend into the sky. Yet he jumped up so abruptly that his *ulvei* dropped out from his body. Hostile spirits took advantage of this opportunity and seized his *ulvei* and delivered to Khosadam. The goddess immediately tried to devour Doh’s *ulvei* but broke her tooth. After this, she nailed the shamans’ *ulvei* to a tree to make sure that the soul would never return to the host. Since then, Doh could not remain on the earth. Neither could he die, because his soul was still alive. His only option was to retreat to the heavenly sphere. So Doh stood on his drum, which turned into a cloud, and ascended into the sky. People were upset about losing such a great shaman and started to cry. To ease their sorrow, Doh took his shamanic cloak and threw it to his granddaughter, saying, “Now she will be shamanizing for you” (7-8).

The second chapter of the Anuchin ethnography deals with shamans and their rituals. Anuchin stresses that during the years of his work among the Ostiak, he had an opportunity to meet all their shamans except one named Baska Sulam. By the time Anuchin wrote the text of his report (1909), the Ostiak had three powerful shamans with complete sets of shamanic paraphernalia and eleven minor shamans of various ranks. Of all these shamans, only one, a young spiritual practitioner, under various pretexts, refused to perform in the presence of Anuchin. In all other cases, the ethnographer did not encounter any problems collecting information on native shamanism. He witnessed shamanic séances twenty-two times

under various circumstances. Much of his information on shamanism among the Ostiak came from shamans Kopsal, Kутten, and Ojom, and from a shamaness named Kutnak. Of these persons, Kутten and Kutnak provided the most detailed explanations of shamanic costumes and other paraphernalia. Anuchin stresses, "Since all shamanic paraphernalia are inherited within a clan, it is very hard to buy shamanic items" (32). The costume Anuchin obtained for the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography was not the actual costume of a practicing shaman but a copy of it. Anuchin explains, "When a powerful shaman who has the complete paraphernalia set dies, he is usually buried somewhere in a desolate area. In such cases, relatives do not hang parts of his costume [as usual] over his grave, but place a specially-prepared copy of his costume. The latter is manufactured in seven days by an entire community that works together. A person who is expected to inherit the sacred power of the deceased, such as a son or a daughter, usually carries this copy of the costume to the grave" (33). The shamanic costume Anuchin describes in his book represents the abovementioned "grave" copy of a genuine shamanic costume. The copy was manufactured for the burial of shaman Kopsal who died in 1908. Incidentally, Anuchin saw the original costume many times. The ethnographer reports that by the time of the publication, the pieces of this original had been preserved by Kopsal's brother. Anuchin also stresses that the copy of the costume ("ritual-funeral costume") is expected to decay on the grave. Moreover, from time to time, relatives of a deceased shaman watch how quickly the copy decays. If the "costume" perishes quickly, it is a good sign which means that the one who is expected to inherit the sacred power of the deceased spiritual practitioner soon will become a shaman (33).

As among other Siberian natives, among the Ostiak, people experience a shamanic call unexpectedly. Some individuals live until their twentieth year and still do not realize they are destined to become shamans. In their dreams or just as they are awoken, the chosen ones usually see a deceased shaman who, silently like a ghost, walks by or directly orders, "Begin to shamanize!" Then all spirits which had been subjected to the power of this deceased shaman begin to visit and constantly pressure a candidate to accept the shamanic vocation. An exterior manifestation of this spiritual pressure is a sudden desire of an individual to sing and dance. If people resist the call of the spirits or simply are not aware of their assigned vocation, they fall ill and even die. The ones who accept the call are usually defined as *dadij*, which Anuchin renders as "blessed" or "possessed." Such people behave as if "they are

out of their minds.” They are visionaries; they feel “ghosts” or talk to themselves and behave in an odd way. These “possessed” frequently weep for no reason and sometimes laugh wildly or roll on the ground. This “possession” stage usually lasts from one to two years. “When they find their shamanic path,” writes Anuchin, the chosen people “master” their spirits, and eventually become sane again. Upon “advice” from their spirits, would-be shamans usually ask people to make them a drumstick, which places spiritual practitioners in the first category of *khynysenin* or “little shamans.” The first drumstick is always manufactured from half-rotten wood because a shaman does not use it for long. The chosen ones usually stay in the rank of “little shamans” no more than a year. Then, upon the receipt of a new drumstick, the headband, and the breastplate, “little ones” become *senin* (genuine) shamans. Those who reach the highest rank of great shamans (*kasenin*) usually have two drums in addition to full shamanic paraphernalia. It is natural that great shamans are few, and they are usually quite old (24-25).

During their séances, shamans mostly act as soothsayers. Shamans are expected to explain why people experience personal and communal misfortunes such as lack of children, hunting failures, and losses of various objects. The most crucial job is an attempt to locate good hunting grounds and wild game. In some cases, shamans’ entire careers are at a stake because people never forgive their spiritual practitioners any mistakes. Those shamans who fail damage their image. On the other hand, those who succeed in predicting good hunting receive an opportunity to upgrade their status, which is usually reflected in the acquisition of one or more items for their shamanic costumes (25-26). Anuchin also describes in detail a typical shamanic séance (27-31). In the beginning, shamans usually “stick” their faces into a drum and sing, summoning their spirit helpers. Shamans lovingly call these spirits by their names and warmly welcome them. Those spirits who arrive “accommodate” themselves inside drums on pendants and on thongs. Then shamans usually start their dance: jumping on both feet, they whirl around a fire, simultaneously revolving on their axes. In the meantime, the spirits raise shamans up under clouds. In their songs, shamans share with their audiences what they see from high above.

Shamans could also journey to the underworld, fly to all spheres, and fight hostile spirits. Anuchin stresses that natives never assume that it is actual shamans who perform spiritual journeys. They are convinced that it is shamans’ *ulvei* that travel to other worlds. Shamans play different parts, imitating the voices and movements of major characters of their

séances. The next part of a séance is a lengthy procedure of soothsaying for any person from the audience. Shamans usually throw their drumsticks in front of an interested person. If the drumstick drops with its “furry” side down, it is a good sign; if the “furry” side is up, it is a bad sign. Anuchin stresses, “In essence, the séance is a dramatic performance that involves numerous characters played by one person.” In the most dramatic moments of séances, such as chasing, struggling, or fishing, shamans usually “go crazy” in their dance and make huge leaps. Anuchin adds that he observed how in one such moment, a shamaness named Kutnak “went crazy” and jumped on burning coals where she danced for about half a minute. The ethnographer was surprised that he did not see any burns. Shamans’ assistants and people from the audience usually watch out to make sure that shamans do not fall. To be exact, adds Anuchin, it is not so much shamans themselves that they try to safeguard but their drums. If the cover of a drum is torn, shamans lose their power and soon might die, pressured by their own persistent spirits. If shamans lose consciousness during séances, people assume that their *ulvei* flew too far. An average séance lasts from two to three hours. Anuchin writes with surprise, “It is hard to image how, for example, a seventy-year old shaman dressed in a fifty-pound costume is capable of dancing for two hours.”

The greater part of the book deals with description of shamanic paraphernalia. Acquisition of specific parts of the costume is usually a gradual process. With each acquired sacred item, the shaman’s power and status increase. Gradually, shamans acquire the drumstick, the kerchief, the breast plate, the footwear, mittens, the drum with the new drumstick, the staff, the cloak along with a head “crown,” and, finally, the second drum. Each item is manufactured for shamans according to instructions received from their spirits. The first item all beginning shamans usually acquire is the drumstick, which is made of musty or rotten wood and which usually does not serve a shaman more than half a year. Incidentally, many shamans, who do not rise in their power and status, continue to shamanize with drumsticks all their lives. When first drumsticks fall apart, shamans ask people to make them new “genuine” drumsticks from good wood. If shamans do not ask people to make them new drumsticks, it sends a message to the community that such individuals refuse to become full-fledged shamans (33). The most important shamanic accessory is the drum. All drawings on the exterior side of a drum are called the “universe” (50). The interior side of the drum is called a “perch.” It represents a combination of iron rods and

things with attached figurines and “trinkets.” The spirits who are summoned by a shaman during a séance usually come and “sit” at this “perch.” The interior side of the drum usually says much about the owner of the drum. For example, the number of pendants point to the number of spirit helpers. The variety of images points to the variety of a shaman’s powers. Taken together, all images and pendants on the costume and the drum “on the one hand, provide a rather exact catalogue of what spiritual forces the shaman has mastered and, on the other hand, what spiritual forces protect him” (51).

When shamans die, their successors usually inherit all metal items from their drums. On average, in a lifetime, shamans usually change their drums from three to seven times. The acquisition of each new drum is accompanied by an increase in the number of pendants. At the same time, successors attach all metal parts of the old drum to the new drum. Even though successors inherit drums with numerous pendants, they are allowed to attach only a few iron “trinkets” and no ritual images. A second drum can already have all metallic pendants belonging to their predecessors as well as a few more ritual images. A third one usually has more ritual images. Shamans explain this gradual attachment of ritual decorations to the drum by the fact that powerful spirits usually do not hurry to serve the new owner of their images. First, the spirits want to “size up” new shamans, and if something upsets them, they might not come to them at all (51). The cloak and the “crown” are the two other highest accessories of the shamanic profession. Shamans usually acquire these items only after accumulating many years of experience. Ostiak shamanic cloaks are tailored in the form of the bird. This is natural because the Ostiak believe that shamans had learned about the secrets of their profession from the eagle. Moreover, cloaks have numerous images of birds. In addition, drawings and pendants depicted on and attached to a cloak might portray a “shaman-human,” a shaman’s *ulvei*, celestial bodies, the earth, and the seas. Like the drawings and pendants on the drum, these drawing and pendants similarly represent the “sketch map that shamans use to navigate themselves during their journeys” (78). A shaman’s “crown” is an iron hoop with two iron arcs that cross each other. One arc is bent in front in the form of a knife, which serves “to cut” clouds when a shaman “rises” to the sky. To the top, where two arcs intersect, iron antlers are attached, because the deer is a symbol of lightness and speed. Usually, all shamans have deer spirits at their disposal, which helps them to move fast. “Crowned” shamans are the

ones who reach the top of the professional spiritual hierarchy among the Ostiak.

Banzarov, Dordzhi [Dorji]. “Chernaia vera ili shamanstvo u mongolov [Black Faith or Shamanism Among the Mongols].” Banzarov, Dordzhi. *Chernaia vera ili shamanstvo u mongolov i drugie stat’i Dordzhi Banzarova [Black Faith or Shamanism Among the Mongols and Other Articles of Dorji Banzarov]*. Ed. G. N. Potanin. St. Petersburg: tipografiia Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk, 1891. 1-46.

For a 1997 reprint of this essay, see Dordzhi Banzarov, “Chernaia vera ili shamanstvo u mongolov,” in Dordzhi Banzarov, *Sobranie sochinenii [Collected Works]*, ed. D.B. Ulimzhiev (Ulan Ude: izd-vo BNTS So RAN, 1997), 29-56. The complete English translation of Banzarov’s book *Black Faith or Shamanism* can be found in Dorji Banzarov, “The Black Faith, or Shamanism among the Mongols.” *Mongolian Studies* 2, no. 7 (1981): 53-91. Banzarov (1822-1855), a native Buryat Orientalist scholar, was one of the first serious students of Shamanism in Russia. This talented Buryat received a rare chance to graduate from a gymnasium school in Kazan city and later from the Kazan University. In 1846, Banzarov, who was specialized in oriental languages, wrote a dissertation on Mongol and Buryat shamanism and received a *kandidat* degree. The same year, his dissertation was published as a short book. In 1891, Siberian regionalist Grigorii Potanin reprinted this book along with a few of Banzarov’s letters and articles. Banzarov’s views on shamanism affected later observers and scholars. Unlike many of his contemporaries, who, in the spirit of romantic scholarly Orientalism, drew the sources of Siberian shamanism from India, Tibet, or China, Banzarov emphasized the indigenous origin of Siberian beliefs.

According to Banzarov, his work is the first “systematic and full description of the Black Faith” of the Mongols (1). The ancient popular religion of the Mongols and neighboring natives is known in Europe under the name of shamanism. However, the carriers of this religion do not have any special name for it. After they adopted Buddhism, the Mongols started to call it the “Black Faith,” which means “crude, unenlightened” faith as opposed to Buddhism, the “Yellow Faith.” One of supreme deities in Mongol shamanism, the heavenly ruler of the world, is a male deity. The second supreme deity is the earth, which is represented by the goddess Etugen. The major quality of Etugen is reproduction,

which is affected by the heavens. This goddess is called “golden” and revered as the source of riches (17).

In heaven there are a large number of secondary deities called *tengeri*. They symbolize celestial phenomena and human passions. According to Banzarov, in their *tengeri*, the Mongols embodied “all popular passions.” The most important *tengeri* are associated with two major fields of nomadic life: war and stock raising (26-27). One of the most important deities was the fire goddess called Ut. The fire goddess is the carrier of happiness and riches. Fire is endowed with purification qualities. As a hearth goddess, Ut is considered to be the protector of each household. Fire is used to light and purify a dwelling. In their veneration of fire as the source and the symbol of purity, the Mongols show their respect for the hearth, which is always kept clean. They do not throw into a fire things that might produce a bad smell or extinguish flames. It is considered sinful to pour water on fire or to spit in fire. The sacrifices that are brought to fire are to enhance the flame: wine, oil and fat. It is forbidden to step over a hearth or raise a sharp cold weapon at it. Many exterior bodily ailments are considered the result of Ut’s anger. The Mongols frequently use fire as a purification device. Persons, animals or various objects are carried over or walked between two fires or held over a fire to make them “clean.” If a person die, the yurt where the deceased resided is purified by fire, and all items that were inside the dwelling are carried between two fires. In ancient times, before appearing in front of a khan, foreign ambassadors to the Mongol court walked between two fires because it was believed that the fire took from a person the ability to do evil. The Mongols bring daily sacrifices to a hearth during their meals. Moreover, once a year, they bring a special solemn sacrifice to fire (23-24). Among celestial beings, the Mongols revere the sun, the moon, and stars; among the earthy beings, they revere the spirit masters of mountains and rivers.

Banzarov also describes how the Mongols revered sacred places called *obo*. The *obo* play the role of local temples, where people bring their sacrifices to the deities and spirits of the locality they reside in. In old times, the construction of the *obo* and the sacrifices to *obo* were simple. A shaman usually announced that spirits who were patrons of a hill or a mountain selected this specific locality as their residence. Then, at a designated place, people erected *obo*, a small pile of stones and dirt, and performed proper rituals in honor of a territorial spirit. *Obo* are usually erected next to roads for travelers to place on them some object as a sacrifice. The Mongols believe that the spirit of a locality resides in an

obo. The goal of the sacrifices is to secure protection during travel. It could be, for instance, a hair from a horse's mane. At a designated time, people conduct public sacrifices near *obo*. After the adoption of Buddhism, the cult of the *obo* was reinterpreted and integrated into the Buddhist spirit (18).

Banzarov discusses the special category of deities (*ongons*), which originated from the cult of ancestors. In ancient times, when people died, their relatives made their images called *ongons*, kept them at home, and "fed" them with regular sacrifices. Later some *ongons* evolved into common clan deities and became separated into good and hostile *ongons*. The foundation of the cult of the *ongons* is the assumption that the deceased might help or harm living people. Whose soul became an *ongon* is for a shaman to define. Not everybody can become an *ongon*. Only those who were famous for their good or bad deeds can become embodied in such images. Those who provided substantial help and benefit to people become good *ongons*, while famous evil ones become hostile *ongons*. Banzarov believes that in this division of souls into two ranks, one may notice the concept of redemption for a person's earthly deeds. The Mongols believe that the souls of good people reside quietly in the afterworld. The souls of bad people cannot move to the afterworld and are doomed to reside in limbo between the earthly world and the afterworld. Therefore, hostile *ongons* wander all over the earth and harm people. They might move into people and cause illnesses. They might target and exterminate children. Shamans usually are asked to find out what specific *ongon* is responsible for a misfortune and expel it from bodies of individuals or their dwellings.

The souls of shamans frequently become *ongons*. *Ongons* are numerous, for each locality has its own *ongons*. However, some *ongons* are recognized by all the Mongols, such as *ongons* from Genghis-Khan's lineage and *ongons* of other chieftains. People consider the souls of the Genghis clan good *ongons* and revere them along with the *tengeri*. Incidentally, Genghis himself is considered an *ongon* and remain a patron and a judge for his descendants (32-33).

The second part of Banzarov's work deals exclusively with shamans. Many scholars believe that shamanism originated from Buddhism and draw the origin of the very word "shaman" from the Sanskrit "shramanas," which means "an ascetic." In reality, writes Banzarov, neither in its origin nor in its essence does shamanism have anything to do with Buddhism (34). The word "shaman" originated from the Manchu "saman," which means an agitated, excited, and ecstatic person. The

Russians borrowed the word “shaman” from the Tungus (Evenki) and later introduced this expression into Western usage. Other Siberian people are not familiar with this word at all. Each tribe has its own definition for shamans (35).

The first shamans were “people of special spiritual inclinations.” They “differed from regular people by their abilities to experience visions and were extraordinarily prone to all things mystical and miraculous. They were also endowed with a flaming imagination and a knowledge of powers of nature” (36). To the present day, shamans are divided into false and genuine spiritual practitioners. The former adopt this vocation to pursue personal benefit. Such people do not have any authentic shamanic qualities. On the contrary, “genuine shamans” “do not chose their vocation; they are driven by a natural force or a call; from early childhood such a person exhibits a tense agitated spirit” (37). Native people interpret this as the activities of supernatural forces.

Shamans are magicians, sorcerers, and soothsayers. Communicating with deities and spirits, shamans supervise numerous sacrifices. The Mongols are familiar with both permanent and random sacrifices. Permanent sacrifices are timed to annual spring, summer and autumn feasts. Random sacrifices are performed more frequently, upon necessity. One of the most widespread occasions for sacrifices is an illness. A shaman usually announces what specific spirit produced an ailment and what is required from people to appease this spirit. In most cases, a deity or a spirit agree to take a sacrifice as a substitute for the soul of an individual (41). Finally, Banzarov describes a typical shamanic session among the Mongols. He insists that all ecstatic behavior of shamans (“demonic frenzy”) during séances is explained by the fact that shamans absorb the spirits that cause illnesses from patients’ bodies into their own bodies, which leads to recovery (42).

Beliaev-Sergeev, M. “Opyt ustanovki poniatia ‘shamanizm’ [Toward the Definition of the Concept ‘Shamanism’].” *Pribavlenie k Irkutskim eparkhial’nim vedomostiam* 22 (1907): 525-531; 6 (1908): 193-198.

In his brief article, Priest Beliaev-Sergeev summarizes the results of research on shamanism and provides his own definition of shamanism. First of all, he poses the question, which later was also debated by Soviet



A Romantic Imagery of Teleut Shamaness. Drawing by E. Korneeff, from Charles de comte Rechberg, *Les peuples de la Russie, ou, Description des moeurs, usages et costumes des diverses nations de l'empire de Russie* (Paris: D. Coles, 1812-1813), vol. 2, pp. 4-5. Courtesy of the Rare Book & Special Collections, Library of Congress.



Shamanic Séance in the Altai. From Wilhelm Radloff, *Aus Sibirien: lose Blätter aus dem Tagebuche eines reisenden Linguisten* (Leipzig: T. O. Weigel, 1884), vol. 2, p. 18.

scholars, of whether shamanism is religion. Many scholars label shamanism as a religion on the basis of its ritual: ecstatic activities of a shaman (22: 526). Yet “religious ritual is not a foundation of shamanism. Any religious ritual is based on a religious doctrine.” Therefore, religions should be classified by their doctrines. Because shamanism does not have a fixed doctrine, it is not religion (22: 527). Since shamanism is not religion, it does not make sense to call it (as Dorji Banzarov does) the ancient religion of the Mongols and Siberian natives. Referring to Mikhailovskii (1892; 1894), the author of the first comparative and comprehensive study of shamanism among all “primitive” of the world, Beliaev-Sergeev writes that the best way to define shamanism is to call it a “religious cult of primitives” (22: 528).

Beliaev-Sergeev divides shamanism among natives (*inorodtsy*) of the Russian empire into three types: (1) the “most advanced Mongol and Buryat shamanism;” the Buryat are “immediate followers of the Mongols,” and their shamanism reached the highest level of development; (2) the Yakut type, which is “less advanced shamanism,” because the Yakut stand close to the Turkic tribes, among whom shamanism did not reach the “Mongol level” and also because Russian Orthodox culture affected the Yakut earlier than the Buryat; and (3) “Finn and Votyak type,” which is “the least developed;” “Finn” tribes and the Votyak lost many elements of shamanism because of their residence in the proximity of European Russia (6: 193-194).

Bogoras, V. G. “K psikhologii shamanstva u narodov Severo-vostochnoi Azii [Toward Psychology of Shamanism Among the Tribes of Northeastern Asia].” *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 1-2 (1910): 1-36.

Despite its title, this paper deals with the psychology of the Chukchi shamanism, which, according to Bogoras, “is still at the elementary state of development” (1), and as such provides the “most typical, uncorrupted and primordial” form of native shamanism. First of all, the psychology of shamanism is rooted in an impulsive behavior. The word shaman originates from the Manchu *saman*, which can be translated as “anxious, ecstatic and excited person.” Bogoras also stresses that, on the whole, “primitive people are more impulsive than civilized ones,” which makes them susceptible to all kinds of spiritual shocks: “Studying shamanism, one encounters first of all the entire categories of men and women, who

either suffer from nervous agitation or who are obviously not in their right minds or completely insane. It is especially noticeable among women, who are generally more prone to neurosis.” Bogoras surmises that shamanism is a “form of religion that was created through the selection of mentally unstable people” (6).

Historically, in the evolution of shamanism, its first elementary form was centered on a family. Each family had a drum, which the head of a household used during various rituals. This type of ancient shamanism was still widespread among the Koryak and the Chukchi in the early twentieth century. At the same time, this rudimentary family shamanism is a reflection of a more archaic “general” or “family” shamanism, when literally all members of a household, including children, had been able to shamanize. Later, the circle of spiritual practitioners kept narrowing until, eventually, individual talented magicians and medicine men took over shamanism and made it their profession. In the archaic “family shamanism,” which survived among the tribes of the extreme northeast, women and men usually enjoy equal religious and ritual “rights.” To certain extent, women are even favored over males. Thus, among the Chukchi and Asian Eskimo (Yupik), women are keepers of family drums and other household sacred objects. Moreover, they supervise religious festivities and ritual sacrifices. In contrast, in “individual shamanism,” as it is practiced by other Siberian tribes, men are always in the spotlight, relegating females to the fringes of religious life. Although many Siberians believe that shamanesses are more powerful than their male colleagues, they are also convinced that childbirth usually “breaks” down women’s “shamanic inspiration.” It is commonly assumed that young shamanesses lose the greater part of their powers after giving their first births (9-10).

As among other Siberian tribes, among the Chukchi natives, people experience shamanic calls when they turn from adolescents into youths. The Chukchi insist that it is easy to recognize a boy designated by spirits for the shamanic vocation by his characteristic look during a conversation. The “chosen one” usually stares somewhere into an “empty space,” bypassing his interlocutor. It appears that he sees something that others cannot see. Bogoras claims that he was able to distinguish shamans from other natives by the expressions on their faces. The shamanic call manifests itself in different ways. Mostly it is an internal voice that orders the chosen person to establish communication with spirits. If the chosen person procrastinates, the calling voice might materialize itself as a stone of strange form that lies on a road or as a colored feather that flies by.

Moreover, the calling spirit might show itself personally (12). The preparatory stage, which continues for a long time, is a painful period for a candidate. The spiritual initiation might last from a few months to a few years. The continual call plants into a young heart anxiety, uneasiness, fear, and insecurity. Gradually, the chosen youths isolate themselves from community life, lose their appetite, do not interact with people, and mostly spend their time sleeping. Such individuals prefer to stay inside and do not leave their dwellings. Or, on the contrary, the chosen ones leave for a “desert” under the pretext of a hunting expedition or tending a herd. The candidates for the shamanic profession should be constantly watched during their initiation period or else they might hurt themselves or fall into snow and fall asleep for a day or two. People sometimes find them sleeping buried in snow (14).

The Chukchi view the initiation of would-be shamans as an ailment and the eventual acquisition of shamanic powers as a recovery. Speculating about the mental state of practicing Chukchi shamans, Bogoras notes that “shamans continue to remain extremely nervous and sensitive, which is frequently combined with an anger, obstinacy, and disorderly conduct” (19). As an example, Bogoras describes his acquaintance, the shaman named Scratching-Woman (*Irgike-ñe*), a female name adopted by a male shaman. Bogoras portrays him as a person who “never was able to sit still and relax for a second”: “Scratching-Woman always jumped up and waved his hands. Once he came to me and complained about a pain in his back. I tried to apply a mustard plaster to the ailing spot. In response the shaman began screaming about the ‘nasty Russian fire,’ and I had to remove the plaster. Scratching-Woman constantly argued with and even fought his neighbors, but mostly unsuccessfully. He became especially unbearable under a slight influence of alcohol. To be honest, once he did have the courage to reject a glass of alcohol offered to him, which is an unprecedented example among the Chukchi. Scratching-Woman was timid to the very extreme and shy like a wild animal. I had an incredibly hard time trying to convince him to spend a few night hours in my cabin to perform a shamanic séance without any witnesses. When he finally agreed, I asked him in a half-joking manner, ‘How about staying in my cabin for a week?’ ‘I would’ve better killed myself,’ the shaman responded with a deep conviction. However, during the séance, he acted as a devilish trickster. In spite of the fact that at the end of the séance we caught him trying to steal our linen we had hung out to dry, in his responses to questions and his predictions, this magician displayed

wisdom and caution, lucidity and vagueness worthy of the Delphi oracle” (19).

The Chukchi divide their shamans into three categories: (1) spirit vision shamans (*kéletkulit*), who are able to speak in voices of spirits directly or as ventriloquists; these shamans perform various magic tricks, and, in a word, put an emphasis on the theatrical aspects of shamanism; (2) shamans soothsayers (*getalátilit*), who are specialized in predictions and foretelling by using various objects or their “internal voice”; and (3) shamans conjurers (*ewgáovikolit*), who are specialized in conjuring, casting spells, “magic medicine and surgery” (21). Chukchi shamans almost always perform their séances at night in complete darkness and prefer the cramped sleeping side of a yurt. Shamans take off their fur shirts and stay half-naked. Frequently, shamans also take off their footwear and upper pants to make more room for maneuvering. Chukchi shamans do not have shamanic costumes such as specially decorated robes and caftans. Instead, they attach pendants, tassels, and fringes to their everyday fur shirts, which point to their shamanic vocation. Many shamans do not even have these symbols of their profession. Shamans singing begin their séances with singing and beating their drums. The singing consists of a short musical phrase that is repeated a few dozen times and then is replaced by another one. In a cramped lodging, singing and beating a drum “stupefy an audience.” Shamans use their drums as resonators, which deflect waves of sounds right and left. People who stay for a while under the influence of these drumbeats eventually lose any sense of direction and feel that the voice of a shaman moves from one corner to another, downward or upward (23-25).

Ventriloquism is considered a special “magic trick” of Chukchi shamans. They perfected this practice to such an extent that even the most skillful European ventriloquists could not match them. Voices originate somewhere far in high spheres, then they gradually near the listeners, and finally sweep through walls like a storm, go under the ground, and die down in its depth. One can hear different animal, bird, and insect voices. Chukchi shamans can even reproduce French and English phrases, which are completely alien to shamans. When one claps his palms, a shaman will immediately reproduce this sound with his voice, which comes from a different corner opposite to where a shaman sits. “Shaman Koráwge made his voices whisper to my ears, and the illusion was so powerful that I could not resist from grabbing air” (25). Cutting a belly with a knife is another interesting trick. A shamaness Upuñe performed this trick on her twelve-year-old son. She put him on his back, pulled his shirt up, made a

long cut with her knife on his stomach, and inserted there her thick fingers. The boy moaned slightly. Blood streamed down both sides of his belly and covered the floor. Upuñe bent down and began licking the wound. In a minute the boy's stomach was again smooth and clean. Bogoras stresses that this trick occupies a significant role in the "shamanic surgery." Shamans pretend that they cut the stomachs of their patients with their magic knives, then "take out" ailments, put inside a lost soul, and finally use proper spells to heal the wound (29). In conclusion, Bogoras discusses transvestite Chukchi and the Asian Yupik shamans, who usually change their gender in response to "the will of spirits" they receive in their visions. Transvestite spiritual practitioners are mostly represented by male shamans who "turn" into women rather than vice-versa. Transvestism varies from simply wearing female clothing to the "complete gender transformation, perversion and hermaphroditism." Transvestite shamans marry people of the same gender and frequently establish genuine homosexual relations. In addition, according to Bogoras, transvestite shamans who pose as females always have "a spiritual pederast" husband (31-33).

Borisov, Stefan. "Iz zapisok altaiaskago missionera [From the Journal of an Altaian Missionary]. "Pravoslavnyi Blagoviestnik 2, no. 14 (1902): 240-247.

In this essay, Russian Orthodox missionary Stephen Borisov, a full-blood native Altaian (Teleut), describes the perils of his missionary work due to the upsurge in interest of a Russian educated public in indigenous shamanism. Outraged with ethnographers and the fans of native exotics, Borisov records how Russian visitors courted Zakhar, a local shaman. Inspired by such attention, Zakhar became "arrogant," which made missionary work very difficult. Borisov specifically complains about a member of the Society of People Interested in the Study of the Altai, who collected information about the beliefs of an Altaian group named the Kumandin. Most probably it was N.B. Sherr, an amateur ethnographer. At the request of the "tourist," Zakhar performed a shamanistic séance and enlightened the ethnographer about various "superstitions" and the system of worship in his "satanic cult." Grateful Sherr gave Zakhar a present of "chevrons" for the shamanic costume. In addition, the ethnographer handed the shaman a letter that confirmed the gift: "The tourist's gift almost drove the shaman crazy. Zakhar ordered for himself a

new shamanic robe, decorated it with the new chevrons” and claimed that the scholar was the messenger of “the White Czar.” The shaman insisted that the ethnographer was one of the czar’s servants sent to reward Zakhar for his loyalty to the ancestral faith and for his shamanic skills. Moreover, the shaman showed around the paper issued by the scholar as the “official edict” that “confirmed” Zakhar’s skills. The frustrated missionary states that many natives flocked to the shaman, which prompted Borisov to confront Zakhar and expose his fraud in public (224).

Although the missionary was able to convince natives that the ethnographer was not the czar’s messenger, Borisov was disappointed to find out that after his instructive talk, local natives came up with another explanation. Now the scholar was viewed as the messenger of Erlik, the master of the underworld, who sent his servant (Sherr) to support the declining shamanic faith on the earth. Indeed, natives had such “excellent” proof as gloves, which the scholar always wore during his visit. To local people it was clear that the “messenger of Erlik” wore gloves because he was afraid to expose his claws. There was also a second “proof” that Sherr was the “messenger of Erlik.” The ethnographer asked natives to make for him a new shaman drum, which was manufactured and decorated according to Zakhar’s guidelines. The fact that the scholar took the drum with him was interpreted as the desire of Erlik to get a new drum because his old drum was worn out. Word spread that in three years, Erlik, the “prince of darkness,” would send more servants to check how diligently people observed their shamanic faith. An outraged Borisov admits that the prophecy actually “came true”: three years after Sherr’s visit to the area, Russian surveyors came to collect information on the local population, including economic and social conditions. Zakhar accommodated the surveyors in his house for more than a week and shared with them all information on native beliefs. What attracted natives most was the standard question the surveyors asked about the circumstances of natives’ baptism. Natives interpreted questioning and recording their responses as an attack on baptism and Christianity in general. The most devastating blow to all missionary work was that at the end of their visit, the surveyors, along with local natives, went deep in the woods, where in a solemn atmosphere, Zakhar performed his “devilish séance” (245). The fact that the Russians photographed Zakhar in different poses during the séance inspired the shaman so much that he again began to insist that the surveyors were the czar’s servants. Zakhar bragged that the czar himself would enjoy his

photographs. Although other natives continued to argue that the surveyors were Erlik's servants, the prestige of the shaman increased anyway. In his desperate struggle against Zakhar and local shamanists, Borisov was about to give up. Words failed the missionary when natives countered him with a question, "Why did these people visit us and not you? Why do they dislike baptized people and do not pray to God? Why do they force us to shamanize and even reward us for doing this?" (246-247).

Chekaninskii, I. "Sledy shamanskago kul'ta v russko-tungusskikh poseleniakh po reke Chune v Eniseiskoi gubernii [Traces of Shamanic Beliefs in Russo-Tungus Settlements Along the Chuna River in the Eniseisk District]." *Etnograficheskii sbornik* 3-4 (1914): 61-80.

Chekaninskii's paper can be defined as a case of investigative ethnography, which was prompted by a presentation made by engineer and amateur ethnographer N.B. Sherr to a meeting of the Krasnoyarsk chapter of the Eastern Siberian Branch of the Russian Geographical Society in 1908. Sherr spoke about a certain "wooden horse" supposedly worshipped by the Russian peasants living in the village of Beriozovaya at the Chuna River area. Visiting this area, Sherr encountered a peculiar case, which "represents a tremendous ethnographic interest." A peasant named Aleksei Kaverzin had a horse made of wood with a small bell on its neck and with a tail made of tow. According to Sherr, local Russians worshipped that wooden horse. In case of poor harvest, stock die-outs, epidemics, and other misfortunes, the village residents flocked to Kaverzin's backyard, where they prayed and brought sacrifices to the horse. Having finished the worship ceremony, Kaverzin wrapped the horse in rugs and hid it in an old barn. Based on this fact, Sherr inferred that Russians in the Chuna area practiced shamanism. Trying to obtain this horse for a local museum, the engineer-turned ethnographer encountered numerous obstacles. No matter how hard he tried, Sherr could not convince peasants to either give or sell the horse to the museum. Finally, Sherr decided to trick them. He informed the peasants that this wooden horse was an idol and that authorities persecuted idol worshipping, and in order to avoid troubles with officials, the horse should be burned. Thus, Sherr was able to get hold of the ill-fated horse, which he brought to the museum (61-62).

Chekaninskii notes that information about the worship of wooden horses by Russian peasants was unique in Russian ethnography and naturally stirred great interest or, better to say, distrust. Chekaninskii was also skeptical about the Sherr report. When in 1914 Chekaninskii was commissioned to make an ethnographic field trip to Chuna peasants, he decided to take this opportunity to verify the information about "Russian shamanists." He questioned a large number of peasants, not only in the Beriozovaya village, but also in surrounding areas located beyond the Chuna River basin. The greater part of Chekaninskii's article consists of testimonies of thirty peasants he interviewed concerning the "wondrous horse." All of them dismissed any possibility of Russians worshipping a wooden horse. Yet they admitted that in old times, the Tungus (Evenki) natives used such horses in shamanic séances and "prayed" to them. Chekaninskii also noticed that in his stunning report, Sherr omitted the crucial fact that seventy-five year-old Kaverzin, the former owner of the horse, was partially native. Kaverzin told Chekaninskii that the wooden horse lay in the barn all the time wrapped in rugs. Kaverzin claimed that nobody touched the horse because he and other villagers were afraid of shamans. Kaverzin also insisted that nobody worshipped the horse: "It ain't God. Why should we pray to this piece of wood?" Chekaninskii found out that in the Beriozovaya village there were other wooden horses similar to the one that Kaverzin had. Peasants claimed that they never touched these and other similar items in fear that they might inflict on themselves the revenge of deceased shamans, who had owned these artifacts in the past. A few inhabitants of the Chuna area remembered that in old times, when somebody fell ill, people approached a shaman, who put on a costume decorated with iron "small enemies" (*vrazhki* from Russian "enemies" *vragi*; what local Russians called decorations on shamanic costumes and native images of spirits) and danced around such a horse. Chuna area people stressed that "a misfortune lives" in all these "Tungus pieces of iron" (decorations for the shaman costume), and wooden horses. Local Russians believed that those who touched them would die (69-70, 72).

Khangelov, M.N. “Novie materialy o shamanstve u Buryat [New Materials on Buryat Shamanism].” *Zapiski Vostochno-sibirskago otdela Russkago geograficheskago obshchestva po etnografii* 2, no. 1 (1890): 144 pages.

Khangelov viewed this work as a continuation of the earlier ethnography he co-authored with N.N. Agapitov (see the review of this work in the present volume). The first chapter deals with “superior beings” in Buryat shamanism. Their ninety-nine chief deities, who resided in the sky, are called *tengeri* (*tengri*) or *tengerins*, which means “daylight sky.” The *tengeri* are divided into two large groups, which quarrel with each other: fifty-five Western (“white”) *tengerins* and forty-four Eastern (“black”) *tengerins*. The “white” ones live on the Western side of the sky, while the “black” ones reside in the Eastern part. Natives consider Western deities benign beings who help people, while the Eastern ones are viewed as hostile deities who inflict various misfortunes, such as illnesses and deaths. The Buryat divide all other subordinated deities into the same “black” and “white” categories: *khaty* (children of the *tengeri*), *zaiany* (secondary deities), and others. The majority of “white” and “black” *tengeri*, *khaty*, and *zaiany* are “specialized” in specific fields: “white” deities act as patrons of human well-being, while “black” ones are patrons of various illnesses and harmful phenomena.

A special place in Buryat shamanism belongs to Erlen-khan, the chief of the Eastern (“black”) *tengeri*. Erlen-khan has numerous “administrators” and “scribes” who are subordinated to him and who serve in special “offices,” where people’s destinies are decided. In addition, Erlen-khan supervises spirits whom he dispatches to manufacture human souls. Erlen-khan also controls underworld dungeons, where the souls of people who are doomed to die live in suffering. When hostile spirits “catch” a human soul, they lock it up in one of these dungeons, which means a person whose soul was “stolen” falls ill and can die. Yet people believe that an experienced shaman can release a human soul from a dungeon and return it to its owner. In this case an ailing person recovers (50).

In a special chapter, Khangelov discusses shamans’ souls. Because of their shamanic “root” (*udkha*), some deceased shamans become *zaiany*. Yet this honor is bestowed only on good shamans. The bad and mean ones are forgotten by people and cannot turn into *zaiany*. It is believed that after they move to the other world after their death, good shamans try to work to benefit their relatives and descendants. Deceased “white”

shamans usually help people and approach deities on behalf of their earthly kinfolks. “Black” shamans, on the contrary, seek to harm people after their deaths. At the same time, if approached appropriately, “black” ones also can defend earthly people by appealing to “black” *zaiany* on their behalf. To make sure that deceased “black” shamans work to the benefit of people, natives have to appease them constantly with sacrifices. Since many shamans and shamanesses turned into *zaiany* spirits after their death, almost every locality, clan, and community (*ulus*) has its special *zaiany* in the other world. Deceased shamans are usually buried in woods and mountains in the vicinity of native settlements. These burial localities are usually called “mountain elders.” Local natives sprinkle *tarasun* [an alcoholic beverage made of milk] or sour milk to these “elders” and sometimes perform special rituals to honor them (83-84).

People love “white” shamans when they are alive and after their death. “Black” shamans usually do not enjoy such popular love. Still, people fear them very much and avoid offending them because they can cause harm. Hated and feared, “black” shamans sometimes become victims of murder. It usually happens in case word spreads that a “black” shaman gave away the souls of his neighbors to hostile spirits in exchange for the “stolen” souls of his or her patients. “Black” shamans usually fall under strong suspicion when a patient they cured recovers, while one of their neighbors suddenly dies (85). Khangalov shares a story about an anonymous “black” shamaness, who lived in the Bazhir area of the Balagan region. The woman fell under suspicion for the above-mentioned reason. Her neighbors, who passionately hated the shamaness, hired two other “black” shamans for forty heads of stock and asked them to “eat her up” with the help of their hostile spirits. The natives told Khangalov that these two shamans, Enkhar and Birtakshin, could not defeat the shamaness and had to appeal to another “black” colleague named Khagla. Finally, these three were able to “eat” the shamaness up. Neighbors buried the woman with proper rituals. From aspen wood they made a coffin and put the shamaness there with her face down. Before covering the coffin with dirt, they pierced her with aspen sticks and pressed her down with an aspen trunk from above. The Buryat believe that an aspen tree was dirty and, as such, can “spoil” a shaman. Putting the shamaness in the coffin face down meant that after her death she could not come back to earth to harm people.

The greater part of the Khangalov ethnography deals with numerous Buryat rites and sacrifices, which the scholar and his co-author did not describe in their first work. One of the notable materials is a description

of the ritual named *khunkhe-khuralkha*, which reflects the Buryat view of the human soul and illness. The Buryat from the Balagan area believe that the soul can jump out of the body of a person who is suddenly scared. The soul that runs away usually wanders around the place where the person was scared. If people do not act to return the soul, it can go away forever, and in this case, the person dies (135). Specially endangered are small children who are easily frightened and therefore can lose their souls. The loss of soul in a person is usually easy to detect. Such individuals fall ill, feel sleepy or lethargic, or, if victims are children, have a fever, jump up, and weep. When the soul is lost because of a fright, people consult a shaman. If an invited shaman “diagnoses” that a soul had left a body because of the fright, relatives of the victim try to return this soul. To retrieve the souls, they bring the favorite foods of their ailing family member, put the food into buckets, and perform the *khuralkha* ritual by luring the stray soul back with its favorite food. During this rite, the person who lost a soul wears the clothing he had on when frightened. In this case, it is easier for the soul to “recognize” its host (136). If nothing helps, relatives invite a shaman, who tries more “serious methods.” At first, the shaman sprinkles *tarasun* to local “mountain elders.” After this, the shaman goes to the spot where the soul was lost and repeats the abovementioned “trick” with a favorite food of the patient. In addition to the food, shamans usually put an arrow in the same bucket. Sometimes, when a stubborn soul does not want to come back, the spiritual practitioner has to repeat the rite three times, and tries to time the ritual approximately to the time of day when the soul was lost. The Buryat believe that the soul comes back to the same spot at the same time and cries for its host. If the host is not there, the soul leaves again and continues to wander. At first, the soul usually cruises around the familiar spot, where it was lost, but gradually it strays away and forgets the old spot. The natives are convinced that when a patient weeps and trembles, it is a good sign. This means that the rite helped, and the soul came back to the body, weeping and trembling with joy (137).

Another rite, called *ukhan-tarim*, is performed for a patient who suffers from an internal ailment or feels a rheumatic ache. Not every shaman can perform this ritual, which Khangalov labels as a “shamanic bath.” Only the most skillful spiritual practitioners are allowed to conduct the “bath” rite. A weak shaman can scald a patient or himself with hot water. Experienced shamans who are invited to perform this séance usually first put juniper and thyme grass (*chebrets*, *thymus serpillum*) into a kettle with boiling water. Then they sprinkle with *tarasun* and sour milk

to the patron of the rite, a *zaiany* named Tarim-Sagan-noion. After this, shamans normally remove all of their clothing except underwear and sit on a bench by the kettle. Summoning the *zaiany* Tarim, shamans dip a switch of green twigs into boiling water and vigorously beat the ailing spot with this switch. From time to time, shamans exclaimed “Hot!” or, on the contrary, “Cold!” Depending on these exclamations, patients either sweat from unbearable heat or suddenly feel cold all over. The Buryat believe that during these switches from cold to heat and vice-versa, illnesses leaves patients. After the rite, patients usually feel very weak. Relatives wrap them tightly in warm blankets and put them to bed (109-110).

Frequently shamans add to the “bath” séance a more dangerous rite called *gal-tarim*. To perform *gal-tarim*, shamans heat either an iron ploughshare or an axe. Then they take one of these items from a fire, and, standing with one leg on a flat stone, they rub the other foot on the hot metal. Khangalov, who personally witnessed such a séance, noticed that at this moment, an unpleasant smell of burning skin spread over a dwelling. The shaman usually touches the ailing spot of his patient with his burned foot. Sometimes, notes Khangalov, inexperienced shamans burn their feet and fall unconsciousness, but it happens rarely and only with young shamans. Khangalov concludes the description of the *gal-tarim* as follows: “When you observe this rite in all its details, it gives you not only the creeps but also makes your hair stand on end” (111).

Kornilov, I. “Obriad posviashcheniia kuznetsa i Kytai-Bakhsy [The Rite of a Blacksmith’s Initiation and Kytai-Bakhsy].” *Izvestiia Vostochno-sibirskago otdela Russkago geograficheskago obshchestva* 39 (1910): 84-85.

This short note deals with Yakut (Sakha) rites and beliefs related to the blacksmith’s work. The article is based on the information Kornilov recorded in the summer of 1909 in the Olekming district from a native named Grigorii Kornilov, who might be a relative of the author. In Yakut shamanism, the blacksmith is a person directly linked to the world of spirits, which places him in the realm of shamanism. The patron of Yakut blacksmiths was a blacksmith deity named Kytai-Bakhsy. Based on his personal experience, Grigorii Kornilov described to I. Kornilov how in the past blacksmiths were initiated into their profession, which strongly echoed shamanic initiations. When a blacksmith acquired necessary tools

and began working, he and other people usually hear how, at night, a forge works “by itself,” a hammer pounds, and bellows “hiss.” At first, a blacksmith does not pay any attention and continues to do his job. Two or three years after the strange event in the forge, the blacksmith falls ill. In the meantime, the “night work” in the forge increases, and the blacksmith’s illness simultaneously worsens. In the long run, the blacksmith invites a shaman to “investigate” the cause of his illness. After a séance, the shaman tells the blacksmith that it was Kytai-Bakhsy who heard the sound of the blacksmith’s hammer and asks for a three-year-old black calf as a gift. The blacksmith has the required calf delivered, and the invited shaman sacrifices the calf. The shaman, who delivers the soul of the calf to Kytai-Bakhsy, usually addresses the deity with a request, “I brought you a sacrifice in exchange for this person. Do not harm him, but make him a blacksmith.” After the séance, the calf’s heart is pulled out by the blacksmith’s tongs and put onto an anvil. The initiated must strike at this heart with his hammer and crumble it. If he crumbles the heart with one strike, the candidate will be a good blacksmith. If he crumbles the heart only with a second strike, he will be an average blacksmith. If the heart is crumbled only after a third strike, the initiated one will be a poor blacksmith. When a candidate “passes” this test, he finally becomes a professional. The blacksmith’s soul (*kut*) now becomes the property of Kytai-Bakhsy, who protects his protégé. Shamans are usually powerless against such blacksmiths, whose patron is Kytai-Bakhsy himself. If, for example, a hostile spirit (*abasy*) that serves a shaman approaches the fire of the forge in an attempt to catch a blacksmith’s soul, the latter might hide in this fire, while Kytai-Bakhsy might take this *abasy* with his tongs and fry it over the fire. In this case, the shaman who is paired with this hostile spirit dies. Not only hostile spirits are afraid of Kytai-Bakhsy, but ordinary people, as well. The Yakut are usually apprehensive about approaching the forge fire (85).

Maksimov, A.Iz. “Mest’ shamana: iz zhizni inorodtsev Krainego Vostoka [Shaman’s Revenge: From the Life of Natives of the Extreme East].” *Priroda i liudy* 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (1891-1892).

This fictional story exemplifies the coverage of shamanism in popular Russian media at the turn of the twentieth century. The story, which is set among the Khodzents people in the Ussuri area in the Far East, flashes the



Yakut (Sakha) Shaman's Coat. From Eduard K. Pekarskii and Viktor N. Vasiliev, *Plashch i buben Yakutskago shamana* (St. Petersburg: tovarishchestvo R. Golike i A. Vil'borg, 1910), p. 116.

characters of an evil shaman, a bold native heretic who openly challenges savage superstitions, and Russian cultural heroes. Maksimov explains

that the Khodzent, whom Russians usually call the Gold (the Nanai), is a “subgroup of the Tungus.” A shaman named Da-Khaitso returns home to the Nor settlement from Manchuria in China. In Nor there live his admirers and friends. It is only Tsatsyr-Khongo who does not welcome the return of the shaman and does not hide his animosity to the spiritual practitioner.

On the eve of Da-Khaitso’s return, a misfortune had visited the people of Nor. A large snow leopard or a tiger attacked a hunter named Linza and “gnawed” him. Residents of Nor are convinced that the hunter was wounded by the hostile spirits (*amba*), who turned into the predator who is now after all of them. People considered the snow leopard the embodiment of the hostile spirit. Natives hope that the returning shaman can help heal Linza. A native named Khuam, the most ardent admirer of the shaman, is especially trustful of the Da-Khaitso’s powers. On the other hand, Tsatsyr-Khongo, who is full of skepticism and distrust, states in public that the shaman is a miserable deceiver. Such a bold statement greatly agitates and upsets the villagers. Khuam and other true believers argue that “the devil himself chose him [the shaman] and endowed him with the power to call him any time.” As proof, natives point to the miracles performed by the shaman. Once Da-Khaitso “in the presence of everybody plunged a knife into his stomach to the very handle and remained alive.” Tsatsyr-Khongo, however, insists that it was just “a clever trick” of the shaman, who “tightened under his belly a bull’s bladder filled with blood and pierced it with his knife, while you fools believed that he was chosen by *amba* himself” (4:66).

Khuam, who is firmly convinced of the powers of the shaman, goes to meet Da-Khaitso. On the way to Nor, the shaman learns from Khuam that Tsatsyr-Khongo spoke against him, which makes the shaman very angry. On the way to the village, Da-Khaitso decides to take revenge on Tsatsyr-Khongo: “You, Tsatsyr-Khongo, dare to fight me. All right, I agree. Let’s see who will be the winner. I will have no mercy for you. You will remember me even in the afterlife!” (4:70). The shaman takes his revenge as follows. During his visit to the wounded Linza, the shaman converses with his spirits and “learns” the will of the devil (*amba*), who crippled Linza. According to the shaman, the devil became angry at the natives for their distrust of his powers. Now the *amba* requires a specific sacrifice from the local people: a pure white horse. In the village, only Tsatsyr-Khongo has such a horse. Although he has no desire to sacrifice his best horse to satisfy the “whim” of the shaman, Tsatsyr-Khongo does not want to contradict his fellow villagers and reluctantly gives up the horse.

Stunned with the ignorance and superstition of his people, the native heretic publicly wishes that the hostile spirit would “choke” on his horse.

When the horse is delivered, the shaman puts on his costume: “The shaman had a short caftan of seal skin tightened with leather ropes on the chest and sewn all over with long leather fringes, which reached the ground, with numerous metal decorations and images of fish, snakes, and lizards. To the magic costume, a leather apron was attached, which was decorated with small leather fringes like the caftan. the apron was decorated with various metal trinkets, among which there were two iron disks that imitated female breasts. The long hair of the shaman was unraveled over his shoulders. On his head, the shaman wore a cap adorned with small iron horns with small bells on their ends. In the his left hand, the shaman held a drum; in his right hand, a drumstick covered with a seal skin” (5:85). The shaman starts to utter some unintelligible chants over the sacrificial horse, and then “begins to whirl around the fire in a fierce devilish dance.” Gradually the incomprehensible chants of the shaman turn into a clear message. The audience learns that the hostile spirit is upset and that one horse might not be enough. The shaman also stresses that the *amba* does not want to grant life to poor Linza, and the hunter is doomed to die as the “victim of disbelief.” Having finished his soothsaying, the shaman kills the horse. At the moment of sacrifice, the shaman “reaches the highest stage of craziness.” Da-Khaitso screams, crows like a cock, howls like a wolf, roars like a bear, and hisses like a snake. Finally, exhausted with his “inhuman madness,” in a fit of the falling sickness (epilepsy), the shaman drops to the ground (5: 86).

The *amba* “fulfills” his threat. The same day, Linza dies. Frightened by the prospects of becoming the next victims of the hostile spirit, the natives persistently ask the shaman to explain how they can appease the *amba*. Having performed a second séance, Da-Khaitso announces the will of the “devil.” The sacrifice did not satisfy the spirit because Tsatsyr-Khongo gave him the horse reluctantly and even cursed the *amba*. Now the devil needs a human sacrifice and “points” to Atsa, Tsatsyr-Khongo’s small son. Because the native heretic did not participate in the séance and did not know about the “will” of the *amba*, the shaman and his supporters plan to abduct the small boy. All other natives are ordered to stay silent. Then, Tsatsyr-Khongo is lured out of his tent, and the boy is abducted. Khuam and the shaman take Atsa deep into the woods, where the shaman is ready to sacrifice the boy. Yet Khuam, who is torn apart by the guilt, convinces the shaman to simply leave small Atsa in the woods, and the

amba itself will come to take the “present.” The shaman knows that a snow leopard was recently seen wandering around the village and agrees.

Fortunately, two Russian Cossack hunters are passing by. They save the boy at the moment when the leopard is ready to tear him apart. Carrying Atsa and the skin of the killed leopard, Russians appear at the Nor village and ruin the shaman’s evil plot. The prestige of the “evil shaman deceiver” is gravely undermined. Residents of Nor have a hard time comprehending how the boy designated to be sacrificed to the *amba* remains alive and how the skin of the *amba* got in the hands of a “young beardless Cossack.” “Cossacks become heroes of the day. All inhabitants of Nor are joyful that finally Russian strong men (*bogatiry*) came and killed the *amba* that kept the entire population fearful for the whole month.” The shaman secretly escapes from the village. “Since the status of the shaman among the natives was greatly shaken, the natives of the Nor village did not put too much trust in his soothsaying anymore, although some of them still believed that Dai-Khaitso could ward off the cruel *amba* from them.” The shaman never visited the Nor village again, preferring to work among those who still trusted his powers (6:104).

Malov, S. “Neskol’ko slov o shamanstve u turetskago naselenia Kuznetskago uезда Tomskoi gubernii [A Few Words About Shamanism Among the Turkic Population of the Kuznetsk Region of the Tomsk District].” *Zhivaia starina* 2-3 (1909): 38-41.

Malov reports the results of a short ethnographic trip to the Shor tribe in the northern Altai. He notes that the shamanic costume among the Shor is rather simple compared to the colorful and elaborate shamanic paraphernalia of the Altaian and Abakan (Khakass) natives. Shor shamans wear a robe made of white canvas and a cap decorated with eagle-owl tail feathers and made of the same canvas material. Some shamans do not have caps and simply tie over their heads women’s kerchiefs, which support eagle-owl feathers. Shor shamans’ paraphernalia also includes the drum, the drumstick, and a hare’s paws. If shamans do not have drums, they use drumsticks during their séances (39).

In spring, in each village the Kuznetsk Shor hold a special prayer gathering called *shashil* or *shachil*, which means “sprinkling.” In advance of this prayer ceremony, people brew a large amount of alcohol. Then they proceed to a sacred birch tree located on a designated mountain and hang ribbons all over this tree. Near the tree, they set up a small table

with the liquor and a ladle. The *shachil* prayer ceremony can be conducted by either shamans or simply old men, who are familiar with the names of surrounding mountains and rivers. An elder or a shaman sprinkles the sacred tree with the home-brewed alcohol, mentioning the names of surrounding mountains and rivers. Then addressing the audience, the leader of the ceremony announces, "The mountains and rivers will bring you what you wished and thought about during this year." After this, people drink the liquor, sprinkle the remaining part of it at the roots of the birch tree, and return home (40-41).

Malov also describes a shamanic séance, which shaman Karastai performed at the ethnographer's request to secure for Malov a safe journey and safe return home. "Karastai shamanized at an open spot. Before the séance, the audience lavishly refreshed itself with tea and home-made liquor. Karastai eagerly partook of drinking and treated me generously as well. Then he began to yawn and breathe deeply, trying to get as much air as possible. That was how he summoned his helping spirits for the séance. In the meantime, the shaman had his drum laid in the sun to dry off in order to produce a better sound. Then, Karastai put on his shamanic costume, tied his head with a woman's red kerchief, attached eagle-owl feathers to this kerchief, took the drum and began his séance. He performed for me about an hour in the presence of an entire village. Sweat streamed all over his face. A native who stood nearby kept on wiping Karastai's face with a filthy rag, which did not bother the shaman at all. For people who usually gather to observe the séance, it is hard to comprehend what a shaman sings about. Moreover, the sounds of a drum mute a shaman's voice. Therefore, an audience usually does not understand shamanic chanting. The séance I observed was not an exception. A few times Karastai stretched out and sang facing the sky, which meant that he was traveling somewhere in the heavenly spheres over mountain ranges. At times, he sang by bending to the ground. Natives told me that upon necessity a shaman could ride a pike or a burbot fish, and he also butted a so-called sea bull. After he completed his séance, Karastai handed his drum and drumstick to his assistant and sat to rest. Karastai announced to me that my trip to the Black Turks (the Shor) and Sagai (the Khakass) natives would be safe. As for the rest of my journey, for him it was covered in 'mist,' because his long-distance helping spirits did not have time to visit him and report to him about the situation in other regions" (39-40).

Malov notes the reverence and fear local Russian populations feel toward Shor shamans and shares a few Russian stories related to shamans

and shamanism. A Cossack once told Malov that local Russians believed that if during a séance they recited a Christian prayer, and especially a psalm, the “devil” would drag and throw a shaman from one side to another, and the séance would not be successful. The Cossack added that if during a séance one threw an object over a shaman, a séance similarly would be ruined. The same Russian informed the ethnographer that he supposedly saw a shamanic costume that had 40 buttons. After a séance, by some miracle the costume became unbuttoned by itself and slipped from the shaman’s body (41).

Meletii, Bishop of Yakutsk and Vilui. “O shamanstve [On Shamanism].” *Pravoslavniĭ blagoviestnik* 2, no. 10 (1894): 51-61; no. 11: 99-106.

During his long missionary practice in Siberia, Bishop Meletii had numerous opportunities to observe shamanism. His impressions of native shamanism are mostly based on his work among the Yakut (Sakha). The article samples attitudes of the official Orthodox Church toward native beliefs. For Bishop Meletii, shamanism represents a rudimentary desire of “infantile tribes for veneration of divine forces,” which is expressed in a “crude form of idol worshipping” (10: 52). Meletii seeks to pin down the basic features of shamanism. First of all, the worldview of shamanists includes “a large number of views that contradict common sense” (10: 55). Thus, Meletii cannot understand how in shamanism, a supreme deity who had created the universe does not pay any attention to the private life of human beings and does not screen and assess people’s daily behavior. The bishop was stunned by natives’ arguments that the god was so far away that human beings could not offend Him or attract His benevolence, and that the supreme god did not punish and did not reward. Therefore, there was no need to fear or to love Him.

Meletii insists that all Siberian natives perceive the god as a human-like being who lives in the sky. His clothing is tailored from a rich material and has numerous decorations like the clothing of a “dragoon officer.” Numerous servants and horses surround the god. To natives, deities are never perfect, stresses Meletii. Like human beings, they might be passionate and vengeful. Hostile beings, which usually descend on shamans, can be tamed by people (10: 56-57). According to Meletii, native worldview sets the afterworld in the underworld, where people live as they had lived when alive. The bishop pokes fun at shamanists, who, in

his words, are terrified of the deceased people: shamans are afraid that the deceased people might visit them again. "Therefore, many natives, who return from funeral ceremonies, try to ward off the spirit of a deceased person by using various superstitious devices. For this purpose, natives jump over a fire, crawl through set up poles, and threaten the spirit with a rod. Finally, they smoke their dwellings or completely leave them" (10: 59).

Meletii also provides a "review" of the types of shamanic "idols." To the bishop, "idols" are any images of spirits or venerated objects. Shamans can make "idols" from crooked tree branches, or from fragments of stones, which might vaguely resemble human figures. Frequently entire mountains and steep rocks of an unusual shape might become the objects of veneration just like "idols" (11: 99). There might be wooden "idols" (*shovoki* among the Tungus, *kamuls* among the Kamchadal, *ongons* among the Buryat), or stuffed ones (*shaitans* among the natives of the Chulym area). The "idols" might be carved from tin and depict people, fish, animals, and stars. They are usually attached to shamanic costumes, drums, and cradles. There are even "idols" made of grass, for example, *khaitu*, which represent images of wolves and which are placed in yurts. So-called Teleut *chalus* usually look like straw mattresses, which on one side depict human faces with eyes made of beads or bits of gunshot. Sometimes these *chalus* are decorated with owl feathers. Buryat *nagats* represent drawings of human beings, which are made in red pencil or in blood taken from the heart of a sacrificial animal. For eyes, the Buryat use beads or bits of gunshot, and decorate the heads of these "idols" with owl feathers. The Kamchadal simply set up in their "deserts" small poles, weave grass around them, and worship these crude objects as "idols." Meletii stresses the "ugliness of all these articles manufactured by savages" (11: 100-101).

The bishop devotes much attention to the personality of the shaman. The mark of the shamanic profession is the "fits" natives experience in their childhood. In appearance, shamans do not differ at all from ordinary "savages" except in their shamanic costumes and their knowledge of beliefs and rites (10: 52). "During their service ceremonies, shamans can experience a strong and genuine ecstasy, which produces an awesome impression on spectators. Sometimes, on the contrary, they blatantly cheat their audiences. In most cases, they practice both" (10: 53). Shamanic chants addressed to "demons" are accompanied by a shaman's "grimaces, wriggling, and unruly conduct." "Ignorant shamans pretend that they possess some mysterious knowledge and try to present their

wriggling as signs of existence in their bodies of some superior power.” Shamanists believe in “evil spirits,” which are scattered all over the world and prey on human beings. “Shamans try to convince people that they are on friendly terms with these spirits and that they are good friends with the devil. Shamans also argue that they have power over these spirits and can call them in and ask any questions.” Here is the description of a “typical shamanic séance” provided by Meletii: “When a shaman wants to know something from spirits about the past or future fate of a person, about the cause of a misfortune or an ailment, or if he wants to tame evil spirits, he usually puts on his shamanic robe. Then, sitting by a large fire, he smokes his pipe and gradually starts to plunge himself in a special state of neurosis. The shaman shakes, looks around wildly, then jumps up and calls in his spirits by beating a drum. Then the shaman begins his mad dance around a fire. His face acquires horrible features, and one can hear wild and incoherent sounds coming from his chest. All this produces a terribly awesome impression. About half an hour later, when the shaman pretends that demons came, he begins to fight them. He asks, promises, and threatens them. Then he throws up his drumstick or an object that belongs to a person who asked for the séance. After this the shaman bends his head toward the drum as through he tries to listen to something. At this moment the shaman shakes, shivers, and sweats. The shamans of the Yakut, Chulym, and other tribes are convinced that at this very moment their souls leave their bodies. Having murmured something, which nobody can understand, the shaman usually blacks out. When the shaman regains consciousness, he begins to tell people a story about where his soul traveled and what spirits it saw and how they looked” (11: 104-105).

Pekarskii, Eduard K. and Viktor N. Vasiliev. *Plashch i buben Yakutskago shamana* [*Cloak and Drum of a Yakut Shaman*]. St. Petersburg: tovarishchestvo R. Golike i A. Vil’borg, 1910. 24 pages.

The shamanic costume and drum Pekarskii and Vasiliev describe in this essay they procured for the Ethnographic Department of the Russian Museum in 1908. They stress that the major function of such ritual items was to affect popular imagination with their “unusual appearance” and with “ritual magic” (1). The shamanic costume, which Pekarskii and Vasiliev call a “cloak,” is made of deer hide. The “cloak” is richly decorated with various symbolic images on the back, chest, and sleeves.

These images, which are mostly made of copper and iron plates, primarily portray spirit helpers who assist shamans in their séances. The images of spirit-birds symbolize the magic flight of a shaman to the kingdom of spirits (8). On the “cloak” above the heart one can see an *amägät*, a human-like carved figurine, which depicts the soul of a deceased shaman. An *amägät* is attached by an elder shaman to the “cloak” of a novice on the chest and serves as a special badge of the shamanic vocation (9). A disc that depicts the sun is attached to the costume to lighten a shaman’s path in the “underworld kingdom” to replace the sun left above (15-16). The symbol of the earth (“middle world”) is a large flat iron ring. The images of animals are helping spirits. A round badge plate symbolizes a saddle shamans used to descend to the underworld and to ascend to the upper world during their séances. A small circle depicts an ice-hole, which is a passage to the underworld, to the “kingdom of hostile spirits.” The small circle is paired with the image of a fish, a shaman spirit that is assigned to guard the passage to the underworld to keep the hostile spirits, who torture the sick, from coming back to the earth. One may also see the thongs tightened to a ring, which is attached to the costumes. These are the “reigns” people use to help shamans to keep their balance when they reach extreme ecstasy during séances. People believe that shamans who lose consciousness during séances might bring a misfortune.

In addition, the shamanic “cloak” has numerous iron plates shaped as bones and joints. These are the shields that protect the corresponding bones and joints of a shaman from the blows of hostile spirits (6-7). Thus, two large round badges protect both sides of a shaman’s chest, shoulder-straps protect collar-bones, and iron circles safe-guard the heads of shoulder bones. There are also numerous plates sewn to sleeves. These plates depict the bones of shamans, which they mention in their chants and prayers during séances (12). Interestingly, for the names of these plates, the Yakut interchangeably use the words describing human bones, bird forearm bones, and wing feathers (13). Each sleeve is furnished with a whole row of small iron pendants which are attached to the special pendant stripes across all sleeves. The word *kysan*, which the Yakut use to name these specific pendants, means “icicles on the body of a horse in winter.” *Kysan* are also attached to the back of the “cloak” (13). The *kysan* depict a bird’s feathers, while the whole costume represents a bird’s hide. When worn by shamans, these skins give them the ability to fly (15). On the whole, the shaman “cloak” is a shaman’s patron spirit (*tanara*). By putting on such “cloaks,” shamans acquire the

assistance and power of the spirits who are depicted on the costume. All this gives them magic power to visit celestial and underworld spirits and to negotiate or fight with them (1-2). On this specific costume described by Pekarskii and Vasiliev, one may find decorations that depict parts of a human skeleton and, and at the same time, parts of “bird wings” and “bird feathers,” which means that the patron spirit of the shaman who wore this “cloak” was “human bird being” (20). The Yakut believe that the shamanic “cloak” is a living being. In addition, shamans use a costume as a shield or an armor that protects them from hostile spirits (21). The number of images and pendants on the “cloak” depends on the rank of a shaman. The Yakut grade their spiritual practitioners as “big,” “average,” and “small” shamans. A new image or a decoration that portrays a specific spirit is usually attached to a “cloak” only when a shaman establishes a close relationship with this spirit and “masters” it. Hence, the number of decorations on the costume reflects the number of the spirits that assist a shaman. Altogether these spirits are usually called shamanic power (3).

The essay also discusses in detail a Yakut shaman drum. The described drum has an egg-like form with a frame covered with a skin on one side that has no drawings. The drum symbolizes a horse, which a shaman rides to “descend to the underworld to the kingdom of spirits.” By beating a drum, a shaman usually summons or, on the contrary, wards off spirits. This drum has a drumstick. The Yakut usually make drumsticks from pieces of wood or horns and shape them as narrow, slightly curved small shovels with a handle. Both drum and drumstick are viewed as living beings (22-23).

Podgorbunskii, I. “Shamany i ikh misterii [Shamans and their Mystery Ceremonies].” *Vostochnoe obozrenie* 42, 47, 49 (1892).

According to the missionary priest Podgorbunskii, shamanism is a “special religion,” which perceives all deities as hostile spiritual beings who should be bribed with sacrifices. If sacrifices do not help, shamans establish contact with these beings to learn what they need to leave a person or a community alone. Individuals who become shamans are usually “people who are prone to fits and hallucinations or epileptics, or people suffering from delusion and insanity in general.” Shamans act as mediators between spirits and human beings (42: 9).

Podgorbunskii stresses that shamanism originated from an abnormal and morbid state of mind. Observing the behavior of people suffering from epileptic fits and hallucinations, "primitive people" developed a concept of a special world of deities and spirits, which ordinary human beings cannot see. Podgorbunskii invites his readers to look into the typical "savage mind" that observes the behavior of a maniac, who "angrily talks with an invisible being, trying to ward it off, and madly throws at this being whatever he gets hold of. It is clear that this insane individual is able to see something that normal people cannot." The "savage mind" assumes that the "maniac" is able to learn the will of spirits, the causes of their anger, and what specific sacrifices such spirits might need. To Podgorbunskii, the first shamans were people suffering from hallucinations, "who were deeply convinced that they were endowed with the ability to penetrate the world of deities and spirits without even realizing that their visions were simply the results of their state of mind." Thus, the Kolosh (Tlingit Indians in Alaska, who were formally part of the Russian empire until 1867) and the Kalmyk (the Altaians) believe that epileptics, during their fits, act and speak not as themselves, but on behalf of a spirit who has entered them. Therefore, people interpret chopped and unintelligible phrases, which sick individuals murmur during their fits, as the expression of the will of deities or as prophecies.

Only individuals who seriously believe in their spiritual call become shamans. The profession of the shaman is hereditary simply because nervous disorders are required prerequisites for this vocation. Since nervous disorders are frequently inherited, the shamanic profession also can be inherited. Podgorbunskii quotes the words of an anonymous Tungus (Evenki) shaman, who "confessed" to the missionary that he did not want to be a shaman at all, yet he was doomed to accept his vocation: "Grandfathers and forefathers in my clan were shamans. I did not like their jumping and wriggling, but some unexplainable power pressured me and totally against my will forced me to accept this craft. I tried to get rid of this power by switching to the Lamaist faith. But nothing helped. I felt worn out, my mind was frozen, and I could not think about anything; sometimes I became totally crazy. I felt that I needed something, and something pulled me somewhere, but I could not understand what and where. Like an insane person, I used to run in mountains and valleys before people caught and tied me. I figured that I could not get rid of these spirits and decided to become a shaman" (47: 9).

To become a shaman, a candidate has to go through a long period of preparatory training, which precedes the rite of initiation. The nature and length of this training vary among different tribes. Podgorbunskii believes that this preparatory training is essentially directed to the artificial stimulation and enhancement of would-be shamans' morbid mental states (47: 10). Despite their tribal variations, "shamanic mystery ceremonies" among Siberian people resemble each other. Usually a "mystery" (a séance) is conducted in the evening or at night. Shamans usually sit down by a fire and begin their "drawling song," accompanied by drumbeats. Having reached the state of ecstasy, shamans either drop on the ground, sit, or stand conversing with spirits, or describe in a singing manner their journeys to specific deities. Finally, shamans return to a normal state of mind and fulfill deities' wishes. For example, they might bring a sacrifice (49: 9).

Podgorbunskii wonders if shamans are charlatans or if they sincerely believe in their magic. He reasons that shamanism cannot be based on deception. Else, how could shamanism survive for hundreds of years all over the world? To be exact, continues Podgorbunskii, there are certainly deceivers, charlatans, and skillful magicians among spiritual practitioners. Yet they are not the people who maintain the power of shamanism. Shamanism endures because of the "people who genuinely suffer from nervous disorders" and who indeed "see" their deities and spirits during their "mysteries" (49: 9). Podgorbunskii points to the power of shamans and at the same time to their vulnerability and shaky social status. Viewed by their communities as unusual people, shamans are kept in a high esteem in their communities. Shamans are surrounded by supernatural aura, and people treat their powers as gifts from gods. At the same time, as people suffering from nervous disorders, shamans need rest and good medical treatment. Unfortunately, the shamanic vocation forces them to maintain and artificially enhance their ailments, which completely wrecks their minds. Another "discomfort" of the shamanic profession originates from the very nature of this vocation. Shamans are advisors and foretellers, who frequently fail in their predictions. Pieces of advice they provide often turn out to be unreasonable, which might result in public discontent or even in popular reprisals against shamans. Podgorbunskii concludes, "It is hardly surprising that shamans are the most pitiful victims of a popular ignorance" (49: 10).

Potanin, Grigorii N. "V geograficheskom obshchestve (doklad Potanina) [A Geography Society Meeting: Potanin Paper]." *Vostochnoe obozrenie* 40 (1892): 10.

This published note is a short digest of the paper "Report on Shamanic Drums and the Sign of the Cross on Them" delivered by Grigorii Potanin to a session of the Russian Imperial Geographical Society. Potanin, the leader of Siberian regionalists and a renowned ethnographer, mentions that the shape of Siberian shaman drums is similar to a basket covered with a skin on one side and open on the other. Some drums have drawings on them. Inside, a drum has a handle in the shape of two crossbars, which form a cross. Potanin divides all Siberian drums according to the configuration of their crossbar. (1) Altaian and Sayan drums have wooden handles. In these drums, the horizontal bar is not connected with the handle (the vertical bar) but goes under it. Sometimes the handle depicts a human face carved in the upper part. In the bottom, such a handle is forked. (2) Tungus (Evenki) drums have two crossbars, which are not directly connected to the frame of the drum, but attached to it with leather thongs. (3) Samoyed (Nentsy) drums have a horizontal bar that reaches only the middle of the drum, where it is connected to the vertical bar. In this type of drums, the image of the cross is not complete.

One may also find drawings of crosses on some *ongons* (ritual images of ancestors). One can also find drums with the sign of a cross, which have a vertical bar carved in the shape of a shaman and the horizontal bar, resembling stretched-out hands. Traces of the cross can be found on ancient rock paintings. Potanin mentions a cross-like rock painting of a human image found in the Kaibazhi rock. The human image has a forked foundation that is set on a drawing of the moon. Another rock painting depicts a cross with the moon on one side and the sun on the other. One can see a similar drawing on some drums. On the drums, such cross-like images are usually made in red paint. Potanin draws parallels between these cross-like images on Siberian drums and analogous images in Christian symbolism. Thus, on Siberian drums, handles have names. The Mongols call them *bar*, which means the tiger; the Altaians label them *mars*, which means the snow leopard; some other Turkic-speaking groups call them *el-bars*, which again means the tiger; and the Buryat call handles *bar-takhi* or *baran-geresun* (the bear). Potanin also discusses "bear festivals" among the Amur Tungus and the Vogul (the Mansi). During the bear festival among the Amur Tungus, people lead a bear to a pole and kill it, and women weep over the animal. Mongol legends

mention characters that had been nailed and chained to walls in cellars. Potanin stresses that legends about the “nailed” characters are common all over Northern Asia. Insisting that Christianity was quite widespread in Mongolia in the seventh century, Potanin draws two conclusions from his paper: “either Asian influence, which had been brought from Asia to Europe, affected Christian symbolism or, on the contrary, Christian symbolism affected the Asian world.”

Priklonskii, V. L. “O shamanstve Iakutov [On Yakut Shamanism].” *Izvestiia Vostochno-sibirskago otdela Imperatorskago Russkago geograficheskago obshchestva* 17, no. 1-2 (1886): 84-118.

This is one of the first studies on Yakut (Sakha) shamanism. Priklonskii approaches Yakut shamanism as a religion. He also examines relationships between shamanism and Christianity. Because all Yakut are formally considered Russian Orthodox, a few works that describe the Yakut “completely disregard the existence of any shamanic religion.” As an example, Priklonskii refers to a book by a certain Samokvasov, who wrote, “Shamanism is neither a faith nor a religion, but ‘individual activities’ that take place in specific cases, for instance, to cure sick people, to ward off stock disease especially among calves, for entertainment because shamans perform various magic tricks and soothsaying, and to cure a possessed person.” Other observers (Pripuzov), on the contrary, argue that the Yakut do have a shamanic religion (85-86).

Priklonskii tries to explain such contradictory views of shamanism by the fact that at his time (1880s), shamanism was on the decline. The conquest of the Yakut by the Russians in the seventeenth century leveled a severe blow to the power and prestige of the shamanic deities. Old Yakut deities were powerless against new Russian deities, which prompted natives to turn away from the former. The activities of Russian Orthodox missionaries contributed to the decline of shamanism. As a result, “heathen beliefs” became mixed with Christian ones (87-88). Still, “poor sanitary conditions” and “inadequate subsistence” made the Yakut to appeal back to shamanism. Contemporary Yakut view shamans from a practical point of view. They consider them “doctors,” who also can predict the future, rather than magicians and theologians. Shamans are gradually losing their former “priestly” functions. As a result, the



Front and Rear Views of Altaian Shaman Drum. From Maximilian Bartels, *Die Medizin der Naturvölker: Ethnologische Beiträge zur Urgeschichte der Medizin* (Leipzig: T. Grieben, 1893), p. 174.



Ostiak (Khanty) Shaman. From V. V. Peredol'skii, *Po Eniseiu: byt eniseiskikh ostiakov*. (St. Petersburg: izdanie A. F. Devriena, 1908), p. 37.

“dogmatic aspects” of shamanism almost disappeared, while the “practical aspects” survived (90). With rare exceptions, all Yakut are baptized as Orthodox Christians. Moreover, many shamans officially also belong to the Russian Orthodox Church and usually never refuse to partake of confession and communion. Yet “one cannot say for sure” that all contemporary Yakut ignore the religious (“theological”) aspects of shamanism. Given the large size of parishes and difficulties of travel, natives rarely see Orthodox priests. Neither do many of them see a church. “Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that natives, who are considered Christians and who keep icons in the front corners of their yurts and wax candles in front of them, appeal to shamans expecting to satisfy their religious needs” (91). Priklonskii personally witnessed a shaman, who before beginning his “mystery ceremony” reverently made the sign of the cross in front of icons, then sat on the ground turning his back to the icons and started to summon his helping spirits. The Yakut who manifest such “double-affiliation” (*dvoeverie*) behavior surmise: if the Christian god does not help, indigenous spirits might (92-93).

Initiation of novices into the shamanic vocation is conducted in public. Usually an established shaman, who acts as the master of initiation ceremonies, accompanies a novice to a high mountain or takes him to an open field, where the initiated person is dressed in the shaman caftan (*kuma*) and receives a purple willow branch decorated with horse’s hair. The “master” places nine youths on the right side of the novice and nine maidens on the left side, and after this situates himself behind the novice and utters a shamanic oath, which the would-be shaman has to repeat. The novice swears to “become a protector for all unfortunate ones, a father for the poor, a mother for orphans,” and to honor spirits and to serve them. Then the would-be shaman names all major spirits, indicates what specific ailments each one inflicted on people, and promises to relieve people from these ailments by bringing appropriate sacrifices to the spirits.

Shamans are usually very poor people. Some of them never acquire households and make ends meet by subsisting on hand-outs for performing their “mystery ceremonies.” Not all shamans have costumes, which usually cost a great deal to manufacture. Costumes include many decorations hammered from iron with carvings, and the work of hammering is very expensive. Furthermore, not every blacksmith is allowed to hammer such iron decorations. Moreover, when the police or clergy learn about practicing shamans, who are baptized Christians, they

confiscate and burn their costumes. As a result, there remain few shamanic costumes in Yakut country (99).

If shamans are invited to perform a séance, they usually start with the slaughtering of a bull or a horse. Hosts usually obey all shamans' orders. Then all participants in the séance, including the shaman, treat themselves to the meat of the sacrificial animal. Part of the slaughtered animal is set aside for the sacrifice proper. After the meal, shamans usually begin a séance. They situate themselves in front of a fireplace on a deer or bull's skin and beat their drums loudly and for a long time, summoning their spirits by a drawling shout, "Ayi." Then spiritual practitioners make a loud yawn and shout three times, imitating birds' voices. Priklonskii describes a shaman's séance, which he witnessed, by using Christian jargon. A shaman he observed called to a "cross-eyed, crooked, lame devil," convincing this "Satan" that the shaman was devoted to him, promised to be a "loyal servant" and implored the "Satan" to enter him. When the "devil" moved into the shaman, the latter became "the carrier of his power and might." The shaman stood up and began to chant, announcing to all spectators that the "Satan" entered him, and that he persuaded the "Satan" to deliver the request to cure a patient to his ancestors-shamans who resided in "hell" and who would convey this request to the "supreme Satan." The coming of the "devil" and his return back to "hell" the shaman described in a song, which was performed in the form of a chanted conversation. The shaman sang for himself and for the spirits he summoned, imitating the movements of these spirits. He accompanied all these activities with drumbeats. Sometimes the "Satan" would not agree to fulfill a request right away or send a shaman away to seek the patronage of major heavenly spirits. The shaman observed by Priklonskii ascended to heaven, which he described in his song and by his bodily movements, showing how hard it was to climb a steep mountain. Then he had to descend to "hell" to visit his ancestors and the chief "Satan." After this, on the wings of a loon, he again flew up to heaven, trying to secure help from heavenly spirits and promising to bring them sacrifices. In another séance observed by the ethnographer, while "flying" to the heavenly sphere, a shaman approached a patient and shouted, "What animal do you want to let the sick person alone?" The spirit who sat inside the patient responded (through a shaman) what sacrifice it needed.

Here is how Priklonskii describes the atmosphere of a shamanic séance: "The surrounding environment: a small yurt with a flaming fire, and the fanatic, who fiercely rushes about. Two strong and specially

selected men can hardly keep him from throwing himself into a fire or from smashing his head in the outburst of ecstasy. His wild howling and shouting can discompose even those who have healthy nerves. A shaman immerses himself into his role to such extent that he completely forgets about himself. It looks like he is sincerely convinced in his interaction with mighty evil spirits” (106). Although Priklonskii informs his readers that in addition to shamans, the Yakut also have shamanesses (*udagan*), who actually exceed their male colleagues in numbers, he never describes their functions and roles. We only learn that shamanesses do not enjoy the same power and prestige as shamans. According to Priklonskii, people approach shamanesses only when there is no shaman around. At the same time, Priklonskii adds that, according to natives, shamanesses are more successful in treatment of mental illnesses. In this case, people favor them over their male colleagues (107).

Shashkov S. “Shamanstvo v Sibiri [Shamanism in Siberia].” *Zapiski Russkago geograficheskago obshchestva* 2 (1864): 1-105.

This book-length paper was the first comprehensive attempt in Russia to provide a review of Siberian shamanism in general without concentrating on a particular tribe. From the text of the paper, it is also clear that Shashkov relies heavily on Dorji Banzarov’s *Chernaia vera (Black Faith)* (for a review of this book, see the present collection). Shashkov eclectically mixes the shamanisms of specific groups or extends shamanism of a particular tribal group to another. Reading his description of shamanic rituals, it is often impossible to surmise what tribe he discusses. According to Shashkov, the backbone of shamanism is the reverence for spirits. Each natural phenomenon has its own spirit master. Air, water, mountains, woods, and underworld spheres are all filled with “legions of spirits.” Moreover, “evil spirits” outnumber benign ones. “No matter where a shamanist goes, he is threatened by Satan. He routinely expects that legions of evil spirits place obstacles to all his activities. Breathing air in, he might think that devils rush into his internal organs. If he has an unpleasant dream, he might have the delusion that the devil threatens him. When he is lost in the woods, he sincerely believes that it is the ‘master of the forest’ who tricked him. If a native falls ill or goes crazy, everybody stresses that a demon settled in his body. Demons with their torture tools await people not only on earth but also in the future life.” Reflecting on the essence of shamanism, Shashkov surmises,

“While hell represents the environment for the shamanist, devils are his *idée fixe*” (3). The description of shamanism colored with such Christian metaphors was rather typical of Shashkov’s contemporaries.

Although shamanists believe that they totally depend on spirits, they think that they also they have tools to divert harmful effects of spirits from people. The major tool is appeasing hostile spirits with sacrifices. At the same time, it is necessary to find out exactly what particular sacrifices spirits wish to have. That is what shamans usually do. Unlike all ordinary people, shamans closely interact with spirits and know their tricks and the ways to affect their behavior. Spirits report to shamans information that is not available to common people (3-4, 100-101). Folk memory especially praises shamans of old, who were skillful in their superhuman activities. Samoyeds (Nentsy) share stories about ancient shamans who flew, swam under water, rose up to clouds, pierced themselves with spears, and cut themselves into pieces and then resurrected. Contemporary shamans are also able to perform some “magic tricks,” such as licking red-hot iron, swallowing rapiers, cutting a body with an axe (103-104).

Shashkov notes that shamans emerged in ancient times long before the appearance of Buddhism. From antiquity to modern times, shamans have represented a special “caste” or “estate,” and the title of a shaman has been transferred within particular clans. Among the Buryat, only those who have shamans among their ancestors can become shamans. Therefore, one who claims a “shaman title” must announce all his paternal shamans-ancestors. Those who have shamans-ancestors can even officiate at sacrifices without being properly initiated, whereas those who do not have such ancestors and who dare to do the same ritual run a risk of angering spirits and dying (82). Among the Buryat, the shamans who are chosen by spirits are called “real ones,” while people who become shamans without being chosen are named “false ones.” At the same time, the Buryat divide their shamans into “white” ones who serve to benign spirits and “black” ones who serve “evil spirits.” Shashkov says that the latter are described as having “bestial-like characteristics.” “White” and “black” shamans constantly fight each other. According to the Buryat, they can throw axes at each other at a distance of about one hundred miles. Usually, this struggle ends in the death of one of the opponents. Most often, the winners are those who have famous and powerful shamans among their ancestors, because shamans-ancestors always help their descendants by soliciting the assistance of other spirit helpers (82).

The first signs that individuals are chosen to become shamans are pressure from the spirits of deceased shamans-ancestors, including frequent faints, dizziness, the ability to foretell future events, or other wondrous and special phenomena. According to Shashkov, the characteristic paraphernalia of shamans are special clothing and special “instruments,” which include: (1) the “caftan” made of cloth or animal skins and decorated with “trinkets”; (2) the shamanic guise (*lichina*) or a kerchief that closes the eyes and the whole face because a shaman “looks at the world using his internal eyesight”; (3) the shamanic cap; (4) a copper or iron plate on the chest; (5) the drum, which is a required instrument to accompany sacrifices and to summon spirits. Moreover, the drum remains the “friend” of a shaman even after his death: it is hung on the shaman’s grave. Shashkov mistakenly insists that shamans themselves manufacture their drums, but he correctly notes that they are made from particular brands of woods, which vary among various tribes. The typical drum has a round form; it is covered with a deer skin or the skin of some other animal. On the cover or even on the rim, natives draw the sun, the moon, and other deities; and (6) the “stick” natives use to beat the drum (86).

A shaman acts as the “magician,” “healer,” and “soothsayer.” Consequently, Shashkov at first describes rituals and sacrifices, which do not deal with illness; then séances that concern illness; and, finally, soothsaying sessions. An example of the first “magical” séance is Buryat *tailagans*, public feast gatherings held three times a year and accompanied by sacrifices. The Buryat gather and set up a sacrificial site on a sacred “sacrificial mountain.” A shaman consecrates jars of sour milk and *tarasun* (an alcoholic beverage made of milk), which are to be sprinkled to deities. The shaman places a small birch stick in the jars and then sprinkles the milk and alcohol to designated deities. After this, the shaman performs a sacrifice by “cutting the stomach of an animal, sticking inside his hand and tearing out the windpipe.” Then natives boil and eat the meat and leave the bones at the sacrificial site as gifts to deities (88). Natives explain illnesses as the “anger of spirits,” which moves into human bodies and tortures them. That is when the shaman performs curing séances. As an example, Shashkov describes a “typical” séance performed among the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) natives: “Among the Kirgiz, a shaman sits in front of a patient and plays balalaika, sings, screams, and makes faces. Then he suddenly jumps up and begins to run around the yurt, and then rushes outside, picking up the first horse he can see and galloping all over the steppe, chasing the evil spirit that tortures

the patient. Having come back to the yurt, he whips the patient, thinking that this might drive the spirit out, bites the patient until he bleeds, raises a knife over the patient and spits in his eyes. The shaman repeats the same procedure for nine days” (99). Yet two abovementioned categories of ritual are not, strictly speaking, shamanic séances. According to Shashkov, the genuine séances, which he calls “shamanstvo,” are related to soothsaying.

The shamanic séance is essentially centered on obtaining necessary information from the world of spirits. Shamanists do not have permanent places where they perform their séances. Therefore, “shamanism might take place anywhere: inside a yurt, in the woods, on a mountain, on the bank of a river, and so forth.” Shashkov describes a typical soothsaying séance: “At a randomly-selected place, natives make a fire, around which spectators gather. A shaman puts on his sacred clothing and takes a drum. Accompanying to himself by sad tunes, the shaman begins to sing chants. At first he sings quietly, then louder and louder. Gradually he becomes frenzied, makes huge leaps, grimaces, and shouts, imitating the voices of various animals.” Finally exhausted, he drops to the ground, and his soul goes to the world of spirits to find out what people need.” Among some Siberian tribes, spirits themselves come to a shaman and provide necessary information. In such cases, there is no need for the shaman to “drive himself to the state of fainting” (101-102).

Seroshevskii [Sieroszewski], V.L. *Yakuty: opyt etnograficheskogo issledovania [The Yakut: An Ethnographic Study]*. St. Petersburg: Russkoe geograficheskoe obshchestvo, 1896. 625-651.

Sieroszewski turned to ethnography while exiled in Siberia for his revolutionary activities in Poland. His study became a classic of the Yakut (Sakha) and Siberian ethnography in general. Excerpts were translated into French and English: Wenceslas Sieroszewski, “Du chamanisme d’après les croyancesdes Yakoutes,” *Revue de l’histoire des religions* 66 (1902): 204-233, 299-338; for a digest of the book in English, see *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 31 (1901): 65-110. The chapter on shamanism has been widely quoted by Russian and Western students of shamanism.

Sieroszewski notes that among the Yakut, shamanic powers are not necessarily transmitted on a hereditary basis. Yet, more often than not, the spirit of a deceased shaman (*amägät*) moves into a member of his or

her own clan and forces that person to shamanize. *Amägät* is an inseparable part of each shaman, a guardian spirit (625). These guardian spirits are always with shamans when they need help and protection. In addition to *amägät*, each shaman has a second major guardian spirit, which manifests itself in the form of an animal or a bird (*ie-kyla*). Shamans carefully guard the identity of their *ie-kyla* from outsiders. *Ie-kyla* manifest themselves only once a year in spring, when the souls of shamans embodied in *ie-kyla* scour all over the earth. Only the experienced eyes of spiritual practitioners can see these scouring souls. Shamans' *ie-kyla* frequently fight each other, which leads to an illness or even to the death of an individual shaman whose *ie-kyla* was defeated. "Dog" shamans, whose *ie-kyla* is represented by a dog, are usually considered the weakest and most cowardly shamans. The most powerful shaman usually have as their *ie-kyla* huge bulls, stallions, eagles, moose, or bears (626). Acquisition of *amägät* and *ie-kyla* does not depend on a shaman. They descend on shamans unexpectedly or, as in most cases, come as spirits of deceased family members who were shamans. Upon their deaths, great shamans sometimes take their *amägät* with them to the heavenly world and turn them into celestial spirits. If an *amägät* was not taken "up above," sooner or later, it would move into a clan member chosen to become a shaman (625). Shamans' power depends on the power of their *amägät*. It is believed that great shamans receive *amägät* from Ulu-toen, the celestial deity that created all shamans (628).

The major function of shamans is to cure sick people. To the Yakut, all illnesses are caused by hostile spirits who plant themselves inside human beings. The curing methods practiced by Yakut shamans are always the same and involve either scaring a hostile spirit away from a human body or appeasing it (636). Stressing that "in appearance all shamanic rituals are rather monotonous" (640), Sieroszewski provides "the basics of the ritual." Using one of the séances he observed, the ethnographer recreates the generic picture of the shamanic ritual, whose elements are reproduced everywhere among the Yakut. Invited to see a patient, the shaman usually rests until night, when "the sorcery becomes possible." While relaxing, the shaman is usually treated with foods and drinks. Neighbors and relatives of the patient come and take seats on benches by the walls. Gradually the fire dies out, and it gets dark in the dwelling. Then the people close the door of the yurt. After this, nobody is allowed in or out. The shaman situates himself on a white horse skin right in the middle of the yurt, takes off his shirt, and puts on a shamanic costume. For a long time, he smokes a pipe, after which the shaman starts

to yawn nervously, shivering and murmuring something unintelligible (639-640). When the yurt is completely dark, he begins to beat his drum lightly. The drumbeats are accompanied by imitations of voices of various birds, such as the hawk, the seagull, the raven, the eagle, the loon, and the woodcock. Soon the drum beats become louder, and, all of a sudden, abruptly stop, replaced by total silence. The shaman repeats this procedure a few times. Then the shaman supplements the music with his chants and invocations of spirits. He asks his *amägät* and other spirit helpers to assist him. (641-642).

When the *amägät* finally descends upon the shaman, he stands up, lights the fire, and begins his dance, accompanied by singing and drum beating. The shaman “fiercely jumps and wriggles, his head is always bowed, and his eyes are half closed; long tangled hair is spread over his sweaty face, his mouth is crooked in convulsions, teeth are bared, and he slobbers. He whirls around a dwelling, beating his drum and shaking his ringing costume. It seems the shaman is intoxicated with the noise and fierce movements he produces” (643). At a certain moment, his “madness” subsides, and, raising his drum high, the shaman starts to sing “quite a solemn anthem,” summoning celestial spirits. Finally, the shaman learns from the spirits whatever he wants: the cause of a misfortune or an illness or the help of various spirits. After this, the singing shaman moves in a dancing manner in the direction of the patient and expels the cause of an illness by scaring or sucking away the hostile spirit that caused the ailment. Then the shaman takes the hostile spirit to the center of the yurt, where he fiercely argues with it, spits on it, or throws the spirit out from his palm to the sky or to the underworld. At the same time, the shaman learns what kind of sacrifice people should deliver to mighty spirits for such disrespectful treatment of one of them, who had been sent to “spoil” the patient. After the “cause of evil” is finally eliminated, the shaman, who still keeps his spirit helpers, responds to questions from the audience (643-644).

According to Sieroszewski, the Yakut shamanic costume consists of a robe made of cow skins. The front part of this robe is so short that it does not even cover the knees. In the back, on the contrary, the robe is so long that its edges hang to the ground. The robe is decorated with leather fringes along the edges and on the back. To these fringes, various “rattles and pieces of iron” are attached. Sieroszewski enumerates the most important “rattles” and “pieces of iron.” A round iron plate of a size of a tea saucer symbolizes the “sun” (*kiungeta*). A similar iron plate with a large hole in the middle serves as “the sun-ice hole” (*oibon kiunga*).

“The sun-ice hole” hangs above the first plate or is attached below it on a long leather rope. Numerous hollow iron tubes (*kondei kykhan*), which hang on metal rings or loops, are attached to the back of the robe. In addition, many flat plates (*chyllyryt kykhan*) hang on the back above the waist. A copper plate with an image of a human being symbolizes *amägät*. The plate shaped as a fish (*balyk-temir*) hangs from the back on a long rope and sometimes touches the ground. The fish is bait for petty spirits, who usually run after it and try to catch it. The front part of the robe is decorated with appliquéd images of fish, birds, animals, symbols of celestial bodies, and “pieces of iron” depicting parts of a human skeleton and intestines (632-634). The drum of Yakut shamans, which is two and a half feet in length and two feet in width, usually has an egg-shaped form. The wooden frame of the drum, which has seven, nine, or sometimes eleven curves from outside, is covered with the hide of a three-year-old bull calf. The interior side of the drum has crossed leather ropes that are tightened in the middle to an iron ring or a cross, which a shaman uses as a handle. In addition, one can see a large number of bells and iron and bone rattles attached all along the drum frame. The drumstick, which is usually held in the left hand, is slightly bent and covered with a skin taken from the leg parts of the horse or the deer (635).

Stefanovich, Ia. “Na Shamanstve [At a Shamanic Séance].”
Zemlevedenie 1-2 (1897): 29-47.

From 1893 to 1894 Stefanovich worked as chief curator of a local museum in the town of Yakutsk, the administrative center of Yakut (Sakha) country. In the museum, he met a Yakut shaman, whom Stefanovich names only as P.P-ov. P-ov lived in Yakutsk and frequently visited the museum. Each time the shaman entered the museum, he first stopped at the exhibit that displayed shamanic costumes. The museum had five costumes, three from the Tungus (Evenki) tribe and two from the Yakut (Sakha) tribe. One of them, the oldest and dirtiest, especially attracted the attention of the shaman. P-ov always examined, touched, looked at, and even smelled each pendant and decoration attached to the costume. He was convinced that this specific costume belonged to a great shaman and was endowed with miraculous power. P-ov confessed to Stefanovich, “I felt this power as soon as I entered the museum for the

first time. Now when I visit you and smell this robe, I feel dizzy and my hands and legs want to dance” (29).

Thirty-four year-old P-ov originated from a shamanic lineage. His maternal uncle was a shaman; a father and a grandfather were blacksmiths, the craft that the Yakut associate with shamanism. By the time P-ov met Stefanovich, he had already shamanized for two years. Telling Stefanovich how he was initiated into the shamanic profession, P-ov noted that six years earlier, before he met the museum curator, he had begun to experience “mental disorders,” which P-ov interpreted as the shamanic call. He suffered from insomnia, hallucinations, and, as Stefanovich thinks, from epilepsy. P-ov resisted the shamanic call for a long time and even went to see a priest, who performed two prayer services (*moleben*) for P-ov to release the native from the “delusion.” However, the spirits pressured him even harder. Moreover, P-ov’s infant children started to die. Finally, he surrendered to the spiritual power and began to shamanize. After that, P-ov felt better, and his son, who had been constantly ill, also recovered.

Although he had frequently observed how his uncle performed séances, P-ov insisted that he never specifically studied shamanic rituals and chants. P-ov stressed that during his first séance, he somehow felt sure of himself and performed like an experienced shaman. P-ov explained it was not he who performed the chants, rituals, and all shamanic activities but his ancestral spirit, *amägät*, which moved into P-ov and navigated him. At the time he met Stefanovich, P-ov still had neither a drum nor a costume. The shaman had to borrow these items from another spiritual practitioner who lived nearby. To make a shamanic costume would have cost P-ov about fifty rubles, and besides there was not a blacksmith in the vicinity who could hammer all the metallic decorations for his costume (30). That was why the shaman once asked Stefanovich to lend him the oldest shamanic costume from the museum to perform a séance for an ill old man. The curator agreed, thinking that it could be a good opportunity to witness a shamanic séance and “write down all the ritual of the mystery ceremony.”

The séance was performed for an ill old Yakut who lived not far from Yakutsk, and it continued from 10 p.m. until 5:30 a.m. Hardly able to speak Yakut language, Stefanovich asked a Yakut acquaintance who spoke broken Russian to explain to him the content of chants, invocations, and talks of the shaman during the séance. The séance started with P-ov squatting on the ground with closed eyes in a nearly dark room and beating a drum. The shaman sat for about fifteen minutes,

continuing to beat his drum slowly and monotonously. Then the yurt became filled with the voices of various birds: a hen, a cock, a cuckoo, a raven, and a seagull. After the spirits arrived, in a recitative manner, the shaman began to relate a story about glorious mighty ancient warriors, rich chieftains (*toions*), and great shamans of the West Kangelass district (*ulus*), and finally mentioned his own initiation into the shamanic vocation. In the end, the shaman appealed to the arrived spirits, asking them not to leave him this night and to show their power through him. After this, P-ov, who slowly moved back and forward while chanting, suddenly jumped up and began to dance all over the yurt. He stopped singing, and his drum beats became frequent and loud. Stefanovich's translator explained that at this point, P-ov was moving somewhere high up to the heavenly habitat of his shaman-ancestor, whose assistance P-ov wanted to secure.

In his description of the séance, Stefanovich stresses that the shaman's activities were chaotic and that P-ov "clearly could not be answerable for his actions." In picturesque manner, Stefanovich portrays the shamanic "heart-rending dance with squealing." Finally, the fire died out, and the rest of the séance took place in complete darkness. At some point, the shaman's dance ended with a "heated scene" colored with an "eerie humor": "I heard a loud blow at a drum, which the shaman suddenly threw somewhere under a bench. A drumstick thrown on the opposite side hit someone from the audience. With wild raucous shouts, the shaman began to run fiercely around the yurt. Stretching his hands out and grinding his teeth, he rushed from one wall to another, as if trying to catch somebody and tear this person apart. People from the audience were jumping up and running away. In the meantime, P-ov stumbled on a door in the darkness, ran outside and, wildly shouting as if somebody had cut him, disappeared somewhere in the fields. A few people rushed after him. Remaining in complete darkness gave all of us the creeps, and somebody began blowing the fire. Before the fire lighted the yurt, P-ov ran in, accompanied by three or four Yakut. He wildly rolled his eyes filled with blood and looked like a 'violent lunatic' eager to crash something. Indeed, he grabbed a trellised shelf used for drying and warming clothing and began shaking it. The shelf cracked, but a few men fell on P-ov and dragged him aside" (36-37).

Stefanovich cannot explain whether this violent outburst was part of the ritual "program" or was an "impromptu fit of disordered nerves of the shaman." After inquiring of his interpreter, who spoke poor Russian, the museum curator surmised that the "wild scene" meant that "devils

crawled into him (P-ov).” Stefanovich also thinks that the shaman became angry and wild because he cracked the drum cover while beating it with the drumstick. This was considered a bad sign, and the shaman was frightened. Having calmed a little, the shaman ordered somebody to ride to another shaman, who lived about six miles away, to bring a new drum. Thus, the séance was interrupted for one and a half hours (38). When the drum was delivered, P-ov continued the séance. The curing of the patient was centered on expelling hostile spirits from the body of the old man. The shaman “scared” the spirits out by jumping toward the patient, hugging him, and producing a threatening shout. Then, with a fierce whooping, P-ov ran again outside, chasing his invisible enemy. A few of the Yakut brought him back, dragging him by a rope that the shaman held in his teeth. While people were roping the shaman to a pole, he rolled his eyes, showed his teeth, wiggled with all his body, and produced sounds like a bull’s roaring. Then the shaman was untied and began to play the part of the hostile spirit extracted from the patient’s body. In an ensuing long conversation, where the shaman played both himself and the hostile spirit, the stubborn hostile spirit did not want to leave the old man alone. As a ransom, the spirit demanded a gray mare and red cow with a white tail. The shaman insisted the patient was poor and that it would be cruel to charge him so much. P-ov asked the spirit to restrict itself at least to the food treats found on the table. In the long run, the “devil” agreed to leave, provided that the shaman pointed to another rich house where the spirit might locate a good soul to move in. The “deal” was concluded, and the shaman “treated” the “devil” with a cake, which P-ov grabbed from the table with his teeth and threw into the fire (39-40).

In a similar manner, only with slight variations, the shaman drove away the other four “devils” from the body of the old man. The shaman at first tried to persuade them to leave the patient in peace, and if a “devil” stubbornly resisted, he “scared” it out with a loud shout. With some of them, P-ov became involved in bargaining. Incidentally, he tricked two “devils” by promising each one a fat cow and not giving the promised ransoms after they left the body. With the two remaining spirits, the shaman concluded an agreement that they would leave after getting food treats, such as a cup of vodka, a cake, and meat, which the shaman took from the table and again threw into the fire (41). Stubborn “devils” were not so easy to get rid of. They kept returning to the yurt from outside several times. The shaman made sure that all of them were gone. P-ov even grabbed a charred log from the fire, and, running around the yurt, he

poked between the logs of the walls, scaring away the “devils” who hid there. Finally, P-ov announced to the audience that all “devils” were gone and that the patient would live for five more years (43).

Sukhovskoi, Rev. Vasili. “O shamanstve v Minusinskom krae [On Shamanism in the Minusinsk Area].” *Izvestiia Obshchestva arkeologii, istroii i etnografii pri Imperatorskom Kazanskom universitete* 17, no. 2-3 (1901): 147-155.

Sukhovskoi describes an initiation and activities of shaman Semen Tinikov, whom he befriended during his long missionary work among the natives of the Minusinsk area, who belong the Khakass tribe. Living among natives who were heavily assimilated by the Russians, Tinikov was considered a “proper Christian.” He attended church services and fasted on a regular basis. Yet when he was about thirty years old, Tinikov fell ill with some unknown ailment and was bedridden for almost half a year. Because of this unidentified illness, he lost one eye. When Tinikov appealed to shamans in desperation, one of them announced that Tinikov himself had to become a shaman, or else the illness would eventually kill him. Two months after this prophesy Tinikov recovered. The prophesy prompted him to acquire all necessary shamanic paraphernalia and to learn appropriate shamanic “verses.” Sukhovskoi writes that Tinikov not only became a full-fledged shaman, but actually came to enjoy his new trade: “It was easy and profitable work.” By the time Sukhovskoi wrote this paper, Tinikov was already an old man and was ready to quit his vocation. Yet constantly pressed by hostile spirits (*shaitans*), who threatened to strangle him, he continued to shamanize in his old age (148).

Sukhovskoi describes Tinikov’s ritual paraphernalia and Khakass shamanic accessories in general. The drum symbolizes the sky and the earth. Small bells and other metal “trinkets” are attached to the drum to “entertain *shaitans* (spirits).” A horizontal line drawn in its middle divides the drum into two sections. The section above this line is dominated by human-like images of spirit helpers, which are painted in red, black, and blue and depicts these beings riding horses and armed with rifles, spears and sabers. On Tinikov’s drum, in the same section, one also can see images of birds, such as owls, eagles and swallows. Images of the sun, crescent, and stars, which are also depicted above the line, symbolize not real heavenly bodies, but those that are situated in the

other world. Below the line are drawn animal-like images of spirits such



An Image of Siberian Shaman. From Friedrich Ratzel, *Völkerkunde* (Leipzig und Wien: Bibliographisches institute, 1894), vol. 1, p. 552.

as leeches, bears, wolves, hares, lizards, winged snakes, a fishing worm, a frog, a black dog, a pike fish, and other species. There are also human-like images such as a “naked man,” “hairy man,” “a man without a head but with eyes in his chest,” and “a man black like dirt with iron claws.” Tinikov specifies that the latter spirit is extremely powerful and that it is “constructed” by boiling and mixing in a stone kettle the spirits of nine men. This “combined” spirit is so mighty and heavy-weighted that no other spirits portrayed on the drum can overpower him. When this “mighty fat spirit” walks, the earth trembles, and his legs are “sinking” in the ground up to his knees (148-149).

According to Tinikov, Khakass shamans cover their wooden drumsticks (*arba*) with the skins of a hare or a wild goat. Yet sometimes a drumstick is made from a bone of some wild animal. A few ribbons, which depict hostile spirits, are attached to the handle of the drumstick. The drumstick is ascribed a healing power. Sometimes during the *séance*, shamans move drumsticks over patients or use them to touch different bodily parts. It is believed that such touching drives away the spirit of an illness. The Khakass shamanic costume is made from thick broadcloth or from calf skins. It is decorated with fabric ribbons of various colors, small bells, and other metal “trinkets.” At first, Tinikov’s costume had only twenty-five ribbons. During his twelve-year practice, the shaman kept on adding more ribbons and eventually gathered 477 ribbons. These ribbons point to the number of spirit helpers shamans are able to attract to assist in their spiritual vocation. Hence, the gradual acquisition of the ribbons points to how well shamans perfected their craft (149).

When Tinikov prepares himself for a *séance* to cure a patient, he normally drinks a few cups of homemade alcohol (*araga* or *airan*) “for inspiration,” as the shaman explained, puts on the costume, and begins beating his drum. At first the shaman beats quietly, and then gradually increases the speed, and then begins to “murmur his learned verses,” which accompany the rhythms of the drum and which are meant to summon his spirits. Sukhovskoi adds that if spirits do not answer right away, shamans usually begin to “run around” a hearth, vigorously shouting and “slightly wounding themselves with knives, putting hot coals into their mouths,” and “raving in any and all imaginable manners until they drop unconscious on the ground.” During *séances*, shamans usually drink much alcohol. Sukhovskoi concludes: “Drinking vodka, fast running around a fire, vigorous beating at a drum, all together makes a shaman frenzied. In such a state of mind, a shaman issues his instructions to the spirits who visited him” (150).

Tinikov indicates that when a patient has a minor ailment, shamans summon only half of their spiritual army, or even a few spirits. In the most severe cases, the shaman calls in “everybody.” Spiritual practitioners also make use of the horses and birds depicted on their drums to go to the other world to save the “health” (Tinikov’s expression) of patients. When a hostile spirit (*aina*) steals the “health” of an individual, it usually leaves behind a black or a sandy red track. Using this track, a shaman’s spirit helpers “sniff” the culprit spirit. Tinikov explained to the missionary that in the other world, patients’ “healths” usually get into the hands of their deceased relatives, who carefully hide

them from shamans and their spirit helpers. If shamans, along with their spirit helpers, are able to find and take away “a health,” they wrap it in a paper and tightly tie it with silver threads and hand it to an eagle that carries the “health” in its claws. The eagle flies to the yurt where the shaman performs a séance, gets inside through a smoke hole, and delivers the “health” to the spiritual practitioner, who usually comes into the dwelling earlier on the wings of an owl. The shaman gives a cup of milk to the patient and ties the “health” by a string to a birch tree, which is dug in the front part of the yurt. Finally, when the patient receives from the shaman’s hands a cup of milk and drinks it, it is assumed that the “health” comes back to his body (150-151).

Based on the words of Tinikov, Sukhovskoi describes major benign spirits in Khakass shamanism. They are represented by human-like beings that ride horses of a special type and wear special clothing. Thus, Kugurtkàn, the “czar over all spirits,” who is able to walk in air and resides on the western coast of an ocean, rides a white horse and has a bridle with silver threads. When the “czar” walks on the earth, the ground shakes, lightning strikes, and a whirlwind “howls.” He wears a white silk cap and white morocco boots and gloves. His clothing is made of pure silver. Shamans are not allowed to bother this mighty deity for trivial matters and summon him only in emergency cases. Hostile spirits, in Tinikov’s words, are “like a forest of fir and silver fir trees.” They “stand close to each other like fingers on one’s hands, their beards are very long, and their claws are bent like the claws of a predator bird. They are incredibly tall and have huge eyes. Their teeth are black like tar. While some of them are hairy, others are naked. Some have tails, but others don’t.” The first time Tinikov saw these monsters, he was petrified and even blacked out. Yet in the process of interacting with them on a regular basis, the shaman became so accustomed to them that he started to treat these beings as his “fellow friends” (*panibrat*). During a séance, they always behave and listen to Tinikov (151).

Troshchanskii, V.F. *Evolutsiia chernoï very (shamanstva) u Iakutov [The Evolution of Black Faith (Shamanism) Among the Yakut]*. Ed. Eduard K. Pekarskii. Kazan: Tipo-litografiia imperatorskago universiteta, 1902. iv + 185 pages.

V.F. Troshchanskii (1846-1898), a student of St. Petersburg Technological Institute and a revolutionary, was arrested for anti-government

activities and sent to prison, then to forced labor camp (*katorga*), and eventually to exile in the area populated by the Sakha (Yakut) natives. As an exile, Troshchanskii had a good opportunity to observe and record native beliefs. Like Bogoras, Jochelson and Sieroszewski, the revolutionary turned to ethnography and began recording his observations. In the introduction to Troshchanskii's book, N.F. Katanov, another student of Siberian shamanism, writes that the ethnographer died before completing his manuscript. Troshchanskii bequeathed all his paper to E.K. Pekarskii (1858-1934), another exile-turned ethnographer, who edited the book and prepared it for publication. Katanov stresses that although many observers wrote on Yakut shamanism (Pripuzov, Priklonskii, Sieroszewski, Vitashevskii), Troshchanskii provides the most complete discussion of this topic. The book is based on Troshchanskii's personal ten-year on-site observations and on the works of his predecessors.

The "black faith" was a name the Mongols used to describe their ancient shamanic religion and shamanism of neighboring tribes. Troshchanskii stresses that the label "black faith" cannot be applied indiscriminately to the beliefs of all Siberian tribes practicing shamanism. Siberian shamanism recognizes both benign ("white") and hostile ("black") sources of spiritual power and reveres both of them with an equal zeal. At the same time, speculates Troshchanskii, in an individual tribal group one may see how either "black" or "white" beliefs dominate native spirituality. Thus, in the process of their development, Yakut beliefs strayed away from "white" sources and became centered on "hostile" forces of surrounding nature. As a result, Yakut spiritual practices place more emphasis on black shamanism. In this case, the Yakut religious system indeed can be described as the "black faith" (101). Among other tribes, for example, the Votyak, white shamanism, on the contrary, relegates "black" beliefs to the fringe.

Troshchanskii's reflections of the origin of and competition between "black" and "white" shamanisms are very vague and impressionistic, which clearly points to the superficial nature of these imagined categories invented by nineteenth-century observers of Siberian shamanism. From Troshchanskii's narrative, one can assume that historically "white" and "black" shamanisms evolved parallel to each other, co-existing and competing with one another. That is how, among such people as the Yakut, beliefs became divided into "black" and "white" realms with their own spiritual practitioners: "white" shamans (*ajy ojuna*) and "black" shamans (*abasy ojuna*). In their struggle for power, "black" shamans

were more successful and eventually came to dominate the religious life of this native group.

Speculating on “white” and “black” shamanism, Troshchanskii turns to the Chukchi, who maintained the most “primitive” elementary “white” shamanism, which anthropologist V.G. Bogoras later called “family shamanism.” Troshchanskii writes that Chukchi spirituality was democratic by nature and open to everybody. Within households, individuals were allowed to conduct religious rites on their own. For collective worship, people selected a new person each time. The ethnographer views this elementary “family shamanism,” which might have existed among all Siberians in the past, as one of the sources of Siberian “white” shamanism (112-113). Troshchanskii speculates that the “class” of “white” shamans gradually evolved from “primitive” elementary shamanism with its fluid group of heads of households and clan and tribal leaders who all supervised rituals. Among them, natives gradually singled out special people who began regularly officiating at collective sacrificial rites and who became “white” shamans (123-124). At the same time, among the Chukchi, those collective “household” cults never developed into an “organized” system with its shamans. On the other hand, Troshchanskii stresses that the Chukchi already had a “special class” of “black” shamans that existed parallel to the “family shamanism” (112-113).

Troshchanskii notes that actually not much is known about Yakut “white” shamans, who had almost disappeared by his time. On the other hand, “black” shamans were widely represented. The ethnographer links the origin and persistence of Yakut “black” shamanism with *manarik*, “repeated collective hysterical fits” conditioned by inhospitable northern environment and perpetuated by native females, who are prone to hysteria by nature. The Yakut name for a shaman (*ojun*) originated from the word “to jump,” while the verb “to shamanize” (*kyr*) means “to jump” or “to make erratic jumps.” According to Troshchanskii, Yakut “black” shamans are neurotics predisposed to “hysterio-epileptical fits.” The Yakut associate insanity and manifestations of nervous disorders of various levels with activities of *abasy* spirits, who temporarily or permanently “possessed” individuals and endowed them with sacred power. Since women in general, surmises Troshchanskii, especially elderly women, are more prone to neurosis than men, historically females were probably the first shamans (119). “Almost all Yakut women suffer from a special nervous disorder that manifests itself from time to time.” During their séances, shamans exhibit the same kind of behavior as

manariks. The only difference here is that genuine *manariks* are naturally insane, whereas shamans consciously drive themselves to insanity (120).

To Troshchanskii, a glimpse into the histories of other Siberian tribes similarly suggests the “special role of women” in the development of “black” shamanism. Thus, in the eighteenth century, the Kamchadal (Itel'men) shamanism was at the “primitive” stage, as among the Chukchi. The Kamchadal did not have any special shamans, and shamanic functions were delegated to any woman, preferably an old one. These informal shamanesses eventually gave rise to “black” shamans. Troshchanskii notes that many contemporary Siberian shamans sew to their “aprons” two iron circles, which symbolize female breasts. While combing their hair, shamans separate and braid it in two parts in a “female manner.” During séances, shamans let their hair down, another interesting example pointing to the “female connection” in “black” shamanism. To perform minor séances, Yakut shamans do not put on their shaman costumes. Instead they borrow from maiden’s robes made of a foal’s skin. Also, during the farewell rite in honor of female patron goddess Aisyt, men are not allowed to be present in the yurt for the first three days. In contrast, shamans of both genders are allowed to stay in a dwelling, along with other women. All these facts suggest that historically shamanism should be linked to female activities (123).

The evolution of shamanism is also related to smiths’ work. To manufacture metal parts for ritual musical instruments and shamanic costumes, shamans need smiths. Those craftsmen who work with “black” shamans become blacksmiths. The ones who work for “white” shamans become “white” smiths. Individual smiths cannot serve both categories of shamans because they acquire a mysterious connection with the spirits whose images they manufacture. The patrons of blacksmiths are “dark” spirits (*abasy*), while “white” smiths enjoy the support of “light” spirits (*ajy*). Thus, smiths establish a sacred and intimate connection with shamans they work for and with their spirits. In the course of time, vocations of smiths eventually became associated with the shamanic vocation. Moreover, smiths are viewed as elder brothers of shamans (124). Troshchanskii speculates about the distinct functions of “white” and “black” shamans. “White” shamans never harm anybody. On the whole, they are nice people: modest, honest and benign, whereas their “black” colleagues act as “old foxes” and swindlers. “White” shamans officiate at annual spring feasts, wedding ceremonies, sacrifices to the non-*abasy* deities, collective prayers to secure good fishing, the rites related to the aftermath of a childbirth, the ceremonies associated with the

manufacture of new *ongons* (“idols”). In addition, they cure patients, apparently those whose illnesses are not caused by the “theft” of a soul (*kut*) (149, 151). “Black” shamans officiate at collective feasts in honor of upper and lower *abasy* spirits. They also shamanize and officiate at sacrifices during various illnesses (152).

A special chapter deals with the ritual paraphernalia of Yakut shamans. Like other scholars, Troshchanskii stresses the role of the drum in Yakut shamanism. Since the ethnographer observed séances performed by “black” shamans, he reconstructs the typical séance conducted by the “black” shaman. “Black” shamans usually extract hostile spirits from the bodies of their patients or, if a person’s soul (*kut*) is stolen, they ride their drums traveling to various spiritual spheres searching for the souls of their patients (130). Troshchanskii notes in passing that historically the shamanic costume came into use later than the drum. The fact that the Koryak and the Chukchi “primitive” shamans have drums but do not have costumes proves this (131). It is hard to say whether in ancient times, Yakut white shamans had costumes. At the same time, it is known that their drums usually have a cross-piece wound with horse’s hair. Also, the cross-piece does not have a hole in the middle, as do “black” shamans’ drums (133). Putting on their costumes, shamans acquire the power of the spirits depicted on them. Images drawn on costumes represent spirit helpers, including a major patron spirit, and are called protectors (*tanara*). Moreover, the costume as a whole is also considered *tanara* (135). Each costume usually depicts a human skeleton. At the same time, metal images of human bones, such as forearms, can symbolize bird bones. Still, Troshchanskii notes that the skeleton depicted on the shamanic costume portrays more of the skeleton of a human being rather than that of a bird. The human skeleton symbolizes the “flying” human being (the shaman), which is also reflected in the drawings of bird bones, along with “feathers” and “wings” attached to the costume. It is believed that the skeleton depicted on the costume belongs to a deceased shaman-relative, who acts as a patron of the living shaman who wears this costume (136). Multicolored plaits on the chest and hem symbolize snakes. On many costumes, ribbons cut from material of different colors substitute for plaits. Sometimes, an iron image of a fish, hanging on a long iron chain, is attached to a costume. The length of this chain varies. Sometimes the “fish” reaches the ground and even drags on it. On other costumes, the “fish” is sewn to a waist. The image of the “fish” is called *abasy baliga*. Like “snakes,” the “fish” acts as a spirit helper of smiths and shamans. In addition, numerous iron plates and

conic hollow tubes are also attached to costumes. Troshchanskii writes that the symbolic meaning of the tubes is not clear (137-138).

Among spiritual beings assisting shamans, the most important is so-called mother-animal (*ijä-kył*). It is believed that shamans' souls (*kuts*) are planted into specific animals, and such animals become their "mother-animals." If one of these animals is killed, it means that the shaman will die. Troshchanskii thinks that the Yakut do not depict "mother-animals" on their costumes (138-139). The most important image on a shamanic costume is the so-called *amägät*, portrayed in the form of a human being. This is the symbol of shamanic power, which an older shaman attaches to the costume of a newly-initiated colleague. Troshchanskii writes that *amägät* symbolizes a deceased ancestor-shaman. In addition to other minor images of birds and animals, the costume usually has an image of an ice hole, which the loon uses to help the souls of shamans to travel to the world of spirits during séances (140).

Vasiliev, Viktor N. "Shaman kamlæt [A Shaman Performs]." *Yunnaia Rossia* 2 (February 1910): 191-210.

This semi-fictional ethnographic story has hardly any plot. Its goal is to convey the essence of a shamanic séance for a young adults' monthly magazine. The ethnographer Vasiliev, who made field trips to Siberian natives and witnessed shamanic séances, is quite precise in his descriptions of shamanism. A Tungus (Evenki) named Maima fell ill and invited a famous Yakut (Sakha) shaman Lakhyrytta. The rest of the story is a detailed description of a séance performed by Lakhyrytta. In Vasiliev's hands, who most probably observed the described séance, the shamanic rite turns into an enthralling activity.

All the neighbors of the patient gathered to see the Lakhyrytta séance. After he arrived, the shaman first of all received the best food treats. Lakhyrytta and his assistant enjoyed tea, cottage cheese pancakes, and reindeer meat. Late evening was the time selected for the healing séance. Lakhyrytta was expected to perform the entire night. After the meal was over, his young assistant began to slightly dry Lakhyrytta's drum over a fire. In the meantime, people spread a white reindeer skin on the floor to situate the shaman. Then Lakhyrytta put on a heavy costume decorated with iron "trinkets," various images, and fringes. After this, he squatted on the reindeer skin and received a pipe. Lakhyrytta smoked for a long time, inhaling smoke and preparing himself for the séance. Soon the

shaman began to exhibit the “symptoms of the preparation.” Convulsions twisted his face, and Lakhyrytta began to hiccup, yawn, and murmur something unintelligible. Now the time came to perform the “mystery.” At first, the shaman summoned his spirit helpers. Gathering of the spirits was accompanied by “special sound effects.” Enhanced by darkness in the yurt where the séance was taking place, these effects “genuinely petrified” the spectators. First, the audience suddenly heard the piercing crowing and wings’ flapping of a raven. Then people felt how Lakhyrytta raised his drum, trying to catch something that fell from up above. It was his “loyal raven” (chief guardian spirit), who was the first to arrive. Then, one after another, all of the shaman’s other spirits came together, and the yurt became filled with the voices of birds and animals, and the rustling and flapping of wings. People could hear the roaring of a bear, the screaming of a loon, the howling of a wolf, and the moaning of a seagull. Quietly beating his drum and singing chants, Lakhyrytta enumerated all these “spirit-friends,” politely welcomed them, and explained to them the purposes of his call. Pointing to the patient who lay nearby, the shaman asked the spirits to assist him in the expected struggle with hostile spiritual beings. After this, Lakhyrytta treated the arrived spirits with fat and milk (200-201). Then, continuing to sing, the shaman called the hostile spirit who “moved” in the body of the patient. The hostile spirit did not want to release the soul of the patient. Lakhyrytta threatened this spirit with these words: “I am coming to you surrounded and accompanied by all my mighty spirits. I am coming to drive you out.” The hostile spirit answered (through the shaman), “You are not the one to overpower me, worthless man.” Since the hostile spirit did not want to surrender voluntarily, the shaman changed his tactics. He made an attempt to appease the spirit with presents and to receive in exchange the soul of Maima. Lakhyrytta became involved in “real bargaining” with his spiritual opponent. Still, the stubborn spirit did not want to back off.

A “horrible battle” was unavoidable. “With an army of gathered helping spirits, the shaman attacked his enemy. In the ensuing battle, animals roared, and birds shouted. Soon this noise turned into the battle-cry of the shaman, who completely lost his mind at this point. Like a blizzard, he circled in a complete frenzy. The shaman was all in himself and did not see anything around him. His rolled-up eyes blinked with their whites showing in the dark. His movements were erratic and convulsive. Then, like a ball, he suddenly jumped to the patient, attacking the fierce spiritual enemy, and then jumped back, parrying enemy blows and exchanging curses with the hostile spirit” (202-203). Unable to defeat

the enemy with his power, Lakhyrytta conquered the spirit with a trick. The shaman put on a skin with a bear's head, and, disguised as a bear, cautiously crawled to Maima and grabbed the enemy. The shaman slightly poked the patient with a loon's claw. That was how the spirit of the loon, who was Lakhyrytta's helping spirit, "pecked out" the enemy spirit from the body of Maima. Then Lakhyrytta "drove" the enemy spirit into the wooden image of a salmon, who was also one of the shaman's spirit helpers. After this, accompanied by the salmon spirit, Lakhyrytta departed to the underworld, where they had to deliver the soul of the conquered and expelled spirit. Finally, in the underworld, Lakhyrytta found the soul of the patient, which was imprisoned by some bad spirit (203-204).

On the way to the underworld, the shaman, who was assisted by his spirit helpers, overcame the depths of taiga forest, high cliffs, deep rivers, and wide seas. Then he reached the ice hole that led to the "bottomless water habitat." The underworld was located beyond this "habitat." The shaman fell on the floor with his face down, spread his hands and legs, and finally "dived" into this water. Boldly Lakhyrytta scoured about in the dangerous underworld, where everything was opposite: "rusty" sun set in the east, vegetation was deformed and made of iron, domestic animals were two-legged, and people were one-legged. Having released the soul of the patient from confinement, Lakhyrytta returned to the "sunny world" with the freed soul. Trying to block the enemy from the route leading back to the earth, Lakhyrytta plugged the "devil's ice hole," which the shaman had passed through on the way to the underworld and which he used again to get back home. The "devil's hole" was symbolized by two wooden folding fish images, which had one tail with a round hole in the same spot where the two fish were connected to each other. There was a risk that the enemy could use the same hole to penetrate the earth again. To block the entrance, the shaman took a wooden image of the perch and plugged the hole with it. Now the spirit of the perch would not let the enemy spirit to go through the "ice hole" (205-206). Finally, the shaman had to perform his last journey. Along with the retrieved soul, he had to reach nine heavenly spheres, the domain of Ai-toion, the creator of the world, where the tortured soul would be "treated and taken care of." Into the ground people stuck a pole with a wooden board that had nine grooves corresponding to the nine heavenly spheres. Beating his drum and dancing, which symbolized riding a horse, Lakhyrytta climbed to the upper world. In his chants during the climbing, the shaman described to the spectators the places he visited. Each time

the shaman reached a specific sphere, he welcomed its spiritual inhabitants and offered them his modest treats. At the moment when the shaman provided a food treat, somebody from the audience stood up and filled a groove with reindeer milk. Gradually all grooves were full of milk, which meant that spiritual beings in all nine spheres were fed. Only great shamans could reach the last ninth sky, where Ai-toion lived. Lakhrytta was one such shaman, and he was finally able to face the supreme deity (206-207). The shaman handed the retrieved soul to Ai-toion, who passed it to his nine crane-sons and eight daughters-white birds (*sterkhi*). The sons and daughters put the soul into a cradle that hung on the branches of a sacred tree. They took good care of it, trying to restore health and vitality to the “damaged” soul. This was the end of Lakhrytta’s spiritual mission. After this, all that remained was his return to the earthly “middle world” (208).

Vasiliev, Viktor N. “Shaman Darkha [Shaman Named Darkha].” *Pedagogicheskii listok* 1 (1910): 34-53.

In his semi-fictional story, ethnographer Vasiliev describes Tungus (Evenki) shaman Darkha. It appears that the story is based on an actual event Vasiliev witnessed during his field research. Darkha belonged to the clan Karanto, which was heavily assimilated by the Yakut and which “from the times immemorial move around in the area of the Khety River, which is a tributary of the Khatanga River that flows into the Arctic Ocean.” In addition, all members of this clan had been converted to Orthodox Christianity. Yet it did not prevent them from practicing shamanism, which became mixed with Christian ideas in the “heads of these children of the [ice] desert.” The Tungus “happily shared traditions” and could not figure out why “people in black robes force them to reject the religion of their ancestors, why they should denounce all spirits and worship only one deity ‘Ai-toion,’ to light some ‘thick sticks’ [candles] and bow to some pictures drawn on boards [icons]” (35).

“In the Tungus understanding, Darkha lived happily and fairly comfortably.” An excellent hunter, he was always able to prove himself. Yet Darkha had “the eyes of a shaman.” They “pierced people right through. When Darkha stared at somebody, it seemed that he looked not at this person, but somewhere else, inside of his interlocutor or through him. Nobody could stand this look”(34). Local natives insisted that Darkha was a “relative” to spirits, who sooner or later would call him for

a service. That is exactly what happened. Once, Darkha became seriously ill and did not recover for a long time. His kinfolks thought he would die. Yet from chopped phrases, which Darkha uttered while unconscious, the relatives surmised that Darkha was “called in” by spirits, who sent the ailment to prepare him for the shamanic vocation. Delirious Darkha asked his relatives to manufacture for him shamanic accessories. He even described to his kinfolks the form and the size of sacred artifacts. Diligently observing all his instructions, which were viewed as sent by spirits, the relatives made all the artifacts that the “spirits needed.” When the paraphernalia were ready, Darkha recovered. He felt that such spiritual “exercises” as singing shamanic songs or beating his new drum especially helped to relieve his sufferings. After recovery, Darkha changed. He became “gloomy and thoughtful, stopped laughing, frequently avoided people trying to be alone” (38). The news that Darkha was called in by spirits spread. Soon the new shaman began visiting his patients and curing them with his séances. Ten years later, Darkha was already considered a “big shaman,” and his name was known all over the tundra among the Tungus, Yakut, Dolgan, and even Samoyeds (Nentsy). Now all his life consisted of regular trips to his patients. Darkha never refused to visit ill people, even if they lived far from his home. Although Darkha received good “fees” for shamanizing, his vocation did not bring him riches. On the contrary, his household, which lost him as a worker, gradually fell apart. On top of everything else, his small son died. Yet Darkha did not complain: “he knew that this was the destiny of all shamans, who were doomed to serve higher forces and constantly interact with spirits, other worlds’ beings, for whom worldly pursuits do not matter” (40).

Such strong shamans as Darkha could look in the future. Once he envisioned an unexplainable danger that approached him. Indeed, soon monk missionaries came to the tundra country. Having heard about the powerful shaman, one old monk came to Darkha in hope of exposing him. Having seen a drum and a shamanic costume, the monk began to “curse Darkha calling him a heretic and a heathen, the words that Darkha could not understand. Darkha was grim and silently looked down, the words of the missionary fell on Darkha without touching his mind. Darkha only felt a piercing resentment toward the monk, who offended the sacredness of his half-savage soul” (41). Darkha’s younger brother, Amarchi, could not stand the offensive behavior of the missionary and started to defend his brother in broken Russian: “Why to curse Darkha? Is he to blame that spirit called him in and he cures the sick and shamanize?”

You have your own faith, we have our own. Why don't you let us to believe in our own way? You shamanize in your own way and don't prevent our shamans to shamanize"(42).

The verbal clash ended with the confiscation of Darkha's costume and drum by the monk, who ordered the shaman to quit his vocation. Yet Darkha could not do it. Arguing that "spirits, who would not leave him alone, demanded that he begin serving them again," Darkha had new paraphernalia made, and shamanic powers came back to him. His prestige grew even wider. Everybody believed that Darkha was able to cause a blizzard, rain, a wind, and that he could shamanize simultaneously in different places. People also shared stories that Darkha could cut himself with a knife, swallow burning coals, kill animals at a great distance, and turn into an animal or a bird. They insisted that Darkha saw and heard everything even when he was at home. People did not dare to say anything bad about him, even when he was not around.

Fifteen years after the missionary's visit, news about monks' coming again reached this far-away tundra area. Now Darkha was certain that real misfortune was coming. Like many years ago, old Darkha again faced a "final judgment" from a visiting missionary. This time, the shaman hid his sacred paraphernalia, but this did not help. The monks found his sacred artifacts and burned them. "With a hopeless look, old Darkha watched how his things were burning, feeling that along with breaking and warping the skin of his drum, the burning fire was taking away part of his soul, all power of the mighty and glorious shaman who controlled his spirits. What gave sense to his entire life for the past twenty-five years was now passing away" (48). This misfortune broke the heart of old Darkha. He lost interest in life. Soon "called" and "tortured" by his spirits, Darkha fell ill, and after a short while, he died. Vasiliev is totally sympathetic with the shaman and his faith and does not hesitate to depict Orthodox missionaries as colonizers and aggressive fanatics who destroyed indigenous faith. The story is rich in ethnographic details, especially when Vasiliev describes the ceremony of animation of the shaman's drum and the funeral of the deceased shaman.

Vitashevskii, N. A. "Iz nabliudenii nad Iaukutskimi shamanskimi deistviami [A Few Observations of Yakut Shamanic Activities]." *Sbornik muzeia antropologii i etnografii* 5, no. 1 (1918): 165-188.

Vitashevskii, a Siberian exile-turned ethnographer, shares his personal impressions of two shamanic séances he observed among Yakut (Sakha) shamans in 1894. The observations made him conclude that to make materials on shamanic séances appropriate for “scientific analysis,” an ethnographer should follow two goals: (1) to “describe séances on the spot,” or, in other words, to describe the actual flow of a séance, and (2) to “separate a séance into specific segments” (165). The first requirement is based on the assumption that no matter how hard ethnographers try to record shamanic séances using stories of shamans themselves or the people who witnessed séances, these descriptions never reflect what takes place in reality: “Recording shamanic activities from a well-informed native, even from a shaman himself, a researcher entrusts too much agency into a storyteller. I am absolutely certain that a shaman will never exactly repeat [in a conversation with an ethnographer] the same verbal expressions and movements [he makes during a séance]. If an observer asks a shaman to describe a specific part of a séance, the shaman will have to define how it fits the entire séance and to single out what is essential and what is irrelevant. A researcher cannot entrust such a native informant, who is intellectually not adequately developed, with these types of generalizations. One cannot expect that a native is capable of comprehending what might be grasped only during the meticulous and diligent cabinet work of a researcher-ethnographer” (165-166). The requirement to “separate a séance into segments,” is related to the comprehensive research of each segment of the phenomenon right on the spot. Vitashevskii even suggests that future observers separate the séance into the “segments that should be described separately.” He suggests that observers accept the following blueprint while describing shamanic séances: (1) “circumstances that cause people to use a shaman, a description of the shaman who is invited, and description of the setting of the séance”; (2) “movement of a shaman”; (3) “his poses”; (4) a drum; (a) “the way of extracting sounds” and (b) “sound effects”; (5) “an intonation of a voice”; (6) “the sequence of activities during a séance”; (7) texts of chants; and (8) the attitudes toward a séance from (a) a shaman himself and (b) participants in a séance (167). Shamans affect their spirits, the mindsets of spectators, and especially the minds of patients not only by chants but also by changing the intonation of their voices, by the variety of drum sounds, and by the clanking of metal pendants. Unusual movements of shamans, who might be gracious or quiet, and, in another moment, on the contrary, might be “savagely mad,” add to the general impression produced by a séance. Vitashevskii notes that these changes in

movements are almost exclusively addressed to spectators. For example, shamans might point a drumstick in the direction of spectators or might pretend that they want to throw burning coals at dozing spectators (167).

After these extensive introductory remarks, Vitashevskii describes two séances he witnessed in the summer of 1894. Both séances were performed to heal a young Yakut who accidentally cut his left foot with an axe. A shaman, Chybaki, who was invited to cure the wounded native, was not considered to be an experienced healer. Although Chybaki had a drum, he did not have a costume and at first had to shamanize without a drum. Then ethnographer E.K. Pekarskii, a friend of Vitashevskii, brought a shamanic costume that he had acquired for a museum (168). When the two ethnographers offered the shaman the use of their costume, the native gladly agreed. Then, following the abovementioned blueprint, Vitashevskii describes in all details the séance he witnessed (170-181).

The séance performed by Chybaki is described as follows. The first “act” was *olokkho ololor*. Sitting on a white horse skin on the floor, the shaman addressed spirits: the masters of the fire, the yurt, the locality, his spirit helpers, all known souls of the dead (*oiri’a*) and “devouring” hostile spirits (*abasy*), who might be the actual cause of the illness. At this point, the shaman beat his drum and sang slowly and very quietly. During a second “act,” Chybaki “tested the waters” by checking where he should look for the hostile spirit that stole the soul of the patient. At times, Chybaki stopped beating his drum and stared far away as if looking for something. Gradually, drum beats and singing grew louder, and the shaman began to imitate a horse prancing and a bird singing. During a third “act,” Chybaki “moved” a hostile spirit from a patient into himself and then dispatched it to the South. The tool the shaman used to dispatch the hostile spirit was called *tsalbyr*, which represented a small young birch tree cleaned of branches. Sitting and pointing this birch stick at the patient, Chybaki gradually moved toward him and sang loudly. Having touched the patient with the stick, he bent over him and spoke in a loud voice, trying to scare out the hostile spirit, who sat inside the body of the patient. At the same time, the shaman produced sucking sounds with his mouth, showing how he absorbed the spirit. Having finished this “operation,” Chybaki began to dance in a twisting manner and to vigorously beat the drum handed to him by one of his assistants. Twists, drum beats, and singing meant that the shaman drove the hostile spirit extracted from the patient’s body to the South. Incidentally, writes Vitashevskii, a patient’s body might contain several hostile spirits, and each one should be extracted and driven away through the

abovementioned “operation.” The fourth “act” of the *séance* was the shaman’s journey to the upper world, where Chybaki searched for the soul of the patient. Before embarking on his journey, Chybaki sent his gifts to the upper world spirits. Then, facing the southern window of the dwelling, he slowly moved his drumstick up and down. After this, slightly jumping and beating his drum over the patient, Chybaki made sure that no hostile spirits remained near the patient. Gradually the sounds of the drum grew louder. The shaman parted with this world by bowing to all spectators as if saying good-bye. Finally, Chybaki was on his way to the upper world. Before he reached the spirits he wanted to visit, Chybaki had to pass through a number of spiritual localities controlled by specific spirits (*olokh*). In each *olokh*, he bowed to a spirit and handed it a present, then looked up and down. Performing his return home, Chybaki acted as if he were sleepy. He bent forward and staggered. At the same time, he did not want his spectators to fall asleep, so he moved around pretending he wanted to stick people from the audience with his drumstick or throw burning coals at them. Having come back to the middle world (the earth), Chybaki was half-asleep. To bring him back, people struck flint stones over him and woke up the shaman with sparks. The *séance* ended with the shaman sitting and singing his final chant.

Vitashevskii stresses that he intentionally did not record any shamanic chants during the *séance* he witnessed. Instead, he honestly admits that he was absolutely unable to perform this work (180). First, he felt that in front of all the participants, it was awkward to record what the shaman chanted: “the procedure of recording might have had a harmful effect on the current of the *séance* itself from a scientific point of view” (180). In addition, it is usually very dark during a *séance*. In a word, “to record something was almost unthinkable. And what else could one record? No matter how familiar an observer is with a native language, in all shamanic chants, one meets a host of unintelligible words, which prevents a quality recording” (180). Vitashevskii sees a partial solution in recruiting native intellectuals who know stenography. To use a phonograph was also hard because by its noise, the recording equipment destroys the natural flow of a *séance* (181).

Then Vitashevskii describes a second *séance* performed over the same patient by another shaman. The native did not recover after the first *séance*, so his relatives decided to invite a more powerful shaman named Bylkiia. Natives said that this shaman wanted to quit his profession, but hostile spirits began “devouring” his foot, which forced him to renew his

shamanic vocation, although Bylkiia remained lame. Unlike Chybaki, from the very beginning Bylkiia was not too optimistic in his diagnosis for this specific patient and began his séance reluctantly. When the relatives of the patient asked Bylkiia if he wanted them to arrange a good sacrifice, Bylkiia skeptically noted that some other shaman would have surely asked to sacrifice some kind of animal (181). Yet to him, “horses and cows are raised to feed people rather than spirits; to sprinkle some oil or to pour a battle of vodka into a fire will be enough for spirits” (181-182). For some reason, Bylkiia had neither a drum nor a costume. The ethnographers again offered the one acquired for the museum, and Bylkiia used it for this séance. The drum was borrowed from the first shaman. The shaman was not opposed to the presence of Vitashevskii during the séance.

Then Vitashevskii recorded shamanic poses, movements, sounds and elements of the séance (182-184). Unlike the first shaman, Bylkiia could not finish his séance. He interrupted his session, claiming that he could not locate the spirit who caused the illness. After one of the spectators dried his drum for a while for a better sound, Bylkiia tried again, but his efforts were in vain. In desperation, the shaman noted that the cause of the illness might be not a hostile spirit, but simply a pus accumulated in the foot of the patient. He asked for the drum for the third time, trying to locate the hostile spirit. After another failure, Bylkiia flatly stated that nothing came out that day and cancelled the whole séance. One native tried to dry the drum again for a better effect, and several insisted that the séance be continued, but the shaman ordered them to stop pushing him. “During a tea-drinking which I arranged for all the participants of the séance, through another native, I invited Bylkiia to come to me, promising to give him some treats and to talk about shamanism. To my offer, the shaman proudly responded that a shamanic séance is a serious business and that he does not want to visit me for an empty talk.” Later Vitashevskii learned that Bylkiia attributed his unsuccessful séance to the presence of the Russian during the séance (184). It appears that in his scientific rush, Vitashevskii did not know any limits: “In conclusion, I would like to report that my offer, which I made for the purposes of an ethnographic observations, to invite one more shaman, famous Kuba Uola, was rejected with determination by all relatives and

neighbors of the patient.” The reader might guess what their motives for this rejection were, although Vitashevskii claims that natives rejected his offer by referring to the incredible powers of Kuba, who might “arouse so many powerful spirits that they will be bothering people after the séance” (184).

Chapter 2

Siberian Shamanism in Soviet Imagination

Avrorin, V.A. and I.I. Kozminskii. “Predstavlenie orochei o vselennoi, o pereselenii dush i puteshestviakh shamanov, izobrazhennikh na karte [Picture of the Universe, Migrations of Souls, and Shamans’ Journeys Through the Eyes of the Oroch Natives].” *Sbornik muzeiia antropologii i etnografii* 11 (1949): 324-334.

This article is a commentary on the “map of the universe” drawn by an Oroch shaman named Savelii Khutunk in 1929. Khutunk made this map for ethnographers Avrorin and Kozminskii during their fieldwork among the Oroch people, who reside on the mainland side of the Tatar Strait in the Russian Far East. The first time Avrorin and Kozminskii thought about approaching a native to draw the map of the universe was when they observed a funeral ceremony supervised by an Oroch shamaness for a deceased boy. Trying to record how and where the soul of the boy wandered in the universe, ethnographers realized they could not do it by simply rendering the shamaness’ story in words. Hence, they came to the conclusion that it would be better simply to ask the woman to put the picture of the whole route on paper. The woman agreed and drew a small map that depicted the routes of the soul of a dead person. Later, Avrorin and Kozminskii showed this map, which unfortunately, did not survive, to Khutunk, another Oroch shaman, who “leveled a severe criticism at the map, questioning the professional credibility and knowledge of our first informant.” In an attempt to correct numerous mistakes of his colleague, the shaman invested almost twenty hours in drawing another map. Not trusting his own artistic skills, Khutunk recruited two young Oroch to help him make the map “more beautiful.” Eventually, the entire male population of a village gathered around the shaman, helping him to complete the map, which became the result of a “collective creative process.” Yet it was the shaman who made all the final decisions (324).

The authors also provide a brief review of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century Oroch shamanism. The Oroch had few professional shamans, and they were approached only in extremely serious cases. At the same time, “all adult male and female Oroch considered themselves a bit of shamans,” which made them well aware of the specifics of the

shamanic profession (325). In ordinary cases, for curing or other spiritual purposes, the Oroch thought that they had a right to establish direct relations with spirits, bypassing professional shamans. In each village in the evening, one could hear drumbeats, quiet singing, and the “murmuring of amateur shamans.” Thus, all Oroch natives always believed both in the power of professional shamans and their own limited shamanic skills. While recognizing the power of professional shamans, the Oroch were not totally satisfied with them. The natives believed that some professional shamans who reached the height of their careers started feeding on human souls. The Oroch insisted that in ancient times their population was numerous, unlike its meager five hundred in the 1920s. They were convinced that one of the reasons for such a drastic decline in population was the predatory nature of high-ranking shamans who devoured human souls (325).

After a “topographical” description of all routes and “landscapes” depicted on the map, Avrorin and Kozminskii detail the wanderings of the souls of deceased people. As soon as Oroch natives die, their souls go to the afterworld (*buni*) without being accompanied by a shaman. Soon souls reach a small side route that leads to the afterworld of dogs. If these are the souls of thoughtless individuals, they take this route and end up forever in the dogs’ habitat, where souls of dogs tickle and play with human souls. Incidentally, this was another reason why the Oroch believed that their population declined so drastically. On the contrary, the souls of good people do not sidetrack but go straight ahead. After three days of travel, souls come to a small table with food. After a meal, they continue their route. In a day, souls reach a cone-like dwelling, where they stay for a night. At the end of the next day, they climb a high rock with a vertical hole that goes right through. Here souls lose consciousness and drop to the afterworld (*buni nani*). Finding themselves in the *buni* land, souls regain consciousness and live in that country for five generations. Then souls leave, going upriver (*buni ulini*) into the “upper cloud world.” At first souls travel in the shape of iron old men with walking sticks, then they turn into iron arrows, and then into iron ducks. Finally, at the very source of the river, souls turn into iron worms and slide right through a hole in the heavenly sphere and continue their journey as iron butterflies. The butterflies fly over the “coal place road” toward the Moon Land. Before entering the Moon Land, souls have to decide which of two old women living in this land they have to join. To do this, they have to choose one of two rivers: the one that leads to the “tiger” old woman or another that leads to the “bear” old woman. When

souls make up their minds, they go over a selected river and live for a while at its source, placing themselves under the supervision of an old woman. An old woman usually nourishes souls by feeding them charcoal. When souls are nourished enough, they turn into puff-balls, and an old woman drops them from the Moon Land back to the earth where they usually penetrate women's wombs. As a result, women conceive and give births. If in a past life a soul belonged to a man, after it drops back to the earth, it turns into a woman, and vice-versa.

The Oroch also enlightened Avrorin and Kozminskii about the development and journeys of shamans' souls. Shamans' souls are created by the supreme sky deity called Khadau, who looks like an old man with a gray beard. Khadau hammers souls of shamans from iron on an anvil shaped as a hornless moose. In addition to shamans' souls, Khadau hammers sacred shamanic paraphernalia such as the drum (*untu*), the drumstick, the shamanic costume, the belt with decorations, and also shamans' helping spirits. When the souls of shamans and all necessary accessories are ready, Khadau sends them to his wife, Khadau Mamachani, who puts the souls in stone cradles. When souls grow up, she turns them into fish and puts them in a river, which starts right at the cradle. Souls go downriver to a lake where all kinds of dangers await them. First, souls have to face a hostile spirit who waits to attack them with a sharp spear. If shamans' souls escape this danger, they come to a stone platform with a dog that runs back and forth. The dog preys on shamans' souls. The souls have a chance to turn back, but here again a hostile spirit armed with a stone hammer waits to strike them. If the hostile spirit knocks down a shaman's soul, it carries it to its dwelling and offers the "prisoner" a treat of human flesh. If the spirit talks its "prisoner" into trying human flesh, the shaman who will receive this soul will feed on human souls and gnaw the dead people. If the spirit fails, it tries to devour a soul. Smart and crafty souls are able to escape from this danger to the lake, from which they get into the river that takes them to the final destination, the walrus sea. Yet by this sea, the last and the most fearful test awaits shamans' souls. Khadau himself stands here, aiming his harpoon at swimming souls. The harpoon is attached to a leather rope held by nine spirits who have cone-shaped heads and nine spirits with round heads. If it is a weak soul, Khadau kills it. If a soul is strong, it keeps on moving, even with a harpoon arrowhead in its back dragging all eighteen spirits behind. Eventually, all these spirits become spirit helpers to the shaman who will get this soul. In the walrus sea, a soul finally acquires a human shape, and Khadau gives it a self-moving boat. When a

soul reaches the shore, it usually chooses a proper person and settles inside the body of the individual, who is designated to become a professional shaman.

The most interesting part of the paper is the description of shamans' cosmic travels. During their séances, when shamans plunge themselves into the state of ecstasy, their souls usually journey to the Moon Land. Between the earth and the Moon Land are three clouds. From the earth to the first cloud, souls of shamans fly as swifts; then from the first cloud to the second one, souls fly as bats; and finally from the second cloud to the third one, as dragonflies. Then shamans' souls turn into spiders and climb the web that leads them to the Moon Land. Before they enter the Moon Land, the souls turn into grasshoppers. Shamans, or better to say, their souls, also can fly to the Sun Land. Yet they do it rarely and only for the sake of showing their bravery. Such journeys are extremely dangerous because each shaman who goes there has to fight a temptation not to look at a girl with a shining face who lives there. As soon as a shaman takes a look at her, he will be blinded forever. Even if a shaman does not look at the girl, he should stay at a safe distance because she might burn him if he stays close. Shamans who want to take a risk to fly to the Sun Land cannot go there directly. First they have to fly to the Moon Land, and from there they can enter the Sun Land. Moreover, a few Oroch shamans of the highest qualification blessed with mighty spiritual experience were even able to travel beyond the limits of the universe.

Bogoras, V. G. "O tak nazyvaemom iazike dukhov (shamanskom) u razlichnikh vetvei Eskimoskago plemeni [On So-called Shamanic Spiritual Language Among Various Branches of the Eskimo Tribe]." *Kunstkamera: izbrannye stati'i*. Ed. A.K. Baiburin, N.M. Girenko, K.V. Chistov. St. Petersburg: Evropeiskii dom, 1995. 97-104.

This paper, which was originally published in 1919, discusses so-called spiritual language (shamanic language), which Eskimo (Yupik and Inuit) shamans used during their séances. Bogoras believes that the shamanic language is similar among various Yupik/Inuit groups of Greenland, Labrador Peninsula, Central Canada, Mackenzie River delta, and Alaska. Shamanic vocabulary usually originates from two sources: (1) archaic words or words which are rarely used by a shaman's community, but might be in use by other Yupik/Inuit groups; and (2) descriptive words with a vague meaning that are based on hints and associations. As a

matter of fact, all shamanic chants have very vague meaning. Moreover, both shamans and their audiences always underscore and enhance this vagueness. Bogoras believes that this vagueness is important because it sets up a symbolic border between the world of spirits and the world of people, who assume that as laymen they are not supposed to understand the language of spirits. As a result, if one asks natives who observe a séance, "What does he [the spirit that transmits its message through a shaman] speak about?" "listeners" usually answer, "We do not understand!" Still, understanding is possible, stresses Bogoras (98). The rest of his discussion is based on the field materials the ethnographer collected among the Yupik people of the Indian Point area, who belong to the "western and less explored branch of the Eskimo tribe." Neighboring Chukchi called them the Ai'wanat, which means "the eastern ones" because the Yupik live east of the Chukchi.

As an example, Bogoras uses a shamanic chant of an anonymous Eskimo (Yupik) shaman from the Uni'sak village at Indian Point (Chaplino Cape): "Oh, man, oh, man, this one, this one! Here, right at this spot, cut my neck, take it down there to him, the food for him who is down there close to him. Oh, human being, Oh, human being, this one, this one, cut my head right here, at this spot, down there take it to that one. Let him take this head to those with fangs for them to bring it to land." This is a fragment from the walrus chant. The meaning of this utterance is "Oh, human being, cut my head and take it down there to that one, which means the walrus. Let this head be his meal. Oh, human being, cut my head and take down there to that one. Let the walrus bring it back to land." In this fragment, a shaman used three words that belong to so-called language of spirits: *taru* (human being), *aku'run* (food) and *tu'wutilik* (those with fangs, which means the walrus). The first two words are archaic in this specific Yupik dialect, and the third word belongs to the category of "vaguely descriptive" words (99). Bogoras also provides additional examples of these vague descriptive words. In the "spirit language," a shaman is usually called "the owner of a drum," a dead person is called "the one who lies flat on his back," the sun is called "light one," the earth is called "location," and a dog is called "the one who walks on all fours." The most characteristic examples of the shamanic language are the ones that describe animals hunted by the Eskimo people. "Shamanic language" avoids identifying animals by their names. Instead, animals are described by their specific features such as "mustached one," "the one with fangs," or "the one with a tail," and so forth. The wild deer are called the "branchy," and the walrus are called

“those with fangs” or even “owners of walking sticks.” It is widely known that among many primal people, hunters never call animals by their names, especially when they plan a hunting trip. Otherwise, an animal could “hear” and avoid them. Like the “shamanic language,” the Eskimo “hunting language” has descriptive names for all animals (101).

If mentioning animals’ names natives consider detrimental to their hunting, the images of animals, on the contrary, are magically helpful because they attract animals and subject them to the power of human beings. Therefore, among the Eskimo people, carved images of the walrus, seals, and fish serve as hunting amulets and are also depicted on the fishing gear (nets, harpoons) and plates.

Another group of words from the “shamanic language” describe human beings and especially the ailments of human beings. Natives treat the illness as the result of “hunting” attacks, which spirits organize to procure human souls. Eskimo legends note that spirits treat human souls as their hunting catch. Spirits invade human habitats as entire families, bringing their wives and children and carrying various nets and traps. Consequently, shamanic curing consists of resisting these hunting attacks and of setting up counterattacks. Shamans usually beat spirits by dozens and hundreds, and then release human souls, which spirits keep tied and packed in sacks on their sleds. People call spirits *to’rnarak*. Interestingly, spirits “use” a similar word to describe human souls: *ta’rnarak* (102). Bogoras also notes that the vocabulary the “shamanic language” uses to describe human beings and human-related activities is more elaborate and imaginative than the words used to portray animals and animal world. A child is usually called a “small cute soul,” an eye is a “sun ray going through a hole,” lungs are a “side extension to a dwelling,” a woman is a “broken one,” a pregnant woman is a “swollen one,” and to die is “to fall into a hole” (102-103).

Diakonova, V.P. “Predmety k lechebnoi funktsii shamanov Tuvy i Altaia [Towards the Curing Function of Tuva and Altai Shamans].” *Material’naia kul’tura i mifologiya*. Ed. B.N. Putilov. Leningrad: Nauka, 1981. 138-152.

Students of Siberian shamanism take it for granted that drums, costumes, and images of spirit helpers are the shamans’ major curing tools. Using collections of the St. Petersburg Museum of Ethnography, published sources, and her own field notes on Tuva and Altai shamans, Diakonova

points out that the sacred tools of Siberia shamans are not restricted to these items. In addition to traditional tools, during their séances spiritual practitioners occasionally used a bow and arrows, lashes, branches of plants, pieces of fabric, staves, and other objects. Anthropologists usually consider these items to be the remnants of the earlier stage in the development of shamanism and treat them as predecessors of drums and other classic shamanic paraphernalia (138). Diakonova notes that scholars failed to pay attention to another attribute of those ancient sacred items. When the ideological pressure of communism eradicated shamanism in its classic forms (in the 1970s Diakonova had to write euphemistically of the “rejection of shamanism on a mass scale”), the role of these “predecessors” did not diminish but rather increased. Those shamans who still practiced in the Soviet period increasingly started to rely on “substitutes” for traditional classic paraphernalia (138).

One of the major functions of shamans was healing. Classic shamanic curing was centered more on religious and magic practices than on folk medicine (138). Still, folk medicine was highly developed among the Tuvinians and the Altaians. Many experienced native elders practiced folk healing, which in many respects resonated with shamanic rituals. The Altaians called such folk healers *emchi*, the term natives later started to apply to Russian-trained doctors and physicians. The Tuvinians called them *domchu* (139). Like shamans, folk healers learned with elders and had to memorize special chants similar to shamanic chants. As curing tools, Tuva and Altai folk healers used bear paws and bear claws as healing tools. The *domchu* used bear paws to heal breast-feeding ailments (140-141). Until the late 1960s, the Altaians valued bear paws and claws. The Telengit, one of the Altaian tribes, kept bear paws and claws in their dwellings. Such attachment to bears originated from a popular perception of bears as symbols of purity. In old times, when taking an oath, the Altaians and the Tuvinians drank water from a bowl in which they had placed a bear’s skull. It was believed that the bear might punish the ones who failed to keep their words (142).

Diakonova notes that existing literature does not provide enough detailed descriptions of séances of Altaian and Tuvinian shamans. To fill this void and to show how modern Siberian shamans perform their séance without a drum, she describes a shamanic séance she observed in Tuva in 1975. The séance was performed by a shaman named Aldyn Khorel Ondar. In those families whose members are frequently ill, shamans try to perform a séance at least once a year. For this kind of séance, shamans usually select the month of July. The Tuvinians believe that in July, all

nature reaches the height of its “blossoming.” Ondar conducted his “prophylactic” séance outside of a dwelling amid a natural landscape and in the presence of the participating family and their relatives. The shaman and the participants gathered around a larch tree (a shamanic tree). The designated tree roughly matched the age of a shaman. If shamans were young, they selected young trees; if they were old, people selected aged trees. Around the larch tree at the four cardinal directions, participants in the séance erected small hearths made of rocks. On the larch tree people hung so-called *chalama* represented by ribbons of fabric of white, blue, and red colors. Then the shaman collected small piles of grass and placed them next to each hearth and situated himself at the hearth on the eastern side. From *tolkan* (flour made of fried barley grains) people made a small sculpture of a person that symbolized an ailing individual. The sculpture was placed in a small hole in the dirt under the tree. The shaman also placed a coin under this sculpture. Then, Ondar had people light the juniper in all four hearths and put into the fires small pieces of food, which were the presents to master spirits from those who asked for help. The master of the larch tree also received gifts. Before he started the séance, Ondar also made another fire near this larch tree and watched what direction the smoke went. By the direction of the smoke, the shaman predicted the development of a targeted illness. The smoke went from the west to the east through the crown of the tree, which was considered a good sign. After this the shaman began his séance. Having taken in his right hand a large piece of white material of about one meter in length, Ondar stood by the fire made near the larch tree. Waving the piece of material, the shaman began singing his *algysh* (chants). In a poetic form, Ondar related the life stories of his ancestors and described his spirit helpers and his activities at home. Using his chants, the shaman summoned the master spirit of the locality. After waving the piece of material, Ondar sprinkled homemade alcohol in all four directions. Then the shaman conversed with the spirit who responded to the shamanic invocation. The spirit reported to the shaman what would happen to the ailing individual. After the shaman heard the “report” of the arriving spirit, he sent it off, and the séance was over (145-146).

Diakonova stresses that in that séance, the use of the piece of white material could be compared with the use of a drum (147). At the same time, the act of waving the material had its own meaning. Unlike the drum, the material was not treated as the shaman’s draft animal. Neither was the material viewed as the shaman’s weapon or as the container for collection of arriving spirits. Waving was intended to bring together the

master spirits of the locality and also to wave off the spirits of illnesses. In traditional Altaian worldview, the manner in which air currents quivered over a flame indicated the way an illness penetrates an individual. Waving off the illnesses by using material was a popular method of treatment among the Altaians and the Khakass. Elders or other people who were knowledgeable about traditional healing usually performed this procedure.

Drawing on comparative materials from other Siberian tribes, Diakonova also discusses the ritual meaning of the sacred staff, which shamans used for healing purposes. Natives from the Ket tribe viewed the staff as a symbol of the “world shamanic tree” (152). Among the Buryat, shamans who belonged to the two lower ranks were not to have their own drums. Instead they carried staves, which were also included in the paraphernalia of full-fledged shamans with drums. Some Buryat shamans addressed their staves by the same names they used for drums. “Such meaning attached to staves was not accidental. The symbolism of staves matched the symbolism of drums because for Buryat and Tubalar shamans, both were their draft animals” (152).

Dyrenkova, N.P. “Poluchenie shamanskogo dara po vozzreni’am turetskikh plemen [Acquisition of Shamanic Power Among the Turkic Tribes].” *Sbornik Muziaia antropologii i etnografii* 9 (1930): 267-291.

Dyrenkova discusses the acquisition of shamanic power among Turkic-speaking tribes of Siberia: the Yakut (Sakha), the Altaians, the Teleut, the Soyot (the Tuvinians). She describes both physical and psychological sufferings related to this initiation into the shamanic profession. Her major sources are oral accounts by shamans themselves and their relatives. All these stories clearly indicate that the shamanic call is a “violent and coercive procedure” (267). Turkic tribes treat the shamanic call as an illness inherited in a family. Usually a call manifests itself as a pressure from a spirit of some distant ancestor to accept a shamanic vocation. Dyrenkova stresses that sometimes the shamanic call might manifest itself in visible material forms. Rocks that somehow dropped into a yard, clothing that suddenly starts burning, objects that move by themselves, and similar phenomena might be interpreted as manifestations of the shamanic call (276). Shamans do not accept their vocation voluntarily. On the contrary, they resist, using all available

tools. For example, one who has been chosen by spirits for a shamanic occupation might intentionally abstain from shamanic séances, refuse to make a drum, and avoid spontaneous and erratic movements, which are usually associated with shamanic behavior. There are examples of “candidates” who do not accept the call. Yet they have to pay a high price. The “chosen ones” who ignore the pressure of their ancestors usually become insane, crippled, gradually “wither,” and even die (268). Spirits severely punish those who refuse to accept the shamanic vocation. Thus, to reject the will of spirits is hardly possible. Moreover, after accepting the shamanic power, it is absolutely impossible to reject this vocation. When a shaman refuses to shamanize and stops performing séances, spirits chew an “apostate’s” hands and legs, press, punch, do not leave him or her alone, and threaten to strangle (277). Despite the large amount of energy shamanic activities “drain” from those who accept this call, shamans usually view séances they perform as a relief from their sufferings. If they abstain from performing séances for a long time, spirits inflict on them various illnesses and misfortunes (278).

Shamanic power usually descends on a person suddenly like an illness. From early childhood, the person who is chosen experiences fits and hallucinations, during which spirits persuade him or her to follow them. The Altaians and the Shor describe the shamanic calls as follows: “an ancestor persuaded,” “a spirit stepped on him/her,” or “a spirit pressures.” The shamanic illness might continue for a few years, despite the resistance of a candidate. During all this time, in dreams and during fits, a chosen one is constantly reminded about his or her duty, threatened with suffocation, and is promised a speedy recovery if he or she agrees to accept the shamanic vocation. Scared and exhausted, a “candidate” usually begins to shamanize and eventually recovers (169).

Shamanic illness is usually accompanied by colorful visions, which are surprisingly similar among various shamans who belong to different Siberian tribes. Shamans explain physical sufferings during the initiation period as spirits’ tortures. These spirits beat would-be shamans, strangle them, cut their bodies, boil them, and examine their bones and muscles. The Yakut call these initiations “tortures,” which are accompanied by spiritual dismemberment of a candidate’s body, “hacking” or “slashing” (*ettenin*) (272). During the “slashing,” a candidate’s soul is taken away by a spirit for instruction. While spirits dismember the body of a candidate, he or she lies outside of a dwelling on freshly-cut birch bark. No people should visit the would-be shaman during this procedure. Only one relative is allowed to be present to take care of the candidate. People

usually appointed to this role were virginal teenage boys or girls. A candidate lies for a few days, not showing any signs of life. Blood oozes from his or her joints and bones, and the whole body is covered with bruises. It is assumed that during these tortures, spirits examine a candidate's body to detect if he or she fits the spiritual vocation. Sometimes, spirits "find" an extra bone that prevents the person from acquiring shamanic power. In other cases, on the contrary, an extra "shamanic bone" is a necessary condition for acquiring spiritual power. Thus, it is only after long and careful "test," "investigation," "dismemberment," and "boiling" of a candidate that spirits decide to grant or refuse sacred power (275).

The most widespread form of the acquisition of shamanic power, which Dyrenkova links to a predisposition of specific people to neurotic ailments and to existence of shamans in a family, is called a "passive" induction. At the same time, there might be an "active" induction, when individuals intentionally seek shamanic power and attempt to learn shamanic skills on their own. Thus, in addition to the shamans "by calling," there exist shamans "by learning" (279). Although shamans claim that they receive their guidelines from their spirits, which visit them during their illnesses, visions and dreams, the majority of spiritual practitioners do usually supplement their "invisible training" by apprenticing with older colleagues. Among the "Chulym Turks," the Nentsy, and the Khanty, there were cases when people simply bought shamanic power; in other words, they bought spirits from another shaman.

Dyrenkova believes that originally only neurotics and highly sensitive people who were prone to hysteria became shamans. Then people began transmitting shamanic power within a family. In later periods, when among some Siberian tribes shamanism became a profession, people began to learn the art of shamanizing (280). She also stresses that while in indigenous Siberia, people practiced a "passive" acquisition of shamanic power, North American Indians were "active" seekers of sacred shamanic power. When Siberian native parents learned that their children manifested elements of shamanic behavior, they had to do everything to divert them from shamanism. Native American parents, on the contrary, sent their children to woods on a vision quest and forced them to fast there until spirits took pity on them and sent them supernatural power. Beginning American Indian shamans persistently sought their guardian-spirits, secluding themselves for a long time, fasting and abstaining from sex. Internal and exterior purification and intensive self-torture served as

prerequisites for an acquisition of shamanic power in American Indian shamanism (282).

Among Siberian tribes, a simple “imposition” by spirits of shamanic power on an individual was not enough to become a shaman. All beginning spiritual practitioners were expected to learn how to handle their spirit helpers and what kind of relationships to establish with them. Only those who were able to skillfully manipulate their spirits usually became successful shamans. Comparing initiations into the shamanic vocation among various Siberian tribes, Dyrenkova concludes that “shamanic calls are surprisingly similar among different Siberian tribes, sometimes even in their minor details, whereas exterior ritual manifestations of shamanism are multifaceted and fluid” (284). Simultaneously with a physical regeneration of shamans through dismemberment and “composition” of their bodies by spirits, shamans went through psychological regeneration. Siberian native people called this regeneration the training of a shaman’s soul by spirits. Thus, the acquisition of shamanic power meant a complete psychological and physical transformation of a human being (285).

Gracheva, G.N. “K etnokul’turnim sviaziam Nganasan: klassifikatsia shamanov [Toward Ethnocultural Connections of the Nganasan: Classification of Shamans]. *Etnokul’turnie kontakty narodov Sibiri*. Ed. Ch. M. Taksami. Leningrad: Nauka, Leningradskoe otdelenie, 1984. 84-98.

Examining categories of Nganasan shamans, Gracheva discusses the influences of neighboring tribes on Nganasan religion prior to 1917. Gracheva notes that Siberian tribes divided their shamans into various “classes” or categories. For example, among the Nentsy tribe, shamans were classified into three groups, according to the nature of their activities and the types of spirit helpers they had: “heavenly,” “earthly,” and “underworld” shamans. Nganasan shamans were never classified by their activities. In this respect, Nganasan shamanism resembles Selkup shamanism (85). The fact that Nganasan shamans were never ranked into those three categories might reflect the weak distinction among the earthly, heavenly, and underworld spirits in Nganasan beliefs. Nganasan shamans were free to visit all these spheres. Even a beginning shaman was able to journey freely to all three spheres. At the same time, it was assumed that novices could not go “too far” because they did not

accumulate enough power. In other words, the Nganasan classified their shamans according to their skills. A gradual attachment of additional symbolic decorations to their paraphernalia usually pointed to the growth of spiritual power of Nganasan and Selkup shamans (85-88).

Gracheva provides a detailed analysis of all known categories of Nganasan shamans. (1) "Underworld" or "unclean" *sambana* shamans carried the staff instead of the drum and specialized only in healing. (2) *Diuchily* (*bakirie*) and *seimyte* shamans were "dream interpreters or seers." Initiation of people into this category was accompanied by painful dreams which matched the classic shamanic illness. Nganasan *diuchily* could have the headdress, the ritual mitten, and occasionally a drum. (3) *Khositala* shamans were the "the ones who help to make a guess." *Khositala* undertook long spiritual journeys. They were able to pin down a spiritual locality or a spiritual object (in shamanic journeys, objects usually change their ordinary appearance). (4) *Tuopsuti*, assistants or students of powerful shamans, usually were members of the families of powerful shamans who did not perform any séance without *tuopsuti* assistance. It was the *tuopsuti* who were the first to begin singing shamanic songs during séances; the *tuopsuti* sometimes even summoned the shaman's spirit helpers. Such assistants acted essentially as stage managers of séances. Gracheva finds similarities between Nganasan *tuopsuti* and shamans' assistants among the Yukagir. She suggests that despite elaborate shamanic costumes and other accessories, Nganasan shamanism maintained elements of primordial "collective" shamanism. It is assumed that primordial shamanism had been "democratic" and open to all members of a community. Thus, in Nganasan society, all members of a community were well informed about the disposition of various spiritual spheres ("lands") and were allowed to participate and interfere in a séance whenever they wished and even direct the activities of a shaman (93).

Gracheva also discusses the peculiarities of Nganasan shamanic terminology. Such words as *diuchily*, *seimyte*, *bakire* and *khositala* were used not only to describe shamans but also material objects of veneration (*koika*). As a result, during séances, shamans could enjoy not only the assistance of their *tuopsuti* and audiences but also their *koika*. For the Nganasan, the whole world was separated into three dimensions: (a) the world of human beings, (b) the world of spirits, and (c) the world of *koika*. In their habitat, material objects *koika* acted in the same manner as shamans, and shamans were perceived as "live" *koika* (94). According to Gracheva, modern Nganasan shamanism manifested features

characteristic of primordial shamanism. The very scenario and format of a shamanic séance suggest that the Nganasan maintained many elements of ancient “collective” shamanism. Although Nganasan shamans were positioned in the center of séances, they were not the major protagonists. Leading parts were played by ordinary people. From the very beginning, audiences issued shamans “assignments” in the form of questions, then directed their steps during spiritual journeys, warned about coming obstacles, and essentially helped the shaman to follow a correct path. In other words, audience members repeatedly interfered in shamanic séances. Moreover, Nganasan séances required the presence of several relatives, who assisted shamans to do their jobs by strengthening their control of spirits (97). All in all, Nganasan shamanism was “family shamanism,” which belongs to the same primordial category as Chukchi shamanism (98). All members of their communities constantly scrutinized shamans during their séances. Any member of an audience not only was permitted to interrupt a séance at any time and change its direction, but also was allowed to converse with the spirits summoned by the shaman. Women played important roles during séances, which provides additional evidence of the primordial nature of Nganasan shamanism. They frequently acted as assistants who began séances or accompanied shamans’ songs. If a shaman were a man, his chief assistant usually was his wife. In addition, women “fed” the hearth of the dwelling in which a séance was performed. Last but not least, a shaman routinely asked permission of his wife to summon his spirits. Nganasan shamanism also resembles Khanty shamanism, which similarly had numerous spiritual practitioners who performed shaman-like functions without becoming shamans. In addition, Nganasan shamanism was influenced by the shamanism of the eastern Nentsy tribe. The terminology Nganasan shamans used to name their patron spirits and spirit helpers particularly points to this influence. However, among all neighboring tribes, Selkup shamanism stands closest to Nganasan shamanism (97-98).

Ivanov, S.V. “Nekotorie aspekty izuchenia sibirskikh bubnov [Toward the Study of Siberian Shaman Drums].” *Iz istorii Sibiri*. Ed. N.V. Lukina and N.A. Tomilov. Tomsk: izdatel’stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 1976. 214-233.

Ivanov offers his own classification of Siberian shaman drums based on the configuration of drums’ handles. A characteristic feature of Siberian

drums was that animal skins covered only one side of these drums. The Evenki and Nentsy had so-called moving handles, which were connected to a rim by small thongs, whereas natives of the Alai and Sayan areas firmly attached their handles to frames. Among the moving handles, Ivanov singles out three categories: (1) the handle in the form of a metal ring in the center of a drum; in this case, the ring is usually connected to a frame with four small ropes or leather thongs; this type of drum was used by the Koryak, the Yukagir, natives of the Lower Amur area, extreme Far East and Sakhalin Island, the Evens, the Evenki, and the Dolgan, the Buryat, and the Eastern Mongols (217); (2) the handle is shaped in the middle of a drum as an iron, wooden, or leather cross with small thongs, which are tied to both to the edges of this “cross” and to a frame; such drums were used a few groups of the Evenki, the Dolgan, the Entsy, the Nganasan, the Sakha, the Selkup, and the Khanty of the Vasiugan and Vakh areas; (3) the handle is represented by sticks, which are tied to a frame by small thongs; a long stick is usually fixed vertically, while a second shorter one is firmly attached to the first one under the acute or right angle; sometimes such sticks form a cross as in the Khanty, Mansi, and Nentsy drums (218).

Drums of the second category with a firmly fixed handle were used by the Turkic-speaking tribes of southern Siberia and partially by natives in Central Asia. Ivanov singles out among this category two variants. (1) Handles that are shaped in a form of a plate or a small wooden bar that narrows to the middle. The handles represented by wooden bars were used by such Turkic-speaking tribes as the Khakass, the Kumandin, the Tubalar, the Teleut, the Shor, the Tofalar, and by many Tuvinian. As a rule, such handles have either openings or carved ornaments (221). (2) Handles that are shaped as anthropomorphic images (219). Anthropomorphic handles, which depict one-headed images of masters of drums and ancestors of shamans, were used by the Altaians proper, the Western Tuvinian of the Khemchik River, who carved a head of a human being or the image of a shaman in the upper part of the drum, the Chelkan and Kumandin; the latter two groups carved their handles as two-headed images, with one head located in an upper side of the drum and the other in the lower part. Ivanov believes that the handles carved as anthropomorphic images historically reflect a later stage in the development of shamanism, when natives began to put more emphasis on the veneration of shamans-ancestors (220).

What are the major functions of the drum during a *séance*? First of all, the drum was used as a signal instrument to enhance the voices of the

shamans in their communication with spirits. By beating a drum, shamans summoned their spirit helpers during séances. Furthermore, shamans used drums to gather and “store” these spirits. It is notable that among the Evenki, names for different types of drumsticks originated from a word root *gis* or *gisun*, which means “speaking.” The Khanty believed that shamans’ words could reach the ears of their supreme deity Torum only if accompanied by the sounds of a drum. A drum could be used not only for the invocation of spirit helpers, but also for the intimidation of hostile spirits. The shamans of the Lower Amur River and the extreme Far Eastern tribes tended to use their drums in this capacity. In these areas drumbeats could symbolize a thunderstorm, which was endowed with the power to ward off hostile spirits. For example, when Nanai shamans rushed to combat hostile spirits, they furiously beat their drums (223-224). In addition to these two major functions, the drum had supplementary tasks. The Nentsy, northern Khanty, and other tribes whose lifestyle was centered on reindeer associated the drum with the deer, and they correspondingly viewed drums as shamans’ draft animals. The Sakha, the Buryat, and the Tuvinians, whose economy placed more emphasis on horse breeding, attached to their drums attributes of the horse. Sometimes, natives viewed drums as birds or boats, which carried shamans in their spiritual journeys. Finally, drums could serve shamans as bows they used to shoot hostile spirits. Sakha shamans also considered their drums as shields or armor that protected them from hostile spirits.

Some Siberian drums had drawings; others did not. Those with drawings reflected native views of the universe. Altaian, Khakass and Shor drums had the most elaborate symbolism. According to Ivanov, this elaborate symbolism associated with drums developed later at the highest stage of shamanism. The native tribes of the extreme northeast of Siberia, the Amur River basin, and the Ob River, who still practiced elementary shamanism in modern time, never reached this highest stage (224). Among some of these tribes, drums were not always used as shamanic drums, as among the Chukchi. Ivanov believes that in ancient times, shamanic drums were simply musical instruments. In the past drumbeats accompanied singing and dancing not necessarily related to ritual activities. It was only later that people turned them into shamanic artifacts (225). The “primordial” approach to drums survived in modern times in northeastern Siberia as so-called family shamanism, which is more ancient than professional shamanism. In this type of shamanism all family members had access to ritual drums. Thus, among the Chukchi, the Oroch, and the Koryak, each family owned its own drum. The

Chukchi, the Asian Yupik, the Koryak, and the Yukagir used their drums not only as ritual tools but also as simple musical instruments for pure entertainment. Furthermore, during a curing séance among the Nanai and Udege people, all men from an audience could dance and beat a drum. Among the tribes of the Lower Amur River area, Sakhalin and the extreme Far East, shaman drums were similarly accessible to people who were not shamans. It is notable, adds Ivanov, that the Chukchi, Koryak, Mansi, and Evenki manufactured toy drums for children. Ivanov thinks that if these tribes had always treated the drums only as ritual items, they would have never allowed their children to play with such toy copies (225-226).

Ivanov, S.V. “Elementy zashchitnogo dospekha v shamanskoj odezhde narodov Zapadnoi i Iuzhnoi Sibiri [Shamanic Costume of the Western and Southern Siberian Tribes as Protective Armor].” *Etnografiia narodov Altaia i zapadnoi Sibiri*. Ed. A.P. Okladnikov. Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1978. 136-168.

Ivanov argues that such elements of a shamanic costume as metal pendants, animal and human-like images, and small bells deserve special examination. At first glance, one might think that these items are designated to simply ring during a séance. It is not surprising that many eighteenth-century authors called them “trinkets.” Yet the function of these items was far greater than just producing ringing sounds (136). In addition, Ivanov disagrees with those scholars who treat metal pendants on shamanic costumes as symbolic feathers because the shamanic costume as a whole symbolizes the bird (167). Ivanov believes that metal pendants symbolize protective or combat armor. To back up his arguments with ethnographic materials, Ivanov analyzes all kinds of pendants on shamanic costumes dated by the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Specifically, he discusses (1) iron and copper rectangle plates; (2) flat metal discs and rings; (3) conic iron and copper hollow tube-like pendants with hooks on tops which were sometimes attached to rings; (4) round and slightly flattened copper bells of eastern Asian origin with engravings and faces of animals; (5) hollow and slightly salient iron *sharkuntsy* made by the Sakha natives; (6) small copper bells made by Russians; and (7) shells (*kauri*), which were called “snake heads” (147-150). Some of these items, such as rectangular plates and shells were tightly attached to costumes; the others, such as bells,

rings, and tube-like pendants, simply hung on costumes. Shamans either manufactured the pendants themselves or asked their relatives to do this. Shamans themselves explained the designations of all these pendants in different ways. Unfortunately, observers rarely recorded these explanations or the names shamans attached to the pendants. On the whole, Ivanov stresses, the shamanic costume represents a coat of armor. Shamans were considered to be powerful only after they acquired all necessary accessories to their costumes, especially protective plates on the backs. Evenki shamans from the Enisei River viewed such plaits attached to the costume as armor.

In addition to combating hostile spirits, souls of shamans constantly fought each other, which reinforced the necessity of a protective armor. Thus, Nganasan shamans viewed metal plates attached to their sleeves as protection from the blows of attacking hostile spirits. For Altaian shamans, small bells on their costumes served as a “god-given coat of armor.” Attacked by hostile spirits, Altaian shamans usually fought back by ringing these bells. Among Todzhin natives, iron and bronze tube-like pendants on the backs of shamanic costumes symbolized arrows, while brass pendants, which were called “shamanic shovels,” symbolized plates of a coat of armor (138). The Sakha natives called a rectangular plate attached to the right side of the shamanic costume the shield of a shaman. The “shield” was used to repel the blows of hostile spirits during a *séance*. In Sakha folklore, the shamanic costume is called a “beautiful iron hauberk” and is viewed as the shield that protects a shaman. The Buryat similarly viewed iron pendants and small bells on the shamanic costume as a shaman’s armor.

All these examples show that shamans attached iron pendants to their costumes primarily to parry the blows of spirits of hostile shamans and of hostile spirits. Yet Siberian shamans combated not only imaginary spiritual beings. In old times, during intertribal warfare, shamans put on their ritual costumes and fought actual enemies. Thus, Nganasan shamans acted as both ritual practitioners and chiefs of clans. One of the Evenki tales describes how a shaman headed a military party, acting as a military chief (139). In the pre-Russian period, Buryat shamans were active in tribal and clan political life, headed military parties, and personally participated in combats. Ivanov adds that metal pendants of the shamanic costume represent miniature images of various weapons. Evenki shamans attached to their costumes images of war clubs, sabers, pitchforks, knives, and axes. The Altaian, Buryat, and Tofalar shamans had pendants that depicted small bows and arrows. During *séances*, shamans also used

wooden images of spears, swords, knives, pole-axes, and war clubs. Ivanov surmises that “attack and protective tools used by shamans reflected actual events of the past, when shamans needed to be armed and dressed in a protective armor to fight enemies of a clan and a tribe” (142). Moreover, Ivanov establishes a connection between specific iron pendants of the shamanic costume and the segments of actual coats of armor used by Siberian tribes in the past. For example, in their form, size and even the way they were attached to the shamanic costume, rectangular pendants and plates resemble plates of real armor of the past. Large metal discs of shamanic costumes similarly resemble metal discs on ancient and medieval Turkic and Mongol armors, which served to protect chests and backs (152-153). Such elements of the shamanic costume as plates even can be traced back to the ancient Hittites, Assyrians, Ancient Greeks, Romans, Scythes, Sarmats, ancient Turks, the Tibetans, and the Japanese, all of whom had used armor made of plates (164). The traces of the same protective function can be found in so-called “knot cuts” on Altaian shamanic costumes. On such costumes conic knots form rhombus or square figures. These knots were made from wool thread, twisted ropes, white hair, brocade cord, or golden thread and were connected with each other by threads made from the same materials. Ivanov stresses that these “knots” were not just decorations. They imitated medieval Mongol warriors’ “jackets,” which were covered with metal badges located in straight squares (161-163, 167).

Kagarov, E.G. “Shamanskii obriad prokhozhdenia skvoz’ otverstie [A Shamanic Ceremony of Passing Through a Hole].” *Doklady Akademii nauk SSSR* 7 (1929): 189-192.

Kagarov discusses the cleansing rite of passing through a hole among the Tungus (Evenki) natives. Natives performed this rite before the beginning of a hunting season, in case of hunting accidents, or simply for a sick person who should be cleansed from a hostile spirit. Yet it was used mostly to purify hunters. The Tungus believed that during idle periods when they were not hunting, hunters accumulated much “dirt,” which could scare away animals. To perform a cleansing rite, a hunter usually cut a tree, split it below in two parts, and set it up on the ground as a cone-shaped structure. Then he killed a deer and smeared this tree (*sičüpkon*) with its blood. The next morning, armed hunters along with their dogs walked or crawled through the split.

There is another cleansing tool called *salgat*, a wooden forked structure similar to *sičūpkon*. *Sálgat* is usually used along with a wooden frame, whose sides are usually bent to make it look like fish. Sometimes the frame is supplemented with a “tunnel” made of bent poles. To each end of this tunnel people usually attach a *salgat*. Such a “tunnel” is called *ugdúun*, which means a loop-hole (189).

The article provides a description of the rite recorded by T. Petrova, a student of the geography department of the Leningrad University, who observed the “passing through a hole” among the Tungus of the Tukhomo River, which is a tributary of the Komo River, in August of 1927. To the yurt of a Tungus named Kuz’ma Mironov people brought in *salgat* and *ugdúun* and then invited a shaman. A *salgat* was set in the middle of the yurt. On its right they set out the *ugdúun* and a fresh deer skin. The shaman, who stood to the left of the *salgat*, bent over Kuz’ma’s sick mother and began his chanting. After this, the woman crawled through the bent hands of the shaman, the split of the *salgat*, and underneath the deer skin. As soon as the woman appeared from under the skin, the shaman roared, took his drum, and, vigorously beating it, started to dance by the spot where the woman crawled out. While dancing, the shaman trampled down the skin, poles and *salgat*. Then the *salgat* was taken outside and placed by the yurt’s entrance. After a while, people replaced the *salgat* with an *ugdúun*, and the whole ceremony was repeated, except now it was Kuz’ma who had to crawl through. The *ugdúun* had images of the fish, which were used by a shaman to “catch” a conquered hostile spirit, the source of illness. Dragging a sick person through the forked structure and the “tunnel” and then trampling down the object, where the illness was driven to, is based on the belief that the shaman can physically affect illness and a hostile spirit (190).

Among other devices that can serve the same purpose of cleansing are a pole split below or a square wooden frame made of notched boards. A shaman again drags a patient through the split in the pole or through the frame. Shamans use such simple structures when all members of a community go through a cleansing ritual at the same time during a large public séance. Kagarov suggests that notches touching the people who go through the “hole” symbolize combing out parasites from hair. The Tungus of the Olekma area have a “cleansing device” made in the shape of the mouth of a large sea fish. They believe that the person who goes through the fish’s “mouth” usually leaves his or her ailment on its teeth. The Tungus of the Erbogoch area have a more “sophisticated device,” which they call *ugduukān* and which consists of a frame with a cross bar,

which is attached to vertical poles and freely moves up and down. After a shaman raises the bar and lets a patient go through, he moves the bar down and places on it a plaster cast of a gun, which “kills” the spirit of an ailment.

Kagarov argues that the cleansing ceremonies resembling Siberian “passing through a hole” in a tree, rock or through magic gates are familiar to many other cultures. Going through a hole can be seen as an act of a renewal or a symbolic transition from a “sinful” “infected” state to a new clean and healthy state (191). Yet Kagarov has a different view. He explains that the Tungus view the “walls” of a “path” or a “tunnel” as being able to absorb sources of illness such as bad spells or ailments, which natives view as material objects. The Yakut (Sakha) people attach an opposite meaning to a similar rite, which includes passing between the legs of a wooden image of the daughter of the hunting spirit. The daughter of the spirit of hunting is considered a mediator between her father and a shaman. Inside a yurt in front of a carved image of this spirit, natives set bent poles that form a structure that resembles a tunnel. After a shaman crawls through this tunnel and then walks outside, he is believed to have merged with the spirit of hunting. Having come back to the yurt still as a “spirit of hunting,” the shaman again crawls back between the “legs” and “shakes” off the spirit of hunting. The Yakut version suggests that by “passing through a hole,” a person cannot only get rid of bad spells but also acquire good qualities.

Karunovskaia, L.A. “Predstavleniia altaitsev o vselennoi (materialy k altaiskomy shamanstvu) [The Universe As Perceived by the Altaians (Materials on Altaian Shamanism)].” *Sovetskaia etnografiia* 4-5 (1935): 160-183.

Describing the Altaian world picture, Karunovskaia draws exclusively on verbal and pictorial materials received from Kondratii Tanashev (also Merej Tanas) during her field research in the 1920s. When he was a shaman, forty-two year old Tanashev, from the Tangdy clan, was viewed by local natives as the “most powerful and dangerous” spiritual practitioner. Tanashev was the only child in his family, and until his adolescent years he was quite healthy. Then Tanashev began to suffer from “fits” which sometimes “blacked” him out for a whole day. That is when he turned to shamanizing. Karunovskaia who sought to reconstruct the “traditional” Altaian view of the universe, does not mention that what

Tanashev described to her reflects worldview characteristic for his clan Tangdy rather than the larger Altaian view of the universe. Neither does she mention that Tanashev was a self-taught individual who once converted to Russian Orthodoxy and even served as a song leader. Moreover, in 1904, he broke with Orthodoxy and became one of the preachers of so-called Milk (White) Faith [Burkhanism], an Altaian ethno-religious revivalist movement that at first denounced and then merged with shamanism. After 1917, Tanashev worked to help spread literacy among the Altaians, performed public “shamanic séances” in local towns to entertain Russian audiences, and even played the part of a shaman in the first Soviet sound movie, “Alone” (1929).

One of the Tanashev’s drawings used by Karunovskaia in her article depicts three-layered universe and a shaman’s journey to Temir-Khan, one of the sons of Erlik, the “master of the underworld.” The second drawing shows a shaman’s route to the area called Ceri-su. The “Altaian cosmos” consists of three layers: the sky (heavenly sphere), “real earth” (the middle world) and the underworld. On the “real earth,” or to be specific, on high mountain peaks, in ravines, lakes and even in human dwellings there live a host of spirits, who help or harm people. If the spirits do not get regular sacrifices, they inflict various illnesses and misfortunes on people. In the center of the earth, there is a mountain called *Ak toson altaj sip’* with a milk lake (*syt kol*) on its top. The soul of a shaman who journeys to the heavenly sphere usually bathes in this lake. In the middle of the mountain there is a naval of the earth and water (*Cer tengere kindigi*), which also serves as the root of the “wonderful tree with golden branches and wide leaves” (*Altyn byrly bai terek*). The peak of this tree extends into the heavenly sphere. During clan-wide sacrificial séances addressed to Ülgen or to Kogo-Monko, the chief creator of the stock and human beings, the souls of shamans penetrate the heavenly sphere by climbing this tree. Observing the position of the branches of this tree, the souls of shamans learn about weather. Watching the branches, shamans also might learn about what awaits the people who arranged the séance.

The *Ak toson altaj sip’* mountain serves as the first stop for a shaman traveling to the heavenly sphere. Weak shamans who are not blessed with power usually do not proceed beyond this point. Upon reaching the mountain, they usually come back to a yurt, where a séance takes place. Spirit masters of various regions of the Altai also like to gather on this mountain. On its flat top, they meet each other and play dice, chess, pebbles, and cards. Spirit masters usually gamble the embryo souls of the

stock, children, or hunting animals. When the population of animals in some area of the Altai decreases, people usually say that the spirit master of this area lost to the spirit master of another area. On the same mountain there lives Ceri-su, the most powerful spirit on the earth. He supervises all earthly spirits and knows what "regional" spirit master lost to another while gambling. During séances, when shamans hope to receive the embryo soul (*kut*) of a domestic animal or the soul (*jula*) of a child, they come to this mountain and address Ceri-su, trying to find out what "regional" spirit they need to appease with sacrifices and prayers. Therefore, spiritually, the mountain is very important for the Altaians (160-162).

The sky, or the heavenly sphere, consists of nine layers populated by various pure and benign spirits. In the center of the last, ninth layer, a fire mountain rises, which is flooded with sunlight. This is the "headquarters" of the supreme deity named Kogo-Monko Adaz, who had created the sky and the earth, who heads all pure benign spirits, and who controls the spirit of lightning. Kogo-Monko can kill using sunrays or bolts of lightning. His "palace" is a yurt made of felt, which resembles the yurts of rich Altaians. On the top of his dwelling there grows a tree with a golden ribbon. Kogo-Monko's mountain is surrounded by a few other fire sky mountains populated by his children (174-175). The underworld, which has the most interesting and elaborate structure, similarly consists of nine layers. The Altaians consider this sphere the domain of Erlik, the master of this "infernal region," and his children. Erlik's children are the chief underworld spirits who inflict various illnesses on people. Using Tanashev's drawing and his comments, Karunovskaia details shamans' journey to the underworld to Temir-khan, Erlik's second son. When, during their séances, shamans travel to the underworld, at first their souls fly out from a yurt's smoke hole and then descend into the "earthly hole," an entrance to the underworld. Having crawled through this hole, shamans' souls at first bow to the guardian of Temir-khan's doors and then enter the underworld, where there is no sun and moon. Then souls ascend to the top of the "underworld mountain," where they meets Erlik's daughters, sisters of Temir-khan. These playful and sexually-charged girls always try to seduce shamans' souls traveling to the underworld. Powerful shamans usually have no trouble in quickly getting rid of seductive traps. Weak shamans cannot resist the sexual temptation and lose their souls. It is assumed that in such cases, shamans die.

Having crossed a vast plain, which is located to the right of the "underworld mountain" and which is devoid of any vegetation, shamans

reach a large swamp, where their route is blocked by five she-goats. These animals prey on both shamans' souls and the sacrificial gifts shamans carry for Temir-khan. Conversing with the she-goats, shamans imitate their voices during a séance. Having passed this obstacle, spiritual practitioners encounter the lake of human tears (*kostin jaz kara kol*), which people of the "real earth" shed for their deceased relatives. Then shamans meet a so-called red lake (*kogys kan kizil kol*) filled with the blood of murdered people and suicides. At this place shamans usually can see what murder might be coming soon and ask that the designated misfortune bypass potential victims among their kinfolks. Beyond the lake, shamans' souls fly to the pole-shaped structure (*siksirgely kara tynos*). This is the place where the souls of deceased people usually stop for a rest. At this point, shamans usually learn about the fate of families for which they perform séances. The next obstacle is a dangerous passage through a horsehair "bridge" that threads over a bottomless lake with black water covered with slime. Weak shamans slide down from this tiny hair thread and drop into the lake, which results in the immediate death of shamans right during the séance. If shamans cross the "bridge," they reach the habitat of their clan ancestors (*emeke jaan jer*). Deceased ancestors live there like ordinary people in the "middle world" on the real earth, attending to their herds, which consist of animals that died or were sacrificed on the real earth. Shamans explain to the ancestors the circumstances that made them descend into the underworld. For example, it could be an illness caused by some underworld spirit. Shamans ask ancestors to keep hostile underworld spirits away from the "middle world," the habitat of human beings. Finally, shamans reach their destination, the residence of Temir-khan. The souls of shamans leave their drums outside, enter his felt yurt, and present gifts, for example, alcohol or pieces of material. After this, souls of shamans ask Temir-khan to relieve patients from illnesses which Temir-khan had inflicted through one of his subordinate spirits. Temir-khan usually explains the cause of an illness as the lack of a sacrifice he awaited. To fix the problem, continues Temir-khan, people should deliver the expected sacrifice (176-178).

Khaptaev P. "Izuchenie shamanstva na novom etape (po povodu knigi Kosokova) [The New Stage in Shamanism Studies (Regarding the Book by Kosokov)]." *Antireligioznik* 12 (1931): 68-74.

Although this paper is a review of the book by Kosokov *K voprosu o shamanizme v Severnoi Azii (Toward Shamanism in Northern Asia)*, Khaptaev briefly formulates a general approach to shamanism that became dominant in the Soviet Union at the turn of the 1930s. According to Khaptaev, the Kosokov book, which "examines shamanism from a viewpoint of a dialectical materialism," laid the ground work for this new approach (71). Khaptaev takes on old and contemporary shamanism scholarship. First of all, he notes that ethnographers accumulated a large amount of data on Siberian indigenous beliefs but did not come up with any theoretical generalizations. The major flaw of all these studies is the "lack of analysis of the social essence of shamanism" (68). Trying to act as "objective" observers and representatives of "pure" scholarship, ethnographers reduced their activities to simply recording shamanic rituals. Such observers also considered these rituals a manifestation of the ignorance of uncivilized natives. This approach did not much differ from the tactics of missionaries and morally justified "violent Christianization" under the pretext of civilizing natives. All in all, this was the "social order" issued by the czarist state to the ethnographers of the old school. "Here is the heritage we have to deal with," laments Khaptaev (68).

Under socialism, argues Khaptaev, Soviet scholarship should eliminate all niches for anthropologists who still harbor the desire to collect shamanism for the sake of "pure" scholarship. Khaptaev stresses that for modern-day Soviet researchers, the study of shamanism is not an end in itself. Modern anthropologists must reject the old "academic" approach that avoids connecting collected facts with the acute problems of contemporary life. "Modern [Soviet] researchers are involved into the study of shamanism not to show to the 'learned' academic community of the West and the East that we have shamanism as a manifestation of animism among our small peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East. Modern researchers study shamanism in order to learn and expose its social roots, its class nature, and its sources to make it easier and faster to erase shamanism where it still exists" (69). Khaptaev details how Soviet ethnographers should apply the "new approach" to the study of shamanism. For example, studying the origin of shamanic deities, a scholar should reveal their class, social and political sources. Take, for instance, a story about how a shaman became a deity venerated in Buryat

shamanism. When the Buryat and their Russian conquerors were establishing “peaceful” relations, a Buryat shaman named Kholongo Bordoiev played the exclusive role of a mediator during Russian-native negotiations by bringing to the Upper Lena River fort a delegation of the Buryat from Lena River, Kharmen, and Hogo areas. On behalf of these native groups, Bordoiev expressed a desire to admit the Buryat into the empire as the subjects of the Russian czar. As a sign of the Buryat submissiveness to His Majesty, the shaman presented to the fort’s commander (*voevoda*) the fur of a squirrel. The commander, who saw it as a sign that the Buryat were ready to pay tribute, which they did not want to do earlier, solicited an award for Kholongo Bordoiev. A native informant told the author that Bordoiev was rewarded with a sable and a czar’s certificate of merit and was assigned to organize the Buryat self-government. When Bordoiev died, his remains were burned at the mountain located on the right bank of the Manzurka River. Later on, during a séance, another shaman reported that Bordoiev’s soul moved to the left bank of the river on a hill with a beautiful grove. Since then, the Buryat revered this grove as a sacred place, and Bordoiev became one of the prominent deities for the Buryat. In this regard, Khaptaev stresses, “I would like to note that not many shamanists know that Bordoiev, to whom shamans sing praises, whom they revere as the founder of the clan’s self-rule, to whom they sacrifice dozens and even hundreds of rams, which cost hundreds of rubles, and to whom they sprinkle *tarasun* (an alcoholic beverage made of milk), was essentially an agent of the czarist Russia” (72).

Khaptaev is disturbed with “attempts of some local [Soviet] officials to underestimate the relevance of studying indigenous beliefs and reinforcing a struggle against shamanism.” According to Khaptaev, such an opportunistic position is based on the “harmful” theory that insists that shamanism is doomed to natural disappearance. Khaptaev devotes much room to the critique of this theory. According to this theory, the disappearance of shamanism is conditioned by the advance of socialism, which undermines and eventually destroys the social environment of this “primitive” religion, which makes irrelevant any special efforts to combat it. However, writes Khaptaev, “shamanism exists among us and with us, and it is only blind people who cannot notice this obvious fact.” Khaptaev explains the endurance of shamanism by the resilience of “clan-patriarchic relations,” which had brought shamanism to life in the first place, and which still survive in the “most backward areas of the Soviet Union.” Moreover, as a remnant of the past, shamanism can

continue to exist for some time, even though the social environment that had brought it to life is gone, simply because ideological categories tend to be more “stagnant” and durable than economic circumstances that shape them (69-70). Therefore, it is too early to shut down anti-shamanist propaganda. Khaptaev points to the facts of how Siberian shamanism revived and became adjusted to the Soviet reality. Thus, in the summer of 1931, there was a movement for revitalization of shamanism among the Gold natives (the Nivkh). In the Don-Don native camp, which is about one hundred miles from the Khabarovsk city down the Amur River, a Gold shaman carried around a red flag, which depicted a hammer and sickle in the upper part and three dragons below. The dragon that was depicted in the middle was colored in red with inscriptions in Chinese on both sides. Another Gold shaman, whose name was Mikhail Akhtenko, distributed among native shamanists “Chinese icons,” encouraging his fellow tribes people to celebrate Soviet holidays and bring together all shamanic spirits into a coherent system (70).

Khlopina, I.D. “Iz mifologii i traditsionnikh religioznikh verovanii Shortsev (po polevym materialam 1927 goda) [Notes on Mythology and Traditional Religious Beliefs of the Shor People: Field Materials Collected in 1927].” *Etnografiia narodov Altaia i Zapadnoi Sibiri*. Ed. A.P. Okladnikov. Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1978. 70-89.

Khlopina’s field material sheds more light on local variations of such Altaian deities as Ülgen and Erlik. She also relates a local version of the Shor creation myth (71-73), four types of soul according to Shor beliefs (74-75), and the acquisition of shamanic powers among the Shor (77-78). The Shor did not always welcome the appearance of a new shaman in their communities, although their neighbors, the Chelkan natives, one of the Altaian groups, always wanted to have a new shaman among them. Those Shor communities that did not want to have shamans among their members, hung all paraphernalia of one of the recently deceased shamans somewhere far in the woods on the branches of a young and durable birch tree. Moreover, members of the clan tried to eliminate all traces of the deceased shaman among them. On the contrary, after the death of a shaman, the Chelkan clans tried to secure the reemergence of a new shaman in their ranks. In this case, members of the clan took from the drum of a deceased shaman an iron rod with pendants and inserted it into a hole somewhere in a dark corner of a barn and did not allow anybody to

touch it. People believed that this would help to bring a new spiritual practitioner to their community (78-79).

Khlopina also provides a detailed description of the manufacturing of a shaman drum among the Shor people. Young shamans without drums were not considered full-fledged shamans. Yet they could perform séances using a mitten, a switch of green birch twigs (*venik*), a cap, or a small bow. The shamans who did not have drums were usually called *shabychi*. When Pustag, the major mountain spirit, reported to new shamans that Ülgen “permitted” them to make a drum, Pustag instructed the novices where and when to manufacture a drum. Trees used to make a frame should grow far from human dwellings and places where stock grazed. Pustag also directed who should cut trees and to bring them to make a rim. A handle for a drum, which was called *mars* (tiger), was usually manufactured from birch wood. Various rituals accompanied the process of making the drums. Clan members prepared themselves in advance for the “drum feast,” which members of a shaman’s clan treated as their own feast. Any qualified people were allowed to participate in making the drum. Yet all of them were to be males, even in cases when the spiritual practitioner was a woman. The person who was responsible for making a drum’s frame usually brought home rose willow wood and cut a piece of an appropriate size. Then the wooden board was soaked in river water for a few days, after which it was easy to bend. On each side of the board this person made holes using a hot iron rod. Then he bent it in the form of an oval and sewed it with thongs made of horse skin (82).

The person responsible for making the handle cut and polished a board that fit the frame. In the upper and lower part of the handle, this person carved an image of the master of a drum and made drawings using burned bones of a hazel-hen. Then people connected the frame to the handle. Then a blacksmith hammered a thin iron rod with small curves to serve as a crossbar. The curves helped keep pendants, which hung on the rod, separate. The rod was called *temir* (iron) or *kyrish* (a bow-string). The rod, which went right through the handle, was placed slightly higher, above the center of the frame. The pendants, which hung on the rod, were small cylinders rolled from metal plates. The number of the pendants matched the number of a shaman’s spirit helpers. Yet sometimes their number was fewer. In addition, a blacksmith hammered special pendants called “sabers,” which were shaped as small sharpened leaves. The “sabers” were usually attached to the frame of the drum. The Shor believed that all pendants were supervised by the spirit called *tengis* who lived underground, and who in turn was subjected to the control of Erlik,

the master of the underworld. *Tengis* helped shamans during their séances, but it was not *tös* (an ancestor spirit) (83). Pendants had multiple functions. The cylinder pendants protected *tös* spirits from all hostile spirits (*aina*), while the “sabers” served as weapons to attack the same hostile spirits.

The Shor usually used the skin of a wild goat buck to cover a drum’s frame. The Chelkan natives used the skin of a horse or a deer for the same purpose. The skin was soaked in river water, after which the fur was easily separated from the skin. The fur was scratched out with a regular knife. Then they put the skin on the ground and poured water on it. After this the skin was hung on a fence, and a few men stretched it tightly into opposite directions. Then they stretched this skin over the frame and tightened it with a rope. Then they inserted a small stick in the rope, and using the stick, tightened the rope as much as possible. During this procedure, a few men sat around the drum, pulling the skin down as hard as possible. In the evening, a large fire was set up, and a few men took turns smoking the drum over the fire. While smoking, they held the drum by its handle and quickly turned it over the fire. At the same time, two men stood by the fire opposite each other and, beating the drum with a switch of green birch twigs and singing a special song. The one who smoked the drum sometimes imitated a shaman. The “smoking” procedure sometimes lasted the whole night (84).

In the morning, following the shaman’s guidelines, men painted on the drum. All males were allowed to participate in this procedure by taking turns. For red paint, the Shor used red stone, for black they used powder, and for white they used chalk or bought paint. Khlopina describes the drawings she saw natives create on a newly-made drum. In the middle they painted a white rainbow. Above the rainbow there was a sky, while under the rainbow natives depicted a birch tree. The sky was represented by three suns: two large ones and one small sun. Under the sun near the birch tree, they drew *tös* spirits: a falcon sitting on the birch along with an archer armed with a bow and an arrow, and also a few images of people, one of them a horse rider with lash. There was also a squirrel above the rainbow, and a cat under the rainbow. On one side of the birch tree, there was a frog, while on the other side of the same tree, there was a snake. On the left, close to the left edge of the drum, there was five-pointed star, while on the right edge they painted the year “1928,” although it was the year 1927. Khlopina adds that the latter two drawings were made without the knowledge of the shaman (84-85).

In the morning before the beginning of a shamanic séance to introduce the new drum, each man brought a ribbon to the shaman. Some of them brought a ribbon on behalf of an entire family or a few friends. The ribbons were tightened to the iron rod. Before the first séance, some Shor shamans attached only nine ribbons to a drum, which matched the number of spirit masters of the mountains, through which the route to Ülgen goes. Ribbons served as the clothing for *tös* spirits (85). During the introductory séance, addressed to Ülgen, this supreme deity informed shamans how long the new drum would last. For example, Khlopina met the shaman named Stepan, who had worked as a shaman for thirty-five years and had already changed his drums six times by 1927.

Khoroshikh, P.P. "Iz shamanskikh vozzrenii irkutskikh Buryat [A Few Shamanic Beliefs of the Irkutsk Buryat]." *Etnograficheskii sbornik* (Ulan-Ude) 5 (1969): 252-255.

In old times, the Irkutsk Buryat shamanists had a rite of "devoting" a horse or a bull to specific deities, which helped them to secure the growth of their stock and safeguard herds from die-outs. Horses were "devoted" to the deity named Suberten. A shaman or a person who wanted to make a "sacrifice" selected a three-year old horse, which was to be an unbranded stallion rather than a foal or a mare. A horse could be of any color except skewbald. The Buryat believed that Suberten did not accept branded animals. Native men and Russian women could ride the sacrificial horse, but Buryat women were forbidden to do it. The sacrificial animal was decorated by multicolored pieces of material attached to its neck. When the "devoted" horse grew older, people usually led it to a high mountain and slaughtered it there. The meat of this horse was usually burned or sometimes eaten, while the skin with its head and legs was hung on a neighboring tree or on a special pole. The head of the horse faced Suberten's habitat. This rite was not accompanied by a special *tailagan* feast. The members of a nomadic camp who were present here restricted themselves only to sprinkling milk at the place where the horse was burned. It was forbidden to sprinkle liquor (252).

Bulls were "devoted" to the deity named Guzhir-tengri, which was responsible for multiplication of herds of domestic animals. Usually a person who wanted to "devote" an animal selected a two-year old unbranded bull of any color except skewbald. In two or three months the "devoted bull became an object of a special rite," which did not include

the slaughtering of the sacrificial animal. First, people sprinkled a hearth fire with *tarasun* (an alcoholic beverage made of milk), then the cup with *tarasun* was removed to the stock yard and placed on the back of the “devoted” bull. When the bull moved, the cup dropped, and this very act was actually a sacrifice to Guzhir-tengri (253). After this rite, owners of such bulls could slaughter them any time if needed. Yet before doing it, they were obliged to select replacements from their herds to substitute for the “devoted” ones. If the “devoted” bull was accidentally killed by a bolt of lightning or devoured by a wolf, its bones were placed on a special platform (*aranga*), erected on four poles at the spot where the bull died. In case a “devoted” bull died its natural death or was slaughtered by an owner, its head and horns (*ongon-bukha*) were to be hung on the gates of a stock yard.

To safeguard their herds from die-outs, following the guidelines issued by a shaman, the Irkutsk Buryat performed a rite called *boinok khetelkhe*, which included making small cross-cuts under a throat of a selected animal. In the cases when an owner’s herd did not exceed one hundred heads, one cross-cut was made. If a herd reached two hundred animals, an owner made two cross-cuts and so forth, adding a new cross-cut for another hundred. Buryat shamans stressed that these cross-cuts helped to secure the benevolence of the deity called Bukha-noion. These cross-cuts were also frequently mentioned in chants recited during collective sacrificial ceremonies (*tailagans*). In time of epizootics, the Alar Buryat cleansed their stock by driving the herds through fire. For this purpose, in the woods they selected two larch or fir trees, which stood close to each other, and then they connected their tops by an aspen pole, while at the bottom the trees were connected by a birch pole. The erected structure resembled gates. Under the bottom pole the Buryat made a fire, which they fed by putting branches of juniper bushes and chips from a tree struck by a lightning. Natives drove their stock through this fire three times, “fanning” the animals with the smoke from burning juniper branches. According to shamans, this rite helped to “cleanse the stock from all hostile spirits” (254). In old times, to protect their stocks from starvation, the Buryat performed special *tailagan* ceremonies in honor of the deity called Guzhir-Sagaan-tengri, who was in charge of the reproduction of domestic animals. Shamans warned people about coming stock die-outs if one of the following happened: (1) when dogs in a nomadic camps were too joyful and playful; (2) when stock suddenly gathered together and ran around for no reason; (3) when a swallow that made a nest in a yurt began to throw droppings of its chicks around a

yurt; and (4) when a raven cawed flying over the stock. When the horned cattle chewed polished bones, it meant that in spring there would be a shortage of forage (255).

Ksenofontov, Gavriil V. *Khrestets: shamanism i khristianstvo (facy i vyvody)* [*Khrestets: Shamanism and Christianity (Facts and Conclusions)*]. Irkutsk: Tipografiia izdatel'stva "Vlast' Truda," 1929. 143 pages.

Ksenofontov (1888-1939) was a native ethnographer from the Yakut (Sakha) tribe. His book is divided into two parts. The first section discusses shamanic mythology of the Uralic-Altaian tribes and includes two theoretical articles, "The Evolution of the Nomadic Life-Ways: Introduction to the Mythology of the Uralic-Altaian Tribes" and "Shamanism and Christianity." The second part is filled with the texts of numerous shamanic legends, which Ksenofontov recorded from shamans and their relatives during his field trips to his tribe in the 1920s.

In "The Evolution of the Nomadic Life-Ways," Ksenofontov draws the origin of the Ural-Altaic mythology from the economic conditions of these tribes. His premise is that all pastoral peoples of Siberia worshipped domestic animals used for transportation purposes. According to Ksenofontov, these tribes attached sacred meaning to all gear they used to tame wild animals: a bridle, leather and linen ropes among the Sakha or a wooden harness and a whip among the Buryat (103). Ksenofontov singles out three major stages of "technological progress" in the nomadic economy of Siberia: (1) the use of polar wolves harnessed onto sleds; (2) the use of the reindeer, and (3) taming of the wild horse (103). Shamanic mythology and art shed more light on the shift from one stage of transportation to another. In other words, through shamanic mythology, one can trace a gradual evolution of a nomadic economy based on the use of draft animals. Each stage of technological development became imprinted in folk memory. To be more precise, the progress in the means of transportation corresponded to the shift from one "corps" of deities to another, more powerful and mobile (109). Thus, the appearance of a Sakha deity *Dzilga-toion* corresponded to the last stage of the progress in transportation development, the taming of the wild horse. *Dzilga-toion* appeared in clouds as a celestial colt, while the bull, an earlier deity, was relegated to the status of the "devil" in shamanic mythology. These examples show that with the coming of a new "more advanced deity,"

folk memory made it benign and raised it to the heavenly sphere. An old deity, on the contrary, became increasingly associated with hostile powers and eventually became “exiled” to the underworld. At the same time, old deities did not simply vanish or were demonized. Folk memory preserved some of them as secondary deities, who later became characters in oral stories. That is exactly what happened with the wolf, the most ancient deity of the Ural-Altai peoples.

Ksenofontov also links the stages of progress of nomadic economy to changes in shamanic rituals. In oral stories “black” shamans can turn into bulls and grow horns during their séances. Incidentally, in real life shamans were expected to have on the top of their heads small bumps, “revered meat” (*ityk et*), which symbolized the traces of horns. Ksenofontov ironically notes that during their séances, shamans simply “played” horses. Through the back of their heads and armpits shamans passed leather belts, which are called *tesiin*, a “horse bridle held by a horse rider,” and then pranced, snorted, and dangled their heads. People from an audience also stuck in shamans’ mouths iron objects to “tame their rage” during their dances. Ksenofontov concludes, “A shamanic dance, which is accompanied by drumbeats, most probably represents an imitation of the noises made by a horse and clatter of horses’ hoofs” (110). Sakha mythology frequently describes souls of shamans (“mother-animals”) as transportation animals such as bulls, horses and reindeer. To Ksenofontov, the long fluttering hair of shamans symbolizes the ancient mythological shaman-stallion, while long fringes on a shaman costume are remnants of an ancient “masquerade,” which imitated the wild yak and its long thick fur that hangs to the ground (111).

In his second work, “Shamanism and Christianity,” Ksenofontov develops his favorite thesis: “Even after a quick look at the shamanic beliefs of Siberian natives, one usually notices a large number of parallels with Christian beliefs” (121). Then Ksenofontov singles out these parallels. (1) The Siberian shaman essentially acts as a “folk doctor” who treats people using his magic. At the foundation of shamanic medical practice there is a common folk philosophy: the world is full of numerous spirits who harm people, and the shamans are those who protect and save people from these spirits. Shamans act as protectors because they can “implant” into themselves the spirits of their ancestor-shamans, whose power living shamans use to save people. As a matter of fact, it is these ancestors who use shamans’ bodies to descend to the underworld or to fly up on the sky during shamanic séances (121-123). In this capacity,

shamanic beliefs match the Christian idea of “descending of the holy spirit on living human beings” (125).

(2) There is no doubt that in ancient times, Jesus Christ was viewed as a folk healer, who drove hostile spirits out of individuals just as shamans did. The gospels describe how Jesus healed the sick, the possessed, lepers, the deaf, and the blind, and, of course, resurrected the dead. These miracles hardly differ from the ones Siberian indigenous legends ascribe to shamans. Like Jesus, shamans were able to walk on water, feed the hungry, and change the weather. By using his magic, Jesus attracted to himself crowds of common folk. Practicing magic released Jesus from the necessity of regular physical labor and gave him an opportunity to live as celestial birds that “do not sow and do not harvest.” Very much like Yakut shamans, Jesus was a honored guest at both weddings and funerals (126). Ksenofontov stresses that one should distinguish this “folk and primitive Christianity” practiced by Jesus from official Christianity, which later became “infected” by numerous theological speculations and which represents a “branch of ancient philosophy” rather than a form of “natural religion” (128).

(3) Both Christ and shamans acted not only as simple healers, but also as prophets. (4) The Bible tells us how ancient Hebrew kings were initiated into their vocation through an anointment by prophets (magicians-shamans). In the same manner, during an initiation of a novice into a shamanic profession, Buryat shamans smeared him with the blood of a sacrificial animal. Extending this analogy, Ksenofontov suggests that in antiquity, shamans were not only prophets, but also kings or “the anointed ones.” To support his argument, Ksenofontov invites his readers to examine the status of Egyptian pharaohs, who were simultaneously magicians and kings, just like shamans from ancient Siberian legends. Incidentally, Yakut legends tells us about ancient “rule” of shamans. (5) Just like Jesus, Siberian shamans were able to renew life. Ksenofontov insists that shamans cleansed people from sins by their invocations. According to the Yakut legends, great shamans appeared at the turning points of history, when old life was regenerated, which required sacrifices. As a result, during such general crises, death multiplied, and illnesses spread. This was the price people had to pay for the right to have among themselves great shamans, who were designated eventually to save them. Thus, concludes Ksenofontov, “the ideas of sacrificial sufferings and the second coming of the Savior, and messianic expectations in general, are equally characteristic of shamanism” (130).

(6) Just as in Gospel legends, in Siberian native folklore, shamans are either born of a holy maiden from a spirit that descended on her or by an old woman, who has a decrepit old husband who is unable to perform intercourse. In legends, shamans are also conceived from the kiss of a dying husband, from a hailstone swallowed by a maiden, from a sun ray, or as a result of amorous relations between a woman and a wolf, a messenger of heaven. (7) Another similarity between shamanic and Gospel legends is a baby Jesus metaphor, whose analogy can be found in a Yakut story about an infant found among cows or about an infant put in a cow crib. (8) Like Jesus, in Yakut legends, great shamans feel their call during their adolescent years or in their early youth. In Yakut stories about shamans, there are some episodes that strikingly resemble a Gospel story about a young Jesus who surprises wise elders with his mature mind. (9) Yakut legends also describe how a shaman, who is about to be admitted into his vocation, is taken to a desolate place in the woods where he fasts, subsiding on water. These legends also refer to shamans who are tempted by spirits, an analogy for Jesus' temptations in the Biblical desert (131).

(10) Legendary dismemberment of a shaman by spirits usually lasts three days, after which a shaman resurrects (132). Moreover, a resurrected shaman "comes alive" enlightened and "blessed" and with a body that is now able to absorb spirits. (11) The process of education and initiation of a novice for a shamanic profession by an old shaman can be viewed as an analogy to the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist, which triggered the prophetic mission of Jesus Christ (133). As a matter of fact, among the Buryat, an initiation of shamans for their profession is represented by actual water ablution. (12) References in Yakut legends to a miraculous ability of shamans to speak different languages on behalf of spirits of "alien" shamans might remind of the Christian myth about the holy spirit that descended on apostles and endowed them with the ability to speak different languages (134-135). (13) The Holy Spirit that descended on Jesus in the shape of a white dove is an analogy to swans and undefined white birds in Yakut tales about "white shamans." In the shape of birds (crows, loons, hawks), souls of deceased shamans usually flock to a shaman who performs a séance. A more ancient version of the abovementioned bird spirits is Raven Spirit in "black shamanism." Ksenofontov ironically notes that the Gospel dove is nothing less than "retouched, polished and ennobled Raven of the ancient shamanism" (135). (14) In conclusion, Ksenofontov speculates on the origin of the name "Christ." He refutes the accepted version that the name originated

from the Greek word *christos* that means the “anointed one.” In his view, one should trace the origin of the name to the Greek verbs “to prophesize” or “to predict,” which form a noun *khrestets*, which means “the seer,” and “soothsayer.” The word can be found in ancient Roman sources about popular Eastern mystery cults. In Roman times, barbarian magicians and sorcerers were called *khrestets*. Ksenofontov insists that “Christ” (Russian *Khristos*) is a later distortion of the word *khrestets*. Thus, the original meaning of the name “Christ” is simply a sorcerer, a witchdoctor, a magician, and a visionary rather than the “anointed one” (135-136).

Ksenofontov, Gavriil V. “Kul’t sumasshestviia v uralo-altaiskom shamanizme (k voprosu ob ‘umiraiushchem i voskresaiushchem boge’) (The Cult of Insanity in the Ural-Altai Shamanism (Toward the ‘Dying and Resurrecting Deity’)].” Ksenofontov, G.V. *Shamanism: Izbrannie trudy (publikatsii 1928-1929 gg.) [Shamanism: Selected Works (Publications of 1928-1929)].* Iakutsk: Sever-iug, 1992. 254-265.

The major premise of this work, first published in 1929, is the assertion that a foundation from which any religion grows is a specific economic system. Ksenofontov tries to blend interpretation of shamanism as a culturally conditioned mental deviation with Marxist economic determinism. The economic life of nomadic Siberian tribes was centered on stock breeding. The evolution of native economy depended on a transition from breeding of one “major domesticated animal” to another. During the first early stage, nomadic life was based on the use of domesticated wolves (dogs). In the forest zone, the dogs became replaced by the deer. The latter was later replaced by the bull, especially in southern steppe area. Finally, the bull gave way to the horse (255). The veneration of a specific “working animal” was mirrored in deities and spirits, which acquired the images of these domestic animals. “Infant minds of ancient people” could not grasp the idea that it was the people who caught, domesticated and subjected these animals to their economic needs. Ancient Asian myths and legends reflect “feelings of gratitude toward working animals.” Eventually, this mythology gave rise to legends about ancient beings, who were half-humans and half-animals and who were considered to be the ancestors of first magicians and

shamans (256). Incidentally, that is why many Siberian shamans wear



A Cover of a Soviet Anti-Shamanic Brochure by I. K. Kosokov, *K voprosu o shamanstve v Severnoi Azii* (Moskva: Bezbozhnik, 1930).



Altaian Shaman Drum, c. 1920s. Photograph by Author. Courtesy of the Biisk Local Museum.

“crowns” decorated with deer or bull horns. The same mythology stands behind the practice of looking for bumps on the heads of infants (“natural horn outgrowths”), which is a sign of an affiliation with the “shamanic stock.” Shamanic robes were also decorated with fringes made of yak fur to enhance the animal imagery of the costume. Among the other “animal accessories” of shamans are Tungus (Evenki) and Buryat staves with deer or horse hooves or horse tails, and bridles and reins attached to Yakut (Sakha) shamanic costumes. Interestingly, until the 1920s, the Tungus of the Olenek, Lena and Iana Rivers, who had been assimilated by the Yakut, maintained in a pure form rites of ancient Yakut steppe shamanism, which they had absorbed in ancient times; during their séances in these areas, Tungus shamans “played horses” by imitating sounds and movements of horses (256-257). The “cult of the suffering and working animal” later evolved into the myth about the dying and resurrecting shaman, whom people came to view as half deity and half human.

Ksenofontov quotes the words of an eighty-year-old Sakha shaman, Ivan Dogoiukov: “Before they become shamans, people are sick for a long time. They lose much weight, go crazy and behave like madmen. During this time, they talk all sorts of nonsense. They say their eyes were put out, their bodies were cut, parted and eaten, and that new blood was poured in and so forth” (258). This and other similar stories, which describe would-be shamans suffering from visions, hearing hallucinations, and experiencing the mania of persecution by imaginary spirits, show that the original source of shamanism was mental illness. In ancient times, candidates for the spiritual profession, who experienced the shamanic illness, most probably imagined themselves “as turning into venerated domesticated animals, whose behavior they copied in all minor details” (261). Although according to Ksenofontov, the “shamanic illness” that accompanied the initiation into the shamanic profession represents a “pure medical problem” (262), he is not able to clearly identify a matching mental ailment known to psychiatrists. Ksenofontov speculates that the closest analogy to the “shamanic ailment” might be schizophrenia (263). Transmitting from generation to generation a “defective physical structure and shattered nerves,” shamanic lineages were prone to hereditary mental ailments (258). Not only during the time of their initiation but also throughout their lives, shamans remained “unfortunate wretches,” who suffered from chronic mental illnesses. Séances, the very acts of their “solemn performances,” were actually the

periodic relapses of their general mental misbalance, which they had gone through from the very beginning.

Ksenofontov singles out three stages in the evolution of native nomadic economy of northern Asia, which match three corresponding stages in the development of the shamanic faith. (1) Before the appearance of the domesticated animals, deities usually manifested themselves as wild animals. (2) At the stage when deities became more "refined," they began to carry images of specific domesticated animals. (3) Finally, deities acquired human features, which reflected a shift to slave labor (261). During the first period, when shamans had to play the role of wild bears, wolves, and other "untamed animals," the "insanity of these magicians" must have reached extreme proportions. Ksenofontov tries to detect traces of this "insanity" among contemporary Siberian tribes with stories such as this: "In the winter of 1924 in the village of Bulun, when a Tungus shaman Kuacha entered a yurt to start his séance, he roared like a bear and was restrained from behind by two men. Looking at the whole scene, I was not quite sure if Kuacha was sane at that moment. Even the most talented actors cannot imitate a wild animal so realistically. People from the audience froze in fear and intently watched each movement of the shaman, who actually reminded me of a lion or a tiger that a trainer brought to the center of a circus arena. Among the northern Tungus, the Dolgan and the Lamut, who had been heavily assimilated by the Yakut, during séances, shamans are usually restrained from behind by two or three men. At some moments, shamans plunge into such extreme ecstasy that these strong men have a hard time keeping them at the same spot" (261-262).

During the second stage of shamanism's evolution, manifestations of the "shamanic illness" did not go to such extremes because now the "role model" was a "peaceful domesticated animal." Finally, at the third stage, deities and shamans, their imitators, acquired human-like features, although the practice established by shamans of plunging themselves into "temporary insanity" had become entrenched. Imaginary dismemberment of the body of a would-be shaman and the consumption of its parts by spirits also can be explained by the "morbid manifestation of the cult of a domesticated animal"; at this second stage, in their dreams and visions, "primitive magicians" simply associated themselves with animal deities, "who can be slaughtered and eaten by people for a meal, very much like real domestic animals" (264). Thus, the idea of a dying and resurrecting deity, which one can find both in shamanism and in "high religions" such

as Christianity, originated from “the labor regime of harnessed draft animals full of suffering” (264).

Ksenofontov, Gavriil V. *Legendy i rasskazy o shamanakh u Iuakutov, Buryat i Tungusov* [*Legends and Tales About Shamans Among the Yakut, Buryat, and Tungus Tribes*]. Moskva: Bezbozhnik, 1930. 123 pages.

For a complete German translation of this work, see, *Schamanengeschichten aus Sibirien*, eds. Adolf Friedrich and George Buddrus (Munich and Planegg: O.W. Barth, 1955): 95-214. For a few excerpts translated from this German edition into English, see Aufsteigender Adler, “Shamanic Tellings of Siberia,” <http://www.kondor.de/mythes/indekse.html>. (accessed 8/8/03). Ksenofontov’s book represents a collection of stories and legends, which Ksenofontov recorded during his field trips to the natives from the Yakut (Sakha), Buryat, and Tungus (Evenki) tribes from 1925 to 1926. Ksenofontov specifically inquired of tribal elders and aged natives about legends and tales regarding shamans. What they shared with him Ksenofontov diligently reproduced in this book. Each tale and legend is accompanied by a short descriptive title that reflects the topic of a legend, by the date and place where Ksenofontov recorded the story, and the name and age of the storyteller.

Before Ksenofontov, many ethnographers frequently reduced their observations of shamanism to descriptions of exterior manifestations of shamanism: a séance, shamanic paraphernalia, and artifacts. Not much was known about the “hidden world” of shamans themselves. Ksenofontov seeks to correct that view of shamanism. Ksenofontov’s materials are especially valuable because he did not doctor his field notes too much and did not use them for generalizations. He simply reproduced his records in a raw form, allowing shamans to speak for themselves. The book largely consists of Yakut legends, which describe ancient shamans and the miracles they had performed. At the same time, a special chapter brings together Buryat and Tungus shamanic legends.

The collected legends provide information about the births and funerals of shamans and the acquisition of shamanic powers by shamans. For example, one finds interesting information about funerals of Yakut shamans, which required performance of specific rituals. A famous shaman was usually buried not in the ground, but in a special structure called *arangas*, which is erected above the ground. An *arangas* could be

a simple empty wooden log placed on a forked tree crown. Later when this "casket" rotted and dropped down, people "raised" the bones of a shaman back to the tree three times with the help of three, six, or nine persons. The ritual of "raising" the bones was accompanied by a sacrifice (14). Legends about ancient shamans-rulers point to the veneration of shamans by people in the past. In ancient times people did not dare to contradict shamans for fear that these spiritual practitioners might harm them. Shamans who headed clans and even tribes literally ruled the people (21). Many legends also reflect fears of the deadly power of shamans. These stories describe some famous shamans of the past wearing iron masks because no living being could bear their deadly looks, capable of killing both people and animals. Moreover, these legendary spiritual practitioners could not control this deadly power, which frequently went against their will and good intentions. A Yakut native told Ksenofontov about a powerful and benign shamaness, who asked people never to upset her, or else she might think badly about somebody and this person would die.

Of special interest are myths about the birth of shamans. One legend describes how in ancient times, "being conscious of her best qualities," a very beautiful maiden did not want to get married. However, after meeting a man who was riding a white horse, she gave herself up to him. The man turned out to be the son of a deity and informed her that she would bear two great shamans. The rider ordered her to perform a series of elaborate rituals during the childbirth. The woman gave birth to two small ravens, which later became boys and eventually famous shamans. The first shaman was able to force a huge pile of hay to fly, while the second could move a moose with her cubs from one place to another (22-25).

One of the chapters of the book, "Shaman Disease and Delirious Ideas of Shamans," groups stories reflecting "close connection between shamanism and nervous disorders." The stories deal with the upbringing and initiation of shamans. Ksenofontov believes that the shamanic call is essentially a form of a "hysterical illness," and all subsequent "education" of a would-be shaman is simply reduced to training the "chosen one" in the art of causing and regulating "hysterical fits" to establish contacts with spirits (36).

Ksenofontov stresses that Yakut legends picture the acquisition of shamanic powers by a would-be spiritual practitioner as a chain of fits of "hysterical singing." It was believed that in reality, singing was the voices of spirits who moved into a shaman. The "singing" could continue a few

years and make a person suffer badly. The Yakut also believed that during this time, spirits dismembered a candidate for the shamanic vocation. After their fits, “candidates” usually were lethargic and out of touch with surrounding reality (41-42). Dismemberment was usually performed by spirits of deceased shamans, ancestors of chosen candidates. Shamans usually knew the time when they were to enter the dismemberment procedure and isolated themselves in advance in shacks (*ambar*) erected far from populated places. Instead of lying in specially constructed shacks, candidates could lie naked on birch bark rugs outside any dwelling in the fields. For three days, a shaman candidate usually went without eating or drinking anything. People believed that for all this time during the dismemberment procedure, a shaman “died.” Persons who watched and cared for candidates were adolescent boys or girls. No other people were allowed to be near a shaman. Elders informed the ethnographer that in ancient times, the most powerful shamans went through the dismemberment three times to strengthen their medicine.

According to one Yakut legend, spirits performed dismemberment in the following manner. First, they took a candidate with an iron hook, tore him apart, separated all joints, and cleaned his bones from his flesh. Both eyes were taken out and put aside. Then spirits put together the bones and sewed them with iron threads and placed the eyes back into the head, and a shaman received back his human body. Ksenofontov recorded another version of the dismemberment procedure. First, spirits cut and put aside the head of a “chosen one.” Although the head was separated, it maintained consciousness and was able to observe the entire dismemberment procedure. After hostile spirits chopped, shared and devoured his meat, they attached new meat to the bones and placed the head back to the body. Natives also believed that while passing through the spiritual dismemberment, shamans lay on their beds appearing as normal human beings except that their beds were smeared with blood. Also, bloody bruises could be seen on their bodies.

A few stories inform us that all shamans had a so-called mother-animal (*ijä-kyl*), which was sometimes pictured as a large bird with curved grabbing claws and a beak that resembled an iron ice axe. A mother-animal takes the soul of a future shaman and descends to the underworld and raises this soul on a branch of a spruce tree. Souls of powerful shamans are usually raised on the ninth highest branch counting from the bottom. When a shaman’s soul becomes mature enough to control itself, the mother-animal ascends to the middle ground, where it dismembers the body of the shaman into small pieces and scatters them

around over all paths leading to death and illnesses and also divides the meat of the body among hostile spirits. A spirit of each ailment and misfortune is assigned its specific part of the body. It was believed that a future shaman could be successful in curing various illnesses only when all parts of his body were properly and fairly distributed (45-46). The procedure of slashing means that the meat of a would-be shaman is scattered in the underworld as a sacrifice to all sources of death and ailments. If during the distribution of the shaman's body, one of the pieces did not reach a designated place or a spirit responsible for a specific ailment, a future shaman would not be able to journey to this spiritual habitat during a *séance* (49). Therefore, a shaman would be able to cure only those ailments which were caused by the spirits who had fed on the parts of his body. Those spirits that were "deprived" of the parts of his body would never respond to his appeals.

Ksenofontov describes the dismemberment procedure in a Christian context, associating it with death and the subsequent resurrection of a dismembered candidate (50). Ksenofontov backs up this interpretation by referring to native legends whose shaman characters, for example, prophesized, "It is high time for spirits to cut my body, and I will die for three days, then I will resurrect" (48). During the dismemberment, spirits count the bones of a candidate, checking whether all of them are in place. If some bones are missing, spirits might require the life of one of a shaman's relatives as a ransom. In several Yakut legends, when they "build up" a great shaman, spirits demand that all relatives of a shaman die. Usually in legends nine relatives were expected to die for nine "major" bones: eight tubular bones and a skull (51). This was a sacrifice a community paid for shamanic powers endowed on a great shaman who would act on behalf of these people. Other Yakut legends say that the bodies of relatives are required as a "building material" used by spirits to "manufacture" the body of a new shaman.

Yakut shamanists had a concept of a special shamanic tree, which was also the "sacred tree" or the "great tree," where the soul of a would-be shaman was nested. The "great tree" is usually located in the underworld or simply "far in the North." A Yakut legend describes the "great tree as a larch tree, which is viewed as the "cradle" of all shamans of the world. The bird with iron feathers (the mother-animal), hatches its egg in the nest located on the branches of this larch tree. The soul of a shaman comes out of this egg. The "shamanic tree" is filled with nests where souls of future shamans are raised. Great shamans are nested on the top of the tree, average shamans are raised on middle branches, and small

shamans are nested on lower branches (60-61). Some Yakut legends suggest that natives were familiar with the idea of reincarnation. A Yakut shaman told Ksenofontov that those great shamans were usually born three times.

The concept of shamanic birds and animals is centered on the image of the mother-animal, which might also appear not only as a bird but also as a moose or a deer. The mother-animal manifests itself three times: first, when it gives birth to the soul of a shaman; second, when spirits complete “building up” a shaman by slashing his body; and third, when a shaman dies (60). In addition, a shaman usually has two invisible spirit assistants who are pictured in the form of dogs. In Yakut legends, shamans do not die naturally. They always die fighting other shamans. To be exact, the legends do not describe an actual physical fight. They refer to the death as a result of duels of shamans’ mother-animals. Each legendary shaman usually has invisible self-shooting bows that are always ready to shoot arrows at other shamans. A soul of a shaman is usually associated with his or her mother-animal, which symbolizes the vision and power of a shaman. In legends mother-animals of shamans hunt down each other. Actual shamans are frequently not aware of this spiritual struggle, although the results of fights affect their lives. If shamans die, it is usually a result of mortal wounds suffered by their mother-animals (66).

Kulemzin, V.M. “Shamanstvo vasiugansko-vakhovskikh Khantov (konets 19 – nachalo 20 vv) [Khanty Shamanism in the Vasiugan-Vakh area at the End of the Nineteenth Century and the Beginning of the Twentieth Century].” *Iz istorii shamanstva*. Ed. N.V. Lukina. Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 1976. 3-154.

The Khanty had a category of people who performed religious functions, but not all of them were formally shamans. Thus, there were so-called *arekhta-ku*, whose major function was singing various songs or telling tales and epics. The *ulom-verta-ku* “decoded” dreams, and the *niukul'ta-ku* staged special entertainment performances, which were accompanied by the summoning of spirits, and sometimes soothsaying sessions about coming hunting trips. These religious practitioners stood close to shamans because they interacted with spirits, although only from the middle world. For example, like full-fledged shamans, some of them (*arekhta-ku*) turned to their spiritual vocation after they heard a spirit call,

cured people (*arekhta-ku*, *ulom-verta-ku*), or performed soothsaying sessions (*ulom-verta-ku*, *niukul'ta-ku*). Moreover, *arekhta-ku* and *niukul'ta-ku* had several accessories and decorations characteristic of the shamanic costume. Still, there were more differences than similarities between these spiritual practitioners and genuine shamans. Spiritual practitioners not recognized as shamans could not converse with the spirits of the underworld and upper world. All their interactions with spirits were simple and passive because these “magicians” did not have power to absorb spirits into themselves and to journey to universal spheres to visit spiritual beings. Most importantly, they never put themselves in the state of ecstasy (122).

More complicated was the status of spiritual practitioners belonging to the category of *isylta-ku*, who were not so distinct from shamans. Individuals who were to become *isylta-ku* usually dreamed that they had been “appointed” by the deity named Torum. Would-be *isylta-ku* announced to people that they were chosen by Torum. Yet they began performing their spiritual duties in only two or three years. It was believed that this period was enough to convince surrounding people that the chosen ones were not just crazy individuals driven by delusions. The major function of the *isylta-ku* was curing, the procedure they performed in the course of a special séance by extracting hostile spirits from the bodies of patients. Before performing the curing rite *Isylta-ku* usually planted in their bodies the helping snake spirit, who “devoured” a hostile spirit. To plant the snake spirit, *isylta-ku* usually drove themselves to the state of ecstasy and “plunged” knives into their bodies (56). When the helping spirit moved in, *isylta-ku* healed people in two ways. The first method was the extracting of the spirit that inflicted an ailment. Pulled out from the body of a patient in the form of a worm, a lizard or another creature, the spirit was swallowed by *isylta-ku*. It was assumed that the snake spirit devoured the hostile spirit. The second method was touching an ailing spot, when *isylta-ku* caught and kept in their hands a hostile spirit, which was also considered as an act of devouring of the hostile spirit by the snake spirit (58).

In addition to curing, *isylta-ku* were able to bring back to life prematurely deceased people. The Khanty believed that their major deity Torum assigned an appropriate number of years for each individual. Yet people sometimes could die before their “assigned” term expired. In this case, to retrieve the soul, *isylta-ku* usually traveled to the underworld, the “kingdom of the dead” headed by Kellokh-Torum. The journey was conducted as follows. After ordering everybody to leave a dwelling,

isyлта-ku lay down near deceased individuals, covering themselves with the same blankets and remaining there for three days. The Khanty believed that during this time, the soul of *isyлта-ku* traveled to the kingdom of the dead and asked Kellokh-Torum to release the soul of a deceased person (59). *Isyлта-ku* differed from genuine shamans in the absence of special paraphernalia and by their limited functions. Kulemzin suggests that *isyлта-ku* be viewed as shamans of a narrow specialization, who were only allowed to shamanize and fly to the underworld (123-124).

The genuine full-fledged shamans were people who belonged to the category of *ielта-ku*. Spiritual practitioners of this group manifested all classic attributes of shamanism: a spirit call, an ability to communicate with the spirits of different spheres, including Torum, the chief deity of the upper world, the state of ecstasy, the special costume and artifacts, and multiple spiritual functions (123). At the same time, *ielта-ku*'s calls to accept the shamanic vocation resembled those of the *isyлта-ku*. Thus, like the *isyлта-ku*, would-be shamans did not want to be labeled as crazy and at first did not tell anybody that they had received the call. Candidates for the shamanic profession usually tested themselves for about three years. When shaman novices saw that they correctly detected good hunting grounds or performed any other miracles, they had enough proof that they had been chosen and eventually informed their community about the call (65).

In addition to the spiritual call, there were many other paths to the shamanic vocation among the Khanty. It is especially characteristic for the Khanty of the Vasiugan area, where either assistants to shamans or people who were able to play musical instruments called *panan-ukh* could become shamans. Incidentally, the ability to play a musical instrument was considered as a necessary prerequisite for the shamanic profession. Additionally, a father could directly pass the shamanic vocation to his son, provided the latter manifested necessary shamanic qualities (66). Vasiugan *ielта-ku* were primarily specialized in retrieving souls and curing the sick by extracting hostile spirits from different parts of a body. Vasiugan *ielта-ku* also put back dislocated bones. During their séances, Vasiugan *ielта-ku* did not establish contact with Torum. Instead, they acted through their helping spirits. To summon helping spirits, shamans usually ate fly-agaric mushrooms, which caused hallucinations, and began beating their drums. Vasiugan shamans cured some ailments without performing any special séances. For example, to cure people from a fever, shamans suddenly scared them. If people approached

shamans to predict the results of a hunting trip, before performing séances, shamans usually left for the woods to consult with the forest spirit. During séances, shamans imitated sounds and voices produced by different animals, which meant that shamans summoned the spirits of these animals and then learned from these spirits which specific animals would be procured and which not (105-106).

In order to cure a person, *ielta-ku* of the Vakh area prepared themselves by smoking a pipe, swallowing its smoke, and eating a few dried fly-agaric mushrooms. Before beginning a curing séance, shamans were expected to establish a contact with Torum. To reach Torum, a shaman usually flew an eagle. Unlike the other tribes of Siberia, the Khanty did not consider the shaman drum to be a riding animal used to travel to the spirits of the upper world. During their talks with Torum, shamans asked his permission to extract a hostile spirit from the body of a patient. Torum usually ordered Kyn'-lung, the chief hostile spirit, to recall one of his subordinates that caused the disease. However, it was up to Kyn'-lung to fulfill or to ignore the order of the supreme deity. If the chief hostile spirit chose to ignore the request, the patient usually died. In such a case, people believed that a shaman did not have enough power to enforce a request. Some very powerful shamans were able to implant Kyn'-lung inside their bodies by putting themselves in a state of extreme ecstasy. People believed that at this moment, shamans were able to master any hostile spirit that caused an ailment. Some shamans extracted and "ate" hostile spirits (usually in the form of a worm) themselves, while others used helping spirits to "devour" the spirit. The snake-spirit, whose image was depicted on a drumstick, usually "devoured" a hostile spirit. To extract a hostile spirit, shamans touched an ailing spot with a drumstick. In cases when people approached shamans to predict the results of hunting and fishing trips, spiritual practitioners did not perform any séances. They normally restricted themselves to soothsaying sessions by throwing up their drumsticks and watching the way they fell on the ground (108-111).

Kulemzin points to the "primordial" and undeveloped nature of the Khanty shamanism, which never developed into an "established system" and which favored extensive borrowing from neighboring tribes (138). "Elementary nature" of Khanty shamanism allows to pin down specific features of primordial shamanism, which other Siberian tribes had already abandoned by modern times. First, one of the primordial features of the Khanty shamanism was the lack of an established system of acquisition of shamanic powers. Second, compared to other Siberian

tribes, functions of the Khanty shamans were limited and their séances were simplified. Third, Khanty shamans used “pre-shamanic” healing methods, which were not always related to extracting hostile spirits. Fourth, there was no strict division between shamans who were able to fly to the underworld and those who flew to the upper world. Fifth, the Khanty shamans did not attach symbolic meaning to the shamanic drum and its specific parts. Khanty shamans treated drums as ordinary musical instruments. They had no drawings on their drums and never developed any specific style or a design for their drums. Neither did they have any rites associated with the manufacturing of a drum or other shamanic paraphernalia. Furthermore, Khanty shamans never developed a complete shamanic costume like many other Siberian tribes (139-140). Moreover, among the Khanty shamans were not the only ones who could perform séances. *Arekhta-ku*, *ulosh-verta-ku*, and other categories of religious practitioners, who historically preceded shamans, could perform parts of these spiritual sessions. As for shamans proper, like other members of a tribe, they subsisted exclusively on hunting and fishing. The gifts they received for their séances could not feed them and certainly never made them rich. Kulemzin concludes by noting that the Khanty shamans who had to devote the greater part of their time to hunting and fishing never evolved into a special “social strata” (133).

Kytmanov, D.A. “Funktsional’nie nevrozy sredy Tungusov Turukhanskogo kraia i ikh otnoshenie k shamanstvu [Functional Neuroses Among the Tungus of the Turukhansk Area and Their Relation to Shamanism].” *Sovetskii Sever* 7-8 (1930): 82-85.

Working for five years among the Tungus (Evenki) tribe, physician Kytmanov collected materials on manifestations of neuroses. His major premise is that “neuroses are directly linked to shamanism.” Yet, according to Kytmanov, there are number of ethnographic works which hardly discussed shamanism from the medicinal viewpoint (82). Of the Tungus examined by Kytmanov, about eight percent of the natives suffer from so-called functional neurosis. The most widespread forms of the “functional neuroses” are hysteria, neurasthenia, psychosthenia and the “neurosis of fear.” Among all these forms, the most widespread is hysteria. In addition to “genuine mental illnesses,” the most peculiar phenomenon Kytmanov encountered among the Tungus is the practice of

simulation and imitation of neurotic behavior by normal people, which Kytmanov describes in detail.

Local Russian-Siberian usage labeled all symptoms of hysteria by one word, "whirling" (*kruzhanie*). There are repeated incidents of mass "whirling," when influenced by a major local calamity; for example, in the event of an epidemic accompanied by high mortality or a long-time starvation, people suddenly "go crazy." Under these circumstances, absolutely normal people begin imitating the behavior of the mentally ill. On the basis of his personal observations, Kytmanov concludes that the "whirling" starts with depression and anxiety. Then people feel agitated, which ends in "fits." That is when individuals begin to sing or recite something. These songs are usually erratic and meaningless and consist of unrelated words and phrases. Yet somehow surrounding people are able to put together these chopped words and phrases and grasp the general meaning. "Neurotics" usually set themselves into a traditional Tungus position: squatting on the ground, they swing back and forth vigorously, singing and imitating the behavior of a shaman. The songs they usually sing also strongly resemble shamanic songs. The "sick persons" pretend that they do not recognize anything around them. They try to escape and resist. They might stay in such condition for hours. When the "neurotics" are tired of singing and swinging, they simply drop back and lie quietly, pretending they sleep, and only sometimes murmur something. After the "fit," pretenders behave as if they do not "understand" what happened to them. Strange as it may sound, all "whirling" people religiously repeat the same pattern of behavior even in minor details.

According to Kytmanov, the life-ways of the Tungus are responsible for the spread of "whirling." The entire life of natives, spent in crowded skin dwellings (chums) where they are exposed to each other all the time, perpetuates imitation of deviant "neurotic behavior." From their early years, the Tungus learn and remember unusual symptoms of this neurosis, and upon necessity in the future, they might imitate this behavior. Sexuality is also one of the chief reasons. For example, a girl wants to marry her beloved one, but the marriage cannot be arranged for some reason. As a result, the girl turns to "whirling," and in the process of this "whirling," she sends signals to surrounding people about her hidden desires. For a Tungus, a person who "whirls" is not simply a regular human being. A "whirling" individual manifests mysterious sacred spiritual power. Here a Tungus sees the manifestation of mysterious "great spirit" power. Therefore, everybody knows that the

members of the community more often take seriously the wishes of a “whirling” person than a request phrased in an ordinary manner (83-84).

In most cases, natives turn to “whirling” when they come of age. Kytmanov stresses, “Most probably such sick adolescents become shamans” and adds, “the more clearly hysterical inclinations of individuals are expressed, the better they shamanize” (84). Established shamans are known for frequent “whirling” in their adolescent years. For them, the years of “whirling” gradually turn into a professional habit, while the hysteria itself probably goes away. Kytmanov adds, “Very frequently shamans possessed with hysteria exhibit a spiritual anxiety before performing a séance. Or in other words, they emanate ‘hysterogenous auras’. The very process of shamanizing for them is a physiological necessity, while a shamanic song, manners and gestures might repeat a hysterical fit” (84). Shamans are spiritual leaders of their communities. Because members of a community are prone to imitate their movements and gestures, which are pathological by nature, shamanism contributes to the spread of hysteria. The Tungus people live a boring life devoid of any bright impressions. Against this unattractive life style as a background, shamans with their awesome séances, accompanied by unusual movements and hysterical screams, leave deep imprints on the minds of natives and serve as the major source of dissemination of “whirling” behavior (84). Kytmanov does not think that “shamanism is the serious obstacle for planting civilized life in the area [Siberia]”: “Upon penetration of civilization, in the future shamanism will naturally die out because the youngsters suffering with hysteria, who are potential recruits for shamanism, will become patients of psychiatric hospitals” (85).

Manzhigeev, I. A. *Buryatskie shamanisticheskie i doshamanisticheskie terminy* [*Buryat Shamanic and Pre-shamanic Terminology*]. Moskva: Nauka, 1978. 125 pages.

This reference book represents a dictionary of more than one thousand Buryat definitions, words, and names related to indigenous mythology and religion. Since the work was written in 1978, in his introduction, Manzhigeev discusses shamanism using Marxist framework and usage. Thus, he formally defines the goal of his dictionary as “to help anti-religious propagandists and beginning religious scholars to master the basics of necessary information on shamanism” (5). The premise of the

dictionary is the distinction between so-called shamanic and pre-shamanic terms. Manzhigeev argues that one cannot approach Buryat shamanism as a uniform or established religion. It includes numerous contradictory and even rival beliefs, rituals, and concepts that had appeared in various periods and overlapped each other. Some of these beliefs and rituals are very ancient and can be called pre-shamanic, whereas others were added later when shamanism came to dominate native spiritual life. According to Manzhigeev, in ancient times, when the Buryat lived in the “culture of primordial communism,” shamans never existed as a separate group. The class of the professional “shamanic aristocracy” emerged when egalitarian kin communities began to disintegrate and to split into class-based groups. In this context, the “shamanic aristocracy” hardly differed from any other secular aristocracy that exploited the poor. Shamans consciously or unconsciously worked to protect their “class interests.” They eventually adjusted many primal pre-shamanic myths and rituals to their societal needs and developed what became known in modern times as shamanism.

Hence, shamanism is a “transitional form of religion,” when people were in the process of switching from primal communal beliefs to a class-based religion (7). Therefore, shamanism cannot be called a primordial religion. Yet, being a “transitional religion,” shamanism did not digest completely such pre-shamanic beliefs as the reverence of fire, a communal hearth, clan mountains, and forces of nature. These primal elements continued to exist in modern times as relics and did not merge with shamanism. This coexistence of shamanism and pre-shamanic beliefs did not exclude a rivalry between them. A good example is a Buryat (pre-shamanic) feast called *tailagan*, where shamans were not allowed (8). Emphasizing the class nature of shamanism, Manzhigeev reduces shamanism to the worship of shamans’ personalities. To Manzhigeev, the evidence of this “cult of personalities” is the deification of ancestors-shamans. As is known, deceased shamans became spirits who were viewed as patrons of their descendants who accepted the same vocation. Manzhigeev suggests that modern shamans themselves promoted this veneration of shamans-ancestors, whereas pre-shamanic beliefs had grown spontaneously from the bottom up (51). Shamanism essentially represents a collection of morbid rituals and beliefs centered on various illnesses, which directly reflected the crisis and subsequent disintegration of egalitarian kin communities. Pre-shamanic beliefs were democratic and centered on the reverence of nature (pantheism). Unlike pre-shamanic beliefs that solicited various “gifts of nature,” shamanism

concerned “humiliating requests addressed to deities to take mercy on a patient.”

Considering so-called pre-shamanic beliefs to be open and democratic, Manzhigeev discusses “pre-shamanic relics” in Buryat shamanism. One of such “relic” was a ritual address to the earth and water: “The earth upon which one walks is ours, water that spreads out as the sea is ours.” Manzhigeev believes that in Buryat shamanism, this address was used in the rites that had originated from pre-shamanic beliefs and contained a request sent to deities to grant to praying people a warm rain, thick grass, good crops, and abundant stock and children. Pre-shamanic sacrificial rites reflected the direct economic concerns of the ancient Buryat. In contrast, in shamanic rites performed for healing purposes, sacrificial ceremonies did not contain any “pantheistic address” to the earth and water. Shamanic ceremonies dealt with the spirits who were “patrons of various illnesses.” Manzhigeev stresses, “In its rites, shamanism developed and maintained the cult of the illness rather than the veneration of nature. Therefore, to associate shamanism with the worship of nature, as some religious scholars like to do, means to distort the essence of shamanism” (41). Manzhigeev also notes that as a “transitional religion,” Buryat shamanism did not develop the concept of a god as sole creator of the universe and human beings. Instead, the Buryat cultivated a concept of so-called *tengerins* (*tengeri*), which represented celestial spirits of the highest rank. *Tengerins* were divided into fifty-five western *tengerins*, who were benevolent to human beings, and forty-four eastern *tengerins*, who were hostile to people. Manzhigeev sees the source of this division in the struggle for power among shamans (74). Like *tengerins*, shamans became divided into two opposite groups: “white” shamans and “black” shamans. During their séances, “white” ones worked with western *tengerins*, while “black” ones worked with eastern *tengerins*. According to Manzhigeev, “white” shamans were viewed as the highest ranking spiritual practitioners. They were usually the people who introduced various innovations into religious rites. “Black” shamans clung to old traditional rituals centered on “sorcery.” Manzhigeev admits that the reason why native people had graded shamans into “black” and “white” categories is not clear. At the same time, he suggests that this division might have originated from social and economic inequality among various Buryat clans. Manzhigeev writes that by origin, “white” shamans belonged to rich and aristocratic clans, whereas the ancestors of “black” shamans had belonged to weaker and non-aristocratic clans (66).

There were nine ranks in the Buryat shamanic hierarchy. Each rank endowed on a shaman the right to perform specific rituals and carry specific shamanic paraphernalia. Although exact names of all these ranks did not survive, Manzhigeev lists the known ones: (1) *dukhaalgain boo* shamans, who performed the rite of sprinkling vodka or wine on the smoldering coals of a hearth surrounded by thyme grass (*chebrets, thymus serpillum*); (2) *khailgain boo* shamans, who performed sprinkling of vodka/wine up toward the northeast; (3) *zhodooto boo* shamans, literally, the “shamans who had fir-tree bark;” these shamans purified people and various items by smoking them with fir-tree bark; (4) *shereete boo* shamans, who were endowed with the power to initiate other shamans in a specific rank; they also officiated at variety of rites; (5) *orgoito boo* shamans, who had the right to wear the iron helmet with antlers (*orgoi*); (6) *zaarin boo* shamans, who were at the top of the Buryat shamanic hierarchy and who went through all nine initiations. Most shamans went through only two or three initiations (24). The Buryat had a special term for the ritual paraphernalia of shamans: *boogei tonog*. This toolkit included: (1) the drum (*khese*) and the drumstick; (2) “horse staves” (*morin khor’bo*), which were usually represented by a couple of staves on which shamans leaned during their ritual dances; these “horses staves” symbolized the horse that gave a ride to a shaman to the heavenly sphere; (3) the small bell called *khonkgo*, which was decorated with ribbons of various colors; (4) a bronze mirror *toli*, to which shamans ascribed sacred power; the *toli* was used as a tool to identify a spirit that caused an illness; shamans also used the *toli* for soothsaying; (5) *khushuun*, which literally means the muzzle of an animal or the beak of a bird; *khushuun* was a ritual bundle of the furs of nine different animals, such as the sable, the squirrel, the ermine, the fox, the polar cat, the otter, the marten, the roe, and the hair; (6) *zhodoo*, a fir-tree bark that was burned to purify people and various items with its smoke; (7) *ganga*, thyme grass (*chebrets, thymus serpillum*), whose fragrant smoke was used to purify ritual items and sacrificial animals (25-26).

The “corporation” of shamans “recruited” its members among the people who had shamans in their lineages on a maternal or a paternal side. The Buryat described these shamanic powers inherited in a family with a special word *udkha*. Those shamans who inherited shamanic powers simultaneously from maternal and paternal ancestors were called *boogei khoör udkha*, or people of a double shamanic genealogy. They were more privileged than most shamans, and people tended to approach them more often than others. Yet such double genealogies occurred very

rarely because shamanic clans constantly rivaled and clashed with each other, and shamanic lineages only occasionally mated. If they did, it usually happened when shamanic clans struck a temporary alliance (26). Natives believed that each shaman was endowed with so-called shamanic power (*boogei khaba*), which was another important shamanic term. These powers “allowed” shamans to perform various miracles during their séances, which were so colorfully described in literature. The *khaba* of Buryat shamans were uneven and depended on the quality of sacred power of their ancestors-shamans. In the never-ending struggle among shamans and shamanic lineages, the ones who had stronger *khaba* usually won (26). On the issue of “mental state” of shamans, Manzhigeev writes, “There is an opinion that mentally ill people prone to ecstasy usually became shamans. Yet susceptibility to ecstasy was not only the cause but also a consequence of the shamanic ‘profession,’ the result of a regular consumption of alcohol, which was stipulated by the ritual. Being under an affect of hallucinations and unhealthy auto-suggestion, shamans often became aggressive toward and socially dangerous for nearby people. In the state of mental trance and ecstasy, they broke various items and injured both people and animals.” Socially sanctioned “mental instability” of shamans became one of the sources of shamanic mythology (24).

Mikhailov, T.N. “Vlianie Lamaisma i Khristianstva na shamanizm Buryat [The Impact of Lamaism and Christianity on the Buryat].” *Khristianstvo i Lamaizm u korennogo naselenia Sibiri*. Ed. I. S. Vdovin. Leningrad: Nauka, Leningradskoe otdelenie, 1979. 127-149.

Buddhism and Christianity started to penetrate Buryat country around the end of the seventeenth century and eventually became implanted in native Shamanism. By 1916 there were more than 16,000 Buddhist lamas among the Buryat. Originally lamas tried to entrench themselves by striking political alliances with traditional leaders (*noions*) and the Russian imperial administration. They used the native leadership and Russian police for organized persecutions of shamans and for destruction of shamanic sacred sites and paraphernalia (129). Yet this policy did not really help the spread of Buddhism. More effective was the conscious incorporation of Buryat shamanic rites into local Tibetan Buddhism, which eventually entrenched Lamaism (Tibetan Buddhism) among the Buryat. Lamas were able to attract Buryat shamanists by preserving

major indigenous deities and spirits. For example, a popular deity called Gudjir tengeri was declared an analogy of a Buddhist deity called Mhkhakala. As a result, the spiritual status and all attributes of Gudjir tengeri were projected to the corresponding deity of the Buddhist pantheon.

Lamas also took care of the ancient cult of *obo*, which represented piles of stones that were erected on banks of lakes, in steppes, on passes and that symbolized clan sacred sites in honor of spirit masters of specific localities. Tibetan Buddhism incorporated *obo* into its pantheon and practice. In some cases *obo* spirits received Buddhist names and even became canonized by Tibetan Buddhism. This happened, for example, with the major Buryat deity Bukha-noin, who was renamed by lamas as Rinchen-khan (130-131). As a result of "lamaisation" of the *obo* cult, especially in eastern areas of Buryat country, the forms of collective prayer rituals also changed. The sacrificial ritual became syncretic. In some cases, during the same *obo* rituals people performed two rites: one was conducted in a traditional shamanic manner, while another one was held in a syncretic shamanic-Buddhist form. The Buddhism influence also led to the appearance of Buddhist-shamanic *ongons* (the images of spirits or deities carved of wood or made of tin, furs of animals or fabric) (132). Another reflection of the merging of shamanism and Buddhism was the development of the whole group of spiritual practitioners who employed both shamanic and Buddhist sacred objects in their rituals. Natives called such *dzhochi* (lama-shaman). Buddhism transformed native concepts of soul, death and afterlife, as well as cosmology in general. Thus, the Buryat came to believe that there existed a thousand "light Burkhan (deities)." This is a clear reflection of the Buddhist teaching about a thousand Buddhas, who manifest themselves as human beings in order to preach proper paths of salvation.

In addition to numerous *tengri*, khans and other deities, in the shamanic pantheon of Buryat one can find deities with Buddhist names or titles such as Arain bogdo khan, Tegeren Burkhan, Obdori bogdo khan, Shingis, Shereete-bogdo, Taanshi lama, and Charidang lama. The most obvious impact of Buddhism on Buryat shamanism was the inclusion of Dalai-lama and Bogdo-gegen into a native shamanic pantheon (135). Although Buddhism made deep inroads into the native worldview, ancient shamanic traditions were preserved, even in those areas where shamans disappeared (136). Mikhailov agrees with Dmitrii Klementz, a nineteenth-century Russian anthropologist, who asserted that the

influence of Buddhism on shamanism was superficial and that the core idea of Buddhism never became rooted among the Buryat.

Christianity penetrated Buryat country with the arrival of the first Russian explorers. From the end of the 1830s, the Orthodox Church made energetic efforts to spread Orthodox Christianity among the Buryat. Mikhailov notes that missionary activities were accompanied by bribing native chieftains, deception, and even violence. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were 85,000 Buryat Christians. Mikhailov stresses that those who joined the Russian Orthodox Church continued to believe in their *ongons* and spirits and regularly approached shamans. Unlike lamas, Orthodox missionaries did not want to compromise with shamanic beliefs. Clerics unleashed an “open warfare” on paganism, seeking its complete eradication. As a result, many cult shamanic sites, where natives performed their sacrificial ceremonies, became abandoned. For example, at the end of the nineteenth century, missionaries insisted that a famous sacred rock on the Lena River, which was worshipped by two Buryat clans, be blown up (138). The influence of Christianity became noticed primarily in rituals, specifically in the timing of sacrificial ceremonies (*tailagans*). Thus, at the end of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth century, the Buryat established a tradition to time their *tailagans* to Orthodox feasts: in June to Peter’s fast, in July to Elijah’s Day, and in the fall to Holy Virgin’s Protective Cover feast. With the advancement of agriculture, Buryat created “bread *tailagans*.” The functions of some deities and spirits changed. Now people endowed former patrons of the earth and water with the ability to bring good crops and grasses. Moreover, the Buryat pantheon absorbed new Christian deities. The Buryat especially favored St. Nicholas, who became the patron of agriculture. In many districts, natives conducted *tailagans* in his honor before planting and collecting crops. The Buryat of the Iangut clan prayed in Russian to St. Nicholas before they began agricultural works. Then, they conducted the same ritual in a Buryat manner by fumigating with sacred grass and silver fir bark a horse and a cart that carried seeds. They also took a loaf of bread to a field and sprinkled the field with vodka.

In the Listvennichnoe village on the bank of the Baikal Lake, natives even cut into rock the face of St. Nicholas, and the place became the object of pilgrimage for many Buryat who came to worship this saint. In the Tunka area, the Buryat made an image of St. Nicholas with Mongoloid facial features. The image was held in a high esteem and was called “Buryat Nicholas” (140). Christianity also affected shamanic

funeral rites. "Air burials" were replaced by Christian coffins and crosses. Natives also stopped sacrificing horses at burial places. Moreover, the Buryat introduced memorial feasts they conducted on the ninth and fortieth days, and also a year after a burial (140-141). On the other hand, natives never adopted the Christian teaching about spiritual salvation, although they were well familiar with the concepts of good and evil (143). In Buryat mythology, Adam and Eve, Moses, and Elijah the Prophet became mentioned along with shamanic Esege Malan and Bukha-noion. Education of many Buryat children in missionary schools helped to channel Christianity into native society. Translation and publication of Orthodox books in Buryat was another venue for the spread of Christianity among the Buryat. Although Buryat society was predominantly illiterate, a small segment of the Buryat did read these books and conveyed their content to the masses, who then transmitted this information to each other orally, leaving traces in the worldview of the Buryat. As a result, Christian ideas became mixed with shamanic ideas and, in some cases, with Buddhist concepts (144-145). On the whole, the interaction of Buddhism, Christianity and shamanism led to the practice of double and even triple belief among the Buryat. There were families whose individual members shared different religions or merged elements of two or even three religions (145). Buddhist natives used shamanic séances, Orthodox natives slaughtered the sheep and horses as sacrifices to a Buddhist deity named Burkhan, who was considered a patron of the stock, and shamanists placed wax candles in front of an icon depicting St. Innocent or brought sour cream, cottage cheese, and other foods as a sacrifice to St. Nicholas (146).

Mikhailov, Taras M. *Buryatskii shamanism: ego istoriia, struktura i sotsial'nie funktsii* [Buryat Shamanism: History, Structure, and Social Role]. Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1987. 288 pages.

Mikhailov is a native Buryat scholar who worked under Sergei Tokarev, a renowned Soviet anthropologist of religion. Mikhailov's monograph is rich in factual ethnographic material. The book remains the major study on Buryat shamanism. As his sources, Mikhailov uses ethnographic, linguistic, archival sources, and folklore materials. The goal of the book is to show the role of shamans in the history of the Buryat people. Those who are interested in learning more about Mikhailov's work can consult the English translation of the conclusion to this book in *Soviet*

Anthropology and Archaeology 28, no.2 (1989): 9-19, which was reprinted in *Shamanism: Soviet Studies of Traditional Religion in Siberia and Central Asia*, ed. Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1990), 110-120. Methodologically, the book is based on the Marxist premise that, like any other religion, shamanism is an element of a so-called superstructure that grew out of an economic basis. The historical role of Buryat shamanism is defined as an “illusive overcoming of the general powerlessness of the people” (136). On the whole, shamanism played a “reactionary social role” in Buryat society. First of all, shamanism harmed the native economy, which had to carry the burden of excessive animal sacrifices and supporting shamans (137).

The monograph begins with defining shamanism as a special form of religion, “a highly developed polytheism” (9). Mikhailov describes the spiritual pantheon of the shamanists, shamanic artifacts, the initiation of shamans into their profession, “schooling” of shamans, shamanic hierarchy and accessories, and the social role of shamans. Mikhailov stresses that shamanism was rooted in the popular fluid native worldview, which could be described as the “chaotic state of religious consciousness.” The Buryat were not familiar with well-defined concepts of supernatural powers. Indigenous religious worldview was vague and fragmentized (53). At the same time, he portrays shamans as “carriers of ruling ideology,” who “channeled the minds and emotions of people in the direction of religion, skillfully capitalized on the awesome power of combined aesthetic tools such as the beauty of nature, images of deities and incenses, darkness or half-darkness, singing, and music” (54). Mikhailov takes on those scholars who considered shamans neurotics: “Shamanic ecstasy is neither a nervous disorder nor the result of the influence of alcohol or incenses. Shamans totally control their ecstasy, which requires tremendous physical and nervous efforts” (64). Drawing on his personal interactions with shamans, Mikhailov stresses, “With rare exceptions, all of them were normal healthy people” (97).

Instead of discussing shamans’ minds, Mikhailov finds it more productive to analyze their social and cultural roles. To Mikhailov, Buryat shamans were not mental or societal deviants. They were, rather, integral parts and products of an indigenous social system. Shamans acted as professionals who lived off their occupation and who did not produce anything (113). Mikhailov groups shamans under the category of clergy and links them to the ruling class of exploiters. He insists that shamans were rich people who enjoyed a high status in society (115). With the development of capitalist commercial relations in Buryat

society, in addition to “good fees” they charged for their ritual séances, shamans became actively involved in money-making, acting as merchants and money-lenders (116). In a word, shamans “lived off laboring masses, exploiting them spiritually and socially” (116).

Recognizing the significance of folk healing in shamanism, Mikhailov nevertheless disagrees with those who, like D.K. Zelenin, insisted that the origin and the essence of shamanism can be reduced to healing (163-164). Since in Buryat society religion penetrated all spheres of social and cultural life, shamans interfered in all social and family matters, participating in resolving economic, administrative, judicial, family, marital, and certainly religious problems (116-117). Hence, Mikhailov stresses multiple functions of shamans who acted as prophets, folk healers, poets, artists, experts in genealogy and on rites and traditions, storytellers, interpreters of traditional law, and singers. It was hardly surprising that spiritual practitioners were both judges and prosecutors, advisors, ideologists, and teachers. Moreover, before the Russians turned the Buryat into subjects of the Empire, shamans had also acted as military chiefs and political advisors. Assessing the personalities of shamans, Mikhailov notes that they were mentally gifted people with an extraordinary memory, creative imagination and artistic skills. They were to be well versed in the elaborate hierarchy of the Buryat polytheistic religion. Moreover, shamans were expected to know all existing myths, legends and tales. He stresses that all this knowledge was transmitted orally. In order to make their soothsaying and sorcery sessions more effective in the eyes of people, they had to master practical knowledge about nature and folk healing methods. Shamans were always perceptive observers who possessed incredible knowledge of nature. In addition, they were good masseurs and psychotherapists (117-118).

In the chapter on shamanic folklore and art, Mikhailov approaches Buryat myths and tales as the equivalents of sacred books in Christianity and Islam. Shamans were major keepers of oral tales and legends. In addition to legends and heroic epic tales, shamans had to learn tribal genealogies, stories about famous chiefs of the past, battle cries, and the configuration of clan regalia (131). Buryat shamanism was closely related to dramatic art. Shamanic séances were not only religious acts, but also theatrical performances. Mikhailov agrees with A.L. Avdeev, a historian of art, who wrote that in shamanism “elementary forms of theatrical art reached the highest professional level” (131-132).

Novik, E.S. “Struktura shamanskikh deistv [The Structure of Shamanic Séances]. *Problemy slavianskoj etnografii*. Ed. A. K. Baiburin and K. V. Chistov. Leningrad: Nauka, 1979. 204-212.

Novik analyzes the typical shamanic séance from the viewpoint of structuralism. She is interested in the meaning (semantics) of séances rather than their observable ritual elements. Her major premise is that shamanic healing séances were structured along one of two “blueprints.” The first type of séance was centered on the retrieval by a shaman of a patient’s soul which had been stolen by a hostile spirit. In the second type, a shaman extracted the spirit of illness from a patient’s body and drove this spirit away (205). Many other séances more or less followed one of these patterns, including séances related to sterility, complicated childbirth, sacrificing domestic animals, blessing new dwellings or hunting/fishing gear, securing hunting luck, funerals, and weddings. For example, many tribes of Siberia and the Far East were familiar with shamanic séances directed to the acquisition of the souls of unborn children, and, on the other hand, with séances dealing with the dispatch of souls of deceased people to the world of the dead. To guarantee the increase of herds of domestic animals and wild game, shamans usually approached appropriate spirits to procure the souls of animals to be born or to be hunted. During sacrificial ceremonies, shamans performed the opposite. By sacrificing animals, spiritual practitioners “extracted” animal souls and “drove” them to the habitat of spirits who were to receive the sacrifices. While blessing a new dwelling and hunting/fishing gear or during manufacturing amulets and shamanic paraphernalia, shamans “lured” and “planted” proper spirits inside those items. On the other hand, in the séances with reverse goals, such as driving hostile spirits out of dwellings, shamans “lured” them into specially-made objects, usually stuffed figures or pots, and then “drove” the spirits out.

Despite their considerable tribal and individual variations, Novik argues that shamanic séances as a special ritual genre can be separated into several elements (206). First of all, the object of a séance was always the soul, or in other words, the “value” that could be moved in opposite directions. (1) The shaman retrieved this “value” in the world of spirits and deliver it to the world of people or (2) the shaman extracted the “value” that belonged to a community (a sacrificial animal or a soul of a deceased person) and carried it away to the world of spirits. The hostile spirit that visited people mirrored the same operations. (1) The hostile spirit “planted” itself into the body of a patient, herd, or dwelling, or (2)

the hostile spirit extracted a soul from the body of its victim and carried it away to the world of spirits (207).

Shamans performed séances in case their communities or their individual members experienced misfortunes. A misfortune was viewed as a result of souls' "shortage" caused by spirits hostile to people. Incidentally, by their mistaken or improper activities, people themselves could provoke spirits to behave in a hostile manner. For example, people could violate some restrictions or forget to bring sacrifices, which prompted spirits to steal souls. The "shortage" of souls usually served as a sufficient cause to perform a shamanic séance. Generally speaking, this "shortage" signaled that the number of values belonging to human beings was reduced in favor of the world of spirits. Under the reverse circumstances, the values that belonged to spiritual beings could be disproportionately appropriated by human beings. Shamans were the people who were endowed with the power to transfer values from one world to another with the help of their spirit helpers. Therefore, shamans were expected to eliminate a "shortage" of souls and restore the balance. Thus, according to Novik, the essence of the shamanic séance was the shaman's "contact of and concluding an agreement with spirits" and the "exchange of values between people and spirits," or in other words, "redistribution of values, possession of which is always contested" (212). Using such key definitions as "value" and "transference," Novik singles out "generic genre blocks" of the shamanic séance. First, people invited shamans to establish contact with spirits and thereby indirectly received the power to eliminate the "shortage" of souls. Second, shamans received information about the causes of misfortunes, either through dreams, soothsaying, or inquiring of spirit helpers. If the cause was known in advance, as in séances dealing with seasonal activities such as multiplying the souls of wild game and domesticated animals, soothsaying was not necessary. Yet shamans were invited and "fed" their spirit helpers anyway. This was a required part of any séance (208).

The third block was a shamanic journey to the world of spirits. After they reached the designated chief deity or spirit at the end of their journeys, shamans usually became involved in long and exhausting negotiations with the spirit. During the negotiations, shamans usually related their life histories, including the story of their initiation into the profession. In addition, they detailed the desperate situation of the people on whose behalf they arrived in the spiritual world. Shamans eloquently described sacrifices they brought in exchange for what they sought. In the séances dealing with extracting a spirit of illness, shamans usually

“transferred” a spirit of an illness from a dwelling, herd, or the body of a patient to their own bodies or to specially-prepared images or objects. In the latter cases, shamans relied on persuasion, or lured spirits using their cunning, or simply “scared” a spirit out. After the spirit of an illness was caught, shamans usually drove it away. Spiritual practitioners could simply throw away an image that “contained” a hostile spirit or carry it away to hide it in the woods (209). The next block was the return of shamans, accompanied by the delivery of the lost or searched-for values. The secured value could be “planted” in different ways. In the séances directed to increase the number of animal herds, shamans scattered around pieces of wool or fish scales, while members of their clans caught them and uttered proper exclamations. Shamans could release the soul of an animal to the taiga forest, sometimes under the guard of the spirit master of a clan territory. Shamans also could “implant” received souls into cows or bulls. Souls of children were delivered to parents or implanted in special images. The séance usually ended with shamans telling people what awaited the received soul in the future. Stressing that “genre blocks” of séances are uniform, Novik attaches to her paper a table in which she graphically reproduces the structure of séances (211).

Petri, B.E. *Staraiia vera Buryatskago naroda: nauchno-populiarnii ocherk [Old Faith of the Buryat People: A Popular Account]*. Irkutsk: Tipografiia izdatel'stva “Vlast' Truda,” 1928. 78 pages.

Berngard Petri (1884-1975) was an anthropologist and a renowned student of Siberian natives. In this book, in a popular form, he describes traditional beliefs of the Buryat tribe. Formally, the goal of his book is to “provide Siberian non-believers basics of native beliefs, which will give them keys to understanding the demonology of each specific native tribe of Siberia.” Written in a lively style, the book is addressed to the general reader. To the present day, it remains the best and clearest review of Buryat shamanism.

In the first chapter, Petri describes the general worldview of shamanism. He stresses that shamanism belongs to so-called animist religions, which “animate not only all natural phenomena such as the wind, thunder, and waves, but also insignificant items such as a spoon, a kettle, or a gun. Each item represents a living being,” or, in other words, each item has its own spiritual master (7). For the majority of Siberian tribes, such words as the spirit, deity, soul, and spiritual master do not

exist separately. Natives label all of them by the same word. For example, the Altaians call it *ezi*, while the Buryat define it as *ezhin* (8). According to Siberian natives, people's material well-being depends on "major spirits," masters of mountains, rivers, lakes, steppes, forests, and taiga. Therefore, it is important for people to appease these beings with chants, rites, and sacrifices (10). Sacrifices are especially important because spirits/deities need various items, primarily those that they usually do not have in their spiritual habitats. For example, the spirit of the Lake Baikal certainly does not need fish, for this spirit itself sends fish to the nets of fishers. Yet the spirit of Baikal might need milk, simply because cows do not live in water. That is why natives sprinkle milk or milk products to the spirit of this lake. The souls of sacrificial animals usually join the herd belonging to a deity that receives the sacrifice. The herd consists of the souls of other animals that were sacrificed earlier. Spirit and deities are very demanding and frequently extract sacrifices from people. If people do not deliver regular sacrifices for a long time, deities punish them for such disrespectful behavior by inflicting sickness, which is usually brought by one of their subordinate spirits who crawls inside an individual's body and starts to gnaw it (11).

Buryat sacrifices can be divided into three groups: (1) "appeasing sacrifices," which are designed to save people from bad experiences; in these cases people ask a spirit to help to ward off a punishment; (2) "preventive sacrifices," which are made in advance in an attempt to secure the benevolence of a specific spirit or a deity, and (3) "pleading sacrifices," which are used by people to ask for a specific mercy, for example, to send good grass for the stock, to protect and increase the stock, or to secure hunting luck or an abundant fish catch.

The second chapter of the book details the Buryat mythology. The Buryat have an incredibly large number of deities. In addition to ninety-nine major deities, there are many secondary spiritual beings. The major deities are divided into fifty-five benevolent deities ("white" *tengerins*), who reside on the southwestern edge of the heavenly sphere, and forty-four hostile deities ("black" *tengerins*), who reside on the northeastern edge of the heavenly sphere. All these deities mainly symbolize various weather conditions, which either harm or benefit people (18). All these deities live a life like all other Buryat. They eat, drink, get married, ride horses, enjoy parties and wedding ceremonies, wear the same clothing, argue, and strike deals (21). The minor or secondary deities are called the "children" of *tengerins*. Sometimes they are also called "khans." The chief deity among the northeastern "khans" is Erlen-khan. His activities

are concentrated on sending his assistants to catch human souls. When the assistants catch a human soul, they lock it in an underworld dungeon, where the soul stays and suffers. Simultaneously, a person who loses his or her soul falls ill. People invite a shaman, who, when convinced that the soul is locked up by servants of Erlen-khan, embarks on a spiritual journey to the kingdom of this deity to retrieve the soul. Upon reaching the “kingdom of darkness,” the shaman offers a ransom (sacrifice) for the stolen soul. If the shaman succeeds, a patient recovers. If a soul is not retrieved, it continues to suffer in the dungeon, and its owner dies (22-23).

Among minor deities surrounding the Buryat in their daily life, the spirit of fire plays a crucial role. The spirit of fire is a benevolent being that resides in the yurt of each Buryat in a hearth and protects a dwelling from other minor “spiritual wreckers.” The Buryat picture the spirit of fire as a geezer with bright red hair wearing a red robe. Natives treat the fire spirit with respect. They honor this spirit with various rituals and feed it with small presents (26). Next on the grading scale of secondary deities are spirits of ancestors. Residing in the afterworld and closely interacting with various deities, ancestors are viewed as potential protectors of human beings. If treated with respect, the ancestral spirits might work on behalf of their descendents who live in the earthly world (29). To keep their ancestral “messengers” satisfied, people are to bring sacrifices because in the afterworld, ancestors always need food and wine (30). Third, all Buryat clans have their territorial patron spirits, who are viewed as masters of specific localities where clans live (32). “Masters of springs and creeks” should be included in the same category of “territorial deities.” “Masters of springs and creeks” are responsible for watering fields (33). Interestingly, among “territorial deities” one finds so-called Mongols, which might reflect a popular memory of ancient population migrations. According to Buryat legends, in ancient times in the Trans-Baikal area, there lived people called “Mongols,” who later moved to the south. Yet the souls of the deceased Mongols remained the “masters” of various localities in the Trans-Baikal area. Thus, in Buryat shamanism, there is the whole class of “Mongol” territorial spirits. Before pitching their yurts at a new place, Buryat usually solicit permission from a Mongol, the spiritual master of a specific locality. Solicitation is usually expressed in the form of sacrifices (34). Finally, at the bottom of spiritual hierarchy, one finds a large number of various “stray” benign and hostile spirits (35).

Petri also discusses the concept of the human soul in Buryat shamanism. Each person has three souls. The major one, which is called *altan*, after the death of a human being goes to the land of the dead, Erlen-khan's domain, where the soul lives like a living person. It eats, drinks, sleeps, and visits its neighbors. The souls use the items that relatives provided for the deceased during their funerals: clothing, jewelry, money, and various household items. Usually, the Buryat do not try to spare expensive items such as their best horses to accompany their deceased kinfolks. To be exact, as Petri notes, the Buryat believe that the human souls in the afterworld use not the actual items provided by relatives but the souls of these items (41). At the same time, the *altan* souls not always safely reach the habitat of the dead. Usually an *altan* soul is an easy prey for hostile spirits because it leaves an individual's body during a sleep and wanders all over the world. What a wandering soul experiences during its journey is reflected in human dreams. An *altan* soul even might jump out from the nostrils when a person sneezes. Hostile spirits usually take advantage of such weaknesses (42-43). Individuals also have a second soul called *bokholdoi*, which becomes active after death. A *bokholdoi* soul turns into a "wandering ghost," who is quite harmless but mischievous. The third soul, called *mu*, is a harmful being, which resides in a human body on a permanent basis. After a while, when a dead human body decays, *mu* turns in a whirlwind which might harm people (45).

The third and concluding chapter of the book deals with the personalities of shamans. According to Petri, shamans are individuals who inherit their powers and who periodically immerse themselves into the state of religious ecstasy upon their wish. Shamans are people chosen for this vocation by spirits, with whom they conclude an "agreement about mutual help." Spirits are obliged to receive shamans, in order to listen to their requests on behalf of people. In turn, shamans are to provide spirits with regular sacrifices and other items they might need. Thus, shamans act as mediators between people and deities (13-14). People who are chosen by spirits to become shamans usually experience their spiritual calls in adolescent or youthful age in the form of a "special nervous ailment," which is accompanied by hallucinations, conversations with invisible spirits, visions, and fits. At this time, future shamans develop an urge to shamanize: from time to time they might jump, dance and sing. In the meantime, the spirit of a shaman-ancestor enters into a chosen candidate and makes him or her insane (50). Petri stresses that shamans are not charlatans. They perform "genuine unexplained

miracles.” In addition, without any medicinal tools, they quickly cure some illnesses. These are manifestations of “shamanic power, which is related to the category of unexplored powers of the human mind, which also includes hypnotic and fakirs’ magic” (52).

Having gone through the stage of calling, individuals do not automatically turn into professional shamans. They still have to go through special schooling, working as apprentices for their elder colleagues, who teach them mythology and rites. The next stage is the ceremony of initiation, which is a very expensive and elaborate rite, “whose description would have required a large size volume” (56). After the first initiation, there might be other initiations, which move a shaman to a higher rank. Gradually, with each initiation, shamans receive new accessories of their profession: a shamanic sword, a wooden or iron staff, a drum and a drumstick, items of shamanic clothing, and finally a shamanic headdress (66-67). Buryat shamans are divided into “black” and “white” shamans. “White” shamans work with southwestern benign deities and wear white clothing. “Black” shamans serve hostile northeastern deities and the spirits of the underworld and wear blue clothing. People approach black shamans in case an ailment or a misfortune was inflicted by northeastern deities (66-67).

Popov, Andrei. “Materialy po shamanstvu: kul’t bogini Aisyt u Iakutov [Materials on Shamanism: the Cult of Goddess Aisyt Among the Yakut].” *Kul’tura i pismennost’ Vostoka* 3 (1928): 125-133.

Goddess Aisyt is considered the patron of childbirth among the Yakut (Sakha). The Yakut believe that there are benign spirits (*ai*) and hostile spirits (*abasy*), which harm people and bring death. They also believe that the world always goes through an unending transformation caused by special deities who belong to a special *ai* category called *aisyt*. The word *aisyt* means both “he-creator” and “she-creator” and defines deities who promote reproduction of people and some species of animals. The most revered deity among the *aisyt* is a goddess who carries the same name, Aisyt. Folk tales describe Aisyt as the lady who usually sits spreading herself. Her fur sable coat is widely open, a cap sits askew, and all laces of her footwear are loosened.

Although Aisyt is a goddess, she does not “manufacture” souls, but rather receives the souls of unborn children from *Yurun-ai toion aot*, the benevolent deity who created the universe, and plants the souls in male

semen. Aisyt delivers the soul of a boy in a shape of a knife, while the soul of a girl arrives in the shape of scissors (125). Young women usually “approach” Aisyt, asking her to make them fertile. Aisyt helps pregnant women by visiting them seven days before the childbirth. When Aisyt “comes” to a dwelling, family members are not allowed to quarrel and curse, plates are not allowed to be turned upside down or tilted, and loud talking and knocking are also forbidden. People are required to walk around on tiptoes and whisper and do everything not to irritate Aisyt, who otherwise could leave a pregnant woman without divine help and blessing (126). On the third day of the goddess’s visit, people conduct a special farewell rite for Aisyt. The ceremony is performed only by women headed by an expecting mother in a specially-erected tent. During the rite, women ask Aisyt to bless a coming child and to visit the same woman again. Participants in the rite are expected to laugh wildly for as long as possible. Natives believe that a woman who is able to out-laugh all others gains attention from Aisyt, who might help the “winner” to conceive (127).

Infertile women are considered to have fallen in disgrace with Aisyt. In such cases, couples ask a shaman to “approach” Aisyt and “request” a child’s soul. “White shamans,” who work with benign spirits, are the only ones who are permitted to journey to Aisyt (128). Popov describes in detail one such “fertility séance.” (128-129). A “fertility séance” was performed in spring. Before the shaman arrived, people cleaned their dwelling. All dishes were washed and greased with oil and then placed in neat straight rows on a table and shelves. In order for all living beings to meet the goddess in a happy mood, people even fed animals, including dogs, which the Yakut usually never feed at all and which routinely survive on waste. The earth floor of a yurt was covered with fresh grass. In front of an open door, people planted an alley of small birch trees in two rows, which symbolized the path that Aisyt would use to walk through. Then the shaman selected seven virgin youths and seven maidens. It is assumed that a shaman is able to “verify” if they are “pure” by simply “looking through” each youth. The chief function of these virgin youths is to enhance the shaman’s appeal to the goddess. If for some reason a couple appears unworthy of having a child, a shaman uses the “clean” youths to talk Aisyt into taking pity on the unworthy parents, at least for the sake of these “pure” youths. All participants in the “fertility séance” wore on their faces tender and happy expressions and smiled throughout the whole ceremony.

Having situated himself on the skin of a white horse, the shaman began beating his drum and appealing to the “spirit of the universe,” asking him to bless his journey to Aisyt. Then continuing beating a drum, the shaman stood up and began jumping at the same spot imitating his trip to Aisyt. As in any other shamanic séances, his journey was hard, and the shaman used various tricks to deceive hostile spirits to make it through. He had to select a correct path among numerous dead ends. Moreover, he encountered an Aisyt pretender, who tried to offer him a “damaged” soul of a weak and sick child who could die right after a childbirth. After a long and exhausting journey and unpleasant “confession” of his “sins” to guards of heavenly gates, the shaman finally reached the goddess and knelt down in front of her on one knee. Throwing his drum to the ground, the shaman addressed Aisyt, bowing his head and asking her to give to the “living place” its “continuance.” Using the shaman as the “transmitter,” Aisyt responded that she could not give the soul right away: “You probably do not behave properly. It looks like you shout too much in the mornings and the evenings, and do not treat well the children I had given to you earlier.” Stretching out his hands, the shaman began to defend both spouses. Then Aisyt backed off and handed the soul to the shaman, who hid it in his left ear. Aisyt warned the parents not to beat or curse the “granted” child, to love and safeguard it, and raise it properly. Showing his gratitude, the shaman bowed once more and began jumping again, imitating his return home. In the meantime, his assistant, who stood behind the shaman, continued to beat a drum.

Before the beginning of the “fertility séance,” the couple had made a small birch box in a form of a nest. In this “nest” they placed two wood carved images of wagtails. During the séance, the couple handed the figures to the shaman, who pulled the soul of a child from his ear and “implanted” it into the wooden birds. During the whole procedure, the audience smiled as much as possible and joyously exclaimed, “Urui! Aikhal.” Then the future parents placed the “wagtails” back into their “nest.”

After the soul was delivered, the shaman enlightened the parents about the future of their coming child by throwing up his drumstick. The Yakut believe that if the drumstick falls on the side covered with fur, the child will be miserable; if not, the child will be happy. After such “fertility séances” are over, the “nest” boxes are usually stored carefully somewhere in a barn. Sometimes, despite all the efforts of shamans, couples learn that an Aisyt pretender stole the soul of the child and placed

instead the soul of a stillborn. If this happens, a shaman announces this misfortune and explains the reasons. Moreover, Aisyt does not always provide a child soul. It happens that Aisyt “discovers” that spouses are not worthy of having children. In such cases Aisyt might give the soul of a child to another man or a woman from the audience, whom the goddess trusts more. When Aisyt chooses not to grant the soul to a couple, she usually “informs” the spouses, who were “bypassed,” through a shaman that they have a bad temper and scream all the time.

Popov, Andrei A. *Nganasany: sotsial'noe ustroistvo i verovania* [*The Nganasan: Social System and Beliefs*]. Leningrad: Nauka, Leningradskoe otdelenie, 1984. Chapter 3. “The Rite of a Clean Chum.” 76-93.

An extensive excerpt from this book contains a detailed description of a shamanic journey narrated in broken Russian for anthropologist Popov by Nganasan shaman Ivan Gornok after his nine-day séance. The séance, which Gornok performed secretly in 1936, was part of the rite of a “clean” chum (dwelling). Gornok, who was one of the last Nganasan shamans, was deadly sick with tuberculosis and was in a hurry to perform this rite. Popov was able to witness the last seven days of the ceremony (77). The Nganasan usually held the rite of a “clean chum” during the first days of February, when the polar night was over. During this rite, which continued from three to nine days (the number of days must be uneven), Nganasan shamans usually asked their deities and spirits for well-being, good luck, and happiness during a new year. It was only high- and middle-ranking shamans who were to conduct this ceremony. The rite consisted of a séance during which shamans traveled through lower, middle and upper worlds. In these spiritual wanderings, their guide and patron was a god/goddess named Khore, who was considered both a father and a mother of trees, and who was a daughter of so-called Mother-Earth-Devil or “mama of the land.” Like all other Nganasan people, Gornok did not separate deities in “evil” and benign spirits, and in a conversation with Popov he used the Russian word “devil” in a neutral manner to describe all major deities and spirits. Furthermore, like many spirits from a shamanic pantheon, Khore was a being of a double gender. Therefore, shamans addressed this deity interchangeably both as a woman and a man.

It is notable that the described spiritual journey is multidimensional. The shaman traveled all over limitless worlds and simultaneously moved inside the body of the Mother Earth maneuvering through her internal organs. Before his departure, Gornok described the universe as viewed by the Nganasan: "At first there was ice, and there was no grass. There was only pure ice everywhere. At that time, the mother of the ice land (or mama of the land) was a maiden. Once she exposed her behind, and the father of land, god, saw it and decided to overtake her. After he overtook her, the land maiden devil became pregnant, and she gave birth to the mother of trees [Khore] to provide firewood for children. Mama of the land also gave birth to the loon. Then trees became very dense, and food for reindeer appeared. Thus, all children appeared. The master of water started to provide fish, and the wild deer started to eat the reindeer moss, which is the nipple of the land. On land, people started to eat the fish and the deer. That was people's nipple of the land. Why did the land create trees? It is for all the people to make fire and breed" (83). Khore brought harmony to the universe, which was also kept intact by her seven spirits of loons.

Like all other Nganasan, Gornok saw the sources of the contemporary ecological crisis in the lack of strong shamans, who could maintain harmony between the world of people and the world of spirits. Many benign spirits disappeared, which led to an increase in the number and power of hostile spirits. The latter began destroying all living beings on the earth. The spirits of loons, who helped to support the harmony of the world, also disappeared along with strong shamans. As a result, Khore, the mother of trees, lost her eyes (it was assumed that her eyes were shamans), and her feet (the loons) became weak. She stopped combating hostile powers and fell asleep. The role of the 1936 "clear chum" séance was at least partially to restore the disturbed balance.

First, Gornok woke Khore, the mother of trees, and by feeding her with sacrifices, he helped her restore her powers and abilities. Then, accompanied by Khore, Gornok embarked on a journey, first to the underworld and then to the upper world. Before he started the journey, Gornok addressed the mother of trees as follows: "Let's go: I will show you the way. Here we will enter the mouth of the devil's land that eats children and then go down. Here are the seven loons who had been eaten, too. It is the devouring devil that ate them up. Here we will go into his stomach. Do you have enough power? How can I help you? Let me try to raise you up" (83). Then they jumped, dropping into the first layer of the underworld. While dropping, Khore hurt herself. So they had to interrupt

the journey, while the shaman healed her. When the mother of trees was healthy, they continued deeper into the underworld, going through the mouth of the spirit of the earth. Gornok continued, "Here is the mouth of the afterworld, where souls go after people's death. It is a very dark place. It is probably because we got into the very center of the stomach of the land" (84).

Then Gornok and Khore crossed an ice land and reached a newly-built chum, where a servant of some spirit of an undefined ailment resided. To get permission to cross the domain of this spirit, the travelers had to pay a ransom, a piece of calico, which was magically turned into female clothing for this spirit. Having paid the ransom, they asked the spirit not to send illnesses to their tribe. Eventually the travelers reached the end of the icy land, where they found the sources of seven creeks, which flew into one spring. Gornok asked his companion deity, "Well, mama of the trees, where did we come to?" "Mama" responded, "You know what, when the mama of the land was giving birth to all grass roots, she was urinating in seven creeks. Here are the seven wombs, where souls of all people are born, seven hordes such as the Russians, the Yurak, the Ostiak and others" (85-86). At the place where the seven creeks flew into one spring, there were three trees that sprang up from one root. The three trees were the three ailments sent to people as a punishment for incest committed by two brothers and a sister. Ironically, according to Gornok, the act of incest was provoked by the same three spirits of the ailments. Incidentally, the shaman noted that this incident was the reason why contemporary native women were giving birth to few children (86). After this, the mother of trees and the shaman jumped into the cold water of the spring and washed away all dirt from these ailments. After a while, they arrived at a narrow spot between two capes. At this point, the weather drastically changed. It was unbearably hot, and sand dunes were turned into a sand storm. Yet here they met a benign god of the underworld. The swimming travelers proceeded farther and finally reached a large lake. There were nine hills right amid the lake. Khore explained that the river they were swimming was not actually a river but the womb of the mother earth (land), and the hills were the bellies of nine old brothers. The rocks on the tops of their "bellies" were actually their penises. Amid these "hills-bellies," the mother of trees spotted an entrance leading to the next layer, to the sphere populated by the deities who grant shamans their powers (86-87). Using the "penis" of one of the old men, the travelers entered the next layer that is also described as a bodily part, the belly of the mother of the chum. Inside the chum, they

saw nine daughters of this mother. The hostess turned out to be the mistress of fire, while her daughters were responsible for providing food to all newborn babies. During his stay at this chum, the shaman complained to the hostess and her daughters that his people did not live well and asked them to help his tribe. The next morning, the hostess gave the shaman eternal fire, fish, and a herd of reindeer. Having received gifts, the travelers returned to the lake of nine grandfathers. They kept on moving down river, which was also an artery, and Khore continued to act a navigator: "Here mother earth lies with her belly up. Here we are moving over her guts" (88). Thus, traveling inside the body of the mother earth, they found the gut that led to her heart. Behind the heart, there was a chum where the spirit of war resided. They dropped by to find out if a war was expected, by any chance. The spirit informed them that there would be no war. The travelers wanted to proceed, but the spirit tried to lock them up. At this point, Gornok used one of his magical tricks. By plunging a knife inside himself, the shaman showed the spectators that he "cut" an opening in the door and escape (88).

Finally, they reached the tip of the mother earth's tongue, where they met a Russian woman who was sitting there. When they inquired who she was, the woman answered, "Do not you know me? I am the mother icon of all baptized, the mother of shamans. When new shamans or new spirits are made, I provide them with iron skins. That is why I am the mother of iron and the mother of the Russian icon. I lost my man, who a Samoyed god, from whom I conceived. He began fighting the spirit of war but did not have enough power and ran away. Now I became the servant of the spirit of war. I do what he forces me to do. He tells me, 'You live by the end of the tongue of the mother earth. So stay there and scratch the tongue.' When I scratch the tongue, Russians start doing all sorts of things. Thus, Russians cut so many trees that the sacred trees [where spirits of forest live] all died" (88). The destruction of the ecological balance by the contemporary Russians Gornok described to the anthropologist as follows: "Cutting sacred trees, Russians made the mother earth's mouth open. Because of this, many native people died. In old times, our people, protecting their own lives, cut just enough trees to make a fire, and not many people died. But now a lot of people are dying out. All shamans died; only my head remained. While I cure a sick person, an illness finishes people at another place. What can I do?" (88-89).

Night descended, and next morning, the spiritual travelers returned to the point where they started their journey, the mouth of the mother earth.



Attire of Altaian Shaman, c. 1920s. Photograph by Author. Courtesy of the Biisk Local Museum.

Yet now the surrounding landscape looked different. From the mouth, they swam in the water, which carried away the souls of the dead, and reached the first layer of the underworld, where they had spent the first night of their journey. The road went through the icy barren land. Gornok and Khore reached three hills, which were the foreheads of three ailments that were very hostile to the shaman. Gornok became involved in a conversation with these hostiles on an apocalyptic topic: "You three grandfathers, why do you stare at me?" The three ailments-grandfathers responded, "We are just surprised because we thought all shamans were gone. As it turns out, you are the one who is still alive. We see your new clothing and do not like it." Gornok tried to reason with them, "Grandfathers, I am the only one who remains. Do I disturb anybody? Go ahead, take my head, I do not need it anyway, because I am the only one who has remained. How are we going to live if everybody is gone on the earth? Do not you feel sorry? Almost all our children died. We cannot live like this; my tribe is almost all gone. If I am guilty, take my head. If I am not, do not take it. I don't disturb anybody. You, powerful masters, want to make the earth empty. If you feel sorry for the earth, do not do this" (89).

The next stage of the journey was a ritual hunting, which was to provide Gornok's tribe with a good catch. At first, hostile spirits tricked the shaman into hunting two false deer ("grandfather hunger" and "grandfather louse") that could poison people to death. Yet Khore helped the shaman to avoid the trap. She found the "mama of the deer food," which looked like a stem of grass, and instructed the shaman, "Now shoot from this bow right in the middle. If you get right in the middle, you will get a very good catch. You should shoot with your eyes closed. If you miss, our people will starve." Gornok hit the target, which meant that in the "coming year we will be eating many wild deer" (89-90). In the morning, the journey resumed and, moving by water, the travelers reached two hills. Above the hills they noticed seven penises of the crescent hanging from up above. This was the entrance to the upper world. To ascend to the upper world, the shaman harnessed a so-called winged devil and began climbing a penis of the crescent (90). At the spot from which all these penises grew, there stood a naked man who was the spirit that spoiled the birth process. After they passed this spirit, they reached the "mother that gives eyes to newborn human and animal beings." Then they swam upriver, which was the streaming urine of a crescent penis. En route they found two boxes with eyes, which the mother of the crescent used to provide eyesight to various beings, and

they eventually reached the dwelling of the “mother of eyes,” who sent them to the father god of shaman-healers. Standing before the father of shamans, Gornok addressed him, “Many people fell sick, they became blind, and their sufferings made us come here. Why did you neglect us? Who will protect us? We are looking for our father and mother. We have no power. The devil of the earth devours the souls of shamans. That is why we ask you. We have no power to cure the sick; we have no power to fix blind eyes. Father, give us power” (92). The father of shamans responded, “Next time when you come to me to get power to heal people, I will make sure that there will be only few people to die. Yet I cannot give you too much power to fix all the sick because the mother-earth-devil might not like it and would fight you each day. That is why I will give you medium power. I will give you a future; you will live to your gray hair” (92). Thus, the shaman received his most precious gift, sacred power. Right after the receipt of the power, the passage to the middle world opened, and Khore instructed the shaman, “Now when you start curing your people, before going to the spirit of an illness, you should ask for power through this hole. You should shout into this hole, ‘Father, mother, give power!’ and power will come to you through this hole” (92). The travelers did not return to the earth right away. At first, they dropped to the principal layer of the underworld to the mouth of the earth, where they had started their journey. Here the travelers went by a river and again encountered various obstacles before they finally returned to the middle world. At this point, the rite of the “clean chum” was over. Despite the elaborate route of the shaman and Khore, they did not penetrate too deep into the underworld or too high in the upper world. According to Gornok, theirs was not a high-risk journey. They actually traveled only in the spheres that were located close to the earth. Yet even this journey required from the shaman mobilization of all his energy and became possible only because of the assistance provided by the deity Khore. Popov stresses that Gornok was the last Nganasan shaman who manifested incredible skills and was endowed with huge power.

Potapov, Leonid P. “Luk i strela v shamanizme u Altaitsev [Bow and Arrow in Altaian Shamanism].” *Sovetskaia etnografiia* 3 (1934): 64-76.

Potapov stresses the significance of the bow and the arrow in Altaian shamanism. As late as the 1920s, some Altaian shamans as well as

spiritual practitioners from a few other tribes used small bows instead of drums in their dialogues with spirits during séances. For example, in 1927, the Kumandin Altaians used a bow to shamanize to the spirit protector of hunting (*tajgam*). At the same time, in the Altai the shamanic séances in which bows and arrows were used instead of drums served only the needs of shamans' relatives (70). The Buryat shamans used bows for soothsaying by placing their ears close to drawn bow strings and interpreting the sounds they produced or by looking at a fire along a bow string. Potapov stresses that all these rituals were "splinters" of the time, when bows were widespread as major ritual tools. Potapov suggests that before the Altaians introduced drums as ritual tools, they had used only bows and arrows. It is notable that after they accepted drums as ritual tools, the Altaians still viewed them as spiritual "bows" and even called them by a ritual name, the "bow."

The way shamans used their drums during séances directly suggests that in ancient times, bows were used instead of drums. For example, during séances, Altaian shamans aimed their drums at hostile spirits. It was assumed that drums were bows that shot arrows at hostile spirits (71). During their spiritual journeys, shamans who turned into different animals, plants, or inanimate objects and who also fought each other, used the "arrows" symbolized by pendants attached to drums. The "arrows" were decorated with ribbons and horse hair. Frequently, drumsticks were also viewed as "arrows." The names Altaian shamans attached to various parts of their drums also indicated the "bow origin" of shaman drums. Thus, all Altaian drums had iron rods for crossbars, which were called *kirysh* that literally means a "bow-string." The iron pendants attached to such rods symbolized arrows. Moreover, the root of the very word "drum" (*jagal* or *cagal*) in the Altaian language points to the bow (*ja*, *ca* or *cag*) (72). Replaced by drums, bows nevertheless survived as ritual drawings on drums and as decorations on shamanic costumes. Thus, on their backs, Altaian shamanic costumes had appliqués of ten small bows with arrows. Karagass shamans sewed to the backs of their costumes an appliqué of a small bow with arrows. Inhabitants of the Minusinsk area (the Khakass) drew bows and arrows on their drums. Potapov also saw a shaman drum that depicted a shaman shooting a bow.

Native mythology also indicates that bows and arrows had originally served as ritual tools. In Buryat legends, before organizing a collective hunt, a hunting chief delivers an address to spirits usually holding an arrow in his hands. An ancient Altaian goddess called Umai, the protector of women and infants, always carries a bow and arrows. In modern times,

the sacred power of shamans was frequently associated with the arrow. Thus, among the Buryat, strong shamans inherited from their ancestors so-called shamanic root (*utkha* or *udkha*) that literally means the arrow. In the same manner, among the Altaians and the Tubalar, strong shamans who inherited their sacred power from ancestors-shamans were called *uktu-kam*, which means “a shaman who has an arrow.” It is natural to suggest that in this context, the possession of arrows meant possession of shamanic power. Earlier, hypothesizes Potapov, the Altaians, like the Buryat, might have kept real wooden arrows in their hands during prayer ceremonies (74). Buryat funeral ceremonies for deceased shamans clearly point to the connection between sacred power and the arrow. When a funeral procession went far enough from a camp, an arrow (*utkha*) was shot back in the direction of the camp. On the way back, people tried to find this arrow. If they succeeded, it meant there would be more shamans in the clan of the deceased spiritual practitioner. Natives believed that once recovered, the arrow would bring shamanic power back to a lineage.

Potapov poses the question of why the bow and the arrow became ritual tools in the first place. Approaching Altaian beliefs from the angle of Marxist economic determinism, Potapov stresses that the invention of the bow and the arrow tremendously advanced ancient tribal economies and eventually became reflected in the ideology of clan-based primal society. The ethnographer notes that the minds of primal people interpreted in magic terms the “miraculous” ability of the arrow and the bow to kill animals at a distance. That is how these hunting tools became the objects of veneration and eventually acquired the status of ritual tools. Those who used these tools were naturally viewed as carriers of sacred power that secured hunting luck. According to Potapov, this is the source of Altaian shamanism. Skillful archers who had been in charge of collective tribal hunts became the first shamans, who eventually came to control rituals that targeted hunting, the major “economic process” in primal society. Potapov supports his assertion by referring to ancient Buryat legends, in which shamans head collective hunting expeditions, military parties, and simultaneously act as spiritual practitioners (75-76).

Potapov, Leonid P. “Buben Teleutskoi shamanki i ego risunki [Teleut Shamaness’ Drum and Its Drawings].” *Sbornik Muziaia antropologii i etnografii* 10 (1949): 191-200.

This article presents a detailed description of a shaman drum that belonged to Marfa Todysheva, a Teleut shamaness. The drum, which Marfa used in the 1920s, was acquired by Andrei Anokhin, the renowned student of Altaian shamanism, who later donated it to the Leningrad (St. Petersburg) Museum of Ethnography (Künstkamera). Describing Marfa’s drum, Potapov also adds additional information regarding the manufacture of Teleut shamanic drums. A drum’s handle was usually carved in the form of a snow leopard and was associated with the owner of the drum. Small round dark hollows carved on the handle depict the spotted skin of the leopard. Comb-shaped edges of the handle have seven cross-holes and symbolize the so-called earthly slot, which shamans go through during their journeys to other worlds. During a séance, a shaman summons the spirits of the deceased “master tailors,” who sew these holes with twenty-seven thick threads to make sure that a shaman does not drop through this “earthly slot.” From inside near the iron rod, the handle has a small carved depression. That is where a shaman hides the soul (*jula*) of a patient. During séances, shamans usually catch a patient’s soul and hold it there by keeping their fingers on the depression. After this, shamans try to get this soul back into its body through the right ear of the patient (192).

The drum also has an iron crossbar, which is called *kirysh* (literally, a bow string) and which has four hanging iron pendants made in a form of tubes (*sunkar*). Above, on the rim of the drum, one can see six small hanging iron plates, three plates on each side. These plates resembling knife blades symbolize sabers (*kylish*). It was believed that in case of a danger these “sabers” began to ring, warning a shaman about a coming threat. When shamans heard this “warning,” they took a drum and began a séance, trying to learn where the threat was coming from. The drum is covered with the skin of a young colt that fed only on horse milk. The handle is made from birch wood, the rim is manufactured from cedar, and the iron parts are taken from a drum of a shaman ancestor of the owner of this specific drum. From the outside, on the cover one can see drawings made in red stone paint. Spiritual practitioners were not allowed to draw on their own. Instead, they solicited help from male neighbors who “painted,” using their fingers and following the guidelines of shamans, who usually tried to replicate the drawings from the drums of their

ancestors (193). Drawings on a drum usually depicted spirits in the form of various animals, people, and heavenly bodies. Drums with the snow leopard handle described above were the only ones the Teleut used. Drums and the imaged depicted on them never pointed to a gender of their owners. There was only one gender difference, which concerned a ritual rather than drawings. Among the Kumandin Altaians, it was forbidden for women to shamanize to the upper world to a “supreme deity” Ülgen. On the other hand, Teleut shamanesses performed such séances (197).

Would-be shamans, “pressed” by the spirit of their ancestors, usually announced to their relatives that they needed a drum. After this, the “candidate” pointed to a person who owned a mare that had a colt that still fed on this mare’s milk. The skin of this colt was to be used to cover the rim of a drum. Using the skin of a colt was permitted because it was very hard to get the skins of wild animals such as a mountain goat (*kuran*) or the Siberian stag (*maral*). Natives believed that a colt’s skin made a drum sound better and louder. Candidates for the shamanic vocation also indicated where people could find an appropriate piece of wood for a drumstick. Then beginning shamans informed relatives how many drums they were going to need during a lifetime and how many years they were going to perform with each drum. In old times, before beginning shamans received their first drums, they had to perform for a while only with a drumstick. Kumandin shamans still followed this custom in modern times. Before they received their first drums, Kumandin shamans would perform a séance only for relatives, using a drumstick and a square piece of canvas called an *alaas*.

When relatives and friends were in the process of manufacturing a shaman drum, many people came around to partake of special rituals related to this process. Participants put on their best clothing, which they wore for wedding ceremonies. They also brought various treats, helping a shaman to feed all gathered visitors. In addition, they gave money to a shaman. Thus, the making of a shaman drum was a public event, where participants shared all expenses. The actual assembly of a drum and a drumstick usually took only one day because all parts of a drum had been made in advance. The rim of a drum was usually made from cedar wood, which was to make a drum sound louder. If the cedar wood was easy to bend, people thought that a shaman would live for a long time.

A handle of a drum was always carved from a piece of growing birch tree. Dry birch wood was unacceptable. Natives believed that a handle of a drum should be “alive,” and as such, it should “come” from a living

birch tree. Beginning shamans tried to take all iron parts for their drums from drums of their ancestors-shamans. If for some reason these old parts were missing, they were ordered from blacksmiths, who manufactured them according to shamans' instructions. When a drum was covered with a skin and painted, all gathered people were encouraged to beat it. Potapov stresses that this custom was a remnant of an ancient tradition, when an entire community owned a drum. After everybody tried a new drum, shamans usually took it and went to show to their spirit helpers. Unlike the southern Altaians, the Tubalar, the Chelkan, the Kumandin and the Shor, the Teleut did not practice a ceremony of animation of a drum. The Teleut thought they did not need this because a drum handle, which "came" from a live tree, made a drum "alive." The skin that covered a drum was also "alive" because it was the skin of a colt rather than an aged animal. Yet the Teleut did "animate" a drumstick, which was covered with the skin of a mountain goat. After shamans showed their drums to their spirit helpers, nobody was permitted to use it except these shamans. The rituals and feasts that accompanied manufacturing a new drum usually lasted about three days.

During their lifetime, Teleut shamans usually had from three to nine drums. When the last drum "died," it was viewed as a sign of a shaman's coming death. The average "life expectancy" of a shaman drum ranged from three to five years. Some shamans, who were "assigned" by their patron spirits to have only a specific number of drums, secretly manufactured additional drums (so-called "stolen drums" or *vorovskie bubny*). Shamans usually made such drums in secret and showed them neither to the public nor to their patron spirits. The shamans who dared to manufacture the "stolen drum" usually were desperate to prolong their own lives, which directly depended on the number of drums.

For a drumstick, the Teleut used purple willow that was to have no fewer than three fork-shaped branches growing from the same spot on its trunk. During a séance devoted to an animation of a drumstick, a shaman usually imitated the mountain goat whose skin covered the drumstick. A shaman ran around over a dwelling demonstrating how a mountain goat ate grass, drank water, and licked salt. A shaman also imitated the voice and movements of a goat. During the same séance, a shaman also delivered a special "address" to the "master of the drumstick."

When shamans died, their drums followed them too. Over the grave of a deceased shaman, a man usually beat the drum with all his might until the cover skin tore apart. He accompanied the destruction of a drum by such words as, "With six humps you, white drum, are hung on a white

birch tree. Ribbons from your drumstick are spread over seventeen roads." People also took iron parts and a frame from the broken drum and placed them on a birch tree near the shaman's grave. Ribbons attached to the drumstick were torn off and spread over the same birch tree. The Teleut always broke the drums of dead shamans because they were afraid that if not destroyed, they would be used by the deceased shamans, who would loudly beat them each night frightening and waking up everybody (198-200).

Potapov, Leonid P. *Altaiskii shamanizm* [*Altaiian Shamanism*]. Leningrad: Nauka, Leningradskoe otdelenie, 1991. 319 pages.

Altaiskii shamanizm is one of the most detailed and meticulously written books on shamanism in Russian/Soviet anthropological scholarship. The late Potapov devoted his entire academic career to the study of the Altaian ethnography with a special emphasis on Altaian shamanism. Because many scholars consider Altaian shamanism to be a "classic" type, Potapov extends his generalizations to shamanism in general. Sources for his book are published studies of other students of Siberian/Altaian shamanism and his own materials, which Potapov accumulated during more than fifty years of field research in the Altai, beginning from the 1920s. The chief goal of his book is to contribute to the discussion, which began in the nineteenth century, between the scholars who consider shamanism a religion and those who argue the opposite. Potapov accepts the first argument and seeks to prove that Altaian shamanism is a "religion of full value" (306).

Potapov begins with the premise that the essence of each religion is its dogma. To prove that shamanism is a religion, one needs to uncover the theological sources of Altaian shamanism (6). According to Potapov, that is where most scholars encounter a major obstacle. The theology of so-called world religions originated from sacred books based on the teachings of their founders, such as Jesus, Buddha, and Muhammad. Altaian shamanism did not have any founder but originated in a natural manner from primordial mythology. Moreover, as an "oral and visual" religion with simple ritual accessories, Altaian shamanism had no sacred books, rules, dogmas, or commandments. This is the reason why many observers either did not consider shamanism a religion or treated it as a "primitive religion." These observers failed to note that Altaian shamanism existed for almost 1,500 years with its own religious practices

and spiritual pantheon, which hardly changed throughout the centuries. Among the Turkic people, of whom the Altaians are part, power of tradition maintained the continuity of shamanism from generation to generation. Potapov suggests that “to make a judgment about a religion, one should look into its content” (87).

Potapov takes on Western authors, many of whom do not consider shamanism a religion. Specifically he criticizes Mircae Eliade, whose concept of shamanism affected many Western scholars. For Eliade, shamanism is the “technique of ecstasy.” In contrast, Potapov argues that shamanic séances are not simply “magic activities,” and shamans are not simply “sorcerers.” Although part of shamanism, magic does not serve as its foundation. The foundation of shamanism is a specific shamanic worldview. “The very séance would not be possible without the existence of established shamanic dogmas and canons, which have nothing to do with sorcery” (10). Potapov stresses that much of his information about Altaian spirituality comes directly from shamans. Insights into their rituals and various types of séances, symbolism of shamanic drums and their drawings, and shamanic paraphernalia revealed to him the “views and concepts of this religion articulated by *kams* (an Altaian word for a shaman), its special ministers.” Potapov stresses that oral materials he retrieved in the course of his field research are equal to the sacred books of the “world religions” (13). A careful look at Altaian beliefs shows that their shamanism does have established though unwritten rules and canons. These dogmas and canons represent the “theological foundation” of Altaian shamanism (26). Potapov divides this “theology” into two groups: (1) “religious canons” specific for Altaian shamanism and (2) universal “religious canons” characteristic for many other religious traditions. In the second group, Potapov includes the concept of a three-layered universe with its heavenly, earthly, and underworld spheres. In Altaian religion, this universal concept is most visibly reflected in the Altaian shaman drum, whose cover is divided into three spheres with their specific drawings. Another universal concept that exists in Altaian shamanism is so-called world tree that connects the different spheres of the universe together. With its crown, the “world tree” sits against the sky, its trunk goes through the earth, and the roots of the tree are located in the underground world. In Altaian shamanism, the birch tree, which shamans used during their séances, represented the universal “world tree.” In some séances, shamans ascended the “world tree” to the very top, which was symbolically connected with the sky. Reverence of specific mountains by the Altaians reflected another universal concept:

the “world mountain.” The destiny of many Altaian shamans was connected to sacred mountains, controlled by master spirits of such mountains. Shamans often linked themselves to these spirits of localities who acted as the shamans’ spiritual masters and protectors (26).

Discussing “dogmas” and “canons” specific for Altaian shamanism, Potapov dwells on the concept of a human “double,” which in ethnographic literature is usually called the “soul.” Potapov notes that using the Christian label “soul” to describe the native concept of the spiritual double is misleading. In Altaian shamanism, the “double” was absolutely different from what Christianity usually implies in the definition of the “soul” (27). Explaining the concept of the spiritual “double,” Potapov notes that shamanism described any human beings and natural object in terms of duality. All objects or natural phenomena such as mountains, rivers, stones, trees, animals, birds, thunders or rains had their own spiritual “masters,” who were viewed as independent beings that merged with those objects or phenomena. Like human beings, these spiritual “masters” had minds. At the same time, it would be a mistake to describe these “masters” as pure spirits because they always existed in a materialized form, either as anthropomorphic (a mountain, a river, a lake) or zoomorphic (animals and birds) beings (24). Human beings also had “masters” or “doubles.” When people were alive, their “doubles” resided in their bodies. Some Altaians believed that after people died, their “doubles” usually left bodies and returned to the heavenly sphere, the source of all life. Other Altaians thought that “doubles” moved to the land of the dead, which they placed in the earthly sphere or in the underworld (29). “Doubles” could be separated from human bodies when individuals were asleep, became suddenly frightened, or lost consciousness. In such cases, separated “doubles” wandered off and returned through nostrils, when, for example, their hosts woke up. Such “stray doubles” were easy prey for any kind of spiritual “masters.” There was a risk, for example, that the master of a mountain or a taiga forest, hostile spirits, or alien shamans might catch human “doubles.” Finally, by wandering away from their hosts, “doubles” simply could be lost. Natives believed that when the “doubles” were lost or stolen, individuals fell ill and had to approach shamans to retrieve them. During their séances, shamans usually caught “stray doubles” and placed them inside their drums. Then, blowing hard in the drum, shamans drove the “doubles” into the right ears of their patients (30). If “doubles” were gone forever, and shamans could not retrieve them, the patients died. In any case, the loss of a “double” was always a great misfortune for an individual (40). The concept of the

“double” helps to unveil the “mechanics of shamanizing” and to answer the question how shamans were able to fly to various spheres of the universe while staying at the same time in a yurt and sharing with everybody the details of their journeys. Potapov underscores that during séances it was not actual shamans who embarked on spiritual journeys but their spiritual “doubles,” accompanied by spirit helpers. In the same manner, sacrificial animals, which shamans’ “doubles” usually carried with them, were not actual animals, but the spiritual “doubles” of these animals. As for actual animals, spectators strangled and ate them, and hung their skins on special poles (48).

Shamans’ spirits were another important part of the “theology” of Altaian shamanism. The Altaians believed that no shamans could perform without spirit helpers, who safeguarded spiritual practitioners during their difficult and dangerous spiritual journeys (64). Natives assumed that all rituals, activities, gestures, and chants during séances were the results of the activities of those spirit helpers, which simply worked through the shamans’ bodies. Some helping spirits informed shamans about the causes of patients’ ailments and also pointed where they could find a lost “double.” Other spirits navigated shamans during their flights to all three spheres of the universe. There were categories of spirit helpers who protected shamans from hostile spirits and alien shamans. Finally, there were spirits that delivered the “doubles” of sacrificial animals to designated spirits or deities. All spirits that assisted shamans consisted of two general categories: patron spirits and spirit helpers. Patron spirits were usually high-ranking deities and spirits such as Ülgen and his sons, the deity of fire, and the masters of sacred mountains (65). In their turn, spirit helpers were separated into two groups. First, they were so-called *tös* spirits, which represented ancestors of shamans, who had been shamans themselves. It was these *tös* spirits who actually pressed individuals to accept the shamanic vocation in the first place and endowed candidates with shamanic powers. This shows that shamanic power was transmitted on a hereditary basis. Second, there were all other auxiliary spirits, whom shamans summoned by beating their drums in the beginning of séances. The auxiliary spirits arrived, situated themselves, usually inside shamans’ drums, and then accompanied shamans on their journeys to various spheres. These beings, “spirits of the drum,” represented the actual power of shamans. Shamans always sought to enlarge the number of their auxiliary spirits, whose quality and quantity affected shaman’s ritual capabilities (66).

At the beginning of their séances, using drumbeats, shamans summoned the *tös* spirits of deceased shamans-ancestors, who usually moved into shamans, immersed them into a trance, and “released” shamans’ doubles for shamanic journeys. Auxiliary spirits, which shamans summoned in the same manner, situated themselves on shamans’ heads, shoulders, hands, legs, or, most frequently, inside their drums. All summoned spirits together formed symbolic shamanic armors that shielded shamans in their journeys (69). Emphasizing the “theological” significance of these “spiritual armies,” Potapov writes, “The drum and the shaman costume, which became animated during a séance, had a specific meaning. These basic ritual items conveyed a fixed shamanic dogmas and canons, which were expressed in symbols and images” (70). The “master of the drum” was one of the major spirit helpers of the shaman. Not only shamans’ ritual activities but their entire lives were linked to drums. Spiritual practitioners had their drums manufactured only after instructions issued by *tös* spirits. The anthropomorphic handle of the drum symbolized the “master of the drum.” The second major auxiliary spirit was the “double” (soul) of the animal whose skin was stretched over the frame of the drum. The Altaians usually used the skins of male Siberian stags, the moose, the colt, or the roe. During séances, spiritual “doubles” of shamans used the “doubles” of these animals to ride to various universal spheres. It is notable that to describe drums in their invocations and chants, shamans did not use a regular word *tüngür* (the drum). Instead, they called their drums by names of the animals whose skins were used to cover the frames. Moreover, in such cases, to the name of an animal they added the word “sacred.” Thus, during a séance the drum could become a “sacred colt” (72). Potapov stresses that despite their individual variations, drums and costumes had standard features that reflected the “basic canons of Altaian shamanism,” both in appearance and in symbolism. Unlike world religions with their permanent prayer houses, drums and costumes allowed shamans to conduct séances under any circumstances without any special ritual sites, which served perfectly well Altaian semi-nomadic lifestyles (159).

Comparing the ritual significance of the costume (*manjak*) and the drum, Potapov stresses that the drum was far more important as a ritual tool. Thus, among the northern Altaians (the Kumandin and the Shor), shamans did not have any costumes at all and performed in everyday white canvas robes, covering their heads with kerchiefs. Still, to perform séances, they had to use drums. Therefore, all genuine shamans selected

for their spiritual vocation by ancestral spirits were to acquire drums (159). Shamans could use their drums for multiple functions. (1) Drums could serve shamans as riding animals, whose skin was used to cover the drum. (2) Drums could become boats, when shamans encountered rivers or seas in their spiritual journeys. In such cases, drumsticks were used as paddles. (3) Drums could become bows to combat hostile spirits and hostile shamans. Incidentally, in all Altaian shaman drums, crossbars inside the drums were called bowstrings (*kyrish*). Iron pendants inside a drum symbolized arrows. (4) Drums served as signal tools to summon spirit helpers in the begging section of séances. (5) Drums could become “sound indicators,” indicating that a shaman had reached certain points during a spiritual journey or describing various activities of a shaman during séances. Changing the frequency, power, and sound of their drumbeats, shamans portrayed a galloping horse, catching a hostile spirit that left a patient’s body, shooting a bow, delivering a sacrifice, finishing a séance, and dismissing spirit helpers. (6) Finally, drums simply served as musical instruments. When shamans sang or chanted and simultaneously beat drums, spectators viewed the drumbeats as a ritual accompaniment (161-165).

The shaman drum was more than a simple ritual tool. In its form, symbolism, and configuration the drum was a “ritual toolkit of a small mobile prayer house.” As such, the drum embodied the basic stipulations of Altaian shamanism (163). Being a “compact mobile prayer house,” each drum had its own “icon screen” (*ikonostas*) represented by the drum’s skin cover with drawings. Potapov stresses that these drawings did not reflect the imagination of individual shamans, but were painted according to established traditional canons (165,192). Shamans inherited designs and drawings of their drums from their *tös* ancestral spirits, who barred shamans from arbitrary configuration of their own drums (162). The most widespread were the drawings of deities and spirit helpers. Looking at these images, one could easily identify the category and rank of an individual shaman. For example, one could see right away, if a shaman had the right to perform a séance addressed to Ülgen, if a shaman could descend to the underworld, and what potential powers a shaman had (194).

Potapov also discusses the moral code and “ethics” of Altaian shamanism, because these aspects are essential elements of each religion. “Moral and ethical principles” of Altaian shamanism were based on an unconditional submission of human beings to deities and spirits. The violators of the established moral code were punished on the earth rather

than in the afterlife, as in Christianity. The Altaians viewed each earthly misfortune as a punishment. Using the powers of shamans, people tried to learn what specific deities or spirits had inflicted these punishments and then tried to ease or eliminate them. The greater part of the shamanic “moral code” concerned relationships of human beings and nature, which was reflected in the veneration of spirit masters of specific localities. Simply put, the “moral code” consisted of various taboos that guarded “peace and riches” (flora and fauna) of spirit masters from human beings. For example, during a hunting expedition, people were forbidden to whistle, shout, sing, talk, or laugh loudly (95). Many of these taboos reflected the caring attitudes of the Altaians toward their environment. Thus, some natives insisted that it was harmful to pull out grass with roots because grasses were the hair of the earth, and the master of a locality might become angry at people for hurting the earth. For the same reason, the Altaian avoided cutting young trees and polluting water reservoirs with waste (96). Similar taboos concerned household life, such as veneration of the hearth. The Altaians avoided desecrating the hearth by throwing waste and garbage into a fire or by stepping over a fire or on ashes. People were to “feed” a fire with bits of food and sprinkles of drinks on a daily basis. If people violated those taboos, the master of a fire usually punished them by inflicting various illnesses, removing its protection from hostile spirits, and burning household items or even entire dwellings (97).

Although Potapov discusses the personality of the shaman, he does this to criticize those scholars who devote, from his viewpoint, too much attention to this topic. He especially takes on those who approach shamanic activities from a psychopathological viewpoint as the “hysterical fits”: “I witnessed quite a few séances in the Altai, but never did I see something like that. No doubt, during séances, the shamans whom I observed were always aroused. Moreover, shots of home-made liquor and pipes stuffed with strong tobacco, which shamans used to warm themselves up, enhanced this state. Yet one cannot compare this state of mind with a hysterical fit. Shamans were always able to clearly and rationally play the role of a traveler to a specific sphere of the universe and at the same time to share the impressions from their journeys with audience. This means that shamans always controlled their behavior” (104). “Although natives linked the initiation of shamans to painful fits and loss of reason,” Potapov repeatedly stresses that Altaian shamans were “quite healthy, normal human beings who had regular families, raised stock and hunted like everybody else” (100). Potapov

ironically notes that so far no researcher could personally observe those “hysterical fits,” which natives explained as the “pressure” spirit ancestors inflicted on candidates. Moreover, adds Potapov, after the disappearance of shamans in the Altai during the Soviet period, when the initiation “disease” was no longer culturally sanctioned, native people never observed shamanic “illnesses.” By the 1980s, not only “illnesses” disappeared, but also the stories about such “illnesses” (100).

The very structure of the shamanic *séance*, stresses Potapov, indicates that shamans were absolutely normal people: “Throughout centuries, Altaian shamans conducted their *séances* within established theological norms and regulations. Metaphorically speaking, they shamanized according to an established scenario that began with the summoning of spirit helpers and addressing the deity of fire and ended with the return of the shaman from a journey after delivering a sacrifice to spirits and deities and dismissing the spirit helpers” (100). The fact that *séances* reminded observers of theatrical performances, in which shamans skillfully played different parts, is additional evidence of the normal and healthy state of shamans’ minds. At the same time, Potapov insists that it was not an individual creative inspiration that drove shamans during their *séances*, but the established religious symbolism, norms and rules. Notwithstanding the states of their minds during *séances*, shamans always strictly followed the accepted structure of the *séance* (104). Like many other scholars, Potapov criticizes Eliade exaggerating the role of the “state of ecstasy” in the shamanic *séance*.

Describing the healing work of Altaian shamans, Potapov is interested in searching for religious “theological” standards that might prove that shamanism is a religion. He stresses that shamanic healing was conducted according to established norms and rules. All shamans shared the view that ailments originated in two ways. Individuals became sick either because hostile spirits “moved” in patients’ bodies or because human “doubles” (souls) “left” bodies. The illnesses associated with the disappearance of “doubles” were so widespread that Teleut shamans even made special holes in their drum handles, where they hid retrieved “doubles” in order to “drive” them back to the bodies through right ears of their patients (135-136).

The most prestigious activity among Altaian shamans was a spiritual journey to the heavenly sphere, Ülgen’s domain, an opportunity that was not available to all shamans. Only the most powerful shamans were able to shamanize to Ülgen, the major celestial deity. On the whole, these powerful shamans could journey to all spirits and deities in all three

spheres (137). The most widespread form of the séance was a shamanic journey to the underworld, the concentration of all “evil” forces headed by mighty Erlik. The easiest one was a spiritual journey within the limits of the middle world to the deity of the Altai, to various sacred ranges and mountains (142-143). Another popular function of Altaian shamans was soothsaying. Shamans’ prophecies were based on the information they received from their spirits during séances. Hence, shamans differed from regular fortune-tellers in the use of spirit helpers, which moved into shamans and transmitted relevant information through the spiritual practitioners. Potapov stresses again that natives always assumed that it was not shamans but their spirit helpers who foretold (147, 149).

The final part of Potapov’s book deals with the spiritual pantheon of Altaian shamanism. Natives believed that pure and benign deities resided in the heavenly sphere. In the middle world (the earth), one could find various spirits and deities of nature, such as spiritual masters of specific localities, spirits of fire and woods, spirits of illnesses, and the spirits deceased shamans. The composition of numerous earthly deities and spirits was the most elaborate and multifaceted. The chief of the heavenly beings was Ülgen, who had created the earth and the sky. His alter ego was “evil” Erlik, the master of the underworld, the habitat of hostile spirits (244). Erlik was considered the patron of “black” shamans (*kara kam*), while Ülgen helped “white” shaman (*ak kam*). Shamans approached Erlik in cases of severe illnesses, when “doubles” (souls) were imprisoned by hostile spirit, the servants of Erlik. The séances addressed to hostile spirits differed from séances directed to benign deities and spirits. Shamans usually performed the séances addressed to Erlik at night and used for sacrifices mostly damaged animals, for example, a lame sheep or a sheep with broken horns. The road to the world of Erlik was full of obstacles (259). Anthropology scholarship argues that “white” shamans never traveled to the underworld. At the same time, Potapov notes that in the 1920s, when he began doing his field work in the Altai, he did not see any division into “black” and “white” shamans. Instead, natives divided their spiritual practitioners into regular and “well-born shamans” (*uktu kam*). The shamans who belonged to the latter category had numerous ancestors-shamans in their lineages and, therefore, they were most influential and powerful. *Uktu kam* could shamanize both to Erlik and Ülgen, as well as to the deities of the middle world (159, 266), whereas regular shamans did not have power to ascend to the domain of Ülgen. In addition, shamanesses were

not allowed to shamanize to Ülgen no matter how powerful they could be (260).

Potapov, who seeks for the roots of the “theology” of Altaian shamanism, is interested not so much in Ülgen as in less known deities. Ülgen, says Potapov, was introduced in the modern period, and ancient Turks did not have such deity. Their supreme deity was Tengri (Sky). Traces of Tengri survived among a few Altaian communities, who still revered it as their supreme deity or maintained it as the vague concept of the sky (246). Incidentally, in ancient times, Tengri was an abstract and vague deity, unlike Ülgen, whom people viewed as a human-like being. The most visible traces of Tengri worship were found among the Khakass, who conducted regular summer sacrifices to the sky on the top of a sacred mountain, where they asked for good crops and good milk (263). The most notable aspect of such collective prayer ceremonies was the total absence of shamans. The above-mentioned ceremonies and all accompanying rituals were supervised by respected elders. Potapov suggests that respected elders replaced “white” shamans, who had headed such ceremonies and who already disappeared by the modern period. “Black” shamans were not allowed to pray to the sky (272-274). Along with Tengri, the Altaians maintained the traces of the Iersu worship. The image of this deity was also vague, and the information about it was very scarce. Some Altaians believed that Iersu was an earthly deity that resided high in the snow mountains of the Altai (279). Among the heavenly deities, Potapov singles out Umai, the patron of women. Women approached this goddess when they wanted to avoid stillborns, to ease childbirth, and to solicit fertility. Natives believed that Umai was present during childbirth and continued to stay close to newborns, protecting them from hostile spirit until they grew enough to leave their cradles (285-286).

Prokof'ev, G.N. “Tseremoniia ozhivlenia bubna u ostiakov-samoyedov [The Ceremony of Animation of a Drum Among the Ostiak-Samoyed].” *Izvestiia Leningradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 2 (1930): 365-373.

Among the mixed Ostiak-Samoyed (Selkup) native communities, when spirits press a person to shamanize, a “candidate” usually approaches an old and experienced shaman. In such cases, old “colleagues” usually give their young apprentices their drums, and novices begin to shamanize.

After a while, spirits of young shamans usually “require” that they acquire their own drums. Beginning shamans announce this “instruction” to the members of their clans, who are responsible for manufacturing a drum and other shamanic paraphernalia. A rim of a drum is usually made from spruce or larch wood. Drum resonators can be manufactured from seven kinds of trees: alder-tree, bird cherry tree, purple rose willow, larch, pine-tree, birch and fir tree. A skin to cover a rim is usually taken from a wild buck deer. Cedar wood is used to make a drumstick. The natives color an exterior part of a drumstick in two colors. The lower part is usually painted in black, which symbolizes the underworld, while the upper part is colored in red, which symbolizes the upper world. To the interior of a drumstick, natives glue a skin from the forehead of a wild buck deer. At the same time, the Khanty-Nentsy shamans have a special all-black drumstick that is used only when a shaman descends to the underworld. To the interior of such a drumstick they glue a piece of fur from the right paw of a bear (166).

After a community finishes manufacturing a drum and a drumstick, these items should be animated. Otherwise, as the Khanty-Nentsy say, they will “go to nowhere.” It is believed that an unanimated drum might break apart during a shaman’s journey to the underworld. Moreover, shamans who dare to use such “non-consecrated” drums run a risk of falling sick for a long time, and it will be hard for them to bring together again the spirit helpers that fall out of this drum. To animate a new drum, a novice again approaches an old colleague, who performs a rather complicated rite of animation. Although occasionally young shamans feel so sure of themselves that they conduct the rite of animation on their own, it might be too risky for them. Because of lack of experience, such brave novices might take a wrong route during a shamanic journey, and their spirits might wander off. In addition, an arrogant novice might fall sick, and would have to approach a senior colleague to help to collect all stray spirits and finish the rite. The ceremony of animation, in which all members of a shaman’s clan participate, is timed to a seasonal migration of birds and usually lasts ten days. On the first day, a shaman goes to the woods and finds a place with the trees that were used to make a rim for a drum and a drumstick. Guided by helping spirits, an old shaman collects all remaining parts of these trees, including tiny wooden chips. All collected parts are stored in a pile at a swamp, where “old sister-in-law,” the spirit protector of all Khanty-Nentsy communities, resides. In their shamanic mythology, the spirit protector lives at the point where two shamanic rivers flow side by side: “the Eagle River” and “the River of

kedrovka bird.” The sources of these rivers are located southward in the mysterious land, where the sacred shamanic trees grow. This is the place where shamans usually “journey” during the ceremony of the animation of their drums (376).

On the second day, the old shaman locates a place where the deer whose skin was used for making the novice’s drum and drumstick lived. The shaman carefully examines the place where this deer wandered when it was alive and where it was killed. It is necessary to collect everything that is related to this deer, including even tiny pieces of hair which it might have lost by rubbing trees and crossing creeks and rivers. Each dropped antler, each bone, each piece of meat, and even the waste of people and dogs, which ate the meat of this deer, are collected and placed at the same place where the remnants of the trees are piled. Now the old shaman faces the most difficult task: to catch the soul of this deer. During this venture, the shaman again uses spirit helpers. If, after seven attempts, the shaman cannot catch the soul of the deer, people have to make another drum and the ceremony starts all over again.

On the third day, the remnants of the deer are “resurrected.” On this day, the old shaman begins performing a séance at sunrise. The shaman makes an image of a deer from a forked birch branch, which symbolizes antlers. On both sides of this branch, the shaman places seven twigs, which symbolize ribs. After this, upon the shaman’s request, two spirits, “Father Raven” and “Mother Raven,” fly to fetch “water of death” and “water of life.” When the waters are delivered, the shaman pours at first “water of death” and then “water of life” on the image of the deer and simultaneously moves a drumstick as if ladling out and pouring water. With the “water of death,” all pieces of the deer become connected and turn into a living deer. “Water of life” makes the deer breathe, and the shaman helps the deer to “stand” up (369). At the moment of the “resurrection,” the shaman’s drum merges with the image of this deer and replaces it. The Khanty-Nentsy believe that a shaman drum represents a draft animal. This perception that a shaman drum is a draft reindeer used by a shaman to journey to the world of spirits is quite common among Siberian natives. Now riding the animated “drum-reindeer,” the shaman journeys to the “shaman tree” (370).

On the fourth day, from the early morning, the shaman sets out on a spiritual journey. By the evening the spiritual practitioner reaches a bank of the “Eagle River.” The river has a bridge that is tested by seven mighty warriors (*bogatiry*). If the bridge is durable enough, the shaman crosses the river. The next points of destination of the shaman are a “river with

black paint,” where black paint is “taken” to color parts of shamanic paraphernalia, a “river with red paint,” where red paint is “taken,” and a “stone river,” where special spirits “collect” for future shamans small pebbles to be inserted inside a drumstick and a drum’s resonators. Throughout the entire journey, the shaman also “collects” wood to make the resonators (370). On the tenth day, the shaman “reaches” the place where blacksmiths live, “shaman father-in-law and son-in-law,” who provide images of spirits and iron pendants used to decorate the manufactured shaman drum and a costume. Finally, the shaman “comes” to the “shaman tree,” the final point of destination. After this, the shaman conducts a sacrificial ceremony, and all participants in the séance have a feast. After the feast is over, the shaman passes the drum to one of the male participants. With the accompaniment of the drum, the shaman begins a fierce “galloping dance.” At this point, two men usually hold the shaman from both sides and do not let the spiritual practitioner fall down. After the dance ends, all participants return home. In different versions, the same ceremony of animation of a shaman drum is familiar to many other Siberian natives.

Prokof'eva, E.D. “Shamanskie bubny [Shaman Drums].” *Istoriko-etnograficheskii atlas Sibiri*. Ed. M.L. Levin and L.P. Potapov. Moskva and Leningrad: izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1961. 435-489.

Prokof'eva describes the general characteristics of shaman drums of about thirty Siberian tribes. She also offers her own classification of these drums. First, she stresses that, unlike ordinary cultural artifacts, shaman drums were very “conservative.” Regular items could be constantly shaped, reshaped, and even totally reconfigured, whereas the designs of and drawings on drums were consciously preserved and transmitted from generation to generation. Among Siberian natives, the drums manufactured for new shamans were to resemble the drums of their ancestors who had been also shamans. A typical drum consisted of a frame of a round or an oval shape from two and half centimeters to twenty centimeters. The wooden board for the frame was bent either over an open fire or with special devices. After a frame was bent, its ends were connected with thin threads made of cedar roots or strong fibers of a bird cherry tree. On the exterior side of the frame were rows of small sticks made of birch wood, bones, or other materials. These sticks were

connected with sinew or leather threads tightened over them. When an animal skin was stretched over a frame, the sticks created small hollow spaces between the frame and the cover; these spaces served as natural sound resonators. To the interior side of the drum, a handle and pendants were attached. Handles were mostly made of birch wood, antlers, walrus fangs, iron, and sometimes leather belts. In its form, the handle looked like a plate, which was attached in vertical position, or a crossbar, or as a forked structure (435). In the latter case, natives frequently used naturally forked branches of birch trees (northern Khanty) or selected forked antlers of the reindeer (the Nentsy). For the cover of the drum, natives usually used skins of such animals as the wild deer, the moose, and the Siberian stag. Prokof'eva thinks that the choice of a skin was apparently conditioned by the economic specialization of an individual tribe. For example, coastal Chukchi, who were marine hunters, stretched the stomachs of walruses over their drum frames, while the natives who specialized in fishing used fish skins. The ways natives stretched skins over frames also varied from tribe to tribe: fastening, gluing, sewing or nailing.

Drawings were painted either on an interior or an exterior side, or on both sides of the drum. Red was the most favored paint, whereas white and black were used rarely. Shamans inherited the designs and content of these drawings, which were specific for each tribe, from their shamans-ancestors. Drawings varied from simple circles, which depicted the drum, to animals' images, images of trees, and heavenly bodies. Prokof'eva stresses that the latter type of drawings was especially popular, which suggests that the major function of the shaman drum was to serve as the symbol of the universe. On many shaman drums, one can see the earth drawn as a flat surface surrounded by mountains, and sea, which are topped by the heavenly sphere. Another important function of the drum was to act as the shaman's riding animal, which is also reflected in drawings: images of the whole deer or its head (436). Unlike drums, drumsticks were not so diverse in their forms. Drumsticks were usually curved pieces of wood or bone, over which natives stretched skins taken from legs of the deer buck, the roe-buck, the bear, or a skin from the forehead of the deer, the bear, or sometimes any animal skins. Siberian shamans used drumsticks not only for functional purposes to produce drumbeats, but also as independent shamanic artifacts for soothsaying and curing (436-437).

Prokof'eva stresses that all previous attempts to classify Siberian drums were reduced to describing one specific element of drums. Grigorii

Potanin, for example classified drums only by their handles. Hence, all earlier classifications “were extremely formal and did not reflect the original nature of Siberian drums.” Prokof’eva widens the number of “common features” and uses in her classification not only handles, but also the configuration of frames, the size of drums, and the lack or presence of drawings (446). First, she divides all Siberian drums into two large groups: drums with an exterior handle and drums with an internal handle. The drums from the first group are usually small in size, the smallest drums in Siberia. They also had very thin frames. Such drums were used by the Chukchi and the Eskimo (Yupik). Among the drums with an internal handle, Prokof’eva singles out West Siberian, South Siberian, middle Siberian, and Far Eastern types. (1) Western Siberian drums, which were not too large, from thirty to forty centimeters, usually had a round or an oval form, seven “bumps” on a frame, a natural or carved forked handle, and drawings depicting circles that symbolized the universe. Such drums usually had no cross-rods. These drums were used by the Ugr people of the Obsk area, the Nentsy, and some Entsy. (2) Southern Siberian drums, which usually had a round form, were large, with a diameter of up to one meter and a wide frame of up to twenty centimeters. These drums had a wooden lengthwise handle, one or two cross-rods, and elaborate drawings which symbolized the universe. The frames of these drums did not have special resonator holes. Such drums were used by the indigenous people of the Upper and Middle Enisei River basin. In addition, the Southern Siberian type has three local versions: (a) the “Sayan and Enisei area version,” which corresponded to the 11 classical” southern Siberian type and was used by the Ket, Selkup, the Eastern Tuvonian, Tofalars, a few groups of the Kachin Khakass and the Buryat, the Evenki of the Sym area, and the Khanty of the Vakh area; (b) the “Shor version,” which tended to have an oval form, an artistically carved handle, and resonator “bumps” in the upper part of a drum; on both sides of the handle there were also pendants (“sabers”) hung on the cross-rod. Such drums were used by the Shor, partially by the Kumandin, the Kachin, Sagai, and Beltir Khakass, and the Teleut; and (c) the “Altaian version,” which differed from the “Shor version” by its handle that had one or two carved human images on both ends. (3) The drums that belong to the middle Siberian type were of a medium size, from fifty to seventy centimeters in diameter. They had a medium frame, from eight to ten centimeters, with resonator “holes” and an iron crosspiece. These drums were made in the form of an oval and usually had no drawings. Such drums were widespread among the tribes of middle and northern

Siberia east of the Enisei River. Moreover, this type can be divided into two versions: (a) Evenki-Yakut drums that had all of the aforementioned features and were used by the Yakut; Evenki except the groups that lived in the TransBaikal area, the Amur River, and Sym area; the Dolgan; and partially by the Yukagir; and (b) Nganasan-Entsy drums that had a round form and that were smaller.

Far Eastern drums were of a medium or a small size, from thirty to sixty centimeters in diameter. They had an oval form and narrow but thick frame from two and a half to five centimeters without any resonator “holes.” The handle was represented by a metal ring that was attached to four belts. In such drums, a skin cover was glued to the frame. Drums of this type were used by the Nanai, Udege, the Ulch, the Nivkh, the Ainu, the Even, the Buryat, partially by the Yukagir, the Dolgan, TransBaikal Evenki, the Orok, the Oroch and the Negidal. Prokof'eva divides Far Eastern drums into two local versions: (a) the “Amur version” that has all “classical features” and (b) The drums of the “TransBaikal version,” which were used by the TransBaikal and Okhotsk Evenki, partially by the Buryat, the Evens, the Yukagir, and the Koryak. TransBaikal drums were round, had a wide frame of about ten centimeters, and sometimes were decorated with drawings, as among the TransBaikal Evenki (447).

Prokof'eva, E.D. “Shamanskije kostiumy narodov Sibiri [Shamanic Costumes of the Siberian Native Peoples].” *Religioznye predstavleniia i obriady narodov Sibiri v XIX-nachale XX veka*. Eds L.P. Potapov and S.V. Ivanov. Leningrad: Nauka, Leningradskoe otdelenie, 1971. 5-100.

The goal of this study, which discusses shamanic costumes among twenty-five Siberian tribes, is twofold. First, Prokof'eva seeks to single out the most ancient elements in shamanic costumes. Second, she attempts to define typical costumes for a few Siberian tribes. Prokof'eva's study is based on a detailed analysis of the collections from the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (St. Petersburg), the State Museum of Ethnography (St. Petersburg) and additional materials from the museums in Tuva, Khakasiia, Irkutsk and Tiumen, and from an ethnographic museum in Leipzig (Germany). She also draws on her own field materials.

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century a few Siberian tribes had elaborate shamanic paraphernalia, which

consisted of the caftan, the breastplate-apron, the headdress, the footwear, gloves or mittens and pants. There were also tribes where shamans never used these items, especially pants and gloves. Some native groups reduced the shamanic costume to the headdress. As a matter of fact, the headdress was a mandatory part of the shamanic costume among all Siberian tribe except the Shor and the central Sakha. Ethnographers observed cases when shamanic costumes were represented by only a breast plate and a fabric face mask, or by a short blanket. Such elementary ritual costumes were worn by beginning shamans. If throughout their careers shamans were not able to upgrade their professional skills, they maintained this elementary paraphernalia. Usually, with their professional advancement, shamans received new shamanic paraphernalia, and the more elementary items were excluded from their costumes or became secondary. Thus, in old times, young Selkup shamans received waistbands and headbands but not metal pendants. When they “matured,” they replaced their entire paraphernalia with more sophisticated items and decorations, and the old items were not used anymore. It appears that the Ket shamans approached their shamanic costume in the same manner. Beginning Kachin (Khakass) shamans had only small blankets. It was only much later that they received the whole costume set: the clothing and the headdress (5-6). Among native people of the Amur River area, shaman costumes had their own specifics. In addition to the shamanic “skirt,” the headdress, and the footwear, local tribes had a costume that represented a set of foot, hand, waist and head bands made of wooden chips, which were manufactured for each specific séance and frequently were replaced during the same séance.

During their séances, some Siberian shamans attached to their casual wear such ritual marks as ribbons or plaits. Sometimes, male shamans used female clothing or their own casual wear, only turned inside out. Other shamans used clothing that looked almost like their casual wear except a color: for ritual purposes, they usually selected clothes of lighter colors. All in all, shamans always marked their clothing somehow for a séance. This practice might have prompted some scholars to assert that several Siberian tribes did not have shamanic costumes at all. A classic scholarly view of the shamanic costume pictures it as a robe with numerous pendants, plaits, the headdress with horns, the footwear that looks like “animal paws.” As important as they might be, these items were not mandatory. One may find numerous digressions from this classic formula, and the lack of one of these accessories should not be viewed as the absence of the shamanic costume. Prokof'eva concludes

that all Siberian tribes had shamanic costumes (6). The most significant pieces of shamanic costumes were robes or caftans with breastplates and the headdress. People usually devoted special attention to the decoration of these two items. On the contrary, mittens or footwear were hardly decorated or were excluded from the costume, replaced by casual mittens and footwear (78). Despite their tribal varieties, shamanic costumes had many similar features which were common for a tribe or for a group of tribes (79). This allows Prokof'eva to single out a few types of shamanic costumes: Altaian, Khakass, Tofalar, Sakha, Nanai types, and a few others.

The shamanic costume symbolized either an animal or a bird. Among the central Sakha, the TransBaikal Evenki, partially Buryat, shamans wore costumes that were more "animal-oriented." Northern and southern Altaians, the Khakass, the Tuvinians, the Tofalar, the Mongols and the Buryat, who lived close to the Altai, manufactured costumes that were more "bird-oriented." Yet on the whole, the majority of shamanic costumes simultaneously conveyed both symbols (79). Thus, shamanic robes and caftans usually symbolized the bird, while headdresses more frequently portrayed animals such as the deer, the moose, the Siberian stag, and the bear. For example, among the Amur River area tribes, the decorations attached to the shamanic shirt only vaguely evoked the image of the bird, whereas the headdress, which they considered the major part of costume, symbolized the head of an animal. The persistence of animal symbolism in the shamanic costume was reflected in a mandatory use of hides of specific animals to manufacture the shamanic robe and the shirt. Deer, Siberian stag, and moose hides were the most preferred materials. Moreover, natives tended to use the hide of an entire animal as a whole, avoiding too much tailoring and changing. Shamanic footwear was designed as the paws of an animal. The Entsy tribe shamans even depicted marrow on their footwear. The headdress with horns on the top symbolized the head of an animal. During séances, the behavior of shamans corresponded to these animal and bird images depicted on their costumes: spiritual practitioners ran like the deer or roared like bears.

Prokof'eva believes that animal images on shamanic costumes are the most ancient and that the bird symbolism was added later. It appears that the bird images became attached to the costumes when natives developed the concept of the upper world. Shamans became viewed as mediators between people and the upper world who could turn into birds standing close to the sky and the sun. Those tribes that favored "bird-oriented" costumes depicted on shamanic costumes bird ribs, bones of wings,

throats, tails, and feathers. These symbols were attached as appliqué, embroidery, iron pendants, or frequently were represented by genuine bird wings, feathers, and bones of genuine wings. Over this dominant bird image, manufacturers layered an “animal image.” For example, it could be the bear, which was associated with the underworld. Interestingly, a few tribes, such as the Selkup, the Dolgan, and the Sakha designed the whole costume as the bear symbol. The tradition of depicting the body of a shaman on the costume is the most recent one. The body of a shaman was usually portrayed as parts of the skeleton drawn on the costume. Furthermore, the costume was also viewed as the armor of a shaman. For example, to protect themselves from enemy blows, shamans attached special plates to their sleeves (8). In addition, costumes reflected personal spiritual pantheons of individual shamans. For example, shamans could depict on their costumes horns because the deer spirit assisted or served as a spiritual patron of a shaman. In modern times, shamans also drew anthropomorphic images of their own ancestors, who were also viewed as their spiritual patrons. However, the “human” images did not squeeze out major ancient “bird” and “animal” symbols of the costume but co-existed with them (9).

Shamans' caftans differed in their cuts. They could be made from an entire hide, only without a head and neck skin. In this case, natives made only two cuts to sew in sleeves (the Selkup, the Ket, the Entsy, the Nganasan), so the costume remained the embodiment of an animal. The costume could be also made from separate hides. The most ancient variant is the costume made from an entire hide without any alterations. Prokof'eva associates this type of the costume with “proto-shamanic” hunting rites, which were widespread among the Nentsy, Evenki, Chukchi, and Yupik people and among North American Indians. The participants in these rites danced in hope to lure animals and secure a good hunting. Dancers wore entire animal hides. She surmises that this hunting tradition might have later laid the foundation for the shamanic costume (8, 98).

In appearance, the decorations attached to the shamanic costume, such as embroidery, pendants, and fringes, varied widely. Yet this variety is more related to materials and forms. As for their symbolism, all decorations can be reduced to four types. First, these were the decorations that constructed the animal-bird imagery. Thus, fringe attached to any part of the costume symbolized usually feathers and, only rarely, the fur of an animal. The use of different materials did not change the basic symbolism of fringes. The most ancient versions were the fringes cut on

the edges of the costume made of skins or hides. Sometimes entire pieces of skins were attached to costumes and then cut as fringes (84). Images of skeletons and body parts of birds and animals belong to the same group of the animal-bird imagery. Thus, shamans attached to their sleeves iron plates, which almost everywhere depicted the bones of wings. Sometimes the “bones” were embroidered on a piece of a hide that was then attached to a sleeve. Altaian and Khakass shamans attached genuine bird wings to the backs or shoulders of their caftans. Frequently they also sewed to the sleeves, at the spots that matched hand joints, iron or copper plates of a square or oblong form. The plates symbolized the joints of bird wings (86-87). Prokof'eva concludes that, by origin, the animal-bird imagery is the most ancient one. New symbols were later layered over this ancient symbolism. Thus, fringes and plaits were viewed not only as feathers, but also as shamans' roads. In addition, the plaits were often considered snakes, especially among the shamans of southern Siberia, where plaits were shaped as snakes (87).

The second group of decorations was represented by animal and a few human images that symbolized shamans' animals/birds helping spirits and patron spirits. These images were usually embroidered in deer's hair, attached as appliqué, or drawn. They were also made from pieces of metal or were attached as dolls stuffed with wool, as entire skins of animals and birds, and sometimes as animal heads, paws, teeth and tails. Among the images of animal spirits, the most popular were the images of the deer and the moose; among the birds were double-headed eagles, eagle-owls, cranes, ducks, geese, cuckoos, and loons. The third group of decorations was represented by celestial and universe symbols such as the sun, moon, earth, stars, and the entrance to the underworld. Usually metal pendant badges on the shaman costume depicted all these symbols. The fourth group of decorations included miniature metal images of shamans' weapons such as the bow and arrows, the spear, the saber, work artifacts such the axe and the shovel, means of transportation such as the boat, and shamans' “roads” portrayed by chains and ropes. The decorations of the fourth group were later additions to the shamanic costume. Unlike decorations of the first three groups, which are more or less similar among all Siberian tribes, in the fourth type, individual and tribal variations are especially noticeable (88).

Putugir, N. "Religioznie verovania u evenkov Kirenskogo okruga [Religious Beliefs of the Evenki People of the Kiren District]." *Taiga i tundra*. Ed. Ia.P. Koshkin. Leningrad: Kraevedcheskii kruzhek instituta narodov Severa, 1930. 157-160.

This paper is an interesting example of how a native youth from the Evenki tribe, a student of the Leningrad Institute of the Northern People, viewed the religious beliefs of his people in the 1920s. As a student, Putugir was certainly indoctrinated by Soviet propaganda. Yet first-hand knowledge of the life of his people prompted him to provide objective assessments of the role of shamans in Evenki life in the 1920s. Along with the Putugir paper, the abovementioned collection of articles includes other articles written by the Institute's students, who represent various indigenous groups of Siberia. Each student covered his or her own native group. Stylistically and grammatically, Putugir's and some other articles are written with many mistakes, which shows that the students still did not have a good command of Russian and came directly from native cultures.

Like many Soviet observations of Siberian shamanism from the 1930s to the 1950s, Putugir's paper concerns the "harmful effects of shamanism" on native society, the necessity to overcome this "remnant of the past," and ethnographic information on shamanism. Putugir stresses that in addition to the Orthodox God and saints, the Evenki worship the spirits of nature, who are very ambivalent. They can either harm or help people, depending on circumstances. Religious rituals are conducted by male heads of families: "heads of families are also shamans, who have special spirit helpers." In his district, Putugir numbers a few practicing male and female shamans, whom he grades according to a then-popular Soviet social grading scale. They are either poor people (*bedniaki*) or people receiving average incomes (*seredniaki*). Putugir, who might have heard from his Soviet instructors that shamans were "exploiters" of poor natives, openly admits that he cannot explain why shamans are not rich. Interestingly, the editor of the collection provided a special footnote to Putugir's statement: "any assertion about the lower social and economic status of shamans should be carefully verified" (157).

Putugir notes that shamans are usually invited to shamanize when individuals or reindeer get sick. In addition, shamans "bring spirits of well-being to a household and drive away spirits that harm a household."

Shamans invited by a household enjoy all kinds of treats. They are offered the best food and welcomed as the most honored guests because hosts hope that with their séances, shamans might summon the “spirits of well-being” who will make a household prosperous. If shamans do not like their hosts, they might invite hostile spirits, which will inflict all kinds of misfortunes on their families and ruin their households. Shamans are also invited to drive hostile spirits out of a dead person, to “bring to him [the dead person] spirits of well-being,” and “to make sure in other world the deceased live among good spirits.” Besides, shamans “drive away the soul of a deceased person from his family.” Putugir writes that by 1930, the influence of shamans weakened, especially in those areas where people have “health stations” within reach. In these areas, natives invite physicians more often than shamans because the results of shamanic treatment rarely lead to recovery of patients. Frequently, if a family member gets sick, the Evenki simultaneously approach both a shaman and a physician. For their services, people give shamans food, reindeer, furs, and clothing. However, the majority of shamans never demand anything and take presents only when a person offers them (158).

According to Putugir, a séance represents “activities of a shaman directed to call good or hostile spirits in order to reach his goal.” Shamans usually prefer to conduct their séances at night, because at night, both good and hostile spirits “stay close to a shaman” and, therefore, they are easy to summon. A séance always draws many spectators and rarely “takes place without people.” “During a séance, spectators act as assistants, and when a shaman sings inviting spirits, the spectators accompany him.” Yet spectators mostly come to hear what a shaman has to predict about various matters of their concern. During a séance, a shaman puts on special clothing, a robe with decorations made from iron and wood, and then takes a drum. For a shaman, stressed Putugir, “his clothing and decorations are tools of defense.” When shamans do not perform, they wear ordinary clothing. Yet it is easy to tell shamans from others by their long shirts and long braids. When a shaman dies, another shaman performs a séance in the dwelling of the deceased and sacrifices a reindeer. The invited shaman learns about the cause of the death and drives away hostile spirits from the dead shaman. All accessories of deceased shamans are placed in their graves. People eat the meat of a sacrificed reindeer and hang its head above the shaman’s grave, along with the ritual costume that belonged to the deceased. The

head of a sacrificial reindeer always faces the sunset, which indicates where the soul of the shaman should go (159).

As for “harmful effect of shamanism,” Putugir repeats household clichés of his time. Thus, one learns that the religion is “obscuring the human mind with various unnatural phenomena,” that in the North, religion (shamanism) is widespread and enjoys significant support, and that “the native population still strongly clings to their religious beliefs” (157). The “damage” inflicted by shamans can be reduced to three things. First, “as servants of religious faith, they go against the policies of the Soviet power,” because by their activities they “obscure the minds of natives.” Second, shamans ruin native households by requiring them to kill a reindeer for each séance as a sacrifice and to pay to the shamans with goods and foodstuffs. It is noticeable that the last statement contradicts Putugir’s previous assertion. Third, shamans aspire to keep women in a subjugated state. At the same time, it appears that Putugir somehow tries to defend his fellow tribes people from possible violent attacks by anti-religious activists. In his words, when fighting against shamans “one has to be cautious to some extent, because at the present moment, native populations still feel closely attached to and believe in shamanism. Under no circumstances must one fight shamans using physical force and confiscating their costumes and all accessories.” The struggle should be conducted “by persuasion,” which means atheistic propaganda (160).

Revunenkov, E.V. “O lichnosti shamana [On Shamans’ Personalities.” *Sovetskaia etnografiia* 1 (1974): 104-111.

This review article furnished 1970s Soviet anthropology with a fresh view of the shaman as an artistic individual. Revunenkov notes that for the past one hundred years, the views on shamans’ personalities oscillated from one extreme to another. At first, scholars viewed shamans as neurotics. The first who began questioning this approach was Sergei Shirokogoroff. In his works in the 1920s and 1930s, he stressed the physical and mental health of Tungus (Evenki) shamans. Shirokogoroff asked a natural question: if shamans were mentally ill people, why did they carefully monitor and control their state of ecstasy? Revunenkov stresses that while in the studies dealing with tribal variants of shamanism, one now finds assessments similar to the ones articulated by

Shirokogoroff, in the works dealing with shamanism in general, one might sense the traditional view of shamanism as a nervous disorder.

Revunenikova describes for Russian readers debates unleashed in the 1950s by Western ethnopsychologists about shamans' minds (107). She stresses that experiments with people who have nothing to do with shamanism showed that any person can experience the same state of mind, which might be called a hallucination and which earlier scholars usually associated with the behavior of "neurotic-shamans." Drawing on experiments that had been conducted by American scientists on Apache shamans, Revunenikova stresses that shamans operate in a realm which they structure not in logically connected phrases and concepts but as combinations of various images and snapshots. The latter are usually considered the attributes of the creative mind. Therefore, notes Revunenikova, it is the creative thinking that sets shamans apart from the rest of society (108-109). She also notes that scientific experiments cannot pin down such states of mind because rationalist logical categories are simply not applicable to shamanism (109). Moreover, she reminds Soviet anthropologists that one cannot apply European cultural categories to the study of "shamanic cultures." "This means the question about the personality of the shaman as it was formulated by [earlier] scholars is simply irrelevant. From a viewpoint of the cultures where shamans operate, they are absolutely normal people" (110). Still, if one wants to try grasp the meaning of shamanism in familiar Western categories, the closest "analogy is an actor or an artist in a very general sense" (110). Revunenikova notes that in her assessments of shamanism, she joins such earlier scholars as V.N. Kharuzin, W. Schmidt, and D. Schröder, who treated shamanic séances as dramatic performances.

Rychkov, Konstantin M. "Eniseiskie Tungusy [The Tungus of the Enisei River Area]." *Zemlevedenie* 3-4 (1922): 107-149.

Although this paper deals with Tungus (Evenki) ethnography in general, it contains materials on native shamanism. Unfortunately, the greater part of Rychkov's field materials still remains unpublished in Russian. Yet there is a German translation of his manuscript on Tungus shamanism: *Drei Schamanengesänge der Ewenki-Tungusen Nord-Sibiriens: aufgezeichnet von Konstantin Mixajlovic Rychkov in den Jahren 1905/1909*, ed. and transl. Karl Heinrich Menges. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996. 339 p. In the section devoted to shamanism,

Rychkov first notes that “shamanism represents an incredible psychopathological phenomenon characteristic of the whole humankind at certain stage of its development.” He also adds that “in the northern part of the Enisei district and in the entire northeast of Asia, shamanism is closely linked to widespread hysteria.” Rychkov connects the origin and development of shamanism in Siberia with the mentality and activities of native women, who, in his words, are prone to hysteria. Ten years of life and research in this northern country convinced Rychkov that local native women suffer from a “special neurotic mass disorder,” manifestations of which one can observe on a regular basis. The number of men, who are not immune to this “disease,” is far fewer than women. The natives themselves connect the “hysterio-epileptical fits” with the activities of spirits, who “possess” an individual temporarily or on a permanent basis. Natives believe that people who suffer from the “neurotic disease” establish “intimate” connections with spirits. As such, they are viewed as individuals endowed with mighty power. Acquired or, more frequently, inherited hysteria presents a fertile ground for the nourishment of such “powers” as clairvoyance, hallucination, delirium, and fixed ideas. Individuals who are prone to hysteria might suffer a “fit” at any time by their own choice, arousing themselves with “abnormal movements, shouts, and narcotics.” Moreover, these “hysterical individuals” arouse not only themselves but nearby people, who are susceptible to the “neurotic imitation” (113).

Rychkov stresses that in the course of his ten-year observations of native Siberians, he established close and friendly relations with “renowned shamans and shamanesses among the Tungus, the Dolgan, the Samoyed, the Yurak, the Ostiak, and the Yakut.” He describes these spiritual practitioners as “personalities who stand out among the common people in their communities because of their developed imagination, fantasy, and inclination to mysticism.” About their mental state, Rychkov writes, “All of them, without any exception, suffer from the abovementioned hysteria.” Drawing a portrait of the “typical shaman,” Rychkov notes such “typical” qualities as an “irritation at all surrounding happenings for any minor reason,” fear, a “deep conviction in the truthfulness of his own delirium, dreams, hallucinations and illusions,” and also a “special inclination to religiosity and mysticism.” From their early childhood, future shamans are “hypnotized with the idea of being chosen by spirits” (115). No wonder, writes Rychkov, during their séances, shamans reach the “highest level of convulsions,” lose consciousness, rave, and produce “wild sounds” imitating animals and

birds. To Rychkov, the content of shamans' chants and invocations addressed to spirits during séances are similarly manifestations of their unbalanced minds, the "results of an improper brain function under the effect of shattered nerves" (116). Shamans maintain their authority and significance by practicing the "art of healing," which is reduced to the "expulsion of demons" from human bodies. In their dreams and nightmares, natives who are ill with hysteria associate their ailments with hostile spirits, which should be expelled to produce recovery. While driving out hostile spirits from the bodies of their patients, shamans have to "strongly intimidate and terrorize spirits." When, during séances, shamans "drive themselves to a frenzy," "stupefy themselves with the smoke of Labrador tea," "smoke and chew a disgusting root of the same plant," "eat [fly-agaric] mushrooms," "grab with their mouths hot coals," "rage," "yell" and "desperately beat their drums," they usually pursue one goal: the intimidation of hostile spirits that "crawled" into the bodies of patients (116).

Sometimes a hostile spirit steals the soul of a patient and takes it to the "kingdom of shadows and darkness." In this case, to retrieve the soul, shamans need to secure the help of their spirit helpers, which they begin to summon. The Tungus characteristically describe this type of a séance by the word "call." Spirit helpers have various names and might represent any kind of animals, birds, or insects. Having the ability to acquire any form, they can penetrate wherever needed (117). The chief spirit helpers of shamans are their deceased shaman's relatives; after their deaths, shamans turn into spirits who protect their kinfolks (117). The Tungus believe, stresses Rychkov, that "genuine shamans" are already "superior beings," for they do not completely belong to the world of human beings. During their séances, shamans ascend the skies and penetrate the habitats of celestial beings, descend to the underworld overcoming "fire rivers," and can kill at a distance. To upset shamans or make them angry is a great misfortune for the Tungus, who are convinced that spiritual practitioners might unleash illnesses on them and predators on their stock. Hence, shamans essentially control the lives of common Tungus, who try to win their favors. When shamans are alive, people fear them. When they are dead, people are still afraid of them because after their deaths, if unappeased, spiritual practitioners turn into hostile spirits (*ilagy*), who destroy people of a different kin or sometimes even their own kinfolks (118).

Rychkov informs his readers that scholars divide all Tungus shamanic séances into "upper" and "lower" ones, depending on what sphere

shamans plan to contact. The “upper” séances are centered on interaction with celestial spiritual beings, while the “lower” ones concern “underworld” deities and spirits. Based on these differences, scholars divide native shamans into “white” ones, who “work” with “upper” celestial beings, and “black” shamans, who “work” only with underworld spirits. Rychkov notes that researchers tend to exaggerate this division. They try to sharply distinguish functions, costumes, and accessories of “white” and “black” shamans. To this, Rychkov responds that for all ten years of his field research into shamanism among the “arctic peoples,” he never met pure “white” shamans among these natives. He stresses that among the Tungus (Evenki), Samoyed (Nentsy), Dolgan, Yakut (Sakha) and Ostiak-Samoyed (Selkup), the same shaman can perform both “upper” world and “lower” world séances (124, 126). Among the Tungus, “the most ancient and typical lower-world shamanizing” is represented by a healing session called *vaptyn*. During such séances, shamans first drive out numerous hostile spirits, who might have filled the chum of a patient, and then they expel the spirit who “crawled” into the body of the patient and “ate” it. If the soul of the patient has been already “stolen” by hostile spirits, shamans embark on a spiritual journey to release this soul. In exchange for the soul of the patient, they usually offer a sacrificial reindeer to the hostile spirit, who stole the soul. Shamans and hostile spirits usually become involved in passionate bargaining. As a result, shamans either persuade the spirits to release the soul or try to deceive the spirits or simply snatch the soul from the enemy's hands. Shamans usually safeguard the released soul at their homes for three days. Before returning the soul to the patient, shamans perform special séances addressed to the “upper” world, specifically to the deity that is in charge of “granting” souls. The purpose of the séance is to relieve the saved soul from fear and bring it into a healthy state. This séance, which is addressed to the upper world in order to bring the soul into order, is described by a special word, *arbalgen* (121).

The Tungus believe that illness is an “evil creature” that penetrates a human body and slowly eats it (96). These “pathogenic spirits” are actually represented by natives' own ancestors, who reside in the afterworld (97). The Tungus are convinced that in the afterworld, deceased people find their relatives, live in families, run households, and, in all other respects, live lives that hardly differ from earthly life. Yet these “creatures” miss all things earthly, and, driven by pure selfishness, they try to take their living relatives and their stock to the afterworld realm. Since the spirits of the deceased inflict illnesses and death on

people, the Tungus view all dead people as harmful beings (98). Natives always interpret death as a result of the intrigues of the dead. According to the Tungus, “natural” death is impossible. If it were not for these “horrible and perfidious creatures,” people would not have to die. Without shamans who successfully fight back against these “horrible creatures” and try to protect human beings, the conditions of people would be quite grievous (104). Based on this information, Rychkov concludes that the Tungus do not view their ancestors as benign beings who safeguard people. Hence, they have never developed the classic system of ancestral worship. Instead they practice the “black worship of ancestors,” which is concentrated on fear of the deceased, who are viewed as “harmful creatures” capable of bringing only misfortunes. Rychkov hypothesizes that the “worship of black ancestors” differs from the classic worship of ancestors as much as the worship of “pure deities” differs from the worship of “spirits of darkness.” In this “morbid” universe, it is the shamans who save people and give hope (102-103).

Sagalaev, A.M. “Udarnie instrumenty v ritualakh Lamaisma i iuzhnosibirskogo shamanstva [Percussion Instruments in Rituals of Lamaism and Southern Siberian Shamanism].” *Sovetskaiia etnografiia* 5 (1981): 117-124.

Sagalaev draws attention to parallels between Tibetan Buddhist and shamanic musical instruments. Lamaism (Tibetan Buddhism) affected the indigenous beliefs of southern Siberia and Mongolia. At the same time, Tibetan Buddhism inherited many archaic features that go back to *Bön*, an ancient pre-Buddhist Tibetan religion. Incidentally, *Bön* ritual practices stand close to the shamanism of Southern Siberian tribes. Hence, Tibetan Buddhism that penetrated southern Siberia was a peculiar mixture of shamanic rituals that were only tinged with Buddhist symbolism (120). Both shamanism and Tibetan Buddhism used percussion musical instruments. In Siberia, it was the drum. Some scholars believe that Siberian drums do not have analogies among other Asian peoples. Those who make such assertions forget about percussion instruments in Tibetan Buddhism and *Bön* (118). In Tibetan rituals, one can find a variety of drums (*baraban*) that were grouped under a common name *nga*. Moreover, *Bön* “conjurers” used the Siberian type drum (*buben*) with a wide frame and with a short wooden handle. During their

rituals, “conjurers,” kept the drums close to their faces with their left



Reenactment of Shamanic Séance in Mountain Altai, June 2001. Photograph by Author.

hands and beat the drum from down below with a curved wooden drumstick. A similar manner of beating a drum, which goes back to ancient times, was reported among various Turkic and Mongol peoples. Among the latter tribes, shamans took the same pose, bending their heads to drums as though hiding their heads in the drums.

Bön “magicians” used the “Siberian” drum not only as a percussion instrument, but also as a ritual object in their rite called “soothsaying with the help of the drum.” Drums were specially prepared for this séance, which was conducted in case of somebody’s sickness. The “conjurers” who performed the ceremony drew two circles on their drums, and then divided them into sixteen sections by drawing perpendicular lines. Then they colored the left side of the cover in carbon-black, while the right side remained white. The four major points of crossings were marked with special symbols. In the boxes created by perpendicular lines, “conjurers” wrote in the names of spirits held responsible for the sickness of a patient. In addition, using their fingers, soothsayers applied a drop of milk to each section and then placed a seed in each drop of milk. On the white side of the drum, a few seeds “stood” in a row symbolizing the “guards” of a patient. On the border between the black and white sides, another seed was placed that symbolized the patient. In the course of such séances, “conjurers” addressed their appeals to various deities and spirits. First of all “conjurers” inquired of them what spirits caused an illness and what should be done to eliminate this cause. Watching the movement of various seeds on the cover of the drum, “conjurers” observed whether a deity was satisfied with an offered sacrifice and also received answers to other questions. Upon completion of such a soothsaying séance, the “conjurer” usually accompanied all deities and spirits who participated in the ceremony to their heavenly habitats. The latter suggests that during the séance of the soothsaying, the “magician” most probably “collected” the spirits and deities at the surface of his drum. Altaian shamans similarly “collected” their spirits on their drums, asking these spirits to come down from their heavenly habitat.

The above-mentioned drawings on the *bön* drum are interesting, as well. The division of the surface of the drum into a white section “populated” by benevolent spirits and into a black section that served as a habitat for hostile spirits suggests that *bön* “conjurers” attempted to portray the world picture. In their symbolism and composition, the “world chart” on the *bön* drum coincides with the composition of the Buddhist mandala and the drawings on shaman drums of southern Siberian tribes (121). The drawings on the *bön* drum clearly show the

division of the universe (the drum's surface) into cardinal directions: the north, south, west, east, the northeast, northwest, southwest, and southeast. Such division echoes a similar division of the drum's surface into four cardinal directions on some Tuvinian, Tofalar, and Altaian drums. There are obvious similarities between *bön* drums and southern Siberian drums called *tungur* (*diungur*). The southern Siberian drums had a wide frame and in their size reached sixty centimeters and more. Such drums also had a lengthwise handle, a widthwise iron rod, and elaborate drawings on an exterior or an interior side. Southern Siberian shamans beat such drums by using a wooden drumstick, one side of which could be slightly curved. Like southern Siberian shamans, *bön* "magicians" used their drums as "flying devices" to travel to the upper world. According to a later Tibetan legend, Shenrab Mibo flew sitting in the middle of a huge wheel, while eight of his students sat on eight spokes of this wheel. It appears the wheel with spokes was the later Buddhist reconfiguration of the "pagan" ritual drum (122). All shaman drums in southern Siberia were covered with a hide on one side. At the same time, according to a Buryat legend, in old times drums were covered from both sides and were empty inside. The legend also says that after the first shaman, Morgon-Khara, riding his drum, ascended the heaven in a search of a lost human soul, powerful deity Esege-malan-tengri became so angry that he reduced the power of shamans by dividing their drums into two halves.

In addition to drums, in its ritual practices Tibetan Buddhism used various types of gongs, bells, and bronze plates. The sounds of these instruments accompanied various rites and were usually used in combination with the sounds of percussion and brass instruments. Interestingly, the name for the Tibetan gong *khar nga* means a "copper drum." At the same time, in Altaian legends one may find frequent references to a copper drum (*dzes tiungur*). In these legends, the mythological owner of such drums is usually an old shamaness. It appears that in their rituals, modern southern Siberian shamans did not use any other musical instruments except drums. On the other hand, Sagalaev suggests that the ancestors of present-day tribes of southern Siberia had a much wider selection of musical instruments than in modern times. Byzantine ambassadors who visited the headquarters of a Turkic khan in 568 CE witnessed a rite that strongly resembles the shaman séance. The "magicians" who performed this rite used a bell in addition to a drum. According to ancient Chinese sources, the Kyrgyz of the Enisei River area were familiar with such musical instruments as

drums, flutes, reed-pipes, and small flat bells (123). He also points to numerous analogies among shamanic rituals of various Asian peoples who lived far from each other. Thus, the costumes of Vietnamese shamans had pendants that look similar to those that Altaian shamans attached to their own costumes. Moreover, ritual drums used during shamanic séances by several tribal groups of southeast Asia resemble Siberian drums. Such parallels suggest that shamanism among different peoples of Asia developed similar artifacts and rituals (124).

Shatilov, Mikhail B. “Dramaticheskoe iskusstvo vakhovskikh ostiakov [Dramatic Art of the Ostiak People of the Vakh Area].” *Iz istorii shamanstva*. Ed. N.V. Lukina. Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 1976. 155-156.

Ethnographer Shatilov, the student of the Ostiak (Khanty) tribe, was also active in the Siberian regionalist movement. Moreover, from 1917 to 1919, he acted as one of the Socialist-Revolutionary leaders in Siberia representing the interests of native peoples. From 1922 to about 1934, before he perished in the Stalinist purges, Shatilov worked as director of the Tomsk Local Museum. In this capacity, the ethnographer made several field trips to native Siberians. The most productive was his 1926 expedition to the Khanty of the Vakh area, which provided materials for the aforementioned article. The manuscript of this paper, written after 1931, was discovered in 1969 in the archives of the Tomsk Local Museum.

Shatilov views shamanic activities as a form of dramatic art, which is clear from the following quotation: “As a ritual act, the harmonic séance represents an elaborate drama with many acts. Ritual activities of shamans demonstrate various elements and forms of primitive dramatic art, ranging from more or less expressive mimicry and pantomime to sophisticated symbolic activities. The whole séance is usually charged with drama. It is accompanied by songs and music and frequently manifests an unusual enthusiasm and expressive skills. That is how a Vakh shaman *elta-ku* structures his activities” (155-156). In brief, stresses Shatilov, a shaman is expected to perform what Europeans usually call a musical drama. In addition to a routine healing séance, Shatilov observed among the Khanty a more advanced and elaborate form of this “drama” that centered solely on the demonstration of performing skills of a shaman. The ethnographer explains that, on the one hand, like regular

“drama sorcery,” these demonstration séances are called by the generic name of *el-vol*. On the other hand, they also carry a special name of *niukul'vel'*, which can be roughly rendered as “to conduct a performance.” The purpose of such performances is to show off to people shamans’ powers by summoning of their spirits. Shatilov describes a shamanic “performance” séance that he observed on the way home from his 1926 expedition and that started at midnight near the Kolokegan River, which is a tributary of the Vakh River. The séance was conducted by a twenty-five year old shaman, G.I. Segel’etov, known under the nickname Sokali (magpie).

After all spectators and participants gathered in a yurt made of birch bark, the fire was put out completely. In total darkness the shaman was sitting somewhere in a corner, playing a musical instrument called *dombra* (*panakh-ukh*) and quietly summoning his spirits. Gradually the sounds of the *dombra* started to move around the yurt from one corner to another. At some point, Shatilov could hear the sound of the *dombra* from different corners of the yurt, from down below on the ground and from up above. It was assumed by natives that the shaman (*elta-ku*) was flying around calling his spirits. Suddenly Shatilov felt that somebody dropped from above to a birch rug that lay in the middle of the yurt. At the same time, he felt that that somebody “flew” away. As he found out later, it was the shaman who “flew” out of the yurt. When the sounds of the *dombra* died, one could hear something rustling. Then once again somebody dropped from up above. And in a moment, one could hear voices of different birds and animals coming simultaneously from various corners of the yurt. These were *loongs* (spirits) who finally arrived in response to the shaman’s invocations.

At first one could hear a cuckoo’s singing, then the flapping of the wings of some giant bird and the sinister “laughing” of an owl. Then a hoopoe cried, followed by a duck’s quacking and a crane’s calling high in the sky. A characteristic whistling of a chipmunk was followed by sounds “produced” by a squirrel. The latter sounded so clear that Shatilov felt how the squirrel “jumped” from one branch of a tree to another. The shaman’s superb imitation skills created a total illusion of sounds and noises produced by birds and animals. The general impression was a sense of the presence of the whole crowd of *loongs* represented by various birds and animals.

While the spirit helpers of the shaman were arriving in the yurt, the entire audience began involving them in soothsaying. For example, when the squirrel “appeared,” the audience exclaimed, “Squirrel, drop, I am

shooting you,” and in a second one could hear a sound like that of a squirrel falling from a tree. When a squirrel “drops” “shot” by people, it means a good hunting season. If a squirrel does not “drop” and continues to “jump” from tree to tree, it is bad sign that does not promise a good hunting season. Then a large-sized creature clumsily barged into the yurt puffing and rumbling; a “bear” itself had entered the yurt. It is interesting that the “bear” also manifested its presence by producing sounds resembling sexual intercourse.

Then somebody flew into the yurt from up above. Again, one could hear the shaman singing and playing his *dombra*, whose sounds resonated in different corners of the yurt. This meant that the shaman “returned” from his mysterious long-distance journey and began to see off his spirits. Tender sounds of the musical instrument accompanied the voice of a “young girl,” who was slowly “approaching” the yurt. Finally, all *loongs* were out of the yurt, and sounds of the *dombra* and singing slowly faded away one by one. The whole *séance*, which continued about two hours, was over (158-162).

Shatilov asserts that the natives who witnessed the *séance* believed in the reality of all that they heard and felt. The Ket tried to convince the ethnographer that the spirits had indeed visited the yurt and that the shaman “flew” away from the dwelling for a while. Yet Shatilov insists that the Khantsy natives clearly distinguish this “performing” type of a *séance* from regular shamanic *séances*. On the whole, the natives he talked to were ambivalent about the “performing *séances*.” Natives did sincerely believe that that spirits came to the yurt. At the same time, they stressed that everything here depended on the artistic and creative skills of the shaman. According to Shatilov, there is no way to draw a clear line between these two perceptions. During a “performance” *séance*, shamans never appeal to Torum, the supreme deity. Neither do they chant any prayers. Their sole goal is to summon spirits to help put together and conduct a performance for a group of gathered spectators. No wonder, reminds Shatilov, this type of *séance* carries a special name, *niukul’ vel’*, “to conduct a performance,” while a regular *séance* is called *iolta*.

Unlike regular healing *séances*, “dramatic performances,” as the one described above, are conducted in total darkness, and people who cannot see the “actor-shaman” are listeners rather than spectators. Hence, Shatilov defines this type of a *séance* as a “musical drama”, which includes all major elements of the dramatic genre. (162-163). This shamanic “drama” includes all major elements of the drama. By his movements, and more with his words, songs and music, the shaman

“plays” major characters (people, birds, animals, and spirits) or events (the bear courting a girl and the appearance of the girl). Moreover, the séance includes an actor (a shaman), spectators (a native audience), a “scene” (the interior of a yurt), and the “orchestra” (a *dombra*). In this “musical drama,” the shaman acts not only as a “multifaceted performer,” who substitutes for the entire company of “actors,” but also as a “director” who assigns specific parts (164).

Shishkov, Viacheslav Ia. “*Strashnyi kam [Scary Shaman].*” **Shishkov V. Ia.** *Sobranie sochinenii [Collected Works]*. Moskva: Pravda, 1983. Vol. 2. 152-213.

Russian/Soviet writer Shishkov wrote this fictional story in 1919. The plot is set in pre-Revolutionary southwestern Siberia (Altai) and is based on real events. Shishkov frequently visited the Altai and worked there as chief of a road construction survey expedition. During one of his trips, he heard a story about the murder of an Altaian *kam* (shaman) by Russians. Although the writer tends to ascribe to natives a few Christian-like images they did not share, unlike many other fiction stories that describe shamans and shamanism, Shishkov’s text is full of many exact ethnographic details. “Scary Shaman” reveals that Shishkov, once a member of Siberian regionalist circle, was familiar with contemporary ethnographic studies.

The story portrays complicated relationships between Russian Orthodox Christianity and shamanism. These relationships lead to conflict that runs through people’s souls. The major protagonist, “scary shaman” Chalbak, is a baptized Orthodox Christian. Yet, pressed by his native spirits, he behaves as an apostate and continues to shamanize. It should be noted that the Russian Orthodox Church had a right to persecute such apostates, while those natives who were formally shamanists had a right to practice their “pagan rituals” undisturbed. Local peasants gossiped about the shaman: “There was kam Chalbak, prophesized, befriended the devil, supervised the whole bunch of *körmös* [hostile spirits]. Then the kam got baptized, adopted the new faith and became Paul, but still cannot part with the devil.” Kazanchi, Chalbak’s wife, begs him to quit his vocation. Chalbak says in response that he cannot forget what sits deep in his heart and tells her how he became a shaman: “When I was fifteen years old, I fell ill. I was so sick that I thought I would die. All of a sudden I had a dream. It looked like Ülgen

visited me and instructed, ‘Make a ringing drum, make a costume all clad in iron like other shamans have, and pray to great Ülgen. Look, cunning devil aldachi has already taken all of your kinfolk to the hell and ate them. Go ahead, pray passionately and protect your kinfolk!’ So he taught me how to become a shaman, how to pray and what words I should say. That is how I became a shaman. Since then I have not been sick anymore.” Chalbak’s response is almost a literal rendering of a story recorded by another surveyor, S.P. Shvetsov, in 1897 from a native Altaian, who described the origin of his shamanic call.

One learns that the baptism of Chalbak was not his voluntary decision. His family adopted Christianity at the insistence of a local priest who promised to exonerate Chalbak’s father, who had committed a murder. Thus, Chalbak, baptized as Pavel (Paul), became person of double faith and with two gods: Jesus and Ülgen. Well familiar with recorded ethnographies of the Altaians, Shishkov introduces two major Altaian deities: “good god” Ülgen and “evil deity,” the master of the underworld, Erlik. Moreover, Shishkov skillfully weaves into his text a native legend about the rivalry between Ülgen and Erlik, which resonates with some genuine native legends. Even the story about Ülgen throwing Erlik and his servants out of his domain, which reminds of Christian god who “threw” down Lucifer and downfallen angels, is not the writer’s invention but the rendering of an actual native legend (175). The responsibility of Chalbak as a shaman is to appease “Satan” (Erlik) and his spirits by delivering to them regular sacrifices. Describing the attitudes of Chalbak to “good deity” Ülgen, Shishkov again exactly conveys the stance many Altaians demonstrated toward this benevolent deity: “Ülgen is light and good, why should we pray to him? He will not be offended anyway. Erlik is Satan, if you do not pray to him, he will quickly get you to the grave.” Therefore, if the shaman stops performing his séances, “black’ Erlik will “press” and “devour” him. Therefore, Chalbak has to bring regular sacrifices to “blood-thirsty” Erlik.

One of the most memorable episodes of the story is the description of a shamanic séance, during which the shaman performs miracles. Although it is unbearably hot in the yurt where Chalbak conducts his shamanic séance, the drum that the shaman drops to the ground is full of ice-cold snow. Then in a few moments, on the motion of Chalbak, the snow disappears. In the same manner, Chalbak miraculously animates an item that belongs to one person from the audience. Shishkov portrays the summoning of spirits by Chalbak as an invitation for the devils to “enter” the body of the shaman. Shishkov colorfully describes Chelbak’s ecstatic

dance. Chalbak imitates a cuckoo bird, a crow, and a loon. On the wings of the loon, he flies directly to “hell,” to the throne of the “Devil-Erlik,” and then to the upper world to Ülgen, the great benign spirit. Like many other contemporary observers of shamanic séances, for Shishkov, the purpose of shamanizing, curing an old woman, is not so important as the “ecstatic” ritual. The séance ends with the sacrifice of a horse. Having cut the horse’s belly with a knife, Chalbak removes the beating heart of the animal with his hands.

This specific séance triggers the arrest of apostate Chalbak. Local priest father Vasilii seeks to “destroy” the shaman, who “confused” his native flock for a long time. Central to the story is an episode of apprehending Chalbak and his suffering at the hands of a raging Russian crowd. Here Shishkov intentionally blurs the borders between shamanism and Christianity. The shaman knows that he might free himself at any time, because the people who arrested him do not have power over him. Yet Chalbak succumbs to them at his own will: “Take me, do whatever you plotted. I know, I see. Körmös all around, under the ground is Erlik. I might wave my hand and everything will be as I want. I feel pity for you. I can do everything. I could have turned into a bear and dropped all of you down from this cliff as dirty carrion. I could have turned into a bird with a copper beak and drunk all the blood from your heart. Yet I feel pity for you” (182-183).

Shishkov intentionally points to biblical analogies. Chalbak acts as Jesus, who, captured by the Pharisees, warns his enemies that one word from him would bring “twelve legions of angles” to protect him (Matt 26: 53). As the story unfolds, Shishkov enhances the analogy between Chalbak and Christ. From his mountain dwelling, Chalbak is escorted to a Russian village, where, enraged with hatred, people curse and beat him. A few modest attempts of natives to protect the shaman are useless. The priest orders people to burn the apostate’s shamanic paraphernalia: a drum, a costume, and a drumstick. He strictly forbids Chalbak to shamanize and instructs him to come for church services on a regular basis. Despite this relatively “mild” solution of the conflict, there is no way to stop the raging crowd. Instigated by the Brukhanov brothers, who had plotted to kill Chalbak in advance “to safeguard and strengthen Russian faith,” villagers beat the shaman to death. Before he dies, Chalbak warns his torturers that misfortunes and fast death would visit his murderers. He addresses his tormentors in a Gospel manner, “I humbly lived in the mountains and did not harm anybody. I did not touch you. Why are you killing me?” (186).

The second part of the story portrays the horrible consequences of the shaman's murder. "Since that damned night a whirlwind of misfortunes fell on the Glyzet village. The flame of life was put down, flowers withered. Something bad happened. It looked like black evil power entrenched itself in the village: either dogs howled all nights or an invisible drum sounded somewhere in the mountains" (189). Panic and fear gripped all villagers. Soon the Brukhanovs' cows gave birth to a two-headed and six-legged calf, which was the fulfillment of Chalbak's prophecy: "You will give birth to a monster." Eventually the "devil" "devoured" the entire Brukhanov clan except a young brother, Filimon, who was able to meet the spirit of the murdered shaman and secure forgiveness for himself. This forgiveness granted by Chalbak's spirit symbolizes the act of Christian mercy. The spirit tells Filimon, "It is not Chalbak but Paul that forgives you" (213). Shishkov portrays the shaman, endowed with the moral potential of a Christian saint, definitely as a positive character. Written in Remizov's modernist manner, "Scary Shaman" is filled with mysticism and mysteries. This is one of the most poetic descriptions of shamanism in Russian literature.

Sherkhunaev, R.A. *Antishamanskie motivy v Buriatskom ustnom tvorchestve* [Anti-Shamanic Motives in Buryat Folklore]. Irkutsk: Irkutskoe oblastnoe otdelenie Obshestva po rasprostraneniu politicheskikh i nauchnikh znaniy, 1963. 49 pages.

This brochure, written by a native Buryat scholar, was designed to use materials of Buryat indigenous folklore for the purposes of atheistic propaganda. Sherkhunaev utilized indigenous folklore to prove that in their social status, Buryat shamans were not different from other groups of native rich people, czarist bureaucrats, traditional native chieftains (*noions*), and Buddhist preachers (*lamas*), which together mercilessly exploited working masses (3). From the brochure, one learns that since ancient times, in all countries and among all peoples, "laboring masses conducted a fierce struggle against religion" and that "this struggle became reflected in indigenous folklore." According to Sherkhunaev, the study of Buryat folklore exemplifies this "popular atheism" characteristic of all cultures (7). He asserts that Buryat folklore portrays indigenous religious practitioners negatively. The shaman usually acts as a culprit. First, Sherkhunaev discusses Buryat proverbs and sayings, which reflect "collective experiences of common people": "Crooked birch tree/Is bad

for its bark,/The shaman is bad/For his evil deeds.” Sherkhunaev notes that the quoted proverb sounds like a “severe and merciless condemnation” of shamans. Native proverbs also convey the message that “shamans are morally depraved persons in social life” (11). Among other proverbs, one may find such as: “Shamans are arrogant and swanky,/The ones who are not used to thinking are stupid;” “Shamans are rude and ignorant,/People who tell fortunes by shoulder blades are liars;” “Shamans are stupid,/Strong men are rude;” “Shamans are vicious and vengeful,/Strong men are boastful.” More interesting are the proverbs that contain moral generalizations, for example, “When a sheep gets lousy, it strays away,/When a man gets useless, he becomes a shaman.” Commenting on the last proverb, Sherkhunaev stresses that shamans were parasites who lived off society (17). A few other examples: “When people complain, it gives chiefs something to do and makes them happy,/When people get in trouble, shamans are always happy.” To Sherkhunaev, such proverbs prove that shamans were greedy people who enriched themselves at the expense of the laboring masses. He argues that shamans felt secure when somebody suffered, died, or experienced misfortunes. Troubles meant a good workload and therefore good incomes for shamans (18). Another proverb, “Shamans have no daughters-in-law,/Shamanesses have no sons-in-law,” is interpreted as a dislike of shamans and shamanesses by popular masses, who did not want to become related to them (20). One more proverb: “Shamans quickly die,/Coats made of material burn up quickly.” Sherkhunaev's comment: the proverb shows that shamans did not live long and quickly burned their lives up. The cause of shamans' short life spans was excessive alcohol consumption, which accompanied any rite and séance. “By constantly drinking, and poisoning their bodies with alcohol, many shamans died before reaching an old age” (21-22). All in all, popular proverbs suggest that “in the eyes of the most advanced segments of laboring masses,” shamans acted as deceivers and obscurantist, the embodiments of “savage ignorance and lack of civilization” (16).

From proverbs and sayings, Sherkhunaev moves to *uligers*: oral epic and fairy tales. He draws attention to the negative characteristics of shamanesses in some *uligers*. In these oral stories, shamanesses are grouped with other evil forces that act as the enemies of protagonists. Yet Sherkhunaev admits that shamanesses rarely appear in *uligers*, while shamans are not mentioned at all. He explains such negligence by the fact that *uligers* reflect an earlier period of Buryat history, when their primitive egalitarian kin system was in a state of disintegration, and

shamans did not yet play a crucial role in native society. During the later period, as Sherkhunaev speculates, the creative imagination of people” simply ignored shamans (27-28). According to Sherkhunaev, the most devastating critique of shamans can be found in native fairy tales. One of these tales, entitled “Who Are You?” (32-35) conveys strong anti-shamanic sentiments. Once, in a taiga forest, a poor Buryat hunter kills a huge bird, which was the size of a sheep. On the way home, the hunter meets a shaman who warns him that the bird will bring misfortune to the hunter's entire village. The source of the misfortune was in the bird's heart and liver. The shaman orders the hunter, “Eat neither heart nor liver, but boil them in a separate kettle. Then wait for me; I know what to do with these organs.” The wife of the hunter, who did not know about the shaman's instruction, cooks the whole bird and gives it to her little sons. As a result, one of them starts to vomit silver, and another one gold. When the shaman comes to visit them and learns that his instruction was ignored, he becomes furious. He scares the wife of the hunter by telling her that now the boys will be sick with horrible ulcers in their bodies. At the same time, the shaman says that he is ready to ward off the danger if the mother kills both sons, cuts out their hearts and livers, and gives them to the shaman. A sister warns her brothers about the coming danger, and two little boys run away from home. Before they leave their family, the brothers promise to return, find the shaman, and set him on a sharp stake. The shaman, who did not get hold of the sons, demands the daughter. Like her brothers, the girl escapes to the woods, where she meets noble bandits and lives with them for a while. When the shaman learns about this, he dresses as a woman and goes to the woods, where he finds the dugout earth dwellings of the bandits. The shaman asks the girl for water to quench his thirst and gives her a berry in return. The girl eats the berry and immediately dies. When they come back home, the bandits see the girl is dead and bury her in a glass coffin on the top of a high mountain.

The “son of a local khan (chieftain), who hunts in these woods, finds the coffin and opens it. Awed by the beauty of the girl, he takes the coffin and hides it in his room. His father eventually discovers the coffin and orders his servants to throw it away from the palace. Throwing away the coffin, the chieftain's servants shake the girl, and the poisonous berry drops from her mouth, which brings the girl back to life. The chieftain's son marries her, and they have a child. In the meantime, the evil shaman learns about this and decides to ruin their happy life. Again dressed as a woman, he comes to the palace and becomes a nanny for the newborn

child. While the hunter's daughter sleeps, the shaman kills the infant but makes it look as if the mother were responsible for the murder. The poor girl, with the corpse of her dead child, is exiled from the palace. Yet the girl is not defeated. Wandering around, she runs across a magic creek and uses its water to heal herself and bring the child to life. In the long run, having learned about a coming festivity at the chieftain's domain, the girl penetrates the palace posing as a storyteller. Inside the palace, she sees her brothers who, by that time, had become strong and famous warriors. During the festivity, she relates an epic story, in which she actually describes the story of her life and all misfortunes she went through. Listeners are struck by the story, and many of them weep. Finally, the storyteller confesses that this is her own life story. Thus, the son of the chieftain and the brothers recognize her. In the end, the evil shaman is caught and faces the brothers. The brothers inquire of the surrounding people, "What are we going to do with this animal?" The gathered people respond, "Execute him!" Thus, the evil shaman is punished. In another version of the same fairy tale, entitled "Two Brothers, Sister, and Evil Shaman," the shaman, who is turned by magic into a worn-out horse, in the end confesses, "Let the gods punish me. All my life I deceived, ripped off, and envied people" (36).

In another fairy tale, "Mu-Monto," the protagonist visits the kingdom of the dead and finds there a large kettle filled with tar, in which Russian bureaucrats and shamans are boiled. The visitor asks his grandfather, who navigates him in the afterworld, "Why do they boil these people in the kettle?" The grandfather answers, "The bureaucrats are boiled for offending the poor, taking bribes, and misjudging people. The shamans are punished because they purposely scared people, trying to extract gifts, or shamanized for the sick knowing that these people would die anyway" (38).

Shternberg, Lev (Leo) Ia. "Kul't orla u sibirskikh narodov: etiid po sravnitel'nomu fol'kloru [The Veneration of the Eagle Among the Siberian Native Peoples: An Essay on Comparative Folklore]." *Kunstkamera: izbrannye stati'i*. Ed. A.K. Baiburin, N.M. Girenko, K.V. Chistov. St. Petersburg: Evropeiskii dom, 1995. 357-383.

In this article written in the 1920s, Shternberg argues that the "worship of the eagle" is characteristic for all races and peoples: the Australian aborigines, American Indians, and people of classical antiquity.

Moreover, the forms of this reverence have obvious similarities in different cultures. Eagles are usually associated with the sun or are even considered masters of the sun. In this latter capacity, the eagle is viewed as the creator, the supreme deity, or a holy bird of the supreme deity. The eagle serves as a protector of individuals and entire clans (358-359). Using materials of Siberian ethnographies, Shternberg discusses the place of the eagle in native beliefs. The Yakut (Sakha) considered the eagle the master of the sun. They also believed that the eagle acted as the fertility deity, renewing nature each spring. Women who could not conceive appealed to the eagle for help. Some Yakut also viewed the eagle as their ancestor: the clan that considered this bird as their ancestor carried the name “originating from the eagle.”

In Yakut shamanism, the eagle is the ancestor and the creator of all shamans, and it is associated with the sacred (larch or birch) tree used to nest shamans. The eagle “eats” the soul of a child who is designated to become a shaman, carries this soul away, and nests an egg on this sacred tree. Then the eagle breaks the egg and takes the child down to an iron cradle, which is set by the roots of the tree. Nested and raised by this “mother bird” (mother-animal), the child becomes a shaman. Similar features can be found in the folklore of the other Siberian tribes. Thus, the Buryat have two legends that refer to the eagle as the first shaman. The first legend relates how western celestial beings (white *tengerins*), which had created human beings, saw eastern celestial beings (black *tengerins*) harming people and sent the shaman-eagle to protect human beings. Although the eagle helped people, they still distrusted him and viewed him as only a bird. More important, people did not understand his language. To resolve the problem, western celestial beings instructed the eagle to endow all his sacred knowledge to the first human being he met. This person happened to be a woman, with whom the eagle had intercourse. The child that was conceived became the first shaman. According to a second legend, the eagle had been a shaman but then turned into the eagle and journeyed flying all over the world. After he returned home, the eagle turned back into a shaman. Thus he lived shape-shifting. Once, after a long tiring flight, the eagle felt so hungry that he landed on a carcass of a dead animal and took a bite of it. This polluted him, and since then the eagle remained a bird and was never able to turn back into a shaman (372-373).

The Ostiak (Khanty) from the Enisei River area have two stories about first shamans. Like the abovementioned legends, one describes the eagle as the first shaman. The other merely describes the eagle as the “teacher”

from whom people learned the art of shamanism. Both stories describe the eagle as a double-headed bird. In an Ostiak legend, the eagle eventually loses his second head for teaching shamanism to people. Shamanic rituals and paraphernalia devote a great deal of attention to the eagle, whose image was frequently portrayed on shamanic costumes. The Ostiak practiced restrictions on hunting eagles. If people accidentally found an eagle feather, they tried to place it to a noticeable place in a dwelling (chum). The person who found an eaglet who dropped from its nest usually considered it as good omen. The Kachin (Khakass) natives, who also saw the eagle as the ancestor of all shamans, believed that the art of shamanism at first was reserved exclusively for the people of "golden eagle clan." Yet through the "golden eagle" women, who married men outside their clan, the secrets of shamanism spread among all Kachin people (373). The Tungus shamans considered the white-headed eagle to be their protector and placed its iron image with spread wings on their iron crowns. The Teleut called the eagle "Ülgen's large golden eagle" (*Ul'gen' kuzhubai morgut*), which means the "sky master." The golden eagle accompanied Teleut shamans in their shamanic journeys to the heavenly sphere and to the underworld and safeguarded shamans from various troubles they usually encountered en route. The golden eagle was also responsible for the delivery of sacrificial animals to designated deities. Along with other birds, an image of the eagle was always depicted on a Teleut shaman drum. Moreover, such an image, which was usually painted in white, was far larger than images of other birds depicted in a costume (374).

The majority of Siberian shamans also depicted body parts of the eagle on their costumes: bones, feathers, and claws. The latter ones were especially popular among the Tungus, who considered eagle claws to be the most powerful shamanic tools. Last but not least, natives viewed a shaman's costume itself as the image of the bird. The Tungus, the Ostiak, and many other tribes tailored their shaman costumes in the form of birds. These costumes were decorated with long fringe, which symbolized feathers and wings. Shternberg also notes that the legends about eagles in Siberian shamanism are linked to sacred shamanic trees. Nivkh, Oroch, and Orok shamans had their shamanic trees, which were intimately connected to their lives. Near their dwellings in fulfillment of the will of their spirits, they erected poles symbolizing trees or special "totem" poles with carved images of their ancestors topped with huge images of birds. According to a Yakut legend, all shamans have their own shamanic trees, which grow when shamans begin their careers and wither when they die.

Yakut shamans erected models of “shamanic trees,” which were represented by tall poles with crossbars and images of birds on top. During their séances, shamans usually “climbed” to the heavenly sphere using these “ladders.” Incidentally, writes Shternberg, among the Buryat the core ritual of an initiation of a would-be shaman was the ascending by a candidate of a specially erected tree. Oroch shaman’s costumes, which depict the upper, middle and lower spheres, have images of a larch tree used by a shaman to climb to the upper world. It was believed that if, while climbing, a shaman dropped from this tree, the whole word would be gone (377).

Sonin, M. L. “Evenkiiskoe shamanstvo kak odna iz form pervobytnoi religii (kandidatskaia dissertatsia, vstupitel’noe slovo dissertanta [Evenki Shamanism as a Form of Primitive Religion (Kandidat Dissertation, Introductory Address).” *Uchenie zapiski Moskovskogo oblastnogo pedagogicheskogo instituta, kafedra istorii drevnego mira* 14, no. 1 (1950): 169-175.

During the period of late Stalinism, shamanism was not a credible topic in Soviet scholarship. Those few studies that were available were conducted within a sub-discipline of history called the “history of primitive society” (*istoriia pervobytnogo obshchestva*). The text of Sonin’s introductory remarks during the defense of his dissertation in 1950 illustrates typical approaches to shamanism at this time. Like all Soviet social science and humanities scholars, Sonin had to validate his research by stressing the social and political relevance of his topic. He states that although in appearance, the topic of shamanism has nothing to do with modern life, in reality, it survives among indigenous people of the Soviet Union. To combat these surviving beliefs successfully, shamanism should be studied. To support his arguments, Sonin provides a few interesting facts. In the villages of Sarakham, where the Aina natives reside, (southern Sakhalin island) in October of 1947, a thirty five year-old shamaness gathered all residents of the village and danced to a drum from evening until morning when “she blacked out.” The goal of her séance was to summon spirits to calm turbulent waters for local fishermen to go into the open sea. Sonin adds that having spent the entire night participating in the séance, the residents of the village were surely tired and not able to work productively the next day. In Central Asia, in the Khazarap region of Uzbekistan, in September of 1946, at the

beginning of the cotton harvest, a former chair of a collective farm performed a *séance*. He gathered people from three villages and shamanized the whole night, which disrupted productive work in the morning (169-170).

Continuing to enumerate the social evils of shamanism, Sonin notes that, like any religion, shamanism represents "one of the types of spiritual oppression of popular masses. It sanctifies and strengthens exploitation, perpetuates nationalities' disputes, and slows the development of productive forces." He concludes, "Shamanism is not only an obscurantist worldview. Shamans directly exploit people and disseminate mental illnesses. They are the class enemies of all things progressive. Although the victory of Soviet power destroyed its social roots, shamanism still survives." Shamanism, according to Sonin, still represents a significant threat to socialist society. Hence, fighting shamanism in social life and studying it from the position of Marxism-Leninism are essential tasks (169). Sonin interprets shamanism as the late form of a primitive religion that developed during the disintegration of a clan community based on primitive communism. Shamans represented transitional figures, something between sorcerers and professional priests. As sorcerers serving the interests of a primitive society, they still used old magic devices, which, over time, became more varied and sophisticated (a *séance*). Yet, as early priests, they already used these magic performances as the source of their income, charging fees for their *séances* (173).

Sonin believes that the Evenki people, during the time of their first contacts with the Russians in the seventeenth century, developed what later became known as the "classic shamanism." During the same period, among the Chukchi, shamanism still remained in its early stage of development. At the same time, among such tribes as the Buryat and the Yakut, shamanism grew out of its classic stage, disintegrated, or mixed with other religions, for example, Lamaism (Tibetan Buddhism) (170). Having placed Siberian shamanism on an evolutionary scale, Sonin describes the "classic" Evenki shamanism. In this tribe, large *séances* took place in specially-erected chums. Shamanic spirits were divided into several categories. The spirits were united under the generic name *etan* and manifested themselves in the forms of specific animals. *Etan* wandered in shamans' bodies and fed off them by drinking their blood. The images of the *etan* were sewed onto a shamanic costume. For example, an iron image of the loon was attached to the chest of the shamanic costume. People assumed that the spirit of the loon resided

there. The Evenki believed that spirits lived the same lives as human beings. They drank, ate, quarreled, and got married (171). Sonin stresses that the state of ecstasy that shamans experience during their séances and their predisposition to nervous and mental illnesses created among the students of shamanism the false impression that shamanism is directly linked to hysteria, neurosis, and epilepsy. Dismissing this approach as a mistaken “psychiatric theory,” Sonin stresses that the “social theory” of Marxism can provide the best interpretation of shamanism. According to this theory, shamanism “has clearly-defined class roots” and, like other forms of religion, “entrenches itself among the people, who are powerless in their struggle against forces of nature and social exploiters” (173).

Suslov, Innokentii M. “Shamanstvo i bor’ba s nim [Shamanism and How to Fight It].” *Sovetskii siever* 3 (1931): 89-152.

The Suslov paper is a good example of anti-shamanistic propaganda that developed in the Soviet Union at the end of the 1920s and in the beginning of the 1930s. Incidentally, Suslov (1893-1972) acted as a direct agent of the Soviet government, participating in conducting Soviet nationalities policy as a chair of Krasnoyarsk branch of the Committee of the North (1924-1935), which was established by the Soviet government for “civilization” and Communist indoctrination of native tribes of the Soviet North. At the same time, Suslov was not simply a Soviet propagandist without knowledge of native culture. Hence, it is better to define him as a scholar-bureaucrat. First of all, he was an ethnographer with extensive field experience among the Tungus (Evenki). Suslov incorporated his unique field materials on Tungus shamanism into the thesis he defended in 1914 before he became indoctrinated with Communist ideas. The thesis was partially translated into German and French: I.M. Suslov, *Materialien zum Schamanismus der Ewenki-Tungusen an der mittleren und unteren Tunguska* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1983) and “Contes chamaniques: Extraits de l'annexe du manuscrit de Suslov, Matériaux pour l'étude des représentations animistes et de la magie chamanique,” *Etudes Mongoles et Sibériennes* 24 (1993): 101-21.

The goal of his 1931 paper is to furnish Soviet propaganda workers and social science scholars with information that helps to fight shamanism and to “clearly see what the cause of social evil of shamanism is.” According to Suslov, “shamanism is a serious obstacle to the socialist

construction among the northern natives.” Shamans are “loyal allies of native rich people and clan aristocracy and protect their interests.” Moreover, “the struggle against shamanism must become a composite part of the class struggle in the North.” In order to successfully fight against shamanism, Suslov finds it necessary to expose “the class nature of this social evil.” He takes on those observers and scholars who restricted their studies to the discussion of the manifestation of shamanism and to the pure description of shamanic rites (90).

First of all, shamans harm people with their healing. In an attempt to show how they harm native society, Suslov suggests that shamans disrupted the economy of native households (91-92). A snapshot of native life used by Suslov as evidence is based both on his field observations and impressionistic fantasies. Suslov invites his readers to imagine a typical poor Tungus household amid a hunting season. The family moves around busily in search of squirrels. Suslov assumes that the wife of the head of the family falls ill. In this case, the hunting is interrupted because the husband is not be able to perform all the work. Instead, he leaves his family in search of a shaman to cure his wife. A shaman, who is also busy during the hunting season, notes that he would like to procure squirrels as well. Yet the spiritual practitioner is ready to cure the wife if the husband reimburses him for the lost catch. The poor man, who does not want to lose his wife and a good worker, for whom he also paid a dowry (*kalym*) in the amount of thirty reindeer, agrees to the shaman’s conditions and brings him home. As it always happens among the Tungus, for a few days the shaman “rests.” Each day the shaman announces that in his dream he sends one of his spirits to ancestors to learn what hostile spirit “planted” itself into the body of the sick woman. Finally, the shaman announces the will of his ancestors: the poor man should slaughter a young reindeer and hang its skin on a larch tree as a sacrifice to the deity named Oksheri to help to cure the sick woman. The poor man does not question this requirement and obediently fulfills this command, which, incidentally, gives the shaman a chance to enjoy the tasty meat of the sacrificial animal. When the meat is eaten, the shaman begins his séance. Having summoned his helping spirits (*etan*) and having secured the help of his ancestors-shamans, the shaman sends one of his souls (*khargi*) to the sick woman to learn what caused the disease. Having “returned,” the *khargi* might “say” that some alien shaman “planted” into her a hostile spirit *bumumuk*, who turned into a needle and crawled into the chest of the woman at night. The shaman turns one of his helping spirits into a hare and sends it to the alien shaman to negotiate the

recall of the *bumumuk*. The alien shaman agrees, but only if the *bumumuk* is replanted into a daughter or a younger sister of the sick woman, because the *bumumuk* needs a “dwelling” (human internal organs) and “food;” the internal organs of young girls are tastier than those of an old woman. “Our shaman” does not agree to this option. At this point, the shaman stops this séance, grim and angry.

The next night, the shaman begins the “same procedure all over again.” Both shamans bargain, using various mediators (hares, mice, ermines). Still, the alien shaman is stubborn. “Our shaman” requires the slaughter of another deer, whose skin again is hung on a tree as a sacrifice to Oksheri. Yet even this does not help to subdue the stubborn alien shaman. Then “our shaman” informs the husband about the demands of the alien shaman, who requests to “buy” his wife health with the disease or even a death of her daughter or sister. Referring to the real case that served Suslov as a model for this typical curing procedure among the Tungus, Suslov indicates that the poor man rejected the “deal.” In Suslov’s words, it was “more profitable” to the native to sacrifice his wife, who was chronically ill anyway and did not work very efficiently, rather than to lose a daughter or her sister, who in one or two years would replace the wife as a worker. Moreover, the native could “sell” the daughter and her sister for a good *kalym* and to buy a new young and healthy wife. Thus, concludes Suslov, the séance is over. The sick woman remains ill despite all “good work” the shaman did for her. Two reindeer that could have been used for transportation were slaughtered as sacrifices. The squirrels the hunter procured went to the shaman as a “reimbursement for the partial loss of the fall catch.” The reindeer used to transport the shaman are worn out. As a result, the poor native is left without any furs, with the sick wife, and the entire family is condemned to lead a miserable, half-starving existence. As for the shaman, he definitely made some money out of this misfortune.

The situation is different when a shaman “heals” the native rich. One rich Tungus, a reindeer breeder, personally known to Suslov, without any doubts agreed to a shaman’s offer to “evict” a hostile spirit from his young wife in exchange for the life of an orphan girl. A clan members’ meeting placed the girl in the rich man’s household “for sustenance,” which, according to Suslov, was a form of a legalized slavery. What disgusted Suslov was the fact that the fate of the young girl was decided openly in her presence. Suslov stresses that almost in all cases, shamans charge fees for curing. He firmly insists that any assertions of some scholars that shamans do not charge their patients are false and point to

the “nearsightedness” of these researchers who do not want to admit the existence of such payments. Even in cases when there are no direct fees for shamans’ services, one must deal with the fact that “the gifts in the form of the reindeer to a shaman or the sale of the reindeer to a shaman for cheap prices or on credit” serve to make the shaman remember the gift-givers and safeguard their souls from a theft by hostile spirits.

The “major evils” of the shamanic treatment are sacrifices, which ruin native households, and arbitrary decisions shamans make with regards to crucial issues of the economic life of a tribe. These decisions, which shamans usually interpret as the will of spirits, in reality are conditioned by their class-based economic interests. For example, during the demarcation of hunting territories among individual families, shamans make sure that rich and high-ranking natives receive the best territories (95). Suslov also discusses “specific northern ailments” such as the “functional neurosis,” which in appearance resemble shamanism. Suslov blames shamanic séances for triggering nervous fits among the native youth. During severe “hysterical fits,” mentally unstable natives imitate the movements and gestures of a shaman. The shaman is viewed as the individual chosen by deities, and as such serves as an object of imitation. Influenced by shamanic ideology, native communities view the people who are caught in the grip of nervous fits as chosen by spirits and potential shamans. Eventually, the chosen themselves come to sincerely believe in their spiritual destiny. Therefore, the “specifically native neuro-psychic diseases” not only serve as a fertile ground that breeds shamanism, but also are enhanced by shamanism. Thus, shamanism nourishes and deepens the spread of nervous diseases among native population (114, 125).

Suslov also sharply criticizes the “non-Marxist,” “Freudian” concept of “sexual election in shamanism” advocated by Leo Shternberg. According to Shternberg, shamans’ patron spirits frequently manifest themselves as beings of an opposite gender and become symbolic “lovers” of shamans (122). In reality, stresses Suslov, this spiritual sexual liaison should be explained by widespread late marriages. Many native males cannot marry because they are not able to forward an expensive dowry for their brides. Therefore, as a substitute for the dowry, a large number of them have to work for their future fathers-in-law without the right to have sexual relations with the brides. This “abnormal” practice breeds sexually frustrated individuals. It is not surprising that under these circumstances, natives experience “psychic misbalance,” which results in nervous ailments, fits, and hallucinations, which are almost always

related to sexual images or visions of an opposite gender (124). Suslov asserts that in addition to “sexual election,” there are many other reasons that drive some natives to shamanic vocation. One of the most important motives is an opportunity to avoid hard physical labor such as hunting, to live at the expense of clients and patients, and to gain prestige and status in the community as people chosen by deities (122).

Tokarev S. A. “Shamanstvo u Iakutov v 17 veke [Shamanism Among the Yakut in the Seventeenth Century].” *Sovetskaia etnografia* 2 (1939): 88-102.

In the beginning of his article, Tokarev explains why he became interested in seventeenth-century Yakut (Sakha) shamanism. On the one hand, no other tribal shamanism in Siberia is so well recorded and researched as Yakut shamanism. On the other hand, all these writings discuss the Yakut beliefs dated by the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. They present this modern Yakut spirituality, which was reshaped by the two centuries of interactions with the Russians, as the ancient religion of the Yakut in its pure and untouched form (88). As early as the eighteenth century, the Yakut were baptized and were considered Russian Orthodox. Russian administration and clergy persecuted shamans, who had to perform their séances in secret. As a result, many old rites and beliefs partially disappeared. For example, by the turn of the twentieth century, “white” shamans totally vanished and were mentioned only in folk legends. “Black” (regular) shamans were more resilient. At the same time, their social role became marginal. Moreover, Christianity strongly affected the religious views of the Yakut. Thus, the image of the benign deity called *Uru-Aji-toin* acquired commonly-depicted features of the Christian God. Therefore, it is a fallacy to view shamanic rites and beliefs recorded at the end of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth century as the equivalent of the ancient indigenous religion of the Yakut. What observers recorded was actually the product of religious syncretism or “shamanic-Christian double affiliation (*dvoeverie*)” (89).

Still, stresses Tokarev, there is a way to reconstruct old Yakut shamanism. One can accomplish this task by analyzing early Russian sources from Moscow and Leningrad archives, specifically the records of legal cases related to the native population and tribute collection records (*iasachnie dokumenty*). The documents, which were produced during the

first decades after the Russians conquered the natives, are represented by so-called columns (*stolbtsy*) of Siberian administration (*Sibirskii prikaz*) and Yakutsk local administration (*Yakutskaiia voevodskaia izba*). These records come from the seventeenth century, when Russian influence had not yet made deep inroads into the native life. On the basis of these documents, Tokarev reconstructs Yakut shamanism of the seventeenth century.

The tribute collection records, which do not contain any description of the natives delivering tribute except their names, nevertheless frequently identify specific tribute payers as shamans. Why did tribute collectors provide this information, especially when the shamanic profession was not related to the payment of tribute at all? To Tokarev, the only explanation for such a strange fact is that the label of “shaman” became so attached to specific individuals that in native usage, it became inseparable from their names. Since spiritual practitioners were always identified by their names along with their professional affiliation, Russian tribute collectors automatically included this information in their rosters. Tokarev suggests that such usage proves that during their conquest by the Russians, Yakut shamans already acted as professionals who represented a special social group (90). Tribute collection records also shed light on the social and economic status of Yakut shamans in the seventeenth century. The amount of tribute paid by individual natives varied and usually depended on the economic status of a tribute-payer. Shamans did not represent a homogenous economic group. According to the tribute collection book for 1648/1649, some shamans paid between ten and twelve sable pelts, which placed them close to so-called *toions*, native chieftain aristocrats, while others delivered only one or two sable pelts, which relegated them to the category of common poor folk (*ulusnie muzhiki*). The book also provides information on how shamans’ households were equipped. For example, shaman Ail (Sail) Bulianov from Nekar community had only two cows, and shaman Ersen’ from Oduge had no stock at all and lived beyond the Aldan mountains “on lakes” among poor stockless natives who subsided on fishing. The same book indicates that in Yakut society, occasionally even slaves (*khology*) could be shamans. On the other hand, *toions*, who occupied the top of the social hierarchy, could be shamans as well (92-92).

As to the activities of shamans, early sources primarily refer to their curing functions. In addition to their abilities to heal, sources also identify shamans as people who inflicted ailments. Shamans were frequently accused of “spoiling” people and stock. Numerous formal complaints by

natives (*chelobitnie*) filed with Russian authorities contain information on such accusations. Yakut customary law treated shamanic spells as delinquency, along with murder, injury, and stock rustling. According to Yakut customs, all these crimes could be settled in a twofold manner. The party that suffered could take revenge on the wrongdoer, or a wrongdoer could pay a ransom, which Russian records call *golovshchina* (96). Czarist courts always respected customary native law and considered such complaints. In most cases, shamans who were accused of casting spells paid ransom. For example, in 1699, a *toion* named Kotos Chabdin from Kangalass filed an official complaint against a shaman named Serguzei from the Naka district (*volost'*), who "spoiled his wife and son to death with his shamanic magic." During court hearings to expose the defendant, the accuser claimed that the shaman had already "spoiled" the wife of another native and had to pay a ransom of ten head of stock. On the order of a local chief administrator (*voevoda*), Russians undertook a "total search" (interrogations) of about eighty natives from four districts. Fifty-four individuals testified that Serguzei indeed "spoiled with his magic" thirteen Yakut and one horse, which resulted in their deaths. Based on these testimonies, the chief administrator convicted the shaman and ordered him to pay a ransom to Kotos (97). Frequently, in the popular imagination, the idea of "spoiling" reached fantastic proportions. In 1678, a native chief, Mazary Bozekov, accused shaman Deki of "spoiling" his son Bulgui. Mazary's brother-in-law claimed that he had seen how "through his magic" Deki turned into a bear, came to their camp and "gnawed" Bulgui, who died from numerous wounds. It appears that this case was based on a real incident. It is obvious that the boy was attacked by a bear, which for some reason convinced people that the animal was the "shaman-turned bear."

Analyzing this and similar cases, Tokarev notes that to some extent, shamans became victims of their own "propaganda" by consciously cultivating perceptions of themselves as people endowed with supernatural abilities. By "bragging," shamans certainly sought to raise their prestige in their community. In the case of Deki, it turned against him. Thus, according to the accuser, in the company of natives, Deki boasted that he had power to "spoil" people. Eyewitnesses questioned by Russians about this case confirmed this report (98). The very fact that czarist officials were ready to conduct "searches" when shamans were accused of "spoiling" somebody shows that Russians treated the supernatural powers of shamans quite seriously. The affiliation of Russian conquerors with the Orthodox Church did not prevent them from

believing in the power of shamanic spirits. Thus, when a chief administrator, Andrei Barneshlev, responsible for numerous acts of violence and wrongdoing, found out that a Yakut native had filed a written complaint against him, he approached shamans to find a way out. Barneshlev summoned Yakut shamans and ordered them to shamanize in order to secure the death of the claimant and the benevolence of the new official who was to replace him as a chief administrator (101-102).

Vainshtein, S. I. "Vstrecha s 'velikim shamanom' [Encounter with Great Shaman]." *Priroda* 8 (1975): 79-83.

Vainshtein, a renowned student of Tuva shamanism, describes his meeting with an old "great" shaman named Shonchur. The meeting took place in the summer of 1963 in Tuva, where Vainshtein headed a combined archaeological and anthropological expedition. Vainshtein stresses that for anthropologists to meet Shonchur was an incredibly good "catch," because by the 1960s, hardly any practicing shamans survived in Tuva, and especially shamans whom people described as "great" ones. Vainshtein notes that the disappearance of shamanism was natural: "As early as the middle of the 1930s, because of tremendous accomplishments in the field of cultural construction, the majority of shamans quit their vocation themselves. Those who still remained were hiding in taiga forests, avoiding contact with unfamiliar people" (79).

Shonchur was born into a family that practiced hunting and reindeer in the Eastern Sayan Mountains. When he was fourteen years old, Shonchur began to experience hallucinations. He ran away from his parents, wandered in a taiga forest for a long time, did not eat anything, and nearly died. During his wanderings, Shonchur frequently lost consciousness (18). His relatives eventually found him, put him on a reindeer and brought him back home. Without waiting for Shonchur to recuperate, relatives invited an old shaman to examine him. The old man shamanized for Shonchur the whole night. At dawn, the shaman announced that the spirit of a deceased ancestor-shaman had "settled" into the patient. If his relatives wanted him to recover, added the shaman, Shonchur should become a shaman. Shonchur was scared of such a fate, and for a few days he did not even want to listen about this. Yet the words of the old shaman were the law for Shonchur's relatives. They eventually convinced their adolescent kin to become a shaman, and together made for Shonchur all necessary paraphernalia: a drum, a

drumstick, a headdress, a short and very heavy robe, and special footwear.

Then the members of Shonchur's clan gathered to animate his drum. After this, the drum became "alive" and served as a "horse" in Shonchur's spiritual journeys to the world of spirits. The drumstick served him as a lash. When Shonchur adopted his shamanic vocation, he gradually began to recuperate from his ailment. His ritual headdress consisted of a leather headband that was sewn over with red material and with eagle feathers attached to it from above. The headband was decorated with hanging leather plaits. The headband also had an embroidered symbolic image of a human face. His shamanic costume was made from a deerskin with the fur turned inside. The costume was decorated with images of human bones embroidered with deer hair. Eagle feathers were attached to the shoulders of the costume. The costume also had attached iron models of a bow and an arrow as well as various bronze and iron pendants, fur skins of squirrels, a Siberian weasel, and ducks, which symbolized spirit helpers of Shonchur. The frame of his drum was covered with a deerskin stretched over one side. On the drum's cover were drawings painted in orange ochre: nine stars, a Siberian stag, and two conifer trees.

Vainshtein and his associates talked Shonchur into performing a séance for them. The old shaman agreed to shamanize to secure the anthropologists luck in their scholarly pursuits. When Shonchur put on his heavy robe, he bent over a fire and began to dry his drum. When the shaman was convinced that the drum was dry enough to produce good sounds, he tenderly asked his "drum-horse" if it was ready for a long journey. Then Shonchur gently patted the drum as if it were an animal and gave it a treat by smearing the cover with tea and deer milk. Having clasped the drum to his chest, the shaman sat heavily on the ground, closed his eyes, and began to sing slowly and quietly. The anthropologists turned on their tape-recorder and motion-picture camera. The shaman was gradually raising his voice, and his quiet drum began to sound louder. Shonchur summoned all his animal and bird spirit helpers, such as a raven, a hawk, a duck, fish, snakes, a mountain goat, and then praised their skills and simultaneously described what they were doing. Finally, accompanied by birds, Shonchur embarked on a spiritual journey to the upper world. Drumbeats fluctuated. They sounded either louder or weaker or, again, louder. Simultaneously, the shaman's voice fluctuated. At times, Shonchur sounded soft and gentle. At other times, his voice sounded threatening and demanding. That is how he conversed with the hostile spirits he met on his way. At first he talked with them

respectfully. Then, if they were stubborn, Shonchur challenged them, threatened, and tried to scare them (82).

Suddenly, the shaman fell silent and quickly rose to his feet. In a dancing manner, he made a few amazingly quick and light moves. The anthropologists, who observed how moments before the old man had stepped heavily in his costume, which weighed many pounds, were stunned. While standing, Shonchur began beating his drum to produce short and strong sounds. Throughout the whole time, he kept his eyes closed. His shouts, moves, and gestures clearly said that the old man became totally immersed in a state of deep ecstasy. Shonchur stopped chanting, and his words began to sound sharply: now he portrayed his vigorous struggle with a hostile spirit, one of his long-time enemies. Using his drum as a shield, Shonchur easily ran and jumped all over the yurt with closed eyes, chasing his enemy and, surprisingly, not touching anybody.

Vainshtein surmised from the shaman's shouts that the hostile spirit avoided open combat; it either jumped into water and turned into a fish, or, having become a bird, hid in clouds. The shaman, who had a hard time chasing it, appealed to his spirit helpers to join the chase. Finally, by producing a sharp and short strike at his drum, Shonchur "shot" the spirit with his iron arrow. Yet the shot only wounded the spirit. The shaman again rushed after it, trying to grab the escaping enemy. Making quick moves, the shaman was able to pin down the spirit and began rolling over the floor, pressing the enemy with his drum. Finally, it appeared that the spirit became exhausted from the wrestling. The shaman slightly lifted the drum and peeked under it. With hatred the shaman kicked the spirit with his foot and then began to trample it down. After a while, Shonchur moved the hostile spirit to his mouth, licked it, and swallowed it, saying, "I have eaten you. I have eaten your lungs and liver! I will not let you lick my red blood!" Now the shaman informed the spectators that he had returned from his journey. Having made a few steps, the exhausted Shonchur sat heavily on the ground. A few moments later, he finally opened his eyes and again turned into a worn-out, bent old man. A few years later, Shonchur died. He was one of the last genuine shamans who maintained the complete set of all shamanic paraphernalia (83).

Vainshtein S.I. "Ocherk Tuvinskogo shamanstva [An Essay on Tuvinian Shamanism]." *Traditsionnaia obriadnost' i mirovozzrenie malikh narodov Severa*. Ed. Il'ia Gurvich and Zoia P. Sokolova. Moskva: institut etnografii, 1990. 150-195.

Usually Tuvinian shamans (*kham*) inherited their spiritual powers from ancestors-shamans. Yet there were shamans who claimed that they had received their powers from the sky (the upper world). These people were called "sky shamans" (*teer-kham*). There were also shamans who received their powers from hostile spirits (*albys* and others). These people were called "black" shamans (*kara-kham*). Natives viewed "black" shamans not only as healers, who could drive hostile spirits out, but also as spiritual practitioners who could harm people, including other shamans (156-157). As in other areas of Siberia, the shamanic call triggered so-called shamanic illness (*albystaar*). Incidentally, the Tuvinians used the word *albystaar* to describe any hysterical fit or insanity. The "shamanic illness" usually manifested itself during puberty. A shaman was invited to take care of this "ailment." If, after a careful "investigation," an invited shaman announced that the spirit of a shaman-ancestor had settled in a patient, it meant that this individual was to become a shaman. In this case, the relatives of the chosen one manufactured all necessary paraphernalia, which were animated in a special rite. Relatives tried to make all paraphernalia resembling those of the deceased shaman-ancestor. Among the eastern Tuvinian, a staff made of birch wood (*daiak*) was usually the first sacred item a new shaman received. The novice was allowed to use this staff to perform séances without a drum. The next step that increased the power of a new shaman was the receipt of the drum and the drumstick. An "animated" drum was considered to be a horse which shamans rode during their sacred journeys. Some shamans never received drums, and all their lives, they performed séances using only an iron staff or a mouth harp (*vargan* or *khomus*). Western Tuvinian shamans did not have any staves and received their drums and drumsticks immediately after an initiation (157-158, 171-172).

Discussing the "mental state" of shamans, Vainshtein defines the spiritual call or "shamanic illness" as a special neuropsychological ailment. He stresses that in his field research, which he conducted in the Altai and Tuva in the 1970s, he found abundant evidence that proves "both the neuropsychological and hereditary nature of this ailment" (158). Like other people, shamans performed regular subsistence activities: raised stock and hunted. Although they received fees for

performing their séances (for example, furs and stock), shamanism never served as their permanent source of income. There were many poor people among shamans (158-159). Séances were performed primarily for curing purposes and were held in the evenings or at night. Before séances, shamans put costumes on their naked bodies and dried their drums over a fire. At the beginning of séances, shamans usually situated themselves in the yurt beyond the hearth with their backs turned to the fire and to the audience. Having closed their eyes, shamans usually began to quietly summon their spirit helpers by beating drums. During séances, their eyes were closed. If shamans performed curing séances, they usually summoned their spirit helpers and, through them, tried to identify hostile spirits responsible for specific ailments. If needed, spiritual practitioners conducted spiritual journeys to other worlds. When shamans found hostile spirits that caused patients' illnesses, they either tried to persuade these spirits to leave, promising various presents, or threatened spirits with reprisals and even death. If spirits resisted, shamans engaged them in a battle, artistically performing all the stages of their struggles for the spectators (159). Conquered spirits were to be driven out of a yurt. To accomplish this, shamans usually ran around a yurt and "packed" hostile spirits into their drums. "Filled" with one or more spirits, the drums became so "heavy" that shamans could hardly hold them. Using all their powers, shamans raised the drums and "kicked" the hostile spirits out of a dwelling. During their séances, shamans not only threatened hostile spirits. Spiritual practitioners could also stir the spirits' pity and make them feel empathy for patients. Shamans frequently used this "pity" tool to trick hostile spirits, for example, asking them to take pity on "small children" of a sick woman, who actually did not have any children. Séances usually ended with soothsaying sessions, during which shamans threw their drumstick in the direction of patients. If a drumstick fell with a curved side up, this meant that the illness would be gone very soon (160).

The Tuvinians were familiar with a special category of benign spirits called *eeren*, which played an important role in their religions beliefs. *Eeren* "resided" in the images manufactured by the Tuvinians. Some *eeren* could be "owned" only by shamans, while others could belong to anybody. One group of *eeren* spirits represented the anthropomorphic images of ancestors. Another group of *eeren* was spirits of animals, fish, and birds. Images of these *eeren* spirits were manufactured from wood, felt, fabric, or metal. *Eeren* of this category could be also represented by stuffed animals or by the furs of these animals. A bronze mirror called

küzüngü, which was used only by shamans, was the most powerful *eeren*. *Küzüngü* were ordinary ancient mirrors, which shamans found by chance in old graves. Sometimes, blacksmiths cast *küzüngü* specially for shamans (156).

Vainshtein devotes much attention to shamanic paraphernalia. The Tuvinian shamanic costume was a shaman's armor that protected its owner from hostile spirits. Images of a skeleton on the shamanic robe, the footwear, and the headdress symbolized the skeleton of the shaman and served, along with plates attached to the costume, to protect the shaman's genuine bones from hostile spirits, who attacked these images (176). The images of *eeren*, which were attached to the shaman's robe, embodied spirit helpers. The shaman's fighting tools were iron decorations depicting arrows and a bow, which also hung on his robe (177). Some shamans also hung *küzüngü* on their robes. *Küzüngü* were ascribed so much power that shamans sometimes substituted them for drums during their séances. Plaits attached to headdresses usually covered shamans' faces in order to protect their faces and, especially, the eyes. Copper antlers on headdresses served to scare away hostile spirits (178). Shamans' paraphernalia also symbolized the spirits of their shamans-ancestors. Thus, images of a human body on the costume or a human face on a headdress and a drumstick were viewed as *eeren* of a shaman-ancestor, who "moved" into a shaman-descendant during a séance (179).

Vainshtein describes a seventy-two year-old shamaness named Dezhit Tozhu, whose séance he observed in the village of Kungurtak in southwestern Tuva in 1983. Dezhit told Vainshtein that she had her shamanic illness when she was nineteen years old. To be exact, the woman stressed that she did not remember anything and that her parents later described to her how the illnesses progressed. Dezhit raved and ran away to the taiga forest, and people found her there unconscious. Her parents invited Khombu-kham, a great shaman from neighboring Mongolia, to examine her. In the course of his séance, the shaman found out that the spirit of her paternal grandfather, who was also a shaman, had "settled" inside her. As a matter of fact, in Dezhit's lineage, there had been nine shamans, including the grandfather and his eight brothers. Khombu-kham took the woman to Mongolia and taught her shamanic skills for three years. At first, Dezhit served as the shaman's assistant during séances. Then she started to perform her own séances, first using a staff called *diak* and then a *khomus* like her grandfather. The shamaness told Vainshtein that séances should be performed at appropriate times and also described her typical shamanic session: "One cannot shamanize any

night, but only on designated nights. All shamans have their own nights. To cure myself, I performed on the seventh, nineteenth, and twenty-seventh days of each month throughout the whole year. On other days, I can shamanize only at the request of sick people. Still, unlike designated nights, the rest of the time a shaman does not have so much sacred power. Also, if there is no moon, one must not shamanize at all. When I start a séance, I sit with closed eyes and listen to the music of my mouth harp. Then I began to sing quietly and softly to summon my *eeeren*. First, it is all dark in my eyes, then I see white dots, which start to gleam like hail. Then the dots are gone, and I can see my *eeeren*. Then I rise, walk around, run around, and drive hostile spirits away. But I do not remember what I talk about and what I ask about during this time. It is like a dream that you do not remember when you wake up. People tell me that when I perform, I play my harp with closed eyes all the time, even when I walk around. My harp is my Siberian deer stag, which helps me to fly to the upper world. Although I call him my little horse, I do not ride him. My stag usually flies, and I fly nearby, holding him. I have weapons to fight hostile spirits, such as a lance, a knife, a shovel, a scraper, a scythe, and a drill. They are all made of iron. It is hard to win without them.” Vainshtein notes that to her costume, Dezhit indeed attached images of all these items (161-162).

Vasilevich, Glafira M. “Doshamanskie i shamanskie verovania evenkov [Pre-Shamanic and Shamanic Beliefs of the Evenki].” *Sovetskaia etnografiia* 5 (1971): 53-60.

On the basis of field materials collected in the 1920s, Vasilevich singles out so-called pre-shamanic and shamanic indigenous beliefs among the Evenki. “Shamanism did not appear from nowhere. It developed on the basis of pre-shamanic beliefs and rites. Shamans only slightly changed them, having adjusted to a new worldview, or sometimes simply mixed old and new” (53). For example, in ancient times, people endowed some items with supernatural power in order to secure hunting luck and the general well-being of households. With the appearance of shamanism and the concept of spirits, these items, the embodiments of spirits, themselves became the objects of veneration. Therefore, a new stance came to dominate the minds of people: if one treated these items nicely, they brought hunting luck and protected from hostile spirits. A good example is a hunting amulet called *singken*, a bundle of noses of fur animals and

lower jaws of hooved animals, which were strung on a small leather thong. Hunters usually took such bundles on a hunting expedition because they believed that the *singken* brought luck. With the appearance of the concept of spirits, people started to use the word *singken* to define another amulet called *bellei*, to which the *singken* was attached. The *bellei* was considered the patron spirit of the taiga forest spirit master. The tradition of “collecting” *singken* was inherited by shamans. After they completed the rite of purification of hunters, some shamans offered to make them a *bellei* with the attached *singken*. Later, natives started to use the word *singken* to describe the very master spirit of the taiga (53-54).

Vasilevich similarly reconstructs the process of evolution of other religious concepts of the Evenki: the perception of a soul (*omi*), which was considered a life-supporting tool, and the source of life (*buga*), the creator of human beings and animals, and illnesses. Any living being had its *omi*. It could exist in various bodily parts: in the brain, in the lungs, or in the heart. Shamans inherited the belief in *omi* and developed it further by creating a new perception of life: (1) the life before a birth or the life in the world of unborn souls (*ngektar*); and (2) the life in a living human being, and the life after a death, in the world of the dead (*buni*). It was also the shamans who developed the idea of the souls of suicides as beings who could not enter the world of the dead and remained to “wander” over the earth (55-56). The idea of the source of life (*buga*) was very vague in pre-shamanic beliefs. *Buga* encompassed all space that surrounded human beings. As such, *buga* was a generic concept that was used to describe the universe, the sky, the earth, and the underworld. Later, under the influence of the concept of guardian spirits, which was introduced by shamans, people started to apply the word *buga* to the patron spirit of the upper world: the supreme deity. After the adoption of Christianity, the Evenki used the word *buga* to name the god, saints, and the devil (56).

In a similar manner, Vasilevich views the evolution of perceptions about illness. The first attempts to explain the causes of lung diseases and catarrhal infections can be found in the pre-shamanic perceptions about the creation of human beings, which found a reflection in the Evenki ancient mythology. An elder brother of the creator was always cruel. While “manufacturing” human images from clay and stones, the younger brother usually left these items under the guard of his assistant, a dog, and forbade the dog to show them to his elder brother. Once, the assistant was negligent, and the “mean” elder brother broke all the images and spit

on them. Since then, people began to cough and sneeze. Vasilevich also relegated to the category of pre-shamanic beliefs the interpretation of the cause of a mental illness (57). Shamans developed their own interpretation of the causes of illnesses, which was conditioned by faith in the ability of a soul to leave its host. When a soul was absent from a human body, petty spirits (*kulikar*) of a rival shaman might penetrate the body and “gnaw” various bodily parts and therefore cause pain. Only a shaman could “expel” the *kulikar*. Eventually, the extraction of hostile spirits became the major function of the shamanic profession.

When shamans developed the concept of spirits, they first surrounded themselves with guardian spirits. On the “must list” of the guardian spirits of all Evenki shamans, natives included the loon, the crane, the duck, and the eagle. Yet the teachers and major spiritual assistants of individual shamans were so-called *mugd*, the spirits of shamans-ancestors or shamans-ancestors themselves. Thus, having surrounded themselves with these “assistants” and having taken responsibility for people’s souls, shamans developed the concept of the soul’s life path and of the worlds of unborn souls and the souls of dead people. The greater part of all pre-shamanic rites and mystery ceremonies sought to secure “replete life” and to ease the difficulties of hunters. This was the goal of soothsaying séances, in which spiritual practitioners used a bear’s paw as a ritual tool and skillfully imitated the chasing and killing of hunting animals. The “ancient mystery ceremony” centered on the bear killed in its den, the rites related to the birth and burial of human beings, and the rites of admission of women (wives) to clans of husbands were similarly parts of pre-shamanic beliefs. All these rites were conducted without any sacrifices. Yet some of these ceremonies later evolved into shamanic séances, which were labeled as the “séances directed to the upper world.” In contrast, the séances that were completely invented by shamans were called “the séances directed to underworld” and were accompanied by bloody sacrifices. For the “upper world séances,” shamans put on robes made of deer skins, while for “underworld séances,” shamans put on robes made of bear skins. Shamans attached the rite of purification of hunters to the ancient hunting rite of “securing luck.” Shamanic séances were mostly directed to changing the fates of the souls of human beings and animals. For example, in case of high child mortality, shamans performed special séances to “steal souls of unborn people” to multiply the population of a clan (58).

Vdovin, Innokentii S. "Chukotskie shamany i ikh sotsial'nie functsii" [Chukchi Shamans and Their Social Role]." *Problemy istorii obshchestvennogo soznania aborigenov Sibiri*. Ed. I.S. Vdovin. Leningrad: Nauka, 1981. 178-217.

Vdovin is one of those anthropologists who strongly disagree with the view that shamanism is a religion. In this long chapter, part of a collective monograph on the religious beliefs of Siberian peoples, he provides arguments in support of this viewpoint. Vdovin builds his generalization about Chukchi shamanism and shamanism in general--primarily on ethnographic materials collected at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Among these are the field notes and published works of Waldemar Bogoraz. In addition, Vdovin uses his own field materials, which he collected while working among the Chukchi as a teacher and an interpreter in the 1930s.

Vdovin offers the reader a look into the social role played by Chukchi shamans, which shows that in Chukchi society, shamanizing never became a profession (180). Traditional healers lived like ordinary people and occasionally had to starve like everybody else. Unlike shamans in many neighboring native groups, shamans among the Chukchi had nothing to do with regular ritual functions such as sacrifices. At least in reindeer Chukchi camps, these rites were performed by the heads of nomadic family groups. Each family had a drum that was used when needed (181). It was the isolation of nomadic camps from each other that might have been responsible for such a stance. Reindeer Chukchi simply did not have many chances to bring shamans in and so had to rely on themselves in ritual life. In this context, Bogoraz's assertion about the existence of Chukchi "family shamanism" is absolutely correct (183). Yet, despite their multiple functions, heads of nomadic families could not cope with the effects of harmful spiritual forces (*kel'et*) on the lives of people and their reindeer. This, therefore, was the niche occupied by shamans. Fighting *kel'et* was viewed as a process of healing, and, for this reason, Chukchi shamans acted primarily as healers. The healing function of shamans acquired additional importance because Chukchi society developed hardly any practical or herbal knowledge of treatment of casual ailments (192). It is not surprising that those few Russian physicians that visited Chukchi settlements and native shamans were described by the same word: *enenil'in* (184).

Vdovin questions (at least as applied to the Chukchi) such accepted definitions as "helping spirits" or "spirit helpers" of a shaman. To view

spirits that a shaman encountered during a session as “helpers” or “assistants” is a misconception. There was no equal dialogue between a shaman and “his” or “her” spirits because the active side was always spirits. A shaman completely depended on them. Spirits did not necessarily respond to a shaman's calls. Moreover, they could elude or refuse to assist a healer, or even punish and leave him or her. Therefore, it is better to describe these spiritual forces as “patron spirits” (209). Unlike their neighbors, Chukchi shamans had hardly any special costume. A Chukchi healer could be identified only by a special haircut, by a fur tail of an animal attached to a shirt, or by some amulets. Chukchi shamanism essentially neither moved beyond a simple magic nor became a religion (202-203).

Chukchi shamans tried to increase their social status and power by staging “artificial performances” in addition to their regular healing sessions. These “primitive tools of deception and manipulation” were intended to awe their fellow tribesmen with their shamanic powers (210). Another tool used to build their prestige was native folklore, a large part of which represented “ideological manipulation” of the native population in the interests of shamans. Thus, Chukchi stories about shamans always ended with glorification of the powers and extraordinary abilities of native healers. These oral narratives encouraged people to believe, trust, and listen to shamans (211).

Before they perished at the end of the 1930s, during the period of early Stalinism (the 1920s and the first half of the 1930s), shamans actively resisted the reforms of the Soviet regime. Unlike some of his contemporary colleagues, Vdovin does avoid drawing direct parallels between shamans' resistance and “rich interests” of Chukchi society. The reason shamans became active opponents of the Soviet regime was not economic interest but their fear of losing their social and ideological niche (214). One of the cases where Soviet power and shamans ideologically challenged each other was a fierce debate about Tenneville. In the 1930s, this Chukchi native came up with a native Chukchi writing system. Shamans immediately declared him a carrier of “supreme spiritual force” that directed this native to establish native Chukchi writing rather than adopt an alien one from Russians. Tenneville was encouraged to become a shaman. Yet from the Vdovin account, it is clear that Tenneville chose the side of the Soviet regime, having wisely realized who called the shots (214-216).

Zarechnaia, Sof'ia A. *Chernaia shamanka: povest' iz zhizni Buryat* [*Black Shamaness: A Story of the Buryat Life*]. Moskva: Zemlia i fabrika, 1929. 117 pages.

This tale is a typical example of how early Soviet fiction treated the subject of Siberian shamanism. Written at the time when the anti-religious campaign in the USSR was on the rise, Zarechnaia describes the advance of the new socialist life to the Buryat land. The major characters are members of a Buryat family: husband Aiusha, his wife Lombo, and their children, eleven-year old daughter Tsyрма along with her brothers Dordzhi and Galsan. Aiusha, who is a rich man, plans to send Galsan to study with lamas, Buddhist preachers, which the Buryat considered very prestigious at that time. By the early twentieth century, Tibetan Buddhism had squeezed out shamans from many Buryat communities, where lamas replaced shamans. To Zarechnaia, the differences between two religions are superficial, because any religion is a “fraud” serving the exploitation of common people. Both religions are portrayed as symbols of the outdated and unjust social system that was to be eliminated. A native girl, Dolgor, a member of the Young Communist League, is portrayed as a carrier of future progressive Communist ideology. Natives call her a “learned person,” because she studied with the Russians.

The plot of the story is rather simple. Little Galsan falls ill. His parents approach lamas. Buddhist healers, who charge their patients exorbitant fees, attempt to cure the boy but fail. Then wife Lombo approaches her old mother Adai, who is a “black shamaness.” Yet the shamaness cannot cure Galsan, either. At this point, a local Russian paramedic Ilya Maksimovich enters the picture. He diagnoses the boy with typhus, gives him medicine and the boy recovers. While young Communist Dolgor acts as a carrier of the new Soviet ideology, the paramedic embodies Soviet modernity. He carries ideas of modern scientific medicine, which clashes with outdated fraudulent shamanic and Buddhist practices. At the end of the story, the head of the family Aiusha undergoes a psychological transformation. Being convinced of the effectiveness of the scientific methods of Ilya Maksimovich, he eventually agrees to send his children to a newly set up children’s playground. The latter serves as a prototype of the Soviet day-care center, where all life of the children is efficiently structured and regulated as the total opposite to the chaotic “dirty” and “ignorant” life of a Buryat camp.

Although her story is ideologically charged, Zarechnaia sheds some light on the conflict between shamanism and Buddhism among the

Buryat. She also pays considerable attention to the description of ethnographic details, especially shamanic paraphernalia (60-61), and notes the “organic” origin of native shamanism. When Tsyrma asks her grandmother who had taught her to shamanize, Adai responds, “You better ask who taught harvest mice to store food for winter. Who taught birds to weave nests for their nestlings? Who taught children to suck mothers’ breasts? Who taught old Adai to shamanize? In my clan, granddaughter, everybody was a shaman. From ancient times our black shamanic clan shamanized all over the Trans-Baikal area. Nasty lamas squeezed us out. They chased away our shamans, burned our shaman stuff, and fined those who still invited shamans” (62). In detail, the story describes a shamanic séance dealing with the retrieval of the soul that left the body of Galsan. Adai uses a large number of tricks in an attempt to lure the soul back to the body. Plates and cups are filled with sweets, his toys are displayed on a table, all friends of the little boy are asked to come in, and all family stock is brought in. After these preparations, Adai begins her séance. At first, she sits and sings, quietly beating her drum. “Then suddenly, the old woman jumps up, throws aside her drum and begins to whirl, producing wild horrible howling sounds, and foam was coming from her mouth” (66). Finally, Adai drops to the floor.

Unlike later Soviet authors of the 1930s, Zarechnaia does not stamp the shamaness as an evil swindler. Moreover, Adai is portrayed with certain sympathy. The author stresses that the old woman is sincerely convinced of her shamanic gift and her ability to communicate with spirits. Unlike the Buddhist priests, she is unselfish. Echoing the popular perception of shamans in the 1920s as mentally ill people, Zarechnaia explains Adai’s shamanic call by medicinal and psychological factors: “In her young years, Adai lost her mind from abuses of her drunk husband and cruel mother-in-law. The mad woman gradually began dreaming that powerful and awesome spirits moved into her” (85). Zarechnaia depicts the shamaness as a person suffering from some sort of epilepsy. Therefore, “Adai did not resemble deceivers lamas and shamans-swindlers, who took advantage of the ignorance of their people in order to enjoy their idle life. No, Adai was the victim of this darkness and ignorance.” No wonder, even communist Dolgor “deeply feels for this unhappy crazy old woman” (87-88).

Zelenin, D.K. "Ideologiia sibirskogo shamanstva [Ideology of Siberian Shamanism]." *Izvestiia Akademii nauk SSSR, po otdeleniu obshchestvennikh nauk* 8 (1935): 709-743.

Zelenin singles out two stages in the development of "shamanic religion": (1) "shamanism of the society of primitive communism," the most ancient period, and (2) developed shamanism that "reflected relations of society divided into social classes." The ideology of shamanism was dramatically changed when human societies based on primitive communism started to switch to systems based on social and class divisions. During the most ancient period, when shamanism served the society of primitive communism, people did not venerate their spirits in a subservient manner. The relations between people and spirits represented a "union or a treaty of equal partners." At that time, shamans centered their efforts on combating "demons" rather than praying to them. People treated all spirits as the homogenous host of hostile beings that caused illnesses.

Later, when people developed class divisions in their societies, their spirits similarly became divided into benign and hostile, major and secondary beings, along with hierarchical relationships within these ranks. For example, shamans started to work with spirits that were divided into major guardian spirits, who were treated as chief spiritual beings, and spirit helpers, who were viewed as secondary beings. Shamans themselves became divided into "black" shamans, who worked with hostile "demons," and "white" shamans, who enjoyed the help of benign spirits. Instead of combating spirits as in the earlier period, at this later stage, shamans and indigenous people in general switched to the tactics of appeasing and worshipping these spiritual beings. Hence, in class society, shamans began more frequently to "appeal to demons by bribing them with sacrifices." Using the established hierarchy among "demons," shamans started to use one category of spirits to affect the other by setting them up against each other. All these developments in the spiritual sphere reflected the "division of society into classes" and its "feudalization" (736).

Zelenin stresses that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, anthropologists were able to observe "live" shamanism only at its later class stage. No known indigenous society was able to preserve "primordial shamanism" to modern times. Still, the most ancient shamanism can be reconstructed by analyzing religious "remains" (709). Thus, the ritual side of nineteenth and twentieth century Siberian

shamanism combines elements of the most ancient shamanic ideology and shamanic ideology that developed in class society. For Zelenin, a typical Siberian shamanic séance during which a shaman uses both the “tactics of struggle” and the “tactics of worship” points to the peculiar combination of modern and ancient shamanism. Even such shamanic method of influencing spirits as beating a drum can be interpreted both as summoning spirits and warding them off with intimidating loud sounds (736-737).

Reconstructing the most ancient versions of shamanism, Zelenin asserts that shamanism in general originated out of pure medicinal needs, to which people later added many other elements (711). Siberian natives viewed the causes of illness from two angles: (1) “a hostile spirit steals one of the souls of a sick individual” and (2) “a hostile spirit plants itself into the body of a sick individual, gnaws internal organs and drinks his blood.” Zelenin considers the second cause as the most ancient primordial explanation of an illness (713). Stealing human souls by “demons” (spirits) is the modern addition, which is related to hierarchical relations among those “demons.” In cases of “theft,” one spirit usually sends another one to catch a human soul, or while one spirit steals a human soul, another gets inside his internal organs to gnaw them (714). In primordial interpretation, the spirit of an animal “entered” into a human being. At that time, people hardly separated an animal spirit from an actual animal. As a result, people viewed spirits as beings more material than spiritual. The fact that many Siberian and European languages label specific ailments with a word originating from the names of animals points to that primordial interpretation. Thus, in a popular Russian usage a cancer became “crawfish,” mumps “little pig,” and quinsy “toad” (716).

Methods of curing corresponded to the views on the causes of the illnesses. When a soul was stolen by a spirit, who took it to the underworld or the upper world, shamans usually exchanged this soul for another one. Normally, it was the soul of a sacrificial animal (718). Later, in the society divided into classes, having received a sacrificial animal, a hostile spirit “issued” permission to a shaman to ascend to the upper world to request a celestial animal to cure a patient (719). It was very different from primordial times, when shamans simply “evicted” the hostile spirit from a patient’s body and transferred it to another being or an object. The “eviction” method that was still practiced in modern times is the most ancient method of pre-shamanic medicine (719). One of the primordial methods of curing was sucking out an illness from an ailing spot. This procedure resembled the licking of wounds among animals.

Siberian shamans widely practiced such sucking out of an ailment (721). In such cases, the ailment manifested itself either as a “petty animal” such as a worm or a lizard, or an object, which a shaman usually extracted from a patient’s body by sucking it out and then “swallowing,” spitting, or throwing it out. In early class society, the cause of an ailment became embodied in a spirit, which shamans sucked out and planted in themselves (722). Those individuals who absorbed an ailment in themselves were expected to belong to the category of people for whom “absorbing demons” was safe and did not lead to an illness or death. Hence, these individuals differed from common people. Such “special people” were usually those who suffered from a nervous disorder. To those around them, they were “possessed” by various spirits anyway and did not die from this dangerous association (723). Therefore, “the first shamans were people suffering from nervous disorders, who consciously and intentionally absorbed spirits of ailments from their patients into themselves” (724).

Siberian tribes believed that spirits entered human bodies through the mouth. Therefore, it was natural, for example, that the Ket natives viewed the nervous yawning of a shaman at the beginning of a séance as an arrival of spirits. The Ket argued that with each yawn, a spirit assisting a shaman entered his mouth. To the Chukchi, shamanic clairvoyance was the conversation of people with spirits, who simply used the mouth of a shaman as a transmitter. During a funeral ceremony, Nanai shamans summoned and asked all their spirits to enter them. After this, shamans usually opened their mouths widely and pretended that they swallowed the spirits by energetically moving the muscles of their faces, shaking their heads, and jumping up and down. Shamans loudly called the names of all helping spirits who entered them by mimicking the movements of those animals and birds that were associated with these spirits. Zelenin stresses that the perception that shamans are able to absorb the spirits of ailments into themselves in order to drive these spirits out represents the most archaic form of shamanism (729). He considers the appearance of this practice the first manifestation of the “most ancient elementary shamanism,” after which shamanic ideology became a religion (735).

Chapter 3

Records of Siberian Spirituality in Present-Day Russia

Basilov, Vladimir B. “Chto takoe shamanstvo? [What is Shamanism?].” *Sovietskaia Etnografiia* 5 (1997): 3-16.

In this article, Basilov, the late dean of Russian students of shamanism, hypothesizes about the general definition of this phenomenon. Many scholars are reluctant to conduct such speculations. Encouraging them not to fear broad hypotheses, Basilov does admit that discussing shamanism in general is a hard task, due to the contradictory nature of documentary materials. He stresses that his own generalizations on this phenomenon do not go beyond educated guesses (4). The mistake of all researchers who have tried to come up with broad definitions of shamanism was an attempt to separate the personality of a shaman from his or her social environment. Who would begin a serious study of Christianity by separating the personality of a priest from religion and society? It would be equally wrong to center (as does Mircea Eliade) discussion of shamanism on an ecstatic séance, the core of the shamanic session (5). Basilov approaches shamanism in an evolutionary manner: from the most archaic versions to the more “advanced.” One trace of the former is the so-called bear ritual practiced among some Siberian natives. Here an animal (a bear) acts as a mediator between the world of spirits and the world of human beings. An example of the latter is semi-professional mediators between spiritual forces and the human realm, as in the case of Altaian shamans.

Basilov disagrees with such scholars as the late Russian anthropologist Aleksandr Tokarev and the Swedish religious scholar Ake Hultkrantz, who insisted that shamanism was not a religion, but only part of a system of primal religious beliefs. According to Basilov, such conclusions were drawn from research on so-called distorted modern tribal shamanism that was or is in a state of decay. In “ancient times,” shamanism embraced the entire life of a human collective. Yet Basilov does not simply dismiss the conclusions of scholars who do not agree with his position. Instead, he uses some of their arguments to show that

this evidence only proves that shamanism does represent a religion. One anthropologist, Revunenkovna, asserts that as a vaguely defined system, shamanism is dissolved in the spiritual life of tribal people and encompasses elements of rational, irrational, and artistic approaches to the world. Basilov argues that this very evidence clearly shows that the “vaguely defined system” did respond to the ideological needs of human collectives and therefore could be considered a religion.

To Basilov, shamanism represents the religion of primal society and has the following major elements: (1) animation of the surrounding world (this stance doesn't recognize the division of nature between “living” and “non-living”); (2) the conviction that human beings are interrelated with everything in the world, including cosmic forces (this worldview treats society as only a part of the universe); (3) the lack of a borderline between the human realm and surrounding nature (this leaves no place for such views as “man the master of nature”); (4) the accessibility of cosmic forces for regular visits by people, who use shamans for such dialogues; and (5) regular and intimate dialogues with spiritual forces (8-9). Defining shamanism as a religion, Basilov nevertheless admits that generalizing about the shamanic worldview is a difficult task. Thus, he recognizes that it is impossible to reduce the shamanic universe to Eliade's formerly popular “three-layer shamanic cosmos” (upper world, middle world, and lower world). In reality, shamans' perception of the world was more complicated and varied among different tribal groups. For instance, in addition to the vertical division, there were horizontal layers.

The second half of the Basilov work deals with the social roles and personalities of shamans. The old debate about whether shamans were normal or sick people, he argues, does not make sense and should be excluded from scholarly discussions. The major function of shamanism is to protect a tribal group from real or imagined harmful forces. If unappeased, spirits and gods might hinder people's subsistence activities or bring diseases. Therefore, shamans direct their efforts to combating the negative effects of these gods and spirits. Those who sought shamans' help judged them by their success in treating physical or social ailments rather than by the state of their minds (11). Among the major social and ideological functions of shamans, Basilov lists assisting people to ease their conditions and accompanying the souls of the dead to the other world (11-12).

Completing his discussion of the social functions of “primitive priests,” Basilov adds a few comments on the shaman drum. The drum is

not only part of a shamanic session. It is an integral part of a shaman's life. When the drum breaks apart or "ends" its life in some other way, its owner is also expected to die. Thus, drums represent shaman's doubles. In his conclusion, Basilov offers a definition of shamanism. First, "shamanism is an early form of polytheism, a specific stage in the development of the religious beliefs of humankind, and was shaped in the period when basic subsistence activities were concentrated on hunting, fishing and gathering." Second, the religious activities of a shaman are directed to protecting a small kin-related group from real and imagined troubles, the source of which is located in the realm of spirits (13).

Baskakov, N. A. and N. A. Iaimova. *Shamanskie misterii Gornogo Altaia* [*Shamanic Mystery Ceremonies of the Mountain Altai*]. Gorno-Altaiisk: Gorno-Altaiiskii institut gumanitarnikh issledovanii, 1997. 123 pages.

This book, compiled by two linguistic anthropologists, represents a publication of the verified text of the major shamanic "mystery ceremony" in honor of Ülgen, the master of the upper world and one of the major Altaian deities. The shamanic séance addressed to Ülgen was a clan-based ceremony performed each year in spring. This séance addressed to Ülgen is a "classical" collection of shamanic chants, which were first introduced into Western scholarship by Wilhelm Radloff (1884) and were later routinely quoted by many students of shamanism from Uno Holmberg to Mircea Eliade. Baskakov and Iaimova note that Radloff's classic German text is incomplete. The complete text of the séance was published by missionary ethnographer Verbitskii in the 1870s in a Siberian newspaper and then in his book (1893), which reproduces the text both in the Altaian language and in a Russian translation. Verbitskii himself borrowed the description of the "Ülgen séance" from an anonymous manuscript of a Russian missionary, who recorded the séance from the words of a native shaman sometime between the 1840s and 1850s. Still, Verbitskii's translation and phonetic signs are far from perfect. Hence, Baskakov and Iaimova brought together all available text versions of the "Ülgen séance," compared and verified them, corrected mistakes in translations, and reproduced in their book two parallel versions of the séance, in Russian and Altaian (22-78). The text represents a male shaman's chants and prayers (women were not allowed to shamanize to Ülgen) uttered during his spiritual journey to Ülgen.

To give their readers a better understanding of the Altaian worldview, the authors have attached to the collection of these shamanic chants an introduction in which they briefly describe the native concept of the soul, various types of souls among the Altaians, the picture of the shamanic universe, major shamanic spirits, and the major categories of spiritual practitioners in addition to shamans (6-19). Unfortunately, the authors fail to remind their readers that the published text of the shamanic chants is not a fixed and canonized indigenous ritual, but rather the impromptu utterances of an anonymous individual shaman. Moreover, instead of pointing to a functional purpose of the séance, Baskakov and Iaimova treat the “Ülgen séance” as a “sample of magic poetry” and “poetic-dramatic creative piece of art united in action and performance” (81). As a supplement to the book, Baskakov and Iaimova have reproduced a few other texts of shamanic chants in the Altaian language from the 1893 Verbitskii book (85-108), the text of the séance (“mystery ceremony”) addressed to the major hostile deity, Erlik, which is reproduced from the 1924 Anokhin book (109-117), and a short excerpt about the rite of purification of new drum from the article by N.P. Dyrenkova, “Materialy po shamanstvu u Teleutov” (117-121).

Batianova, E.P. “Zhenshchiny-shamanki u narodov Sibiri [Shamanesses Among the Native Peoples of Siberia].” *Zhenshchina i svoboda: puti vybora v mire traditsii i peremen*. Ed. V.A. Tishkov. Moskva: Nauka, 1994. 416-422.

Although the roles of women and men in Siberian shamanism varied and were uneven, both genders could be spiritual practitioners. In native Siberian societies, anthropologists single out two types of shamanisms: “family” and “individual” or “professional” shamanism. Moreover, chronologically the first type precedes the first one. While “professional” shamanism was dominated by men, in “family shamanism” the active role belonged to the woman. The archaic “family shamanism,” which anthropologist Waldemar Bogoras also called “general shamanism,” still existed at the turn of the twentieth century among the tribes of the extreme northeast: the Chukchi, the Koryak, the Yukagir, the Itel'men, and the Yupik. These tribes practiced shamanic performances within family groups, in which all family members were allowed and even were obliged to beat a drum to establish contact with spirits. These collective ritual performances naturally balanced the number of men and women

who all acted as spiritual practitioners in this archaic type of shamanism. Nevertheless, being primarily guardians of the family hearth, women more often than men employed shamanic activities to heal their children, to ask spirits to bring prosperity and well-being to family members, or to resolve other family problems. Until the present day, stresses Batianova, among the Chukchi and Koryak, many old women who do not consider themselves shamans, wield some shamanic skills and use them to change weather or to cure themselves or their close relatives by beating a drum (417).

To be exact, in addition to “family shamanism,” the Chukchi and the Koryak were well familiar with “classical shamanism,” in which selected individual shamans on a permanent basis provided their sacred medicine to relatives and non-relatives. Although both men and women could be represented in this “individual shamanism,” the dominant role of men was obvious. As a matter of fact, this leading role of men in individual shamanism was common for all Siberian tribes in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Contemporary ethnographies and travel accounts primarily describe shamanic séances performed by men rather than by women. She suggests that one of the reasons was that the colorful “individual” shamanism was very visible, whereas “family shamanism” remained in the shadows. Despite the male domination of the classical individual shamanism, those few females who were able to enter the “profession” were usually viewed as “leading masters of the shamanic trade.” To support this statement, Batianova stresses that all Siberian tribes shared a perception that shamanesses were endowed with greater sacred power than their male colleagues. This may be why an initiation period was far shorter for a shamaness than for a shaman. Batianova quotes a Chukchi native who once told Bogoras, “There is no need for a woman to be trained, for she is a shaman anyway.”

Among many Siberian tribes, male shamans occasionally acted as women. They braided their hair as females, performed their séances in female clothing, and attached to their costumes metal disks that imitated female breasts (the Sakha). Moreover, among the Chukchi, the Koryak, and the nomadic Chuvan, there existed transvestite shamans, who always wore female clothing, used female dialect, changed their voices, performed female work, and even had husbands. Such persons of a “changed gender” were considered to be the most powerful shamans. Batianova believes that the existence of transvestite shamans suggests that in the remote past, female shamanism had enjoyed a dominant position among Siberian tribes. In modern time, by “feeding” on

“feminine powers,” many male shamans sought to upgrade and enhance their “magic skills,” which also indicates that the first shamans were women (148). As a matter of fact, in Altaian, Tuvinian, Buryat, and “Yellow Uigur” oral tales about the beginning of shamanism, the first shamans are always women. Moreover, Altaian epic tales describe only shamanesses and never mention shamans. At the same time, many Siberian tribes believed that childbirth spoiled the sacred power of women. It is not surprising that the most powerful shamanesses were either young girls or old women. Natives believed that all material things related to childbirth ruined shamanic powers. Thus, a Chukchi shamaness complained to Bogoras that her mother-in-law made her drink dog’s placenta liquid in order to destroy her shamanic powers.

Geographically, “professional shamanism” was widespread among the Evens and Evenki and such southern Siberian tribes as the Altaians, the Tuvinians, the Khakass, the Buryat, and the Teleut. Such “professionals” had an elaborate ideology and rituals, which required shamans to have high intuition, performing skills, and a deep knowledge of their genealogies and indigenous folklore. Batianova believes that among some southern Siberian tribes, one person could combine the roles of shaman and storyteller. Shamanic séances among the Altaians, the Buryat, the Khakass, the Teleut, the Shor drew large crowds of people. Each village and settlement had its own sacred site, where shamans regularly performed their séances and sacrificed animals. All these tribal groups restricted participation of females in shamanism. Yet the same groups had an influential minority of women who became famous spiritual practitioners (419).

In the 1970s and 1980s, during her field work among the Teleut, Batianova befriended two professional shamanesses: Tatyana V. Manysheva (1911-1993) and Anna I. Kaptiakova (1922-1983). Both women came from shaman lineages and inherited sacred powers from their ancestors. A few features of their appearance and behavior, such as piercing looks and high sensitivity, suggested that they were people with “non-ordinary state of mind.” In addition to foretelling, their “shaman work” centered on curing people. They successfully treated people from “fear,” “bad spells,” and also from specific neurotic illnesses, whose sources were ascribed to the harmful effects of the souls of dead people and animals. In exchange for their services, shamanesses received small in-kind or monetary “fees” such as boots, pieces of clothing, vodka, or simply sums of money from thirty to one hundred rubles. Although they were considered high-ranking shamanesses who had the right to

shamanize with a drum, neither woman used a drum during séances. Instead, they used drumsticks and switches of green twigs (*venik*). Dressed in shamanic costumes that hardly differed from normal wear, they usually performed their séances a few hours in a row at night. Their “work load” was quite substantial. It was not only the Teleut, their fellow tribes people, but also neighboring Shor and the Altaians who used their powers. Interacting with them, Batianova was always amazed with their sharp and astute minds. Before they retired, both Tatyana and Anna had to work in a collective farm (*kolkhoz*). Although authorities regularly persecuted them, repressions never dissuaded the shamanesses from their vocation. Both women continued to pursue their shamanic activities for decades because they firmly believed in their “shamanic predestination.” Thus, Manysheva shamanized for more than fifty years despite numerous official warnings, subpoenas, and arrests by the police (*militzia*). She even served a six-month prison term (421-422).

Batianova, E. P. “Teleuty rasskazivaiut o shamanakh [The Teleut Talk About Their Shamans].” *Shamanizm i rannie religioznie predstavlenia*. Ed. D. A. Funk. Moskva: institut etnologii i antropologii, 1995. 48-62.

Batianova discusses stories about the life of the Teleut shaman Markel Mazhin. Two of his granddaughters shared these stories with the anthropologist in 1994. Batianova stresses that stories about the life and deeds of shamans help to maintain shamanic ideology among the Teleut, one of the Altaian tribes. They also shed more light on the daily life of shamans, their relations with relatives and friends, their community, and family status (48). Students of shamanism, stresses Batianova, too often center their attention on the personalities of shamans, neglecting their social environment. Markel Mazhin lived at the end of the nineteenth century and died sometime between 1925 and 1927. Markel served as one of the major informants for Andrei Anokhin, the renowned student of Altaian shamanism. Popular legends describe Markel as a powerful shaman who was able to walk over water, eat glass, and ride a bear (49). Modern members of his clan are well aware of their famous shamanic lineage. They live under the spell of their shamanic roots, expecting that some of them will eventually become shamans.

According to his granddaughters, Markel lived a humble and simple life. Being constantly preoccupied with his shamanic activities, he did not

care too much about the material well-being of his family. As a result, his wife left him. To help run his household, Markel had his twelve-year-old son married to an eighteen-year-old girl, who became a new worker in the family. Villagers always teased Markel about his sloppy life style. Throughout his career, Markel fought with other shamans over power, combated hostile spirits, Orthodox priests, and the Soviet regime. Incidentally, the relationship between shamans and the Soviet regime is the most favorite topic of the stories about shamans (62). When Soviet power was still being established in the Altai, Markel was asked to “perform” for a Soviet village council. “Are not you afraid?” asked the shaman. The council members said, “No.” The shaman started to shamanize. When his helping spirits started to arrive, the door to the village council house started to crack. Everybody saw a bear’s paw getting into the opened door. “Shall I show you the whole paw?” asked the shaman, and people asked him not to do this. After this, the council members became convinced that he was indeed able to shamanize. They even offered to give Markel a ride home, but the shaman refused. Instead he sat on the bear and left (59).

One of the granddaughters named P.V. Pazikaeva remembers, “Grandfather fought Altaian and Shor shamans over human souls. Shamans usually tried to get human souls from each other. Once my grandfather fell asleep, and one shaman from Novokuznetsk stole tiula [a type of a spiritual double] of one of our women. Yet the ‘friend,’ or as you Russians say, ‘spirit,’ reported the theft to my grandfather. He said to my father, ‘See, I was sleeping, but he [the alien shaman] wanted to take one of my people to cure one of his own, which might make my people die. My ‘spirits’ woke me up and said, ‘From your village one was already abducted, and this woman shall die, but this one shall recover.’ My grandfather caught up with the alien shaman, told him special words, and returned tiula to the woman” (53). Well aware of her shamanic origin, Pazikaeva converted to Orthodoxy to ward off the shamanic call and to avoid the shamanic vocation: “I do not want to become a shaman. People said that the grandfather was not able to convey his power to anybody. Yet spirits recognize me. They know that I am of a shaman lineage. If a shamaness cures somebody somewhere, I usually yawn. When I pray, I also yawn. If I had not been baptized, I would have been already gone by now” (57).

Bulatova, N.Ia. “Shamanskii obriad *Alga* u Evenkov [Shamanic Rite *Alga* Among the Evenki].” *Kul’turnoe nasledie narodov Sibiri i Severa*. Ed. E.G. Federova. St. Petersburg: Muzei antropologii i etnografii, 2000. 242-247.

Anthropologist Bulatova describes how in the summer of 1987 she and her two female colleagues recorded a shamanic séance performed by eighty year-old Matriona Petrovna Kul’bertinova, “the only shamaness among the Evenki tribe” (242). Kul’bertinova performed the séance, which is called *Alga* (“blessing” or “wishing well-being”), to celebrate the arrival of the three anthropologists to her nomadic camp. The *Alga* séance consists of two parts. The first one, which lasted more than three hours, was performed at sunset. The second one lasted about an hour and was performed at sunrise. Before the rite, anthropologists received so-called *salama*, a long thick thread. Matriona had the women attach to these threads *khulgaptyn* (multicolored pieces of material), candies, and cigarettes for those who smoked. In the meantime, Terentii, a grandson of Matriona, made three *tura*, which is a ritual name for a small larch tree that symbolizes the world tree in shamanic séances. Terentii attached three *tura* to the eastern side of the scholars’ tent. The *tura* were to be used by the souls of the anthropologists to journey to the upper world. When preparations were complete, Matriona entered the tent, let her hair down, sat by the fire and said, “Let’s take a look at their future.” She took a spoonful of liquor and “fed” it to the fire by saying, “Breathe in and tell me if I can start.” The fire blazed up and cracked, which was the sign to start the séance. Matriona’s relatives brought her *archi*, juniper grass that is burned during shamanic séances for fumigation. After this, the shamaness put on her shamanic robe, apron, and footwear made of suede, and roped herself with a long belt that was attached to the top of the tent. This belt “connected” the shamaness to the upper world. After this, the shamaness put on her headdress and asked to light *archi* (243). After Matriona was handed a drum, the entrance to the tent was closed, and she started her blessing-giving séance by beating the drum.

First of all, the shamaness appealed to cuckoo and hoopoe birds, her patron spirits, by summoning them from the upper world. Matriona skillfully imitated the voices of these birds. Incidentally, all Evenki view the cuckoo as a sacred bird. They believe that a long time ago, the cuckoo was a human being, but a shaman from the Kukty clan turned her into a bird. Until the present day, natives think that to meet a cuckoo bird in the woods is a good sign. Matriona was also helped by a spirit called

barkanatkan, a small stuffed figure of a little bear. Matriona addressed the river, on the bank of which her camp was located: “Oh! Mulekmon river,/I ask for goodness from your current,/I ask only for goodness!”(244). Then she addressed the heavenly sphere and the mother-moose, who is her “spiritual double”: “Mother moose, mother moose,/The host of my soul./Tell us only good things!” (244). The shamaness explained to all spiritual beings she addressed the reason for performing the séance and asked the spirits to assist her. Having called her patron spirits, Matriona addressed those spiritual beings who granted her physical power. First of all, she appealed to fire, which symbolizes life. Then, slightly beating her joints with her drum, she addressed the drum that gives power to her legs. Then she prayed to water that has the power of *mukhun*, who is the master spirit of natural phenomena: water, wind, mountains, and rivers. Then Matriona asked her guests to bind their *salama*, which she blessed by sprinkling with wine and fuming with the burning juniper. After being blessed, the *salama* became carriers of anthropologists’ souls. Then the shamaness sent the *salama* en route over the heavenly river, which went through upper, middle, and under worlds. This part of the séance ended with offering wine to fire. Having made this offering, the shamaness gave a drink to Terentii, who assisted her, and shook the anthropologists’ hands. After this, the shamaness began whirling around vigorously beating her drum. That is how she tried to move the *salama* up to the heavenly sphere. Having finished this, Matriona interrupted her dance and started to soothsay by inserting threads into needles and by throwing up her drumstick. The soothsaying produced good results, and the shamaness put her palms into a bowl of water to “energize” herself with new powers. After this Matriona began to sing again, imitating the cuckoo bird. (245): “Do not give in to anybody,/Do not give in to anybody,/Safely take the salama to the sky./My drum, my drum, sparkle like fire.../” (246). At this point, Terentii began to release the belt that roped the shamaness. Matriona sat down and drank some water, which she also used to wash her face and hands. Finally she took off her headdress and costume and put on her casual clothing. The first part of the séance was over.

The next morning, Matriona again put on her shamanic costume and performed the second part of the séance. Having washed her hands, she situated herself in the anthropologists’ tent and began to sing, asking the scholars to join her and repeat her words. Then Matriona went outside toward the larch trees, which she sprinkled with wine. Then she rubbed herself over each larch tree. After this, she took all our *salama* and fumed

them with juniper smoke. Walking around in a dancing manner, she roped out *tura* with the *salama* in the middle. A few times Matriona circled around the *tura*, blessing them and shaking the little bearskin. Then she addressed the earth, drank water, washed her face and hands, and said, "Now I blessed you at your request, and I am done." Terentii took the *salama* and *tura* and went toward sunrise into the woods, where he tied all these items to a larch tree. The *alga* ceremony was over (247).

Diakonova, V.P. "Shamanki i obshchestvo u narodov Sayano-Altaiia [The Status of Shamanesses Among Native Peoples of the Sayan-Altai Area]." *Shaman i vseleonnaia v kul'ture narodov mira*. Ed. Ch. M. Taksami and V.P. Diakonova. St. Petersburg: MAE, 1997. 36-42.

Diakonova stresses that it is common knowledge that chronologically, "female" shamanism preceded "male" shamanism. Yet the role of women in Siberian shamanism did not receive adequate research treatment. Using "antiquity" materials and ethnographies of Turkic-speaking tribes of southwestern Siberia such as the Tuvinians, Altaians, the Khakass, and the Shor, she tries to at least partially fill this void. Native people of this area had a special category of shamanesses that can be described by the generic name *jelvici*. The Salchak Tuvinian called them *elvichi-kam*, the Teleut *iirynchi*, the Khakass *il'bychi*, the Tuvinian *il'vichi*, and Altaian tribes called them *iolbe tol'gochi*. It appears that as early as the ancient Turkic period, *jelvici* shamanesses enjoyed the same status as their male colleagues. Their major ritual tool was a large fan, which represented a piece of fabric they used to summon their spirit helpers. The *jelvici* were mostly specialized in foretelling and sorcery and were able to secure for themselves high status. These shamanesses frequently acted as advisors to khans and princes. Ancient Chinese chronicles mention a young shamaness Deukhun, who had the nickname "Possessed" and who acted as "government" advisor and sorcerer at the court of Cheun' khan. Ancient Chinese and Byzantine chronicles also suggest that these shamanesses occupied a high status and earned their living by performing ritual séances. In medieval times among the Mongols, shamans and shamanesses belonged to the elite of society. For example, Chagotai, one of the sons of Genghis-Khan, and his wife were shamans (37-38).

Native mythology points to the ancient origin of female shamanism. Buryat legends mention a character named Asuikhan odigon, who was considered a patron of two Buryat clans, Ekherit and Bulagat, and who

resided on a bank of Lake Baikal. Another Buryat legend mentions a mythological shamaness Bukhe-bookhei, who was believed to accompany the sun and moon. In Sakha heroic epic tales, one may find a shamaness named Ayii Umsur udagan, who belonged to the deities of the upper world. Among her celestial functions was the invocation of nine skies (the upper world), which placed Ayii in the position of the chief celestial shamaness. In legends, she also acts as the prophetess for earthly rulers as well as a teacher, patron, and assistant for the epic tale hero Niurgun Bootura (39).

When inheriting their shamanic powers, those Tuvinian, Altaian, and other Turkic-speaking shamans who had shaman ancestors both on mother's and father's side always chose a maternal line (39). During their induction into the shamanic profession, the shamans of the Kachin area (the Khakass tribe) usually climbed to a sacred clan mountain to receive their drum. Having climbed a mountain, they usually "saw" a copper drum belonging to a grandmother on a mother's side. As late as the 1920s and 1930s, Western Tuvinian shamans used to receive "permission" to perform their séances from a sacred mountain, Khor-Taiga, which was portrayed as a woman. During their séances, Tuvinian shamans metaphorically called this mountain a deer or a grandmother. The transmission of shamanic powers over a maternal line can be linked to drums' handles. Tuvinian shamans depicted images of their female ancestors on their drum handles.

It is known that for a person "chosen" for the shamanic vocation to reject this call was practically impossible. Yet in special cases, women were able to release these "chosen ones" from their spiritual obligations by using their female magic. By applying the same inherent female magic, women could completely destroy the power of a malicious shaman. For example, to "drain" a male shaman who harmed people of his power, the Altaians usually roped the culprit, threw him on the ground, and a woman simply stepped over him. It was believed that such a quick procedure took away all his sacred power. Unlike shamans, some of whom owned only a few pieces of their sacred items and accessories, shamanesses of all ranks usually had complete sets of shamanic paraphernalia. At the same time, among some of the aforementioned tribes, shamanesses were forbidden to "journey" to the upper world during their séances (40). Famous shamanesses frequently had two drums. As late as the 1920s, in Western Tuva a renowned shamaness Alchi-kham had two drums: *kara-shokar dungur* (literally "black-motley drum") and *anaa dungur* (regular drum). She used the first one for

séances that guarded her from the activities of dangerous people. The second drum was used for curing and ordinary séances. Her daughter, Seren-kham, inherited her mother's power and also became a famous shamaness. In the 1950s or 1960s, after authorities confiscated her drum, Seren-kham performed her séances by using a whip (*kamchi*). Incidentally, her husband noted that this new sacred tool was "more convenient because no official was able to hear it" (40-41). In conclusion, Diakonova admits that there is no reliable evidence to speculate about the status and hierarchy of shamanesses, especially in the pre-modern era. Scarce sources do indicate that in medieval times in southwestern Siberia, professional shamanesses came from high-ranking classes. Researching the role of women in southwestern Siberian shamanism, it is important not only to discuss their regular shamanic séances dealing with journeys to the middle and lower worlds, but also their activities related to foretelling, doing sorcery, and casting spells. Native people believed that in these fields, shamanesses were far more effective than males (42).

Dugarov, D.S. *Istoricheskie korni belogo shamanstva (na materiale obriadovogo fol'klora Buryat)* [Historical Roots of the White Shamanism (on the Basis of Buryat Ritual Folklore)]. Moskva: Nauka, 1991. 300 pages.

Dugarov singles out in Buryat shamanism those elements that are related to "white" (benign) shamanism and traces their ancient roots. As is known, believes Dugarov, such Siberian tribes as the Buryat, the Altaians, the Tuvinians, and the Sakha divided their shamans into "black" and "white" spiritual practitioners. People viewed "white shamans" as persons endowed with "benign powers" that benefited people. Among the Buryat, a "white" shaman usually swore not to offend the poor, not to charge them excessive fees for ritual and healing services. If invited simultaneously by both a rich and poor person, they also swore to first visit the poor one. "White shamans" enjoyed the assistance of only western (benign) *tengri* deities and their children called *khat*. The "white ones" usually wore white silk clothing and rode white horses. In contrast, "black shamans" brought their sacrifices to eastern (hostile) *tengri* and *khat* and served the master of the underworld, Erlen-Khan. The Buryat believed that "white shamans" belonged to celestial realm and received their powers ("celestial root") personally from the Thunder deity through the strike of a lightning bolt, provided they remained alive after this. In

most cases, they simply inherited the “root” from their ancestors, who had been killed by lightning some time in the past (21, 27).

Dugarov asserts that “white shamanism” is not shamanism per se and that “white shamans” are “not shamans at all” in a traditional sense (29) and that “white shamanism genetically has nothing to do with the black shamanism of the Turkic-Mongol peoples, although in the course of centuries both versions mingled with and affected each other and to some extent became merged” (3). Still, there were visible differences between the two groups. In “classical shamanism,” semi-professional spiritual practitioners immerse themselves into religious ecstasy and conduct shamanic séances. It is also known that they have ritual paraphernalia such as drums, special caps and costumes. “White shamans,” stresses Dugarov, did not have all these accessories. They did not need to reach a religious ecstasy. Neither did they own drums, caps and shamanic costumes. If some “white shamans” occasionally had such items, notes Dugarov, it was the influence of “black shamanism.”

In the worldview of the Turkic-Mongol tribes, people became shamans in fulfillment of the “will of spirits,” who haunted and “pressed” the “chosen ones” to accept the shamanic vocation. Each candidate for the shamanic vocation was expected to experience this shamanic illness. At the same time, it was only “black shamans” who went through these painful experiences. “White shamans” did not have shamanic illnesses. In any event, for “white shamans,” the spirit call in the form of a spiritual illness was not considered a prerequisite for acquisition of shamanic powers. Thus, Genghis-Khan had simply “promoted” his old uncle to the rank of a “white shaman,” although he had never experienced any shamanic illnesses (28-29). Dugarov stresses that “white shamanism,” as it was practiced among the Sakha, Buryat and a few other native tribes of the Sayan-Altai area, is much older than “black shamanism.” Essentially, in modern times “white shamanism” represented remaining fragments of the cult of the ancient god Aia. Strictly speaking, this ancient cult had nothing to do with shamanism (30). In ancient times among the Buryat, “white shamans” acted as “magicians” who served patron spirits of their clans. Later, when a kin-based communal system began to disintegrate, and life became more centered on the family, these “magicians” acquired a few features of shamanism, such as personal spirit helpers and the ability to fly over the earth and to heavenly spheres. For example, in the seventeenth century among the Buryat, shamanism absorbed and integrated all ancient tribal beliefs. In contrast, the Sakha natives, where the clan system was more durable, still maintained many rituals centered

on clan patron deities (*aiyi*), which were not integrated into shamanism (30).

Using materials on Buryat linguistics, mythology, and folklore, Dugarov comes to the conclusion that the ancient “Buryat tribal god,” which had been forgotten by the modern Buryat, was Aia, the supreme creator of the world and other deities, people and useful animals. Aia is a benevolent and generous god, who took great care in the improvement of worldly life. His spouse is Mother Earth, the embodiment of global fertility. Aia, who is also “Father Sky,” impregnates Mother Earth by pouring the earth with his rain-semen. Aia also acts as the Thunder God, using the power of lightning (the “thunder arrow”), which mercilessly destroys hostile spirits who harm people (159, 204-205). Traces of the veneration of Aia as the all-tribal creator deity can be found in the “most ancient” genres of the Buryat ritual tradition that historically preceded shamanism: a circle dance called *ieokhor*, round dance *ner’elge*, and drawling songs *ai don*. In modern times, the Western Buryat performed the circle dance *ieokhor* during the initiation of a “white shaman.” The dance also occupied an important place in “white shamanism” in general. The *ieokhor* dance included holding each other’s hands, moving around a fire, and simultaneous singing. Dugarov pays a special attention to the refrains of the *ieokhor* songs. Some of these refrains are so ancient that they cannot be translated. The natives who recited these refrains could not understand the words themselves. In some distant past, writes Dugarov, the words did have a meaning, but later it was lost. He stresses that it is these “meaningless” refrains that “packed” the most archaic layers of the native beliefs (91-92).

Thus, one *ieokhor* refrain consists of strange words, “go away, rise high, move off.” One receives an impression that participants of the *ieokhor* used the magic power of their dance to move somebody to somewhere to pursue important tribal goals. Dugarov speculates that originally these words had been addressed to a doe. Yet why did the Buryat sing refrains addressed to a doe? The response, stresses Dugarov, can be found in modern shamanic rituals of many Siberian tribes. To native Siberians, a shaman drum symbolized an animal which a shaman rode to journey to “other worlds” during a séance. Riding a doe (a drum) during a shamanic journey, a shaman was to overcome numerous obstacles and plots imposed by hostile spirits. It is known that shamans were messengers to the “other worlds” who acted on behalf of their communities. Performing their magic dance and chanting the refrain, the Buryat assisted their messengers by “pushing” their riding animals (the

doe) up. In addition, through the circle dance, the Buryat “delivered” to the upper world not only their shamans, but also the souls of sacrificial animals and deceased people. In retrospect, the *ieokhor* dance represented a “form of collective shamanism and magic” (99). Although the modern Buryat cannot explain the meaning of the word *ieokhor*, Dugarov suggests that the word originated from an ancient Turkic phrase, which means “up” or “rise high.” This suggestion allows Dugarov to make his major conclusion: the circle dance *ieokhor* did not originate among the Buryat. It had been brought to them in antiquity from outside by alien Indo-Iranian and Indo-European tribes (118). In a similar manner, Dugarov has analyzed the ritual round dance *ner’elge*, which, according to Dugarov, received its name from a refrain word *ner’e* (thunder). Like *ieokhor* (up), *ner’e* is a magic word addressed to Aia, whom people had asked to send a rain to the earth (189).

Dugarov discusses Buryat drawling songs *ai don*, which a choir of old men sang collectively during a ritual sprinkling of horse milk (*kumys*) and vodka to deities. A “meaningless” exclamation “ai-ee!,” which accompanies each phrase in *ai don* songs, in reality points to Aia, the supreme being, the creator and the master of thunder, to whom participants of the rite addressed their songs (218). The word combination *ai don*, which singers themselves do not understand, is a refrain text and belongs to sacred shamanic usage, where it means “water of the deity Aia.” This magic word formula, which ancient native magicians or “white shamans” used to “cause” a rain, was viewed as Aia’s semen that impregnated Mother Earth (244). In addition, the word *don* has an Indo-European origin. Using these linguistic parallels, Dugarov again stresses that historically “white shamanism” is rooted in archaic Indo-European beliefs (270). Dugarov insists that the resettlement of Indo-European peoples greatly affected the beliefs of indigenous people of Central Asia and Siberia.

Among other rituals of “white shamanism,” Dugarov discusses the rite of raising the “thunder arrow.” In a similar manner, he deciphers this rite and locates visible traces of ancient “pre-shamanic” worship of the Thunder deity. Protecting people from the intrigues of hostile spirits, Aia struck these spirits with his “thunder arrow.” Yet the cunning spirits began hiding in the bodies of domestic animals and people as well as inside dwellings. For this reason, when the deity used his magic weapon, he could indiscriminately strike people, animals, and dwellings. After a lightning strike, people were to perform a rite of “raising” or “returning” to the sky the “thunder arrow” back to Aia, along with the souls of people or

animals who had been struck by this lightning (159). People were obliged to return this “thunder arrow” to the heavenly sphere immediately because remaining on the earth, this sacred and pure celestial tool could easily be spoiled. If not returned to the sky, the “spoiled arrow” could bring great misfortunes or illnesses to people. Animals that were killed by the “thunder arrow” were not edible. They were usually buried on a special platform (*aranga*) or hung on a tree after people performed funeral and sacrificial rites. As a matter of fact, the animals killed by lightning were viewed as ready-made sacrifices selected by Aia himself. The person who was killed by lightning was considered to be chosen by Aia. It was believed that by striking a person with lightning, Aia raised the soul of such a person to his heavenly habitat, where the “chosen one” automatically was included into the rank of celestial beings and became a powerful shaman. Needless to say how useful it was for relatives of such person to have a “representative” and “patron” up in the heavenly sphere. Hence, when an animal, a person, or a dwelling was struck by lightning, people viewed this as a happy event, the high honor endowed by the deity on a family or an entire clan (164-165). Such a person was announced a sacred being, and became an object of special veneration. Under the guidance of an experienced “white shaman,” a community (*ulus*) performed the funeral ceremony for the person “chosen” by Aia and also the “return” of the “thunder arrow.” The funeral and the “return” ceremonies were elaborate and continued for nine days. All this time, members of a Buryat community did not work, wore their best clothing, drank vodka, sang songs and danced the *ieokhor* dance. If people did not properly send the soul of the chosen person to the sky by burying him or her on a special platform, they risked inflicting on themselves great misfortunes. In this case, instead of becoming a patron for relatives, the soul of the “chosen one” could turn into the worst enemy of an entire clan.

Ermolova, N.E. “Ob 'igre v shamanstvo' u narodov Sibiri [On ‘Playing Shamans’ Among Siberian Natives].” *Traditsionnoe mirovozzrenie narodov Sibiri*. Moscow: institut etnologii i antropologii, 1996. 34-44.

Native children playing shamans and staging shamanic sessions: how relevant was this to indigenous societies in Siberia? Did it seem sacrilegious in the eyes of native Siberians or, on the contrary, did it

represent a normal process of induction of the younger generation into the ceremonial life of its community? This article, which is based on the analysis of a small collection (27 items) of Evenki artifacts from the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology in St. Petersburg, attempts to respond to these questions. The “children collection” was gathered by anthropologist G. M. Vasilevich during her fieldwork in the Podkamennaia Tunguska area in 1927. Of the abovementioned items, twelve – drums and costumes – are directly related to playing shamans. Usually children from three or four to ten years and older were involved in the game. According to Vasilevich's field notes, native youngsters re-created in detail genuine shamanic sessions, chanted ritual songs, and imitated shamanic journeys. Not only did adults not restrict such games, they encouraged them by helping children to manufacture “shaman toys” and assisting their sons and daughters to recite ritual songs during “shamanic sessions.” Such an attitude was far from being perceived as sacrilegious.

Making exact copies of shamanic artifacts such as a drum was not considered inappropriate or harmful in native society because these facsimile items were never “consecrated” through the special rite of “making it alive” and therefore could not disturb any spirit. Moreover, in many cases, among native Siberians non-shamans had access to shaman drums even after they became “consecrated.” In general, “relations” with a shaman drum were much easier and “democratic” among natives in eastern Siberia, the eastern Evenki or the Chukchi. Thus, the Evenki could use a drum both before and after “consecration” without any fear of being punished by the shamans' spirits (26). During their ritual fall slaughter of deer, all Chukchi – including small children – were allowed to beat a drum and to accompany it with loud singing (37). Among the natives in western Siberia, on the other hand, only a shaman could handle his or her artifacts. In this area, there was a conviction that those lay people who used a shaman drum would suffer. The only time when ordinary natives could have access to a shaman drum was before the rite of making a drum alive. After this ceremony, the object was considered sacred and was to be handled only by a shaman.

All in all, playing “shamanic games” was a socially approved practice comparable to native children's imitation of the subsistence activities of adults. Shamanic games made it easier to transmit to the younger generation the requirements and attributes of the dominant ideology. No wonder adults treated such games very seriously. In native society, a community that did not have its own shaman was considered unprotected.

Therefore, people eagerly sought a person who might become a spiritual healer and protector of the group. Games made it possible to single out a potential candidate who later might be “called” or “elected” by spirits. The whole community viewed the appearance of a new shaman as a happy event and participated in raising a shaman by encouraging in his or her activities elements of “deviant” behavior. In Siberia anthropologists observed many cases in which the existence of a shamanic gift was detected very early, sometimes among three- or four-year-old children (39). Moreover, there were examples when children were initiated and recognized as powerful shamans (40-41).

With regard to such phrasing as “playing shamans” researchers should be cautious. First, we should remember that distinctions between “adult” and “child” pursuits are drawn by anthropologists raised in the Russian/European cultural milieu and might not reflect the perception of “playing shamans” in native society, where children at the age of eleven and twelve were actively involved in subsistence activities (42). Second, a shamanic session itself represents a performance or an “impromptu game,” and adult shamans essentially could be viewed as “players.” To summarize, what anthropologists might consider as a “native game” in reality could be an introduction of children into the ritual life of an indigenous community and might not be separable by a strict border from so-called adult activities.

Funk, Dmitrii A. “Materialy A.V. Anokhina po Shorskomu shamanstvu [A.V. Anokhin’s Materials on Shor Shamanism].” *Shamanizm i rannie religioznie predstavlenia*. Ed. D.A. Funk. Moscow: institut etnologii i antropologii, 1995. 180-206.

This paper is a publication of ethnographic materials collected on Shor shamanism by Andrei Anokhin, one of the prominent students of Siberian shamanism in the early twentieth century. Funk stresses that Russian archives contain unique sources about Siberian shamanism, which still await their researchers (201). Among Anokhin’s papers at the Tomsk State Historical Architectural Museum, Funk discovered notes on shamanism of the northern Shor tribe. Many of these materials are recorded in native language. Anokhin, who examined the Shor tribe a few times between 1908 and 1916, stressed that their shamanism was in decline under the influence of the Russians. Still, Anokhin was able to record the descriptions of a shamanic journey to the benign deity Ülgen

(183) and a shaman's burial. Shamans were buried faster than common natives. A shaman's drum and drumstick were hung by the grave on a nearby tree. A shaman's immediate relatives usually stripped the drum of its iron pendants, chains, or buttons and kept them as relics. When a new shaman or a shamaness appeared in their clan, one of these relics was attached to his or her drum. Thus, decorations preserved from the drums of deceased shamans served as symbols of an intergenerational continuity of the shamanic vocation. The Shor people believed that such relics contained special powers, which helped a new shaman to acquire the ability to interact with the world of spirits. Some Shor believed that spirits themselves resided in such relics. Those shamanic items that were left to hang on a tree were not to be touched by people. Unlike other Altaian tribes, the northern Shor used the drum and the drumstick but did not have any special ritual costume. Shamans usually performed in a casual robe and footwear, and the only sign of their shamanic vocation was a calico kerchief. Some of them did not have any drums and shamanized using only a drumstick. Moreover, there were shamans who did not have these items at all. Such spiritual practitioners used either a twig of green birch branches or a simple leather mitten (181).

Funk reproduces one complete text (in a Russian translation) of a shamanic séance ("mystery ceremony") addressed to Adam (*Adam-buurul* or *Ada-kizhi*). Anokhin recorded this ceremony on June 24, 1911. The northern Shor usually appealed to Adam when a person was severely sick. During the séance, which was performed inside a dwelling, the shaman sacrificed a dark-colored horse in a yard (184-186). On one of his field trips, Anokhin met a Shor shaman named Ivan, who lent the ethnographer his drum for a few days to examine its drawings. The paper provides detailed descriptions of these drawings. Anokhin notes that Ivan called all drawings on his drum *edndzhi* (*enchi*), which literally means "heritage," and which in a spiritual context can be rendered as "spirits" or "inherited spirits." Funk adds that the Shor and Kumandin natives used the word *edndzhi* to describe shamanic spirits (187). The frame of Ivan's drum was made from black willow wood. A handle was manufactured from a bird cherry tree. The drum is covered with deerskin. To make the drawings, the shaman applied synthetic paint used to color fabric or paper and paint made from chalk mixed with clay (190). The paper also contains similar detailed descriptions of the drum and the drumstick that belonged to shaman Kukush, who served as Anokhin's informant in 1913 (192-199). Among the numerous drawings on Kukush's drum, one is of special interest. This is an image of a person (*Shor ezi*) who sits on a sled

harnessed with a horse. Such an image was alien to traditional Shor drawings. Funk suggests that this image provides additional evidence that “the violation of tradition” was possible and acceptable in native Siberian shamanism. Second, Funk hypothesizes that the image of *Shor-ezi* could mean the spirit master of the Shor tribe. Although in the beginning of the twentieth century the Shor were hardly aware of themselves as members of the same tribe, this image might indicate the rudimentary development of such tribal consciousness (195).

Funk, Dmitrii A. “Zametki o shamanistskom panteone Teleutov: bozhestvo Töö-kaan [Notes on Shamanic Pantheon of the Teleut: Deity Named Töö-kaan].” *Problemy etnicheskoi istorii i kul'tury Tiurko-mongol'skikh narodov Iuzhnoi Sibiri*. Ed. D.A. Funk. Moskva: institut etnologii i antropologii, 1996. 147-155.

Unlike other tribes of the Altai and Sayan area, Teleut shamanism developed the concept of the five-layered universe, which was populated with specific deities and spirits: (1) heavenly sphere (*tengere*), (2) “real land” (*pu-t'ier*), (3) “imagined land” (*t'ier-t'oly*), which was positioned between the horizon and the “real earth,” (4) “the land of truth” (*chyn-t'ier*), which was located beyond the horizon, and (5) “the land of evil” (*t'ier-aalys*). Funk sheds more light on the deity named Töö-kaan, which resides in the “land of truth.” Most students of Altaian shamanism barely mention this deity in their works (147). At first, Funk briefly describes the “land of truth.” The Teleut believed that this land, which they positioned east of the “imagined land,” was devoid of any lies. The “land of truth” actually consisted of two “planets” separated from the “real land” and the “imagined land” by a hollow space. One “planet” was the residency of the deity named Adam (*Adam-buurul* or *Ada-kizhi*), while the other was the domain of Töö-kaan. The “land of truth” had its own moon, sun, crescent, lakes, mountains, forests, pastures, abysses, steppes, and people. In their stories, shamans pictured both “planets” as attractive habitats somewhat similar to the Christian heaven (148)

The route of shamans who journeyed to the land of Töö-kaan can be recreated on the bases of notes made by Andrei Anokhin in 1911 and preserved in the Tomsk State Historical and Architectural Museum. Anokhin recorded a spiritual journey to Töö-kaan attempted by Teleut shaman Markel Mazhin. Mazhin performed his séance inside a dwelling with accessories mandatory for Teleut shamans: the drum, the costume,

and the kerchief. At first, the shaman summoned his guardian spirits, shamans-ancestors. Then Markel called the mistress of his drumstick, the master of his drum, and heavenly (*nebozhiteli*) spirits named *ülgens*. Incidentally, the Teleut labeled all heavenly spirits by the word *ülgens*. Finally, he summoned the rest of his spirits, including the spirits of a land route (*t'ier-t'oly*) (149). Markel continued his séance the next day by sacrificing a horse. The sacrifice was accompanied by appropriate chants, which are reproduced in the articles (149-152). In his shamanic journey to Töö-kaan, the shaman went through the foundation of the sky (*tengere tös*). Going through golden gates that opened and closed by themselves, he entered a field piled with animal and bird bones. Then Markel crossed the so-called yellow steppe (*kuba* or *sary-chol*), and passed through three countries that had three, seven, and nine yellow lakes. Finally, Markel reached the “earthly hole” (*tier tunugi*), the residence of Enkei-khan, and the “shining eyed-mother of people of the world.” The last obstacle that Markel overcame was a horn-shaped mountain, after which he entered the domain of Töö-kaan (152).

What was so special about Töö-kaan that people were prompted to deliver regular sacrifices to him and to reserve an entire “planet” for this deity in their spiritual imagination? The Teleut viewed Töö-kaan as a deity endowed with the power to provide childless couples with souls (*kut*) of children. At the same time, various Teleut communities ranked Töö-kaan in a different manner. While some families viewed him as one of the *ülgens* (heavenly spirits), others relegated him to the status of an ordinary benign spirit (152-153). What does this reveal? First, it clearly shows that the Teleut did not have canonized deities and spirits. Second, different Teleut clans had different versions of the same shamanic deities and spirits. Third, not only clans but also individual shamans and ordinary natives interpreted the same deities and spirits in their own manner. Funk concludes that his own field materials show that the shamanic worldview of the Turkic tribes of southern Siberia cannot be reduced to such universal pillars as the “shamanic world tree” or “upper world,” “middle world” and “underworld” (153).

Gemuev, I.N. and G.N. Pelikh. “Kategorii Sel’kupskikh shamanov [Categories of the Selkup Shamans].” *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 5 (1997): 36-45.

On the basis of field material they collected in the 1960s and 1970s, Gemuev and Pelikh define three categories of shamans among the Selkup tribe. These categories differed from each other by their accessories and rituals. The Selkup called their shamans *tetypy*. At the same time, natives always specified what *tetypy* they meant: *tetypy-sombyrni*, *tetypy-kamytyrni* or *tetypy-aloga*. The *tetypy-sombyrni* shamans usually performed their séances inside a chum at full light. The complete paraphernalia of such shamans included the robe (*parka*), the breast plate, the cap, the drum, and two drumsticks (*kapshit*), one of which was lined with fur from a deer’s forehead and the other with fur from a bear’s paw. In addition, the most powerful *tetypy-sombyrni* also had a ritual saber (*kidy*). The number of iron plates and iron images of the crane (*karr*) on a shaman’s robe pointed to the amount of sacred power a shaman had. Beginning shamans usually attached only iron images of wings of the crane to their robes. Only after acquiring appropriate experience did they receive their first complete image of the crane. Still, they were not allowed to paint the image of the crane on their robes. At this point, beginning shamans were permitted to draw cranes on the interior sides of the frames of their drums. As their shamanic power grew, spiritual practitioners gradually received the right to depict cranes on the backs of their robes. The most powerful *sombyrni* shaman befriended by Gemuev and Pelikh had seven crane images (36).

Kamytyrni were the shamans who performed in complete darkness and without any special costume. Their ritual clothing was limited to a headband (*churakty*), a breast plate (*kutyn*) and also a drum, which they rarely used in their séances. The authors describe a *kamytyrni* séance, which they personally witnessed. Before the shaman came, people built a fire. The hide of a moose was placed between the fire and the back side of the chum. The people placed a bucket filled with small wooden chips nearby. Not far from the bucket, there was a copper kettle. Between the skin rug and the fire lay a wooden stick. The shaman showed up in everyday clothing. He undressed to the waist and sat on the rug. Then his assistant handed him a headband and a breastplate. All participants were encouraged to forward questions to the shaman and receive responses after the séance. Then the legs and hands of the shaman were tightly roped, and the fire was completely extinguished. From then until the very

end of the séance, everyone was to stay in complete darkness. After a while, the ethnographers heard a knocking sound that came from the kettle. Then the shaman began to sing, summoning his spirits and asking them to release him. The first spirit to appear in the chum was a “bear.” The “bear” walked around roaring and breathing noisily and beating the poles of the chum right over the heads of the participants. Then “birds” started to fly all over, flapping their wings. The audience felt how the shaman released himself from the rope and threw it into the face of the one who had tied him. Then the ethnographers had the feeling that in front of the shaman, the stick was placed, and various shaman’s spirits situated themselves on it. Finally, the shaman “flew” up and began to turn around on the stick, continuing to sing. Then his voice gradually started to die off somewhere far away, and the shaman “flew” away. Soon, people could hear how the voice of the shaman was again getting louder, which meant that the shaman was returning. A few moments later, the shaman’s assistant set up a new fire, and all could see the shaman sitting on the moose skin. Sweat streamed all over his face and body, and the shaman wiped it away with wooden chips. During a short rest, the shaman smoked a pipe. Then he began the second part of the séance. At this point, the shaman “cut” himself with a knife, “pierced” his body with a cleaning rod, and “plunged” knives into his belly. Everything looked absolutely real, but there was no blood. Gemuev and Pelikh inform their readers that some shamans “plunged” up to fifteen knives into themselves during a séance and were able to dance and sing after this “self-torture.” At the end of the séance, the shaman responded to the participants’ questions. Their inquiries concerned different aspects of daily life, including perspectives on the coming hunting season, the search for culprits responsible for wrongdoings, and the location of missing objects (40-41).

Shamanism by the *aloga* shamans was usually called “black pursuit.” People who decided to associate themselves with the *aloga* shaman took a great risk. The Selkup shared a story about a young native who became an apprentice to an *aloga* shaman. The apprentice could not bear the pressure of schooling and quit, after which he was killed by a lightning strike that went through the chimney. The Selkup were very apprehensive about *aloga* shamans because their major spirit helpers were the spirits of deceased shamans (*kava-lozy*) and deceased infants (*patchak*). The Selkup believed that if a baby died before it teethed, it turned into a being called *patchak*, who was connected to the underworld and who acted as a “terrible devil,” chasing and killing people.

The Selkup viewed the *aloga* shamans as representatives of some sort of ancient shamanism. Gemuev and Pelikh believe that it can be confirmed by the following evidence. During their séances, the *aloga* frequently mentioned horses. The Selkup would say, "It is our distant ancestors who had kept horses." At the same time, the natives were well aware that there had also been a second coming of the horse-breeding practice with the advance of the Russians. Second, the Selkup believed that during their séances, *aloga* shamans used an ancient language, which modern natives hardly understood. Gemuev and Pelikh define *aloga* shamanism as the most ancient and esoteric form of Selkup shamanism, which modern natives knew exclusively through their oral tradition. Gemuev and Pelikh also believe that *sombyrni* and *kamytyrni* shamans represented indigenous Selkup shamanism, whereas *aloga* shamanism had been transmitted from other tribes which the Selkup had encountered during their migration to the North and which completely perished in modern times (44-45).

Gomboeva, M.I. "Etnopsikhologicheskaiia identifikatsiia v shamanistskoi praktike aginskikh Buryat [Shamanic Practice in Ethnopsychological Self-Awareness of the Agin Area Buryat]." *Gumanitarnii vektor* (Chita) 2 (1998): 55-64.

Gomboeva, a native Buryat student of shamanism, believes that in Russian scholarship, those who studied shamanism were primarily anthropologists. They approached shamanism mostly as religious and ritual practice of Siberian and Native American peoples. Now, she continues, under the influence of Western scholarship, Russian scholars pay more attention to the "meditation and ecstasy in shamanism." Many of them now research shamanism from medicinal, psychiatric, and psychological points of view. Gomboeva joins this recent trend and attempts to review Buryat shamanism as a tool of native "ethnopsychological self-awareness."

In current Buryat society, shamans, whom Gomboeva calls "psycho-healing personalities," have taken over "cultural functions." They maintain the cultural and social continuity of families and clans and enhance the clan identity of an individual. Present-day shamans work to establish a harmony of human beings with themselves and with their communities (56). With the beginning of the democratization process in the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s, native people at first treated

revived shamanism and other ancestral rituals as a newly-discovered and exciting forbidden fruit. Yet in the course of time, as Gomboeva stresses, original popular excitement subsided. Now native people treat shamans as everyday spiritual healers. Moreover, many natives even became disinterested in or skeptical of shamanism. She ascribes the latter stance to the simultaneous revival of Tibetan Buddhism and Russian Orthodoxy in the Buryat Republic (57).

Like many other present-day Russia ethnographers, for the explanation of the ethnopsychological role of shamans, Gomboeva turns to New Age psychoanalytic, transpersonal and esoteric concepts, which are currently fashionable in the Russian intellectual community. She insists that the classic concept of “collective unconsciousness” by Carl Jung might give a clue to the activities of present-day Buryat shamans. She writes that, according to Jung, “collective unconsciousness” is identical among all people. Having said this, Gomboeva stresses that shamans generate “archaic memory of ethnic unconsciousness,” and, as such, activate an “ethnic unconsciousness” in individuals, exposing them to archaic indigenous traditions (57).

Among the Buryat, the shamanic vocation can be acquired in three ways. People might inherit or acquire it through their personal charismas. She also notes that the acquisition of shamanic powers is possible through multiple ritual initiations (*shamar*), when individuals meditate and consciously “provoke” in their minds images of shamans of the past, who are viewed as masters of specific natural localities (58). In psychiatric literature, the “shamanic call” or “shamanic illness,” which serves as a signal for an individual to start shamanizing, was classified as “mental automatism.” Victor K. Kandinsky, a Russian psychiatrist who allegedly had a Buryat shamanesses as his grandmother, studied this syndrome. The latter was later labeled as the Kandinsky-Clérambault syndrome, after a French psychiatrist, C.G. de Clérambault, who conducted similar research. Both scientists stressed that the syndrome manifests itself in a feeling that “somebody’s thoughts” take over the mind of a person and force him or her to act or speak in a certain way (59).

Among the Buryat of the Agin autonomous district, where Gomboeva gathered her information, the majority of newly-produced shamans “were



Reenactment of Shamanic Séance in Mountain Altai, June 2001. Photograph by Author.

endowed with shamanic powers through an initiation (*shamar*).” Having become shamans after an appropriate “schooling” and initiation, they use only elements of a trance in their séances (60). There are only a few individuals who are recognized as shamans without an initiation. Like many shamans of old, these individuals inherited their shamanic powers within their lineages (59). Gomboeva stresses that only the spiritual practitioners of the latter category are able to demonstrate a “genuine full-time trance.” To Gomboeva, the future of shamanism in Buryat society does not look bright. In the present-day Buryat Republic, people are turning their attention away from “ethnic self-awareness” to “personal self-awareness,” which leads to the “natural decline of an interest of the population in shamanism.” The second cause of the decline is the resurgence of Tibetan Buddhism (64).

Il’akhov, P.N. “Repressii protiv severnikh shamanov (1920-1935) [Repressions Against Northern Shamans, 1920s-1930s].” *Istoriko-etnosotsial’nie issledovania: regional’nie problemy*. Ed. V.N. Ivanov. Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1998. 89-97.

Il’akhov describes repression against shamans in Yakut (Sakha) country in northeastern Siberia during the early Soviet years. Although he occasionally mentions shamans of other indigenous groups, his discussion is centered on Sakha shamans. In the early 1920s, when the Soviets still had to fight internal and external enemies, shamans were not yet targeted for mass repressions. Yet as early as November 20, 1920, the Yakut revolutionary committee decreed persecution of all shamans as “parasites.” The committee also planned to confiscate their shamanic costumes and fine them for performing shamanic séances. Being aware that the Soviet power in the North was still weak and trying not to antagonize natives at this point, the committee soon revoked its own decree. Four years later, when the Soviets more or less established themselves in the North, they renewed the attacks against shamans. From 1922 until 1925, in the northern Sakha country there was an anti-communist revolt. Some shamans sympathized with the rebels but did not participate in combat (91). Still later, the Soviet regime linked shamans to this revolt. In 1924, a Communist party regional convention singled out three venues to eradicate shamanism in the Sakha country: (1) cultural propaganda and education, (2) increase of medical help to the people, and (3) administrative and judicial “measures” (90). The local branch of the

Department of Justice released an instruction to all local authorities to persecute shamans. Shamans were forbidden to cure people, to practice foretelling, or to receive fees for their séances, and male shamans were also forbidden to have sexual intercourse with women. Violation of these restrictions led to criminal prosecution. The Soviet regime simultaneously sought to mobilize “masses,” especially the youth, against shamans. In many respects, writes Il’iakhov, this campaign was successful. Poor natives and native youngsters zealously persecuted shamans (91).

By 1928, a young generation of natives raised in the spirit of atheism was already against shamans (92). At the turn of the 1930s, along with other categories of “class enemies,” shamans were denied citizenship rights, which seriously undermined their subsistence activities. Shamans could not get hunting grounds, hunting and fishing gear, reindeer, and hunting guns. Not only spiritual practitioners but also their relatives were ostracized. Under official and mass pressure, many shamans themselves started to publicly denounce their vocation. Local press published numerous confessions and self-accusations of shamans. Authorities encouraged people to inform on shamans who secretly continued their practices. After receiving informers’ reports, police sometimes arrested natives simply for imitating and mimicking shamans (93). Local authorities increasingly started to use shamans as convenient scapegoats, blaming them for economic and political failures such as a collectivization disaster that resulted in the mass slaughter of stock (94). Il’iakhov believes that the publication of an article against shamanism by anthropologist Bogoras in the magazine *Sovetskii Sever* (*Soviet North*) in 1932 signaled a new round of repressions against native spiritual practitioners. Now secret police (GPU) unleashed a campaign of total merciless eradication of shamanism (94). Il’iakhov describes the fate of a great Sakha shaman named Konstantin Chirkov, who was kept for six months in a secret police prison in 1935. At one point, officers forced Chirkov to perform a séance in a secret police club in the town of Yakutsk, the Yakut Republic capital. According to oral tradition, although the séance took place in summer, Chirkov caused snowfall in the club. When he asked his audience if they minded him bringing a wolf or a bear inside the club building, the frightened officers exclaimed, “Do not do it!” Soon after this incident, Chirkov was released. Allegedly the police found that six months in prison was enough of a sentence for him (95).

Katanov, N.F. *Shamanskie pesnopeniia Sibirskikh tiurkov: zapisi 1878-1892 godov.* [Shamanic Chants of Siberian Turks: Notes from 1878 to 1892]. Poeticheskie perevody Anatolia Prelovskogo [Poetical Translations by Anatolii Prelovskii]. Moskva: Lit-ekspress, 1996. 188 pages.

The book is a poetic “translation” of shamanic prayers, chants and recitations, which were recorded among the Khakass natives by Katanov, the renowned student of the Siberian Turkic tribes. Katanov, a Khakass himself, was educated at St. Petersburg University in the Oriental Department and became professor of Turkic linguistics at Kazan University. In 1907, Katanov translated and published in Russian those materials as volume 9 (*Mundarten der Urianchaier (Sojonen), Abaka-Tataren und Karagassen*) of *Proben der Volkslitteraturder Türkische Stämme*, edited by one of the deans of Russian anthropology of the later imperial period, Wilhelm Radloff.

Shamanic Chants of Siberian Turks, the greater part of which is exclusively based on the 1907 edition, is not a translation into Russian. The notable part of the book is a poetic creative rendering of the above-mentioned Katanov’s materials by literary scholar and writer Anatolii Prelovskii. In his rework, the shamanic chants indeed sound better to a Russian ear but completely lose their functional purpose. Prelovskii approaches shamanic Siberian shamanic texts as folk poetry. In the introduction, the writer says that for a long time, he felt an urge to render the 1907 texts into poetic Russian, which reflects the writer’s long-time romance with the “poetry of shamanism.” Prelovskii notes that he was introduced to the “shamanic poetry” as a child by Podgorbunskii, a scholar-missionary who had written on Siberian shamanism (for the review of one of Podgorbunskii’s work, see the present volume). The writer stresses that the 1907 volume was one of his first reading books in childhood (17). Prelovskii also adds that he is the first to come up with this sort of a project: “Unfortunately, never in my life have I run across a poetic creative translation of shamanic chants” (18). As poetry, the book is lively and interesting to read. At the same time, the editors of *Shamanic Chants of Siberian Turks* defined for themselves rather contradictory goals. On the one hand, the book is intended to give Russian-speaking readers a chance to see “shamanism of Siberian Turks in its specific manifestations of tribal poetic genius” and as such the collection “almost closely resembles originals.” On the other hand, the book is the “first and

the only one collection of shamanic chants in poetic creative translation in Russian" (16).

Furthermore, in the original 1907 publication, Katanov often, although not always, tries to set shamanic chants and prayers in their social and situational contexts. The ethnographer explains on what occasions shamans recited their "chants." In Prelovskii's rendering, the "chants" lose their practical applied character, such as securing well-being or prosperity for tribal communities and their individuals, and acquire strictly literary features. Although Prelovskii preserved in the footnotes information about from whom and when the texts had been recorded, there is nothing that informs readers about the impromptu nature of this "poetry." Instead, one receives the false impression that all these chants were "canonized" versions of the "native religion." At the same time, Prelovskii does try to introduce Russian readers to the style of the Turkic verse by means of the Russian language. Since, according to Prelovskii, the Turkic verse is short, he tries to make the Russian renderings of shamanic chants short as well. He correctly assumes that long descriptive translations "sound very boring to readers" (18). "I tried to maintain whatever I could from the poetics of the originals; only in some cases did I give a preference to the content at the expense of a form" (18). Indeed, changes are dramatic, but it is good reading.

The book can be divided into three parts. The first and the largest one includes Khakass shamanic chants (21-115). The second one includes the chants of Tuvinian shamans (117-157). In addition to the material collected by Katanov, the book has a third part, a short attachment, in which editors included Tofalar shamanic chants recorded by V.I. Rassadin, which were also poetically translated by Prelovskii. Moreover, the editors included in the attachment a few chants of the Sakha, the Shor, the Altaian and the Tubalar, which had been recorded by contemporaries of Katanov. The names of the collectors, unfortunately, are not mentioned (158-171). As an example of the way Prelovskii worked with the native chants, one might look at the text of a rite called "sacrifice on the top of a hill." Without explanation of the meaning of this rite, Prelovskii renders the words of the chant as follows: "Being a boy, I became a shaman!/Kam-Agysa, the ruling spirit/Wore out my strong body. It so happened that since then/Kam-Algys helps me to shamanize/In mountains and on waters/And his mother is Taryk." (21). In the 1907 original edition, these words, which a shaman used to approach Adamkhan, the spirit of a mountain, were actually not a chant, but a ritual address that Katanov naturally relates in prose: "I became a shaman,

when I was a boy, and my trade wore out my strong body. My patron is (spirit) shaman Kam-Algys, whose mother is Taryk” (*Proben der Volksliteratur der Türkische Stämme* 9: 554).

Kenin-Lopsan, Mongush B. *Problemy etnograficheskogo izucheniia Tuvinskogo shamanstva: po materialam shamanskogo fol'klora [Toward the Study of Tuvinian Shamanism: Materials of Shamanic Folklore]*. St. Petersburg: institut etnologii i antropologii, 1996. 53 pages; “Mifologicheskie korni tuvinskikh shamanov [Mythological Roots of Tuvinian Shamans].” *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 2 (2000): 80-86.

Kenin-Lopsan, a Tuvinian writer, contributed much to the study and revival of the shamanic folklore among his people. He is a dean of shamanism-related studies and activities in the Tuva Republic. *Toward the Study of Tuvinian Shamanism* is a paper he presented to the St. Petersburg Institute of Ethnology in partial fulfillment of requirements for the academic degree of the doctor of historical sciences (*doktor istoricheskikh nauk*). The paper provides a good summary of all his studies on the shamanism of his native people. In his dissertation, Kenin-Lopsan is mostly concerned with so-called *algys*h (shamanic songs or chants), categories of Tuvinian shamans, their accessories and their ritual practices, and classification of spirits in Tuvinian shamanism. The article “Mythological Roots of Tuvinian Shamanism” supplements the information provided in his dissertation essay.

*Algys*h songs were impromptu songs composed by shamans for their séances. The record of *algys*h songs and shamanism-related Tuvinian mythology can be found in Kenin-Lopsan’s book *Shamanic Songs and Myths of Tuva*, ed. Mihaly Hoppal (Budapest and Los Angeles: Akademiai Kiado and International Society for Trans-Oceanic Research, 1997). These songs were accompanied by drumbeats and the sounds of a mouth harp called *khomus* and a small copper mirror called *küzüngü*. Kenin-Lopsan examines the themes of the *algys*h songs as well as their sound composition, rhythms, and stanza. Kenin-Lopsan classifies Tuvinian shamans according to the origin of their powers. As a result, he singles out the following categories of spiritual practitioners: (1) “hereditary” shamans,” who received their sacred powers from shamans-ancestors; respected hereditary shamans usually numbered in their lineage from eight to ten shamans-ancestors (1996: 20); (2) shamans of a

“natural” origin, whom Kenin-Lopsan divides into to four subgroups: (a) shamans of the celestial origin (*tengri boo*), who traced their roots to such celestial beings as Azarlar and Khoorlar. Celestial shamans, who were usually considered the most powerful, were placed on the top of the pyramid of the shamanic hierarchy. Celestial shamans freely interacted with spiritual beings that resided in the upper world, and they also freely traveled in the upper world, which they used for curing purposes and for elimination of various misfortunes (1996: 21); Kenin-Lopsan stresses that this category of the Tuvinian shamans most probably originated from the beliefs of ancient Turks in Tengri (supreme heavenly deity); according to Tuvinian mythology, these shamans received their powers through a rainbow, and the first celestial shamans swore their loyalty to “steel sky sons,” who resided in the upper world heavenly spheres. These “sons” eventually gave rise to all celestial shamans. In their séances, celestial shamans addressed their chants to various natural phenomena, such as thunder, hail, rain, and the movements of planets. Celestial shamans were convinced that they were the only ones who were able to interact with the “steel sky sons,” who control all things earthly (2000: 82); (b) “shamans empowered by witches,” who received their powers from the witches called *albys*. People usually became *albys* shamans after a witch stole their souls, which made them sick. If a powerful shaman won back the soul from *albys*, the recovered person was obliged to become a shaman. *Albys* shamans usually cured insomnia, “mental disorders,” and “madness.” Unlike the shamans of other categories, *albys* shamans performed their séances during the day (1996: 24). When they performed séances, *albys* shaman always stressed that they had received their power from the *albys*. In 1972, Tuvinian native Kuular Togdugash Sug-Bazhi described his initiation into the *albys* shamans: “I am a shaman from the *albys* ‘witch’ clan. Once I walked over pebbles in a dry creek-bend. Suddenly two beauties showed up and I found myself between them. I felt myself lying in their embraces. Thus, we slept together on a sandy spit. When they woke up, the beauties took me to the high steep bank, where the whole groups of witches pitched their camp. Later, when I had already become a shaman, some of these witches visited our camp a few times, but nobody could see them except me. After meeting the witches, I armed myself with shamanic tools and began to shamanize. Nobody taught me how to put together shamanic songs because I came from the tribe of witches” (2000: 84); (c) “shamans empowered by water and the earth,” who obtained their powers from master spirits of the earth and water. “Water and earth” shamans were primarily specialized in séances

performed on the eve of hunting expeditions, brewing home-made milk alcohol, moving a camp to another location, or before wheat or rye grasses sprout. In addition, these shamans reserved for themselves such important functions as prophesizing (1996: 25); (d) “shamans empowered by the demon” received their sacred powers after they encountered the demon (*aza*) and miraculously survived. These shamans empowered by the devil were ascribed a passion for night journeys. Hence, they preferred to shamanize at night (1996: 27).

Kenin-Lopsan pays a special attention to the symbolism of a shaman’s drum sounds. He stresses that in the Sayan and Altai areas not a shamanic costume, but a drum was considered the most important ritual artifact. Shamans could not make their spiritual journeys without drums. Like other Siberian spiritual practitioners, Tuvinian shamans viewed their drums as draft animals. In some cases, drums could serve as boats, while drumsticks stood for paddles. In other instances, drums could stand for bows, which the shaman used to combat hostile spirits. In such cases, drums’ crossbars symbolized bow-strings, while pendants attached to these crossbars served as “arrows.” Yet, the major function of drums was simply as ritual musical instruments. Without drums, shamans could not compose or recite their *algys*h songs.

During séances, different tunes of drums conveyed specific messages and meanings: (1) the “signal sound of a drum” (*dungurnun otkutuni*); Tuvinian shamans believed that the sound of the drum was defined by superior forces, which sent their signals from the heavenly sphere; (2) the “sound of conjure” (*dungurnun kargyshtyg unu*); shamans used this sound in their shamanic “duels.” When shamans combated each other, they produced threatening sounds with their drums; these sounds imitated the croaking of a crow. The one who won was usually a shaman whose crow “screamed” louder and scarier; (3) the sound “to find what was lost” (*dungurnun chitekn chuve tyvar unu*) helped a shaman to find a lost item; it was assumed that the sound of the drum was over-penetrating, did not know any borders, and during a séance could fly all over mountains, woods, to the underworld, and to heavenly spheres; (4) the sound of a drum that honors the newly made and “consecrated” drum (*dungur doiunda dungur unu*); (5) the sound produced to cure a mental illness (*dungur unu alystaan kizhni ekirtir*); (6) the sound dealing with the retrieval of a soul (*dungur unu sunezinni keldirtir*); this was used when a shaman journeyed to various spheres in search for the soul of a patient; (7) the sound that warded off hostile beings (*dungur aiyyl chailadyr burus*) such as *aza* (the demon), *albys* (the witch), *shulbus* (the deuce),

kizhi burus (the snow man), *buk* (the monster) and *chetker* (the devil); and (8) the sound that brings luck (*dungur unu kezhikti chalaar*), which was produced during a special séance dealing with the “solicitation of luck and happiness” (1996: 31-32).

Turning to the classification of spirits in Tuvinian shamanism, Kenin-Lopsan divides them into special shamanic spirits and “regular” spirits for “common consumption.” In the first group of spirits, he includes *Adyg eeren* or the spirit of the bear. *Adyg eeren* has celestial origin. In ancient times, celestial tribes of Khoorlar and Azarlar sent down to the earth the great shaman in a shape of a bear. Since then, the “bear-shaman” has lived on the earth. Only the celestial shamans were endowed with superior powers to summon the spirit of the bear. The next one is *Daer edi eeren* or the Heavenly Body spirit, who is represented by particles of stones and metals that fell from the sky. This spirit cured madness. *Kuskun eeren* is the raven spirit, who served as a scout for shamans during their journeys to three worlds (upper, lower and middle worlds). *Buga eeren* is the bull spirit, which protected a shaman from his hostile colleagues. *Khovugan eeren* is the moth spirit, who helped a shaman to retrieve the soul of a patient. Kenin-Lopsan notes that in shamanism, the soul of a person was able to wander off to various places, and if it went far way, the person got sick (1996: 34-36).

The second category of the Tuvinian spirits, who served the interests of common people, is represented by “home spirits” responsible for curing. *Ak eern* is the white spirit, who treated infertility and all ailments below the waist such as rheumatism of the legs, bladder ailments, and tibial tumors. *Aldyn-Bozaga eeren* is the Golden Pillow spirit, who guarded the entrance to the yurt and whose major responsibility was to hold all good things inside a yurt and not to let anything bad get in. *Ugek eeren* is the Shed spirit, was usually depicted in the form of small dolls made of clean white felt; the major function of this spirit was to protect an offspring; natives believed that the presence of *Ugek eeren* in a yurt stopped child mortality. *Olchanyn diin* is the Squirrel Catch spirit, who secured good hunting; this spirit was popular with hunters and reindeer breeders (1996: 36-38).

Discussing practices of Tuvinian shamans, Kenin-Lopsan divides them into the “ritual” and “medicinal” séances. Ritual séances were conducted openly for all members of a tribe, a clan, or a family. These rituals were usually timed to seasonal festivities and conducted during the day. “Medicinal” séances were conducted at night and were usually centered on one person (1996: 39). The ritual séance was a public

performance, when a shaman recited *algys*h addressed to specific spirits. An example of such a ritual séance is a collective prayer ceremony in honor of the fire (*ot dagyyry*). The Tuvinians believed that the fire is the younger brother of the sun, which explained reverence of the fire in the Tuvinian culture. The rite, which was performed by a specially-invited shaman, was centered on a home hearth and could be called a family festivity because all family members were expected to participate. Those who ignored the family hearth rite courted a misfortune (1996: 41). *Ergi churtun dagyyry* is the prayer to an old campsite and was sought to express gratitude to the spirit of an old campsite for the well-being of children and to secure safe life and luck in daily pursuits (1996: 40).

The “medicinal” séances were naturally centered on ailments and dealt with the retrieval and the return of lost or stolen souls to patients. According to the Tuvinian worldview, people were not supposed to be ill at all. If someone fell ill, it simply meant that this person had offended an individual spirit who took his or her soul in revenge. However, the sick person did not know the cause of his or her illness. It was only a shaman who, during a séance, was able to detect the spirit that caused an illness. Then the shaman had to appease the spirit who had caused the sickness (1996: 41-42). According to Kenin-Lopsan, Tuvinian shamans did not go through a special “school” of shamans. Yet in reality there were elements of training. Thus, shamans who were empowered with the bull spirit taught young shamans the art of shamanism. This training could continue for a week and usually never exceeded one month. An experienced “bull-shaman” conducted special “rehearsal sessions” with young shamans and taught them how to perform a shamanic dance and how to compose shamanic verses and chants. Yet, the “analysis of the shamanic mythology shows that each shaman sought to have his own costume, his own melody, his own texts, his own specific dance, and, finally, his own spiritual genealogy” (2000: 85).

Lar, L.A. *Shamany i bogy [Shamans and Deities]*. Tiumen: institut problem osvoeniia Severa SO RAN, 1998, 126 pages.

Lar is an artist and ethnographer from the Nentsy tribe, who designed this book as an “attempt to expand the existing information on the Nentsy religion” (11) and as a color album illustrated by numerous reproductions of his own paintings depicting shamanism-related scenes. The narrative

part of the book is based on Lar's study of relevant literature and the field materials he gathered among his tribe in the 1980s and 1990s.

According to the Nentsy traditional worldview, the universe consists of Upper (the sky), Middle (the earth) and Lower worlds. In the upper world lives the supreme deity Num, the embodiment of heavenly spheres. His brother Nga heads the spirits of the Lower world, who are hostile to human beings. Nga, a "ferocious" deity, feeds on "bloody" food and requires constant sacrifices. If people do not deliver sacrifices to Nga, he inflicts on them various misfortunes, diseases, and death. Num and Nga were equally responsible for creating the world and human beings. Therefore, these deities have equal powers, which explains the religious stance of the Nentsy, who view nature as a mixture and an equilibrium of good and evil (14, 18).

The Nentsy call their shamans *tadebja*, which literally means "sorcerers" or "magicians." In the past, the people who were designated to become shamans were expected to have from one to three fist-size birthmarks ("head crowns," an extra finger, or any kind of a physical deviation (24). Shamans were divided into two groups: uninitiated ones who did not have drums (*mal tedebla*) and initiated shamans who had drums without pendants (*tadebja si'm'ja*). Uninitiated shamans had various names, depending on their functions. They could be *iudartana*, who were specialized in deciphering dreams, *sevtana* (those who see far) who were able to diagnose an ailment by using their internal powers, *iltana* (giving life), who were specialized in soothsaying, *teltana*, who were so-called shamans-interpreters, and *inutana*, which means shamans who provided spiritual advice. Unlike the initiated shamans, the uninitiated were involved in routine economic and household activities. Being responsible for simple sacrificial ceremonies, they used a limited set of shamanic paraphernalia and techniques. Thus, they never immersed themselves into an ecstatic state. Only a few of them possessed hypnotizing powers. Those shamans who became initiated were endowed with a specific "rank" and the right to conduct elaborate religious rites. However, many spiritual practitioners never sought to go through an initiation and become a professional shaman of the highest rank because the "job" of the shaman was difficult and brought hardly any significant income (25).

The initiated shamans were divided into a few ranks: *penzretna*, who could see future and communicate with the supreme deity Num; *ial'tana*, who invoked hostile spirits, *mutratna tadebja*, or wonder-workers; *tem'sorta*, literally, "those who performed magic tricks;" and *khekhe*

tevrambda, who “brought spirits from the upper world.” All these shamans were endowed with considerable power and knowledge. They occupied the top of the shamanic hierarchy and were naturally more respected than the uninitiated. The initiated shamans were also ranked according to their “geographical specialization.” The shamans who journeyed to the upper world were called *vidutana*. They wandered all over the heavenly sphere and interacted with its celestial spirits. *Vidutana* shamans were so respected that people avoided mentioning their names aloud and approached them only in extreme cases, when nothing else could help. Most valued was their ability to communicate directly with the supreme deity Num and bring him sacrifices. Shamans of this category had two assistants. The first one usually accompanied a shaman in his song and transmitted to the audience that information a shaman received from spirits during a séance. The second assistant performed the role of a soothsayer. Those shamans who worked with the spirits of the middle world were called *i’niangi tadebja*. They specialized in the treatment of all kinds of illnesses and relied heavily on herbal folk medicine. *I’niangi tadebja* provided emergency assistance in case of fractures or wounds. They also used methods of psychotherapy, hypnosis, and purely religious methods and tools such as rites, charms exorcism sessions, and amulets. *I’niangi tadebja* similarly enjoyed the help of two assistants, who performed the same functions as *teltena* and *ingutana*. The third category of shamans, called *sambdorta*, conducted spiritual journeys to the underworld. Their professional specialization was funeral ceremonies. They usually performed special séances to accompany the soul of a deceased person to the afterworld. Escorting a soul was a hard, long, and dangerous enterprise. *Sambdorta* had to watch out that no souls of living people accidentally joined an accompanied soul. As assistants, these shamans had *tadebja sevtana* and *iltana* people (26-27).

An initiation ceremony for shamans who sought to become professionals was conducted by a “narrow circle of old experienced shamans” in a specially-selected dwelling (*chum*) that people carefully cleaned. First, one of the experienced shamans brought back to the earth the soul of the one who wanted to be initiated. For this purpose, an old shaman usually performed a séance during which he approached the spirits who held the soul of a would-be shaman. In the meantime, the one to be initiated lay on the skin of a sacred deer and repeated the words of a charm exorcism pronounced by an old shaman during his conversation with spirits. Second, a novice joined the old colleague in performing a séance. Together they ascended to the upper world and then descended to

the lower world. During these spiritual journeys, the old colleague introduced the novice to the paths that led to major habitats of various spirits. Acquisition of shamanic paraphernalia was also accompanied by special rites. A shaman who supervised the ceremony of an initiation shamanized for a few days, inquiring of various spirits how to make a drum, and where to find a tree to be used for a frame and a drumstick. After a drum and a costume were made, the old shaman performed the rite of feeding the spirits of the new shaman (28).

Compared to the clothing of Altaian, Sakha, and other Siberian shamans, the Nentsy shamanic costume was quite simple. The major function of Nentsy shamanic costumes was to protect shamans from hostile spirits on the earth during a séance, when shamans' souls journeyed thorough the upper or lower worlds. Nentsy shamanic costumes also symbolically displayed specific spirits who harbored themselves in the costume during a séance. Newly-manufactured shamanic costumes were to be purified. After the purification, nobody could touch them except their owners. In addition to the robe made of a deerskin and decorated with copper pendants that symbolized spirit helpers, costumes included a special belt, footwear and a headdress. Belts were decorated with small pendants shaped as small sculptures and flat images, which depicted spirits of animals and birds, paws of predator animals, skins of small animals, claws and teeth of a bear, dried heads of birds and pike fish, and bells. A headdress could be a headband made of a piece of fabric with short fringes. It also could be a metal hoop with attached antlers. All shamanic accessories were animated during an initiation ceremony. They were also purified from time to time to maintain magic powers intact (29-30). Only initiated shamans were allowed to own drums. In addition to drums, Nentsy shamans had staves (31-32).

Shamans had patron/guardian spirits and spirit helpers who were graded into special categories. Patron spirits usually included high-ranking deities and shamans' ancestral spirits. Upon their death, shamans usually became guardian spirits for their shamanic clans, joining the chain of ancestral patron spirits headed by the first major shaman-ancestor, who gave rise to the shamanic lineage (36). In addition to ancestral spirits, shamans could enjoy the support of auxiliary spirit helpers. At the beginning of their careers, newly-initiated shamans enjoyed the help of only one or two of helping spirits. In the course of time, after a few more initiations and at the discretion of a major patron spirit, they acquired additional spirits. The acquisition of these spirit

helpers, which increased the power of a shaman, continued for a few years. These auxiliary spiritual beings usually accompanied shamans in their journeys to various universal spheres. The category of auxiliary spirits included spirits of drums, pendants, and headdresses, as well as spirits represented by various "idols." Among them, the major role belonged to the spirit of a drum. Compared to this spirit, the rest of the auxiliary spiritual beings were secondary. During shamanic séances, these spirits usually manifested themselves either as animals or as human beings.

At the beginning of a séance, at a shaman's request the spirits arrived and participated in the séance. At the end of a séance, the shaman released and sent them off. The Nentsy believed that day and night patron spirits safeguarded people from all evil deeds of hostile spirits, the "dark forces" of Nga. Spirit helpers usually protected shamans from attacks of hostile spirits during spiritual journeys. Spirit helpers performed only limited and specified functions. Each one of them had a "specialization." One spirit helper could cure a disease, another one could identify thieves, and a third one could predict the future. Depending on the ailments and conditions of their patients, shamans summoned half of their spirits, or, if necessary, all of them. While journeying to other worlds, shamans usually left middle-world spirits on the earth. Unlike patron spirits, spirit helpers were usually active only during séances. In addition to spirit helpers, during their séances, shamans also summoned spiritual masters of specific localities, the host and hostess of fire, to solicit their help in the struggle with hostile spirits.

Among the major patron spirits of *vidutana* shamans were Iav'mal Vesoko, one of seven sons of Num, who helped shamans to ascend to the heavenly sphere, and other celestial spirits such as Seven-horned Deer and Flying Iron Bird (37). Shamans who "worked" within the middle world interacted only with earthly spirits, which helped to cross rivers and mountains and to overcome other natural obstacles. Patrons of *ia'niangi* shamans were spiritual masters of specific localities. There were also special spirits who assisted in cures. Middle-world shamans also enjoyed the help of spirits of animals and birds: the bear, pike fish, burbot, loon, crow, and others. At the same time, it was only powerful shamans (*ia'niangi tadebja* and *sambdorta*) who were allowed to have the spirit of the loon. People believed that at a shaman's request, the spirit of the loon flew all over the world and collected information about the fate of specific people. Shamans usually summoned the loon spirit to

predict a future; for example, to foretell what individual was “scheduled” to fall ill, to recover, or to die.

The *sambdorta* shaman enjoyed the help of Nga’s sons, who assisted spiritual practitioners in their negotiations with Nga. Yet, as their chief patrons, all *sambdorta* shamans had the spirits of their deceased shaman relatives. The Nentsy believed that a person became a *sambdorta* shaman when the soul of a deceased shaman relative “moved” into the body of a designated candidate. When the spirit of a deceased shaman and those spirits who assisted it located a person who was to become a *sambdorta* shaman, Nga personally inflicted an illness on such a candidate, forced the chosen individual to accept the spiritual vocation, and provided the new shaman with spirit helpers who had served a deceased shaman. With that movement, the spirit of the deceased shaman protected a new shaman. Like their colleagues, *vidutama* shamans, for a journey to the domain of Nga, *sambdorta* shamans usually used such sacred beings as the loon, the crow, the “underground deer,” the bull, the pike fish, and the burbot (38).

Markhinin, V.V. “Potrebnost’ v etnotraditionnikh verovaniakh (na primere otnoshenia predstavitelei severnikh narodov k shamanizmu [Need for Ethno-Traditional Indigenous Beliefs (the Attitudes of Northern Native Peoples Toward Shamanism)].” *Izvestiia Sibirskogo otdelenia Rossiiskoi akademii nauk, seriia istoriia, filologiya i filosofia* 3 (1992): 31-36.

As ideologists of the “native aristocracy” who resisted forced collectivization, Siberian shamans became victims of Stalinist repressions in the 1930s. Later, the Soviet state sought to eradicate the remnants of indigenous beliefs through its educational system that underscored the outdated primitive nature of native shamanism. In his article, Markhinin posed the question: is there any aspiration on the part of native northerners to revive indigenous shamanism after it was almost totally wiped out? To respond to this question, Markhinin and a group of sociologists he headed conducted a sociological survey among indigenous people of Nizhnevartovsk area of the Khanty-Mansiisk Autonomous Region in August and September of 1991. The sociologists worked in ten native settlements with 420 respondents sixteen years and older, who were primarily represented by the Khanty people and a few Nentsy and Mansi. Sociologists asked natives to evaluate the role of

shamanism in their past and to express their opinions on the possibility of its restoration. Of the surveyed people, 58.5 percent gave a positive assessment of the place of shamanism in their history, 35.4 percent spoke negatively about its role, and 6.1 percent of respondents could not answer the question. Interestingly, men spoke more positively about shamanism than women. The profession of respondents also affected their preferences. Of the natives who were involved in traditional indigenous occupations, 76.2 percent gave a positive assessment of shamanism in the past. Native “mechanics and people working with machines in general” exhibited similar assessments (71.4 percent). Unlike all other professional groups, native “village intelligentsia” such as teachers, physicians, and librarians were predominantly negative about native shamanism. Only 25.5 percent of native intellectuals spoke positively about the role of shamanism in the past. Markhinin is not surprised by such an attitude because the official Soviet view of shamanism as an “archaic relic of the past” mostly affected the mindset of indigenous intellectuals. Markhinin makes a conclusion: the more educated their respondents were, the less positively they spoke about the place of shamanism in indigenous history (33).

Questioning natives about the possibility and necessity of revival of shamanism turned out to be a more difficult task. One-third of all respondents found it hard to answer the question. To Markhinin, this means that natives expressed more definitive opinions about their past than about their modern life, which was unpredictable. Of those who did respond, only a meager number of people (8.3 percent) believed that the revival of shamanism was possible, whereas more than half (60.5 percent) were convinced that the revival of shamanism was impossible. Yet, when asked if they wanted shamanism to be revived, the ratio changed. Of the respondents, 28.5 percent would like shamanism to be revived, while 40.4 percent opposed this idea. Those who believed that the revival of shamanism was impossible did not necessarily argue that shamanism did not fit modern life. They simply stressed that at that moment (the turn of the 1990s), traditional customs and beliefs had been forgotten, and there were hardly any people who were able to learn the mysteries of shamanic “art.” Markhinin notes that in this case, again, respondents’ opinions were divided by gender. Native men who spoke positively about the possibility of the revival of shamanism outnumbered native women. Native intellectuals again exhibited pessimistic views on the restoration of shamanism. Only 6.5 percent of them believed that the revival of native shamanism was possible, and only 15.2 percent

considered it necessary (34). Markhinin avoids making any general conclusions from the received data. Moreover, he argues that the survey did not reveal any firm or established opinions on shamanism in native society. Indeed, it is clear that the survey rather reflected evolving opinions of natives on their own spirituality in the very beginning of the democratization process at the turn of the 1990s. Markhinin concludes, “On the whole, oscillations of opinions on the possibility and necessity of the revival of shamanism show how natives gradually overcome stereotypical negative views of shamanism planted in their minds by educational system” (35). On the whole, it was the indigenous people of traditional occupations who sent strong signals about the necessity and possibility of the revival of shamanism. Markhinin predicted that in the next few years, the dominant opinion would be an overall positive assessment of the historical role of shamanism. The situation would be totally different when native village intellectuals changed their attitude to shamanism (36). The current attitudes of native Siberians to their own spiritual heritage suggest that Markhinin was right in his prognosis.

Murashko, O.A. “Shamanstvo i traditsionnoe mirovozzrenie itel'menov [Shamanism and Traditional Worldview of the Itel'men].” *Izbranniki dukhov: traditsionnoe shamanstvo i neoshamanizm*. Ed. V. I. Kharitonova. Moskva: institut antropologii i etnologii, 1999. 160-182.

Murashko discusses shamanism among the heavily assimilated Itel'men, who reside in the Kamchatka peninsula. The greater part of her paper deals with their attempts to regenerate shamanism in post-Soviet Russia. Specifically, Murashko describes a modern-day shamaness named Olga Zaporotskaia, an old native woman in her early forties, who lives modestly in a one-room apartment in a wooden “barrack” type house along with her two daughters, a niece and a grandson. Olga acts as a shaman among the Itel'men, although she avoids using this word and prefers to call herself “a folk healer.” Incidentally, the Itel'men generally avoid the word “shaman,” using it only in their conversations with outsiders. In their native usage, they call a shaman a “knowledgeable old man” or a “knowledgeable old woman.” From a few elders and her mother, Olga absorbed bits and pieces of traditional legends and shamanic skills: “I remember how my mom shook switches of rose willow twigs over sick people.” Yet Olga’s vocabulary and usage are

mostly affected by “popular literature on parapsychology mixed with the ideas borrowed from popular medical and Russian Orthodox religious literature” (172). In a conversation with Murashko, Olga claimed that she discovered in herself clairvoyance skills in childhood. Olga can “see” sickness inside a human being, particularly infected internal organs. Her major healing method is using the power of her own “bio-field” (*biopole*) (173). Olga is quite popular all over the Kamchatka peninsula. Fishing boats’ crews and locals who look for missing persons regularly solicit the help of this modern shamaness. She does not charge for her services, preferring to take food and clothes as presents.

According to Murashko, for a long time among the Itel’men, “the living web of traditional worldview was hidden under the cover of official Orthodoxy and atheism, but now in the present ideological chaos, this worldview is in demand again as indigenous people try to understand the world around them and find their ethnic identity” (174). In 1987, the Itel’men established the Council for the Revival of Itel’men Culture, an organization that seeks to retrieve indigenous culture through reading narratives of early European travelers to northeastern Siberia and through conversations with elders (174). For this purpose, natives periodically conduct reenacting performances in which they recreate scenes from indigenous mythology and old ways of life. The council already conducted a few “traditional” ceremonies. Boris Zhirkov, whom local native residents call “our shaman” with a bit of irony, is the person who is in charge of these performances. Boris, a seasoned bachelor who studied ballet in St. Petersburg, lives with his elderly mother. He uses a “shaman drum” during the performances he helps to stage (176). In brief, the modern worldview of the Itel’men is the combination of “native tradition and the mass culture of postmodern society” (178). Making her conclusions, Murashko draws on the ideas of Russian/Soviet cosmic philosopher V.I. Vernadskii, who is rather popular among some present-day Russian intellectuals and who tried to link human reason with cosmic power. She specifically stresses Vernadskii’s thesis about an intuitive approach to reality. Murashko writes about shamanism as the intuitive and creative appropriation of surrounding nature (179). To discuss shamanism or to express its essence in rational terms through “logic and words” is useless: “To explore shamanism, one has to drop fixed methodology, strict definitions, and rational conclusions. Like shamanism itself, which is based on intuitive knowledge, the methods for its study should be intuitive too.” To grasp the meaning of shamanism, observers

have to “immerse and participate in the collective vision” of native groups they study (180).

Ondar, T.A. “Shamanizm v Tuve [Shamanism in Tuva].” *Gosudarstvo, religiia i tserkov’ v Rossii i za rubezhom* 2 (1997): 48-54.

This paper briefly discusses major periods in the development of Tuvinian shamanism and its current status. Ondar believes that shamanism, which serves as the foundation of the Tuvinian popular folk philosophy and worldview, provides the key to the “roots and the essence of the ethnic psychology of the Tuvinians” (49). Shamanism absorbed the most ancient Tuvinian beliefs, such as veneration of mountains, water, fire, hearth, and the cult of ancestors. Collective prayers addressed to master spirits of mountains, which symbolized a clan’s ownership of a specific locality, were widespread before 1917. Now this practice returns to the life of the Tuvinians through the rites of elucidation of mountains: putting stones together into small piles on mountain paths (49). From the thirteenth century to the sixteenth century, Tibetan Buddhism began to spread over Mongolia and Tuva. Then, from the seventeenth century, the Mongols implanted this religion by force. Yet Tibetan Buddhism never became the major religion of the Tuvinians, even though in the eighteenth century, it became the official religion of Tuva country. Buddhist deities did not replace native deities and spirits. They were simply attached to the old spiritual pantheon (50). Hence, from that time to the present day, Tuvinian beliefs represent the mixture of Tibetan Buddhism and shamanism.

Russian explorer Petr Chikhachev (1845) was the first to record Tuvinian shamanism. He incorrectly surmised that their original religion was Tibetan Buddhism, which was later distorted by shamanism. Modern scholars proved that shamanism actually preceded Buddhism in this area. Although Buddhism became the official religion, shamanism maintained all its attributes until the beginning of the twentieth century. According to the census of 1931, in Tuva there were 725 practicing “crowned” shamans with all necessary paraphernalia. Of these 411 were males, and 314 were females (51). Under the Soviet regime, many shamans began to hide their sacred skills. Yet, when requested, they did conduct a few rituals, especially memorial rituals and funerals. Ondar stresses that the shamanic funeral ceremony never disappeared under communism.

Ondar enumerates factors that became destructive to shamanism, especially during the period from the 1940s to the 1970s. Among these factors, she names the development of education and “civilization,” new agricultural techniques, industry, urbanization, population mobility that undermined popular attachment to clan territories, official atheism dominant in schools and mass media, and the persecution of shamans and their relatives. As a result, shamanic practices sharply declined and went underground, while shamanic beliefs were “blown out” from the consciousness of young and middle-aged Tuvinians. Nevertheless, these beliefs did not disappear completely. Since the 1990s, there has been the resurgence of shamanism, which is linked to the process of “revival of national self-awareness of the Tuvinians and the sovereignty of the Republic of Tuva” (52). Ondar describes the current state of the Tuvinian shamanism as follows. Despite persecutions, elderly spiritual practitioners who still remember elements of traditional shamanism did survive. Some of them came back from prisons. A society called “Dungur,” which unites and supports old and young practicing shamans, was established. One can see the growing public interest in both “applied” and “theoretical” shamanism. Thus, Tuva sees the rise of neo-shamanism, which regenerates ancient shamanic practices in the new social and intellectual environment.

Explaining the social environment that enhances the current revival of shamanism in Tuva, Ondar first stresses the natural need of people to maintain traditional beliefs. First, there are funeral and family rituals, which actually never disappeared. Second, people turn to shamanism because they aspire to physical and psychological health. Third, the growth of ethnic self-awareness naturally drives people to shamanism. In addition, shamanism builds continuity among generations. To Ondar, the return to shamanism might provide “a solid system of values and more stable moral life.” She compares the resurgence of shamanism in Tuva with similar “returns” to ancestral traditions among other ethnic groups of Russian Federations: Russians to Orthodoxy and Chuvash, Mordvinians, and Mari to “traditional heathen beliefs.” People also approach shamans when they feel uncertainty in their lives (53-54). The Tuvinians certainly cannot return directly to old shamanism, because Tibetan Buddhism, which enjoys a considerable influence on Tuvinian society, significantly watered down traditional spirituality. The religious life of the present-day Tuvinian is marked by Buddhist-shamanist syncretism. Ondar also notes a growing interest in Tuvinian shamanism among scholars. In 1993, Tuva hosted the first Tuvinian-American workshop of “shamanologists,” who

delivered papers, and practicing shamans, who performed their séances. Participants in the workshop made a few “field trips,” which convinced them that shamanism as a “living tradition” is still rooted among “common people of the republic” (54).

Revunenkov, E.V. “Zametki o sovremennoi terminologii, sviazannoi s shamanizmom u Telengitov [Notes on Current Telengit Usage Related to Shamanism].” *Shamanizm i rannie religioznye predstavleniia*. Ed. D.A. Funk. Moskva: institut etnologii i antropologii, 1995. 88-98.

Revunenkov, a renowned student of shamanism of Malaysian, Indonesian, and Siberian peoples, brings a valuable comparative dimension to her paper. The paper deals with the current usage of shamanism-related terminology among the Telengit, a southern Altaian tribe that experienced Mongolian influences. To some extent, the article is designed as a response to a book by Leonid Potapov, the late dean of Altaian studies in Russia and the major expert on Altaian shamanism. In his *Altaiskii shamanizm (Altaian Shamanism)* (for the review of this book, see the present volume), Potapov insists that it does not make sense to study shamanism among modern Siberian natives because among those tribes shamanism died out with the advance of socialism as early as the 1930s. He even takes on those researchers who attempted to conduct field research of modern Siberian shamanism. Potapov argues that, at the present time scholars can study indigenous shamanism only through archival records, old published ethnographies, and museum sources.

Revunenkov writes that in old times, Telengit shamans liked to learn from their Mongol and Tuvinian colleagues. Telengit spiritual practitioners were divided into “white” (*ak*) and “black” (*kara*) shamans. At the same time, there were shamans who simultaneously belonged to both categories, or, as natives said, “walked two roads” (90). Unlike Potapov, Revunenkov believes that present-day stories about past shamans cannot be dismissed. The analysis of these modern stories shows that they are filled with many authentic historical facts, which proves how durable folk memory can be. Even if we assume that current informants totally “make up” their stories about shamans of the past, these oral sources are still valuable because they show in which direction shamanism-related ideas currently develop (91). Many modern Telengit have shamans among their ancestors. In 1983, of Revunenkov’s 22

native informants, eight were direct descendants of shamans. Under the Soviet regime, many descendants of shamans became community leaders or Communist party, Communist youth, and trade union functionaries (91). Revunenikova also argues that despite decades of repression by the Soviet regime, shamanism exhibited an incredible durability and endured, reconfiguring itself and adjusting to the existing political and social environment: "Shamanism was strongly deformed but did not disappear. The elements that did disappear are colorful rituals and ecstatic séances, which always attracted the attention of researchers" (97). Like other Siberian tribes, the Telengit had to hide shamanic tradition and preserve it in different forms. The fact that Revunenikova does not dwell on post-Soviet materials, when shamanism came into vogue among native populations and some Russian intellectuals, makes her analysis especially valuable. She bases her arguments on the materials of her 1983 field research, when, frightened by the repressions of previous decades, all informants insisted that shamanism was a thing of the past (90). Revunenikova agrees that the profession and the definition "kam," which described a shaman among the Altaians, indeed went out of use. At the same time, shamanistic ideology did not disappear. Earlier, shamans alone performed all major traditional rituals, such as healing, prophesizing, and funeral ceremonies. When the Soviet regime eliminated shamans or drove them underground, these functions became shared and spread among minor spiritual practitioners who had always existed on the fringe of shamanism.

For example, indigenous healers (*ak-sagyshu* or *byiandu-kizhi*), who are usually specialized in massage and can detect the source of pain in a human body, are viewed by the present-day Telengit as people resembling "white" shamans, who traditionally dealt with benign spirits (92-93). Modern-day *kara-sagyshu* or *taarmachi*, who cure people by transferring an ailment to the relatives of a patient, can be traced to "black" shamans (93). Moreover, in modern Altaian society, there appeared a new category of people who became known as *biler kizhi* or "the ones who know something." The Telengit informants directly referred to them as a modern analogy of shamans of the past. "The ones who know something" heal people, remove spells, and prophesize. Unlike other folk healers and clairvoyants who do not go through any initiation and usually do not experience a spiritual call, the "ones who know something" exhibit elements of sacred behavior as early as childhood, which certainly places them close to traditional shamans (94). One of her informants stresses, "There are no kams (shamans) anymore.

These people who are called *biler kizhi* are kams nowadays.” (94). Traditional clairvoyants who are called *kosmachi* widened their functions in modern times. At the turn of the twentieth century, the *kosmachi* specialized in detecting spiritual doubles of human beings (*sunu*). Yet, unlike shamans of old, they were not able to retrieve a *sunu* and give it back to a sick person. By the 1980s, the *kosmochi* were already endowed with power to return a spiritual double back to a human body. The *kosmochi* also began to act as mediators between living and dead people, which was also one of the major prerogatives of traditional shamans. Sometimes *biler kizhi* are also called *kosmachi*, which points to the merging of functions of shamans and clairvoyants. “Therefore, modern-day *kosmochi* drew closer to shamans in their functions.” (95). The Telengit also applied the word *kosmochi* to a person who did not become a shaman and also to those who quit shamanizing. Thus, during her field expedition in the Iazula village, Revunenikova met a native male in his fifties who belonged to a lineage of renowned shamans and experienced a “mental ailment.” Villagers called him *kosmochi*. “Such people did not become shamans because, according to our informants, they did not have ‘tutors’ who could have instructed them” (96). All in all, non-shaman spiritual and medicinal practitioners have always existed on the fringe of Altaian society. When the Soviet regime undertook massive attacks against shamanism, auxiliary spiritual practitioners gradually took over specific shamanic functions. By doing this, they essentially saved the entire profession. Revunenikova, who stresses that she cannot agree with Potapov’s dismissive assertion (96) that shamanism is gone forever, concludes, “My research of shamanism in Indonesia and the comparing of shamanic beliefs among people of other areas, particularly in Eurasia, convinced me that shamanism is incredibly durable and resistant to all kinds of religious injections and historical calamities. I view shamanism as a vital, timeless, and resurgent phenomenon that might be pushed aside but never disappears completely. Under favorable circumstances, shamanism resurfaces again, although in other forms.” (98).

Sagalaev, Andrei M. “Naturfilosofskie nachala Sibirskogo shamanizma (k postanovke voprosa) [*Naturphilosophie* of the Siberian Shamanism: Toward a Problem].” *Metodologicheskie i istoriograficheskie voprosy istoricheskoi nauki* (Tomsk) 25 (1999): 118-128.

This article does not have a clearly defined topic. Using Siberian shamanism as an example, Sagalaev draws philosophical conclusions about shamanism in general. Sagalaev parts with major interpretations of shamanism: shamanism as a system of beliefs, shamanism as religion, and shamanism as the technique of ecstasy. In his view, each of them is too narrow to grasp the essence of shamanism. Instead, he offers to approach shamanism as the “strategy of knowledge about surrounding world” (121). Within such broad interpretation, researchers can conveniently accommodate all systems of beliefs, which scholars usually do not directly associate with shamanism: so-called pre-shamanic beliefs such as family rituals, funeral rites, worship of fire, reverence of ancestors, and hunting rituals. For too long scholars centered their attention on the mind and personality of the shaman and paid hardly any attention to shamanism as a system to understand the world and the place of human beings in it. Essentially, shamanism represents what we call *Naturphilosophie*: the “most complete, full, and natural embodiment of mind-stance of an entire society” at its primal stage (121).

Ethnographic records of modern Siberian shamanism provide a unique opportunity to research “archaic layers” of human *Naturphilosophie*, which one cannot trace only by making insights into ancient Greek or Oriental mythology distorted by later literary appropriations. In the case of Siberian beliefs, on the contrary, one encounters “the mythology within which the first version of the worldview was formulated” (119). To Sagalaev, Siberia is one of a few unique corners of the globe, where until recently, tribal people held a “mythopoetical attitude toward the world.” Unlike Sumerian and ancient Greek mythology, which went through literary “processing,” Siberian shamanic mythology supplies a recently recorded primal-like “living worldview.” “Mass materials” drawn from Siberian ethnography might help us to draw better understanding of primal *Naturphilosophie*. One of the major flaws of the numerous generalizations about primal mythology is a limited body of genuine sources, which results in substituting primary research of this mythology with a discussion of what was written about mythology. As a result, scholars trap themselves within a few imagined analytical

definitions such as the three-layered mythological cosmos, which has hardly anything to do with reality (122). Original ethnographic sources brought to this discussion quickly undermine and demolish such fictitious analytical constructs.

Illustrating how scholars can appropriate Siberian ethnographies for the discussion of *Naturphilosophie*, Sagalaev draws analogies between early Greek philosopher Thales and shamanic worldview. Such analogies might shed more light on primal worldview in general. Thales stressed that everything originated from water. So did Siberian shamanism, writes Sagalaev. The Greek philosopher animated surrounding nature. So did shamanism. However, Sagalaev warns scholars not to go to the extreme in the search for specific similarities (125). It is not particulars but general philosophical similarities that are more important. In this case, one can establish a genuine similarity between shamanism and practically any philosophical concept that is colored in “primal organic colors.” It could be not necessarily the Greeks, but also Jakob Boehme, whose metaphorical style is reminiscent of the “archaic pagan organic philosophy” (126) and thereby is well comparable with analogous metaphors of mystical shamanic visions and spiritual illnesses.

In the end, Sagalaev outlines major elements of the Siberian “shamanic cosmos.” First of all, this “cosmos” rejects any definitive approaches (absolute definitions) such as infinity, death, eternity, absolute evil, and absolute good. Shamanic worldview is more concerned with the transitional, marginal, and blurred and clearly avoids operating with opposites. As such, the “Siberian cosmos” is harmonious, undivided, and interrelated. Siberian tribes philosophize (Sagalaev uses ethnographic present) in a “landscape style”: while building their world picture, they use such elements of the landscape as trees, lakes, or animal species rather than abstract definitions (127). To Sagalaev, shamanism is essentially a broadly defined indigenous primal worldview, which includes both shamanic rituals and all native mythology. Sagalaev concludes by stressing that ideas of “organic natural philosophy” continue to attract people to the present day because the “Western” mechanic world picture cannot satisfy human beings. It is too fragmented, too abstract, and devoid of spirituality. This means that “organic natural philosophy” (read “shamanic philosophy” - A.Z.) is not a remnant of the past, but an integral part of many philosophical concepts from the ancient times to the present (128).

Simchenko, Iu.B. “Obychnaia shamanskaia zhizn’: etnograficheskie ocherki [Ordinary Shamanic Life: Ethnographical Essays].” *Rossiiskii etnograf* 7 (1993): 316 pages.

This book, which fills the entire issue of the anthropological periodical *Rossiiskii etnograf*, consists of two loosely-related parts. The first one represents a separate article entitled “Revitalization of Traditional Beliefs among Northern Asian Peoples,” which discusses the history of shamanism among various tribes of Siberia in pre-Revolutionary times, the Soviet period, and the current status of shamanism. During pre-Revolutionary times, Christianity affected the development of traditional indigenous beliefs. The uneven Christianization of Siberian tribes was accompanied by their inclusion into the Russian Empire. Yet, Simchenko writes, “Christianization of the native Northern Asia never became the goal of a governmental policy.” The czarist administration and missionaries spread Christianity by peaceful methods and practiced “full religious toleration in relations with natives” (5). During the Soviet period, on the contrary, the government sought the total eradication of any faith. Christianity and shamanism equally experienced pressure of the totalitarian state. Prior to 1917, shamans never hid their rituals, even during the periods of the most aggressive missionary activities. In the Soviet period, authorities singled out native spiritual practitioners in a “special category of exploiters,” who “took advantage” of the ignorance of the populace. As a result, shamans became the targets of the most brutal repressions and traditional rituals became illegal (9, 13-14).

The second segment of the book, which occupies the greater part of the text, represents a collection of popular autobiographical stories Simchenko wrote about his travels and ethnographic fieldwork among the Chukchi, the Udege, the Buryat, the Nganasan, the Dolgan, and the Tadzhik. The anthropologist details his meetings with shamans from those tribes. Simchenko’s story “Ordinary Shamanic Life” (65-91), which is the title of the entire book, exemplifies the materials included in the collection. The central character of the story is an old Chukchi shaman, Val’girgin. Simchenko encountered the Chukchi for the first time in the early 1960s. During this first trip, the anthropologist had a chance to meet old Val’girgin at his home in the Neshkan village. By that time, Simchenko had already seen many other shamans and collected plenty of materials about their activities. The anthropologist asked the old shaman “to consult” him on “a few elements of the Chukchi shamanic vocation.”



New Age Market Place: Russian Vendors Selling Replicas of Siberian Shaman Drums and Native American Paraphernalia at a Native Festival in the Altai, June 2002. Photograph by Author.

The scholar also told Val'girgin about his meetings with other shamans. At the end of their conversation, Val'girgin gently cautioned the scholar that "quite a few people nowadays claim they are shamans." The anthropologist thought to himself ironically, "Look at yourself, old man, can you prove that your manipulations are not the product of your own imagination?" (66). Thus, at first Simchenko reacted to the shamanic vocation of his "consultant" with a large dose of skepticism. Yet the anthropologist soon received a chance to converse with "real witnesses of Val'girgin's powers."

One of the witnesses was the shaman's daughter. Having married very late, she could not conceive for a long time. Physicians gave up on her, telling her that she would not be able to have children at all. Although the daughter was a product of "modern upbringing," and, in her own words, "did not trust any shamanic tricks," she decided to approach her father as a last resort. During a séance performed for his daughter, Val'girgin at first journeyed up to the "Sunrise" to the "Supreme Manager" to ask Him to grant his daughter a child soul. Later, inquiring of Val'girgin about this séance, Simchenko found out that in the heavenly sphere among the "upper people," the shaman had seen a large house, where the "Manager"

lived. Near the house there were children standing in a row. These were the souls of the dead who, after staying for while in the land of the dead, went under the supervision of the "Manager." Soon after the séance, his daughter conceived and gave a birth to a girl, followed by other children (67, 69).

Thus, Simchenko became introduced to the old Chukchi shaman. "I concluded an agreement with the old man. If he planned to perform a séance somewhere, he would inform me in advance. I would come there, observe, and record on paper whatever I wanted without disturbing him or interfering with his activities" (71). They also agreed that for the right to observe séances, Simchenko would always bring a bottle of vodka, which the two "experts" would drink together after their work. Thus, Simchenko witnessed numerous séances and gathered valuable ethnographic data. The anthropologist mentions a few cases of miraculous healing by the old shaman. For example, a five-year girl accidentally swallowed a needle. Having performed a séance for her, Val'girgin had her mother set the girl on a chamber pot. The needle miraculously "went out" without touching the girl's intestines. In another case, an infant fell into a large pot of hot water and burned himself. Almost all his skin was burned. Strangely, the suffering infant did not cry but started to scream only when doctors came to give him a painkiller shot. The shaman saw this incident in his dream. With a tremendous effort, Val'girgin absorbed the infant's pain inside himself and "kept" the pain at bay until the doctors came with the painkiller. "Keeping the pain away took so much power from the shaman that after the doctors relieved the suffering of the infant, Val'girgin dropped on the ground and kept on rolling from the pain." The shaman was able to recuperate only after intoxicating himself with a large amount of vodka. When, in the early 1970s, authorities confiscated his shamanic costume, Val'girgin performed naked, covering his loins with a towel. As a substitute for a hearth, by which shamans are supposed to sit and dry their drums, Val'girgin used his small mobile iron stove. His drum consisted of a wooden frame with a handle made of bone and a skin of a walrus air bladder stretched over that frame. For a drumstick, he used a long strip of whalebone. At the beginning of his séances, the old man usually quietly "mooded" with a closed mouth. Then Val'girgin began to sneeze air in. During this procedure, he drove himself to total exhaustion, sweating and red-faced. His most powerful spirit helper was a mosquito, which usually "sucked out" a patient's illness (74-75).

Despite their popular style, Simchenko's essays are filled with interesting theoretical details. Thus, as a result of his conversations with Val'girgin, Simchenko learned about the "classification of shaman among the Chukchi. Val'girgin himself belonged to the category of shamans called *enenmeletynen*. Shamans of this category were endowed with powers to heal people and improve the weather. Sea hunters always tried to take *enenmeletynen* on their hunting expeditions to secure good weather. If a boat with hunters were caught in a storm, such shamans threw an alder branch into the sea, and the storm would stop. *Enenmeletynen* were also able to produce miracles. When Val'girgin heard from Simchenko the story about Jesus feeding a large crowd of people with five loaves of bread, the old man was not surprised, because any shaman, including Val'girgin, could perform the same miracle. According to Simchenko, Val'girgin was once able to convince a group of people that instead of one seal, he was able to procure a multitude of seals, whose bodies "covered" the entire seashore. Simchenko associates this phenomenon with mass hypnosis (88).

Yet other shamans, whose powers were limited to the ability to put people to sleep or to make people believe in something that never happened, belonged to the *euvan* ("those who know the words") category. The *euvan* could not visit the places accessible to powerful *enenmeletynen* shamans. The *euvan* were able to enter the land of the dead only "under mushrooms" or, in another words, when they boosted their powers by eating fly-agaric mushrooms, which are strong hallucinogens. According to Simchenko, these shamans "ate dry mushrooms and told people, 'I want to see my ancestors.' And 'the fly-agaric dragged them all over' to the land of the dead. At the same time, the *euvan* shaman did not behave like common folk who also consumed the fly-agaric. Having eaten the mushrooms, most people simply dropped on the ground as if sleeping, whereas the *euvan* began acting like drunks. They spoke in unintelligible phrases for a long time. In such moments, parents tried to keep their children and dogs away. People were afraid that if awakened, the *euvan* could be frightened and die right on the spot. These *euvan* were considered some sort of inferior shamans" (88-89).

The most powerful shamans were so-called *engetylet*. "They were able to perform everything ordinary shamans usually do, such as producing a miracle, interrupting a storm, or finding a lost object. At the same time, the strong shamans were able to do something that nobody else could do. For example, they shot themselves in the head and stopped the bullet. There are not many such shamans nowadays, and, to be honest, I doubt

they ever existed. However, old fellow Val'girgin seriously insists such folks could heal people from a gunshot wound by shooting again at the same wound. He also says that these *engetylet* were able to stop bleeding with words, that they instantly cured all kinds of cuts, and that they could reattach a finger that had been severed" (89).

Smoliak, A.V. *Shaman: lichnost', funktsii, mirovozzrenie (narody Nizhnego Amura)* [*The Shaman: Personality, Functions, Worldview (Lower Amur River Tribes)*]. Moskva: Nauka, 1991. 277 pages.

Smoliak discusses the shamanism of the Nanai and the Ulch, two Lower Amur River tribes. Major sources are the materials of her field trips to this area from the 1950s to the 1980s. Specific chapters deal with such topics as the native view of the universe, spirit world, human soul, shamanic sessions, initiation of shamans for their profession, types of séances, and shamanic paraphernalia.

In the Lower Amur River area, shamans transmitted their powers on a hereditary basis through a parental line (34). Like everywhere in Siberia, Nanai and Ulch shamanic call manifested itself as a long "shamanic illness." The chosen ones usually resisted the calls for the shamanic vocation for many years. Not everybody was ready to take the burden of this profession on his or her shoulders. Shamans usually did not belong to themselves and were obliged to respond any request for help from any person. In the Lower Amur area, "shamanic illness" usually "overtook" natives in middle or old age. Usually, such individuals at first became themselves the patients of other shamans. When the latter found out that they could not cure these patients, "sick" persons were themselves initiated into the shamanic profession. The initiation usually led to the complete recovery of a patient (35).

Smoliak ranks Lower Amur shamans according to their powers. The weakest shamans, *mepi-sama* (the Nanai) and *khoirakachi* (the Ulch), had drums that belonged to their deceased relatives and were able to cure only themselves. Such shamans had weak helping spirits. Moreover, weak shamans usually did not go through a rite of initiation. Some of them even had no drums; while singing their shamanic chants, they beat rhythms with a small wooden stick on a table or an axe (51). "Average" shamans, *taochini sama* or *siurinku sama* (the Nanai) or *sulme-sama* (the Ulch), specialized in curing various diseases. Such shamans were able to win popularity by their musical and artistic skills and by various magic

tricks that they demonstrated during their séances. Some of them “flew” over roofs of dwellings, “swallowed” fire, and “harnessed” their spirits into sleds (52). These shamans did not have special spirits and paraphernalia inherited from ancestors.

The *kasaty* shamans were the highest category of spiritual practitioners, who, in addition to curing and many other shamanic functions, were responsible for transporting the souls of deceased people to the underworld (*buni*) during the last memorial rite called *kasa*. The *kasaty* shamans had special caps, staves with knobs depicting their spirits, and metal disks (*toli*) or “mirrors,” which they attached to their chests, backs or waists. The spirits that “resided” in these items helped shamans to accompany the souls of deceased people. Shamans usually “delivered” the knobs of staves, “mirrors,” or small bells for caps through their mouths. The Nanai and Ulch were convinced that it was only powerful shamans who were able to “deliver” such items. Before they became “big” shamans, the *kasaty* had to acquire appropriate sacred objects. The rite called *undi*, during which shamans “delivered” the aforementioned items, was the stage that propelled spiritual practitioners to the *kasaty* status. Conducted in fall and spring, the *undi* was a large social feast that included shamans’ séances. The purpose of the *undi*, which did not have analogies among other Siberian tribes, was an annual feeding and entertainment of shamans’ helping spirits. During the *undi*, shamans, who were accompanied by any interested people, made rounds of local dwellings, where they shamanized to expel hostile spirits. The hosts and hostesses usually treated shamans with foods and presents. It was assumed that by eating food treats and accepting gifts, shamans fed their helping spirits.

While visiting one of the dwellings, shamans usually felt “sick,” and those present placed them on plank beds, covered them with robes and blankets, and placed nearby cups and bowls with water and the extract of the Labrador tea. Such incidents usually attracted many people, who extinguished all lights, sat down, and listened in darkness how a shaman lay and vomited into bowls and plates. They also heard the sound of dropping metal items. After the procedure was over, in addition to vomit, people usually found in the bowls and plates the ritual objects, the paraphernalia of *kasaty* shamans. Natives believed that shamans “delivered” these items from their mouths, which placed them in the highest spiritual category. The “big” shamans usually “received” these “mirrors,” small bells and other sacred objects from their ancestors, which meant that weak and “average” shamans could not move up to the highest

category at their own choice. Only these “big” shamans had a special helping spirit called *koori*, which was perceived as a huge bird, the size of a house, with an iron beak and metal swords and arrowheads for feathers. The shaman flew on this bird to the underworld. For their journeys to the underworld *kasaty* also used special sleds and spirits of dogs (53).

Booth high-ranking and “average” shamans, whose job was to cure people, had drums and drumsticks, belts, skirts, shirts, and robes. All this paraphernalia was usually manufactured by the relatives of shamans. At the same time, unlike many other Siberian tribes, in Nanai and Ulch shamanism, there was no connection between a shaman’s professional experience and the acquisition of sacred paraphernalia such as drums and costumes (54). What pointed to the rank and prestige of shamans was small pieces of material or feathers attached as stripes to sleeves and shoulders of the shamanic costume. The stripes were sewed to the shamanic costume during the *undi* ceremony by patients grateful for their recovery. On the whole, the Nanai and the Ulch did not practice shamanism as a profession. Like other natives, shamans subsisted on hunting and fishing. Shamanesses were responsible for keeping their households and raising children (40). Even the most popular *kasaty* were not able to survive and feed themselves from the proceeds of their “shamanic practice.” At best, séances could provide only irregular “income.” For the majority of shamans, who usually belonged to the category of average “curing” shamans, the spiritual vocation only distracted them from hunting and fishing and complicated their lives in general. People had the right to approach them at any time, and shamans were not in a position to refuse, which could offend spirits. The basic “payment” for curing séances was either a piece of fabric or a ready-made robe. No one specified the amount of the “payment” in advance. Frequently the payment was only symbolic. The obligatory “service to spirits” frequently “broke” shamans, many of whom were usually poor people (55-56).

Nanai and Ulch shamans did not go through special “schooling” as apprentices of their elder colleagues. Upon recovery, those natives who experienced the “shamanic illness” usually did not interact with the shamans who cured them and declared them to be shamans (57). From her talks with elders, Smoliak concluded that in the Lower Amur area, shamans rarely associated with each other. Spiritual practitioners usually treated each other with suspicion as potential competitors. Shamans, especially if they lived in the same village, were involved in a constant struggle for public power and prestige. A success by one shaman usually

aroused animosity in another. They frequently complained that spiritual competitors “stole” their helping spirits (58). Constant competition often led to spiritual warfare conducted by helping spirits of competing shamans. Such “corporate” fighting resembled the spiritual combat shamans routinely performed during their séances. In most cases, spiritual battles occurred among shamans who never saw each other and who represented different ethnic groups. Shamans usually announced that they had an enemy shaman from a specific village or locality and that they were about to fight. Thus, Nanai and Ulch shamans fought Sakha, Evenki, and Nivkh colleagues (59). People explained illnesses and sudden deaths of shamans as the intrigues of hostile shamans and their spirits. The struggle between shamans sometimes evolved into a struggle between two shamanic lineages, which lasted for generations. The responsibility to avenge their fathers and grandfathers was inherited along with shamanic powers (60).

Smoliak discusses at length the question of ecstasy in Nanai and Ulch shamanism. Although scholars frequently view the ecstasy as one of the major elements of shamanism, in her personal field work, Smoliak never witnessed “the same kind of ecstasy which some authors ascribe to the Altaian, Chukchi, Sakha and some other shamans” (63). “The ecstasy in Nanai and Ulch séances had special features. The shamans from these tribes usually immersed themselves into the process of chasing hostile spirits. They shouted from agitation, sweated, gasped for breath, and, being worn out, literally dropped on the ground. On occasions Nanai and Ulch shamans partially even blacked out. At the same time, they were constantly on alert and always watched what went around. Not for a single second did they switch themselves off from reality, and they maintained constant contact with surrounding people” (64). Numerous studies on Sakha, Buryat, Altaian, Ulch shamanism and other tribes of Siberia have noted that the state of ecstasy shamans experienced during their séances was usually conditioned by mental disorders, epilepsy, and “neuro-hysterical fits.” Nanai and Ulch shamans never experienced any “mental disorders” except when they were called by spirits for their shamanic vocation. After they were initiated into their vocation, the “disorders” completely disappeared. It was shamans who usually summoned spirits at their own initiative, not vice-versa. Smoliak avoids making generalizations about other Siberian tribes. Yet on the basis of her long-time field research among the Nanai and the Ulch, she states, “It might be possible that among other tribes, shamanic séances were accompanied by fits. Yet in the Amur Rivera area it was absolutely not

the case” (65). Shamanic séances usually attracted many people. Séances performed in solitude for themselves were not considered very effective. Natives believed that the more people present during a séance, the more effectively helping spirits worked for shamans (155).

Nanai and Ulch divided all their spirits into two groups: “regular” spirits (*saven*) and hostile spirits (*amban*). Both groups of spirits could inflict illness. At the same time, ordinary human beings, except powerful shamans, could not control or affect the behavior of the *amban* spirits, and people did not make images of these hostile spirits. The “regular” spirits (*saven*) usually visited and “touched” people to make them feed them with sacrifices, which inflicted illnesses on human beings (68). In such cases, during their séances shamans fought, defeated, and “moved” a *saven* spirit into a specially-made image or a sculpture, which was manufactured from wood, metal, or fabric. As soon as a *saven* was “moved” into one of these objects, it was considered subservient and began to help human beings. Having turned them into helping spirits, people kept *saven* in secure places at their dwellings, storages, or a taiga forest and regularly “fed” them (75-76).

Amban spirits usually stole human souls, which automatically caused an illness. It was the job of shamans to retrieve these souls and help patients. Having found during a séance that a patient’s soul was missing, a shaman began to chase the hostile spirit that had stolen the soul. The stolen soul could be found in different spheres: among heavenly deities, clan spirits, and earthly spirits-masters of the taiga, water, and mountains. Yet in all cases, no matter where a soul ended up, it was assumed that an *amban* spirit kept it. Even if an individual fell sick from heavenly spirits, it was believed that an *amban* was the one who usually stole a soul because *amban* were subordinated to heavenly spirits. During séances, shamans usually tried to find out what spirit actually “issued” an order to steal a soul. When shamans identified this spirit, they usually ascended to the heavenly sphere and approached the major deity, Boa Endurni, or one of the heavenly spirits, asking to release the soul. In return, shamans promised to deliver a sacrifice.

In case an *amban* spirit penetrated the body of a human being, shamans performed another type of séance during which they extracted the hostile spirit. For this purpose, people made a large figure from dry grass. A shaman stretched out a thread from the patient to the “man of straw.” After this, the audience began to shout, “Gah!” to scare the spirit out, while the shaman tried to expel the spirit by biting the patient’s body in various spots: the stomach, chest, or neck. It was believed that during

this fight, an *amban* spirit was dashed around a patient's body and eventually ran out of a patient's mouth. When an *amban* finally jumped out of a patient's body, it ran over the thread and ended up in the "man of straw." After this, the "man of straw" supposedly began "jump" by itself so energetically and so fast that even several strong men had a hard time controlling this doll by ropes. At this point, all participants began beating the doll with sticks, and eventually "killed" the hostile spirit, and the doll was thrown out in the taiga forest (168).

Solomatina, S.N. "Materialy po shamanstvu u Tuvintsev [Materials on Shamanism Among the Tuvinians]." *Materialy polevikh etnograficheskikh issledovaniï 1988-1989 gg.* Ed. Yu.Yu. Kriukov. St. Petersburg: institut etnologii i antropologii, 1992. 119-129.

This paper discusses the link between so-called *albys* spirits and the shamanic call in Tuvinian shamanism. As her sources, Solomatina uses pieces of indigenous folklore she collected in Tuva: Tuvinian legends about acquisition of shamanic powers and recollections of natives who witnessed shamanic séances. *Albys* was a special category of spirits, which were viewed in a various manners depending on locality. Some Tuvinian viewed these spirits as human-like creatures; others considered them to be a vague and invisible wind-like power. The Western Tuvinian described the *albys* in an ambivalent manner. On the one hand, these spirits were attractive, youthful beings wearing beautiful clothing. On the other hand, they were marked by several physical drawbacks, which actually stressed their affiliation with the other world: a long curved copper or white nose or even the absence of a nose, a crooked mouth, or "if you look from behind they have no bodies, you can see entrails" (124). The Tuvinians also stressed the ability of the *albys* to change their gender.

There were several types of the *albys* spirits: *sug* (water) *albys*, *cher* (earthly) *albys*, *oran tandy eezi* (mountain or middle world) *albys*, and *ustuu oran khood* (sky) *albys*. Depending on their type, the *albys* affected human beings in different ways. They could make people sick or call specific individuals to accept the shamanic vocation. On the "grading scale" of the *albys* spirits, one can find at the lowest level *sug albys*, which was usually associated with the mental illness (*albystaar*). Although *sug albys* possessed the ability to turn people into shamans, the individuals who received power from these spirits were considered weak

shamans. On the top of this spiritual ladder natives placed *khoor-albys*, which was exclusively considered the source of shamanic power. *Khoor-albys* was viewed as the “shining being” that “descended” on an individual from high above. This spirit was responsible for turning people into the most powerful shamans.

The Tuvinian legends and stories recorded by Solomatina devote much attention to the relationships between the shaman and the *albys* and between the sick and the *albys*. An illness inflicted on an individual by *albys* spirits could be treated only by those shamans whose “nature” at least partially is associated with the *albys* responsible for this specific ailment (124). In this context, the story of Senmit, the daughter of the shaman Chadym, is especially interesting. Senmit observed many séances performed by her father. She also questioned him about the meaning of ritual activities her father repeatedly performed during his séances. She told the anthropologist about his healing method: “I often asked my father what he did when he was chasing an *albys*. He tried to catch the *albys*, and whipped a sick person with a lash that had a red handle. My father told me that was the way he wanted to get from an ailing person the name of an *albys* [that was responsible for an illness]. Usually a sick person would not name it. When the sick one backs off and gives a name, he starts to whip. After this my father used to say, ‘Where are you? I cannot go there.’ Then people could hear in his drum some sort of noise, like a mouse’s or a cuckoo bird’s rustling. After my father caught an *albys*, he usually severely beat him as a punishment for sending an illness. For the shaman, when a man fell sick, an *albys* appeared as a woman, and if a woman fell sick, an *albys* appeared as a man. For some people, the *albys* appeared as a cuckoo bird or a mouse. When a person fell sick, he became friends or ‘fell’ in love with an *albys*. That is why a sick person would not name the *albys*. As soon as the sick person named an *albys*, the *albys* ran away. When a person named an *albys*, the *albys* usually began to cry. An *albys* could change his shape ten times. To distract or to keep the shaman off the sick, the *albys* might turn into a dog’s excrement or into a shoe bottom. If an *albys* changed himself, that was when my father usually began to whip a sick person. I remember once he beat one woman at her chest until she bled. Once he caught an *albys*, the father pressed him with his hand in the drum, and beat him there. An *albys* often likes to enter young people” (Mugut-Aksy village, 1982) (121).

Irgit Baiyr, a native from the Shegetei area, said to Solomatina in 1988, “No other shaman except the *khoor-albys* shaman can help people who fell ill because of an *albys*. When the *khoor-albys* shaman

approaches the yurt of a sick person, an *albys* spirit usually whispers to the sick, 'Here is our enemy; let's get out from here as soon as possible.' In such cases, people tie this sick person to something. Once a woman fell ill from an *albys* at Mugur-Leksakh. This woman laughed for no reason, talked with herself, and ran around. So people roped her and then invited a shaman, Chadym. The shaman beat her with a whip, demanding that she name the *albys* that entered her. She had to name the *albys*. After this, she cried for her "good friend" she had lost and who had appeared to her as a very handsome man. This woman blacked out, she cried again for a long time, and finally recovered." Kok-Kadai from the Shina area (1989), explained to Solomatina the difference between the shamans who were able to see the *albys* and those who could not: "Not all shamans can see the *albys*. The shamans who can see the *albys* usually say that *albys* makes fun of regular weak shamans whom people sometimes bring to cure a sick person. Powerful shamans say that the *albys* even can sit on the collars of the weak ones and defecate. In one yurt once they tried to chase away an *albys*. They brought a shaman who could not see, and this shaman was beating his drum. At the same time, another shaman who could see came in. The one who could 'see' noticed that the *albys* hid behind the felt of the yurt right behind the back of the shaman with the drum and peeked out from there. The one who could see began to beat the *albys* and finally got rid of the him. People who became sick from an *albys* should not come back to an old campsite for three years. Otherwise, the *albys* might jump into them and make them sick again" (123).

In 1988, Irgit Urut told Solomatina a story about the receipt and rejection of the shamanic vocation by a midwife named Irgit Arymzat (1906-1980s): "When Irgit married, her fits began. She was able to wave and suddenly find in her hand a piece of silk fabric. Then she could wave again, and the piece was gone. There was a cliff with a steep crack inside. During one of her fits, Irgit ran down the crack and blacked out down there. Men had to pull her out with ropes. She stayed with her brother Chadym for the whole winter. The brother explained to her that she would not be able to become a shaman. Chadym said it was like trying to lift a heavy rock you cannot move at all. He said that the shamanic illness fell on her by chance, not by heritage. The brother shamanized for her during seven days. After this, the illness was gone" (123-124). Senmit (1988) remembered the same midwife: "She was the youngest in the family. When she got married, that was when the fits started. She could climb a tree and sit there singing like a cuckoo bird. We were not allowed

to leave the yurt. Our parents were afraid that we might scare her away, and something bad might happen to her. When Irgit was sick, she could see right through a pregnant woman and say who was inside, a boy or a girl. Irgit herself gave birth to five children, all of whom died. My father shaman Chadym made a small *urug eeren* [a carved image that contained the souls of children] and did something with it. After this, all her new children stayed alive. Irgit helped those who did not have children. When women felt especially bad during their deliveries, people usually asked Irgit to come and help. She used to go to a hospital to help women. They thought that Irgit had the power to help because she once was sick herself" (123-124).

In conclusion, Solomatina writes that the story about Irgit reflects a situation of an unplanned receipt of the shamanic power by an adult person. The *khoor-albys* spirit accidentally penetrated Irgit, who did belong to the shamanic lineage, which already had the "consecrated" shaman in the same generation. In this situation, the shamanic power could not be "assimilated." Therefore, the new candidate was viewed as totally unprepared for accepting this power. In such cases, the power should be returned to its source (the sky). Although the impact of the *khoor-albys* was not entirely eliminated, the spiritual and medicinal activities of the candidate who had been "accidentally" selected were narrowed (126).

Startsev, A.F. "Udegeiskie shamany [Shamans of the Udege Tribe]." *Etnograficheskie protsessy i obshchestvennoe soznanie u narodov Dal'nego Vostoka*. Ed. V.A. Turaev. Vladivostok: Dal'nauka, 1998. 118-130.

As other Siberian tribes, the Udege recognized as a shaman an individual who went through a "spiritual disease" that was accompanied by fits and hallucinations. Would-be shamans were expected to meet their patron spirit (*sevon*) in their dreams or visions. Young inexperienced shamans were called *nitsa samani*, which means a "small shaman." Of the shamanic paraphernalia, such young shamans had only drums and so-called thundering belts, which pointed to their limited "professional qualities." Young shamans were invited to shamanize for individuals with minor ailments such as a stomach ache, a headache, or a joint pain. Before performing a séance, such shamans usually hinted to the relatives of a patient that they would like to acquire ritual footwear embroidered

with images of lizards and snakes on tip-toes. The Udege believed that these images made the feet of shamans fast and maneuverable. The relatives of the patient usually well understood the hint of the beginning shaman and manufactured the required footwear with the necessary embroidery.

If the first curing séance went successfully, shamans usually began to believe that they were able to heal more serious ailments. The first successes of young shamans were usually reported to all inhabitants of a village. This gradually established their reputations and secured more invitations from patients. No member of a community questioned the skills of new or young shamans if they proved themselves. What also helped people to establish themselves as shamans was the conviction of the Udege people that supernatural powers penetrated spiritual practitioners not only because they were chosen for their vocations by spirits, but also because members of the community wanted this. The Udege insisted that it was only enough for people to believe strongly in something and it would surely happen (119). Udege shamans were well aware that their power depended on people's faith in their medicine. That is why under no circumstances did shamans refuse to visit their patients. With each new visitation, *nitsa samani* usually acquired a new shamanic item. According to the Udege religious tradition, sacred items and artifacts made by shamans themselves never helped during séances. Such items should be made by the relatives of a patient, as in the case mentioned above. Filling their ritual "wardrobe" was very important for spiritual practitioners, because it pointed to their professional growth and allowed shamans to climb up the ladder of a shamanic hierarchy to receive at first a rank of the "average" and eventually the "big" shaman. Unlike "small" shamans who primarily served their own clan members, "average" (*samani*) shamans were very popular both within and beyond their clans. They were invited to cure serious ailments, to find lost souls, or to expel hostile spirits (120). A soul of a human being was considered very weak, which made it an easy prey for hostile spirits. Moreover, a soul itself could wander off from its host or hostess. In this case, an individual fell ill. It was believed that the soul of a very sick person got into the hands of a hostile spirit, who carried it away to its dwelling, where this soul was tortured. This was reflected on or in the body of a patient.

Shamans usually visited their patients in the evening. After inspecting a patient, shamans extinguished a fire and embarked on the search for the hostile spirit who had stolen the patient's soul. Without yet putting on

their ritual clothing, shamans began to sing and beat their drums, shouting out the names of possible hostile spirits that might have taken the soul of the patient. If the patient, having heard one of the mentioned names, shuddered, it meant that this specific spirit held the soul. In this case, shamans appointed the day of a séance and informed the relatives of the patient to start all necessary preparations for this event. During séances, shamans conducted “mental journeys” accompanied by their patron spirits to the habitats of hostile spirits. At first, shamans usually promised a hostile spirit good food and asked them to return the soul in a friendly way. If persuasion did not help, shamans engaged this spirit in combat. To spectators, the combat looked like furious shamanizing, threatening singing, and fierce dancing accompanied by drumbeats and a “thundering belt.” In the course of this struggle, a shaman retrieved the stolen soul from the hostile spirit and returned it to the patient.

Sometimes, instead of stealing a soul, a hostile spirit “settled” in the body of an individual, which made the whole body of the patient shake and sweat. In this case, shamans again usually started with persuasion, trying to talk the hostile spirit into leaving the body of this person. Dressed in their costumes with all accessories, shamans usually knelt down and sharply beat their drums, trying to convince a hostile spirit to taste a prepared treat and to leave the body of the patient (121). During this type of séance, shamans always used dried odorous Labrador tea leaves. The Labrador tea burns slowly without a fire and emanates a fragrant smoke, which shamans’ assistants used to smoke shamans and their artifacts. Inhaling the smoke of the Labrador tea, shamans went into a trance (*narkoticheskoe sostoianie*) and began sharing with the audience what they learned from their patron spirits during the séance. If these were instructions, the audience was expected to remember and to fulfill what the shaman transmitted to them from the spirit. If this was not done, the patient would not recover, and the shaman would not be able to repeat the message for a second time (122). If a patient did not recover after a first séance, shamans continued treatment the next day. Upon their recommendations, relatives of a patient made from paper or wood the image of the hostile spirit that was responsible for an ailment. If they failed to extract a hostile spirit during the first séance, shamans stopped trying persuasion. The next time, they literally destroyed the spirit with deafening drum beats. Being unable to stand the sound of the drum, the spirit usually ran away from the body to a specially-prepared object that was used as a container to catch the hostile spirit. After the object absorbed the spirit, it became so heavy that even strong men had a hard

time carrying it out. Finally the “container” was carried out and burned (123).

“Big” shamans (*sagdi samani*) cured all kinds of ailments. Yet their specialization was memorial ceremonies, during which they sent the souls of deceased people to the land of the dead or to the sacred old woman named Tagu Mama (124). In the latter case, shamans as well as their patron spirits traveled to the heavenly sphere. During these journeys, hostile spirits usually chased shamans. To confuse the spirits, shamans turned into various insects, animals, and birds. In this case, shamans imitated the sounds and voices of all these creatures. Tagu Mama’s domain, which shamans journeyed to, resembled an earthly landscape: fish in a river, a house on the bank of a lake, a boat with paddles, and the same mountains. If shamans came to Tagu Mama to retrieve the soul of a child, they might tell the old woman that they wanted to take the soul back. Tagu Mama could respond with a question, “Why do his father and mother mistreat the child?” Defending the parents, shamans might say that child was mistreated by chance. Incidentally, this “child mistreatment” theme was reproduced in many séances performed over sick children. The Udege usually brought up their children without any curses or physical punishments. Therefore, people assumed that parents who mistreated their children could lose them because all-seeing spirits usually made the child ill. If parents ignored this spiritual warning, spirits could take the child’s soul away to Tagu Mama, and in this case the child would die. Therefore, “the shaman acted not only as the healer, but also as the educator who, through his dialogue with the heavenly old woman, instructed parents to treat children fairly” (125-126).

According to the Udege worldview, each adult person had three souls, which were called shadows. An individual could easily lose his or her “shadow.” The one who lost a soul looked sick and confused. If the most experienced shamans were not able to retrieve a soul, it meant that a person would die (127). Usually, to locate a soul, shamans embarked on journey to the “kingdom of the dead” and met numerous souls, from which they tried to identify the one they were looking for. The problem was usually complicated by the fact that all souls looked identical, and shamans could tell them from each other only by birthmarks or by characteristic wounds, cuts, or injuries its owners had when they were alive. Examining souls, shamans usually mentioned aloud these characteristic marks, and people from the audience helped shamans to participate in the search. In case shamans were able to find a soul, they constructed its figure or image, trying to make it look exactly as they saw

it in the afterworld. The image of the soul was usually hung on the chest of a patient (128).

Timofeev, G.N. *Tainy sibirskikh shamanov: iz istorii shamanizma Iugorskogo kraia* [*Mysteries of Siberian Shamans: Essays on the History of Shamanism in the Yugra Area*]. Surgut: Yugra, 1996. 107 pages.

This book represents a collection of fictional and semi-fictional essays, which are tailored as reminiscences of a Russian author about his childhood and youth encounters with Khanty, Mansi, Even, and Selkup shamans in the Yugra area between 1937 and 1944. According to Timofeev, his stepfather, a secret police officer (then OGPU) in Soviet Central Asia, got in trouble for losing important documents. Miraculously, the father somehow was able to quit this job and took his family deep into the Western Siberia taiga forest. In Siberia, in an attempt to avoid a possible purge and an execution, he moved the family from one place to another. Constantly on the road amid wilderness, young Timofeev had an excellent chance to observe the life of various native tribes. The topics of the essays include descriptions of conversations between adults and native shamans the writer accidentally heard, scenes of shamanic séances, and legends related to shamans he heard from natives. Each story is accompanied by Timofeev's philosophical generalizations on the essence of shamanism. Primitive in its style and not properly edited, the book is an example of the currently booming popular Russian literature, where shamanism is romanticized to the very extreme. In the Timofeev book, shamans act as carriers of high ecological, ethical, and philosophical wisdom: "among the Siberian shamans, the power of practical philosophy embodied the essence of the entire Aristotelian dialectics" (104). Shamans are the "people endowed by divine nature with the special ability to transmit the mind of the universe as the essence of the world, which opposes the falsity of the primitive classical materialism devoid of any spirituality" (65). Here is the description of the old shaman Iunus, whom Timofeev met when traveling with his family to the Entsy natives: "He was seventy years old. However, he looked much younger, and physically he was in a good shape. The reason is daily physical work, the eternal source of health and wisdom, which is a far cry from the daily routine of the civilized world. Constant communication of Iunus with nature made him a strong and

honest person” (41). While his stepfather and Iunus talked about religion, shamanism and Christ, young Timofeev sat nearby, listening to their conversations. Timofeev’s shaman speaks slowly, carefully articulating each phrase.

The most peculiar essay is about encounters of one of the leaders of the Russian revolution, Leon Trotsky, with a native shaman during his exile to the Obdorsk area in Eastern Siberia in 1907. Timofeev does not explain whether the story is the creation of his own imagination or a local legend. To be exact, Trotsky did live as an exile in this area and then escaped abroad. Using the episode of his escape as background, Timofeev describes Trotsky’s encounters with native shamans who put down his materialistic worldview with their wisdom. The first shaman, Nikolai Sandalov, “who looked like an Indian: black eyes, thin eagle nose unusual for a Mansi native,” harbors the revolutionary, who engages the spiritual practitioner in political and philosophical conversations. Trotsky introduces the shaman to the nationalities program of the Russian Marxists, the land question, and the contemporary political situation in the Russian empire. Sandalov grasps everything quickly and gives Trotsky good feedback in return (58). Trotsky becomes curious about native wisdom and tries to penetrate the shrine of the shaman hidden in the woods. Although the shaman cautions him not venture there, curious Trotsky will not listen. Alone amid the wildlife in the center of the native shrine, the revolutionary “sharply felt all horror of the fratricidal events on Red Presnia in December of 1905, where in the volleys of gunfire, people committed a terrible bloodbath. People commit such evil acts, while here amid nature there is such peace. It is here that Trotsky for the first time felt all harm and the gap between human evil and the philosophy of thinking nature.” Eventually, Timofeev’s Trotsky concludes, “Probably Jean-Jacques Rousseau was right when he called people to return to nature” (59). Moreover, Trotsky “became surprised that judgments of the Mansi magician contained grains of wisdom that could be found in the generalization of Zeno and Borges” (64-65). Trotsky becomes a witness of a shamanic séance performed by Sandalov and even feels “some unexplainable power” (62). The encounter with the shaman would not be complete without the spiritual practitioner predicting the fate of Trotsky. Sandalov successfully performs this mission by telling the revolutionary that he would be killed by one of his own (64). The Trotsky story is interesting because it visibly shows how current Russian *belles-lettres* assigns different roles to shamans. Earlier in Soviet fiction, shamans existed to be exposed or served to add native

exotic flavor to a plot. Now, “although Sandalov did not read Claude Levi-Strauss, Bengt Danielson, Plato and Aristotle” (65), he spiritually wins over godless Marxism and materialism.

To Timofeev, in ancient times Siberian natives lived in a natural paradise. When the Russians came, natives became greedy, rich, and jealous. Moreover, claims Timofeev, earlier, indigenous people were not even familiar with such words (105). Native shaman Vasilii Ivanovich enlightens a Russian animal technician Kun that in ancient times, spiritual practitioners were separated into “black” and “white” shamans. Shamans of old always lived in peace, were friends with, and helped each other (104-106). After the Russians came, continues Timofeev’s shaman, the two groups became mixed which each other, which resulted in all kind of troubles (104). Despite these obvious distortions, Timofeev does make a few correct observations. For example, he correctly stresses that shamanic séances were far from “one-man shows.” Instead, they were collective enterprises in which shamans and their audiences were intimately connected: “all people who were present during a séance felt their relation to the powers of the other world” (33). Hence, shaman Iavlak, one of the characters, instructs his son, a would-be shaman: “You should welcome your spirits in a gentle manner. They like it. And when you start talking with them, watch carefully people around you. If you see that somebody does not listen to you very well, you try to stare at him, or start shouting loudly, or sing loudly, or beat a drum. After the séance, when spirits leave, make sure that all people come back to reality and are cheerful. Before a séance, better not to eat, only drink tea. A full shaman is a weak shaman; he is lazy and stupid” (86). Throughout the book, Timofeev repeatedly stresses the mysterious nature of the shamanic vocation. Yet, in a contradiction to his anti-materialistic utterances, Timofeev advocates the necessity of scientific research on shamanism and even draws an unfounded conclusion: “nobody has yet attempted to study the phenomenon of shamanism as a scientific problem in the spirit of current achievements of science” (98).

Totysh, Sofron. *Zapiski molodogo kama [Notes of a Young Shaman]*. Kemerovo: Kemerovskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1992. 61 pages.

This small semi-fictional book is a sample of the burgeoning literature on shamanism in present-day Russia. Written by a native writer from the Shor tribe, in the northern Altai, the narrative is set at the turn of the

twentieth century and tailored as the notes of a young native adolescent named Sharan Otush. The Shor had a long history of interaction with Russians, and many of them became heavily assimilated. Otush, who reads Dostoevsky, is a student in a Russian technical school. His father wants to see his son become a scribe in a local office. Suddenly Otush begins to experience fits and loses consciousness. His family cannot understand what is going on. Some Russian physicians think he simply simulated his illness. Others are lost and unable to diagnose his ailment. In desperation, the father sends his son to Tomsk, the largest cultural and academic center of Siberia at that time, in hope of treatment by prominent Russian doctors. On the way to Tomsk, Otush is befriended by Olga, a Russian girl, who eventually falls in love with him. The girl's father turns out to be a famous doctor, who is able to rise above the contemporary "scientific superstition." He suggests that Otush go home and consult Shor's "folk medicine men" (19).

After Otush's Tomsk venture, local elders, who heard that Russian doctors could not heal his fits, suddenly announce that the devil settled in his body and that in old times, such people like Otush were shot or thrown into a river to ward off danger from villagers. Local shaman Kychai, who was just a fringe character to this point, saves the boy by openly challenging the village elders. Kychai announces that Otush has a shamanic disease. The attitude of the villagers immediately changes. The elders approach the boy with their apologies and even begin persuading him to become the village shaman as a successor of Kychai (28). The rest of the book is the description of Otush's apprenticeship with old Kychai. The apprenticeship represents the set of healing miracles Kychai demonstrates to Otush: from curing toothache to changing the physical and facial features of native boys and girls. For example, Kychai makes children more beautiful by changing the shape of their noses and cheekbones: "I indeed shape heads and occasionally faces of children. To tell you honestly, it is hard work that takes years. Children's bones are soft like dough. You should start to shape them when they are still fresh and do it carefully without rush" (39). The old shaman proudly demonstrates his student, a girl named Okasha, whom he turned from "ugly monkey" into a beauty. Gradually, Otush begins to perform and unfold his hidden powers. Kychai gently exposes his apprentice to the secrets of his shamanic ailment, reminding him that "shamans are not normal people. Normal people cannot become shamans, especially if they do not have physical and mental deviations in regular life." "What are these deviations?" inquires Otush. Kychai responds thus, "Let's say, a

person went through some kind of a disease, and one of his organs started to function improperly, especially if it is related to the brain.” Otush again asked the old shaman, “It means that I also have some deviation?” Kychai responds, “Of course, you do” (36).

Eventually the old shaman sets out to test Otush’s skills, using the case of lost children. Otush uses his mental energy to locate the children and successfully passes the test (45-46). Although learning with the shaman, Otush does not consider it harmful to study anatomy with a local drunken paramedic named Filimonov, who supplies the young shaman with appropriate books (52). Kychai was not a stranger to the written word, either. Looking for specific remedies and diagnoses, the old shaman regularly consults notes of his shaman-grandfather (56). The whole narrative centers on the description of numerous cases of a curing magic. In the end, the old shaman, who sees how skillfully his young colleague treats patients, finally instructs Otush, “Now it is time to get used to a drum; he is your first assistant” (60).

Urbanaeva, Irina S. “Shamanizm Mongol’skogo mira kak vyrazhenie tengrianskoi ezotericheskoi traditsii Tsentral’noi Azii [Shamanism of the Mongol World as an Expression of Central Asian Esoteric Tradition].” *Tsentral’no-aziatskiishamanizm: filosofskie, istoricheskie, religioznye aspekty, materialy mezhdunarodnogo nauchnogo simpoziuma*. Ed. I.S. Urbanaeva. Ulan-Ude: Buriatskii institut obshchestvennykh nauk, 1996. 48-64.

Urbanaeva is a native Buryat scholar whose paper might serve as an example of the intellectual and conceptual environment that affects many native and non-native students of shamanism in present-day Russia. The article summarizes the results of Urbanaeva’s research, part of which was financed by the Soros Foundation. The goal of her research is to reconstruct “worldview and eco-ethical sources of the nomadic civilization and pan-ethnic tradition of inner Asia.” She claims that “nomadic inner Asia, the motherland of our ancestors, is the region which maintains the most ancient form of esoteric knowledge on the earth” (48). According to Urbanaeva, “not borrowing from China, India, or from the Near East, wise elders of Mongol and Baikal area steppes independently developed sacred wisdom akin to classic yoga, Daoist alchemy, and Buddhist Tantra” (48).

Urbanaeva insists that shamanism is the manifestation of so-called *tengrianism* (from major Buryat deities called *tengri*). *Tengrianism* is the indigenous tradition of the nomads of this area: "From an esoteric viewpoint, the shamanism of our ancestors is the exterior manifestation of one of the most ancient traditions of world occult knowledge, which might be called *tengrianism*" (48). As the ancient shamanic tradition, *tengrianism* represents the "occult protection of the Mongol world as a whole and its specific tribes and clans in particular" (56). "*Tengrianism* is not simply a worldview, philosophy, or religion. Observing the heavens, nomads examined the mystery of immersion into the infinity. They developed their own system of spiritual practice and meditation. The shamanic 'science' existing among the Mongol-Buryat was the system of knowledge that was transmitted to young shamans during their training and initiation. Having discovered in deep antiquity the emptiness and purity of Tengeri steppe, wise elders developed the art of simple living that values unspoken truth higher than verbal reasoning." (59).

To help her readers to grasp the "sacred wisdom" of the Mongol-Buryat world, Urbanaeva draws on the "method of comparative esoterism" introducing "a number of Western and Eastern occult and esoteric teachings such as Neoplatonism, mystical Christianity, Cabbala, Occult Philosophy, magic, Theosophy, anthroposophy, classic yoga, Hinduism, Daoism, Dishims, Sufism, the philosophy of Georgii Gurdzhiev, and the philosophy of Carlos Castaneda:" "The method of comparative esoterism provides an opportunity to locate the universal esoteric source of philosophical and ideological concepts that might be found in our Buryat and Mongol spiritual tradition" (48). Sometimes she uses that literature as her sources: for example, works by Helena Blavatsky, one of the founders of Theosophy, and books by the Russian "cosmic philosopher" and artist Nicholas Roerich (49, 62). Among Urbanaeva's references, one may also find "an Indian shaman Don Juan, whose teaching is narrated by C. Castaneda," and who is a "carrier of the ancient Toltec wisdom, elements of which could be found in inner Asia" (49). Reviewing the variety of esoteric works that flooded the Russian book market in the 1990s, Urbanaeva surmises that "according to occult data, central Asia [inner Asia] is the region where the spirit of all races had existed" (48). In addition to archival sources drawn primarily from the papers of Khangalov, the nineteenth-century native ethnographer, Urbanaeva relies heavily on Potanin's folklore studies.

Part of the paper deals with numerological analysis of the number four in the Buryat shamanic tradition (four groups of *tengri*) and also thirteen,

which is repeated in shamanic chants and which represents the highest rank in the shamanic vocation among the Buryat. Urbanaeva compares the “Buryat numerology” with analogous numerologies in other cultures (51). Urbanaeva also stresses that the division of Buryat spiritual practitioners into “black” and “white” shamans and its interpretation within the framework of good and evil were not characteristic for indigenous tradition and represent later creations (61).

The most interesting parts of Urbanaeva’s paper are her own field data and archival data on Buryat shamanism recorded by previous ethnographers. Although shamanic powers were mainly transmitted on a hereditary basis within specific clans, archival sources show that natives from non-shamanic lineages could become shamans as well by accepting another shaman’s *udkha* (root, the line of continuity) through a special rite connecting their own *udkha* with an *udkha* of the shaman. Shaman L.K. Galsanov remembered (1962), “I became a shaman when I adopted another person’s *udkha*. Earlier, a shaman named Malakhaan Mootongi lived. He visited me in my dream and ordered me to take his *udkha*.” There were cases of self-initiation as the result of an extraordinary natural or social calamity. Bulgai Onkhanova, a Buryat shamaness, reported in 1923 that she had initiated herself into the shamanic profession during an epidemic of measles that ravaged native camps in the valley of the Inda River from 1908 to 1909. Another native became a shaman after he miraculously survived a lightning strike that killed a cow. In conclusion, Urbanaeva states that the comparison of Buryat shamanic tradition with the most ancient religious beliefs is important not only from an academic point of view. It is crucial for maintaining the “ecology of the Buryat soul” (64).

Vainshtein, S.I. and N.P. Moskalenko. “Problemy Tuvinskogo shamanstva: genesis, izbrannichestvo, effektivnost’ lechebnikh kamlanii, sovremennii renessans [Problems of Tuvinian Shamanism: Origin, Election, Effectiveness of Curing Séances, and Current Renaissance].” *Shamanizm i rannie religioznie predstavlenia*. Ed. D.A. Funk. Moskva: institut etnologii i antropologii, 1995. 62-75.

This paper integrates a brief review of Tuvinian shamanism and theoretical generalizations on shamanism in general. On the issue of acquisition of shamanic powers, Vainshtein and Moskalenko firmly assert that “it was only people suffering from visible mental deviations who

became shamans; these people carried inherited neurotic reactions, which became entrenched in ritual tradition in the form of so-called shamanic illness” (66). The authors stress their disagreement with such scholars as, for example, the late V.N. Basilov, who argued that “shamanic illness” was conditioned by the designated social role of a shaman. The authors believe that recent research confirmed the neuropathological and mental character of the “shamanic illness,” “which is genetically conditioned.” Vainshtein and Moskalenko provide evidence to support their thesis. For example, they point out that in 90 percent of examined cases, the “shamanic illness” took place during puberty, which they describe as the period of “hormonal misbalance, and critical bodily changes,” when an inherited “genetic program” manifests itself more clearly than in other periods of life. Moreover, they cite data from Altai and Tuva psychiatric institutions, which confined patients suffering from the mental illness that resembled “shamanic illness.” As it turned out, many of them had shamans among their close ancestors (67-68). Vainshtein and Moskalenko stress, “Having become patients of psychiatrists and being denied an opportunity to become shamans, they never recovered. This suggests that the miraculous recovery of shaman in the process of their ritual practice is related not to the designated social function of shamans, but to psycho-physiological factors, which require proper psychiatric analysis” (68). Shamanic activities, which strongly rely on natural “psycho-theatrical techniques,” produce a favorable effect not only on the nervous systems of their patients but also on the personalities of shamans themselves. Their spiritual vocations lead to complete recovery, provided shamans conduct their activities on a permanent basis. Vainshtein and Moskalenko stress that experts from V.P. Serbskii State Scientific Center of Social and Criminal Psychiatry, the leading Russian psychiatric research institution, supported this assertion (68). Shamanic séances are effective because they represent “the most ancient form of psychotherapy.” Of 57 patients of shamans, the authors surveyed, 49 claimed that they had recovered or felt significant improvement in health after séances (69).

By the middle of the 1950s, the number of practicing shamans in Tuva drastically decreased because of the transition from nomadism to settled life. By the end of the 1950s, their number was so meager that Leonid Potapov, head of a complex archeological and anthropological expedition to Tuva, stated that “we could not see a shamanic costumes anywhere and had to study them using museum objects” (72). Still, shamanism survived to the present day. It also survived despite the fact that the official

religion of Tuva is Tibetan Buddhism (71). As many other areas of Siberia, after the collapse of communism, Tuva saw the resurgence of shamanism. The factors that contribute to the resurgence of shamanism are the activities of native intellectuals who try to regenerate “lost traditions,” mass media that support shamanism, the repeal of restrictions on shamanic healing practices, and finally the deterioration of governmental health systems, which enhances interest in shamanic healing. As a result, the prestige of shamans has grown, and now people who are “chosen by spirits” to become shamans usually do not reject their vocation. On the other hand, Vainshtein and Moskalenko stress that “there are few opportunities for the revival of shamanism in Tuva” because of the expansion of Tibetan Buddhism. Unlike shamanism, Buddhism “not only uses a solid governmental support, but has an established hierarchical structure, the system of training of lamas abroad and resources to build prayer houses.” Buddhism has all the necessary tools to ideologically affect the minds of the Tuvinians. Moreover, one of the goals of Buddhism, which its preachers admit publicly, is to squeeze shamanism out of Tuva (73).

Zakharov, Yuri. *Sistema shamana-tselitelia [The System of the Shaman-Healer]*. Moskva: Iauza, 1998. 251 pages.

The writer Zakharov, who specializes in popularizing folk medicine, designed this book as a self-help manual based on shamanism. The author argues that he comes up with his own “shamanic system,” which, in his words, is based on the “traditional Siberian indigenous knowledge” he supposedly learned directly from Siberian shamans. At the same time, careful reading shows that the book is based on published ethnographies such as Alekseev’s (1981) and Smoliak’s (1991) studies of Siberian shamanism. One also finds out that Zakharov has freely borrowed from Potapov’s *Altaiskii shamanism* without any references to this text (217). In addition to the generic description of Siberian shamanism based on Nivkh, Nanai, Ulchi, and Altaian ethnographies, Zakharov introduces shamanic techniques and practices illustrated with pictures. He invites his readers to make a journey to the “land of goodness,” a metaphor for the system of physical exercises which people can learn on their own from his book. Zakharov claims that these “shamanic exercises,” which he supposedly received from Siberian spiritual practitioners, might improve personal mental and physical health (8-21): “For the first time I introduce

the system of coordinated movements, which were used in ancient times to reach various aesthetical states during a séance. Without losing its mystical designation, this set of physical exercises allows us not only to improve health and to balance bodily energy, but also literally to stop the process of aging and to make one's body strong and durable" (8). The core of this system is a set of exercises labeled the "Dance of Ülgen," which represents a mixture of urban yoga with elements of a shamanic séance. Trying to attach an element of mystery to his "Dance of Ülgen," Zakharov stresses, "The expression 'dance of Ülgen' carries a powerful meaning unfamiliar to anthropologists and scholars who study shamanism" (9). If fully mastered, the exercises eventually turn a convert to his system into Ülgen and "dissolve an individual into a beautiful dance of dream" (9). He directly asks those who doubt his methods to take him at his word (11).

Zakharov starts his book with an intriguing incident. From a distant taiga settlement, people brought an ailing old native man. Nobody could tell his age, but everybody knew that he had shamanized as early as pre-Revolutionary Russia. Zakharov claims that this old man, named Pulka, of an undefined tribal affiliation, revealed to him the wisdom of Siberian shamanism. Moreover, Zakharov states that his book is the description of revelations he received from this old shaman. At the same time, elsewhere he mentions that he also met other shamans, who similarly provided necessary spiritual feedback. Furthermore, Zakharov insists that he was an apprentice to "genuine Altaian shamans, only a few of whom still remain alive" (2). Describing Siberian indigenous beliefs, Zakharov tries to construct generic Siberian shamanism, which in Zakharov's rendering is heavily centered on Altaian shamanism, one of the "classic" versions of Siberian shamanism.

Zakharov not only rubbed shoulders with Siberian shamans as an apprentice. The reader learns that the writer himself eventually became a full-time shaman, although he resisted the call, as is required in "classic" shamanism. In the long run, Zakharov accepted the shamanic vocation, especially after Vanga, a female soothsayer from Bulgaria and a popular "guru" of the Russian esoteric movement, prophesized that Zakharov was destined to become a shaman. Well aware that available ethnographies note that native Siberians received their shamanic powers primarily from their ancestors-shamans, Zakharov at first refused. Yet, by wrapping her message in Christian phrasing, Vanga provided him with a necessary inspiration: "You are a born shaman, but not an ordinary one. Instead of spirits, you will serve God" (5). Years later, claims Zakharov, he became

an “an experienced shaman” (233) and began initiating other individuals into the shamanic profession, and even gained respect in the eyes of natives. Thus, Nanai people invited him to initiate a young woman named Irina, who happened to be his university acquaintance, as a shamaness. Zakharov “blew a spirit” inside Irina, after which she “jumped from a bed and began to sing and dance in a shamanic manner,” which eventually made her a shamaness (233).

Zherebina, T.V. “Kul’t dukhov-urodtsev v sibirskom shamanizme (k postanovke problemy) [The Veneration of Freak Spirits in Siberian Shamanism: Toward a Problem].” *Dialogi vo vremeni: traditsionnoe obshchestvo v kontekste muzeiia*. Ed. E.A. Okladnikova. St. Petersburg: MAE, 1998. 33-40.

Zherebina discusses “aesthetics of ugliness” in Siberian shamanism, specifically the cult of the “spirit freaks” (*dukhi-urodtsy*), whom natives portrayed as scary, disgusting, and appalling creatures. In their simplistic interpretation, many students of Siberian native beliefs labeled these beings as hostile spirits, who bring various misfortunes, in contrast to benign spirits, who are endowed with attractive features. For Russian scholars who grew up in the Christian tradition, it was natural to link “shamanic spirits of evil” with their “unattractive” appearance as opposed to “beautiful” benign spirits.

Exposing this fallacy, Zherebina insists that in Siberian shamanism, the “bodily” ugliness of spirits does not necessarily reflect their “evil nature” or “moral corruption.” Natives perceived shamanic spirits as neutral and ambivalent beings. Spirits could harm if they were “hungry,” or, on the contrary, they could help if properly “fed.” “Ritual ugliness,” unattractive appearance of shamanic spirits, or, as Zherebina, put it, “anatomical mutilation” in shamanic sculptures, was always meaningful in native societies both from ritual and mythological points of view. Zherebina provides numerous examples of “spirit freaks” in Siberian shamanism: “hybrid” animal monsters such as an Evenki “mammoth” perceived as a deer with a fish tail, a cow with antlers, creatures with missing or extra body parts such as Buryat headless spirits and spirits having only half of a body, and Chukchi hostile spirits (*kele*) who were handless, legless, with one or three eyes or with mouths on the backs of their heads. Such “freaks” are common characters of shamanic mythology. The images of “freaks” were also frequently attached to

shamanic costumes in the form of iron pendants or were portrayed on shamanic ritual sculptures.

In her assessment of “spirit freaks,” Zhrebina fully shares an opinion of the late V.N. Basilov, a renowned student of Central Asian shamanism. This scholar argued that the images of the “ugly spirits” reflected a perception that in the “other world,” everything was opposite. Not surprisingly, Siberian natives broke apart and demolished all belongings of a deceased person. Natives simply surmised that in the “other world,” all these items would be “safe and sound,” whereas unbroken objects would be broken. In a similar manner, if shamanic spirits had appeared in the earthly world as beautiful and well-rounded creatures, in the “other world” they would have been ugly and unattractive. Thus, appearing in front of people, they had to become the legless, the one-eyed, handless, or three-headed “freaks. Zhrebina calls this transformation a “ritual inversion.”

Another reason why shamanism spirits were frequently ugly is that spirits could constantly change their appearance upon their choice. Thus, *ayami*, the major patron spirit of Nanai shamans, could manifest itself to the shaman either as an old woman, a wolf, or a winged tiger. Interestingly, in sculptures natives portrayed the *ayami* either as headless or handless creatures or as beings whose heads were elongated. Yet these shamanic sculptures were only the ritual embodiment of spirits. In their own “real” spiritual habitat, the *ayami* were “normal” celestial beings without any physical defects. Furthermore, the ugliness of spirits can be explained through the eyes of native mythology, which holds that the spirit who made the first human being a shaman was ugly by nature. As an example, Zhrebina uses an Entsy shamaness Savone, who had as her patron spirit Varuchi (Barochi), a one-handed and one-legged creature. For this reason, one glove of Savone’s shamanic costume was three-fingered. Ksenofontov drew the origin of the “aesthetic of ugliness” from shamanic “pseudohistorical” tales. Thus, according to Sakha shamanic legends, the “devil shamaness” had one leg, one eye, and one hand. Ksenofontov collected many similar “historical” tales. According to Andrei Anokhin, the cult of the freaks is related to the induction of shamans into their profession, when shamans were transformed into celestial deathless beings, which in appearance looked like regular human beings, but in reality were all “tailored” and “reshaped” by the “celestial army” according to their celestial standards. A celestial blacksmith usually “hammered” a new body for a would-be shaman, and then this body was filled with frogs, snakes, bees, wasps and other creatures. Most

important, those who were chosen by spirits for the shamanic vocation had an “extra bone,” which was the major indication that the person belonged not to this earthly world, but to the other spiritual world.

Zherebina believes that the tolerant nature of shamanism, which was open to alien beliefs, also perpetuated the spread of the reverence of the “ugly” spirits. Siberian shamans willingly acquired spirits they liked from neighboring peoples and easily incorporated them into their personal pantheon. Shamans were especially attracted to the dark “intimidating” nature of alien spirits. Thus, from Christianity, Siberian shamans borrowed “reverence” of the devil along with his entourage in the form of magicians and sorcerers. The Buryat incorporated into their spiritual pantheon “angry” qualities of benign deities from Buddhism, and the Nanai borrowed images of “scary” dragons from Chinese religion systems. “Good” deities of alien religions acquired new “scary” features that served to protect a shaman from unfriendly spirits of his or her competitors. For example, the Nanai had drums that depicted St. Nicholas. The Even people, on the contrary, had a spirit protector *tangara* (god) Bamul who guarded them from “hostile intentions” of Orthodox icons. Finally, the spiritual “anti-aesthetics” might have originated from myths about twins, where one brother or a sister always acts as “good” and another as “evil.”

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