

HUANG QIANG 黃強, SE YIN 色音. *Samanjiao tushuo* 薩滿教圖說 [Illustrated shamanism]. Series: Minzu wenhua congshu 民族文化叢書 2. Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2002. 282 pages. Illustrations, tables, references. Paper RMB20.00; ISBN 7-105-04896-4.

This book is the result of the cooperation of two Chinese scholars: Se Yin wrote the Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2, while Huang Qiang wrote Chapters 3 to 5. It describes shamanism of the peoples of Inner Mongolia and North-Eastern China in its historical and cultural context. The book is illustrated with photos of shamanic sessions witnessed by the authors. As a result, this mutual research presents valuable material on beliefs and culture of the Tungus-Manchu and Mongolian peoples.

In the introduction the authors give their understanding of the term “shamanism” and its use in Chinese scholarly tradition. According to them, there are two aspects of this term, depending on whether it is used in a broad or narrow sense. In the narrow sense, it was applied by European scholars to local beliefs of the Siberian peoples; in the broad sense, “shamanism” is used for similar beliefs among other peoples of the world. The authors claim that they use it in the broad sense, making parallels with ancient Chinese myths and beliefs in spirits that are similar to shamanic concepts of the universe, the relation between

Heaven, Earth, the human world, and the spirits. This leads them to the conclusion that shamanism is also a religion of the Chinese people from ancient till modern times (3). They follow American and European Sinologists in defining ancient Chinese culture as being shamanic (5). But when speaking about modern shamanic rituals in North-Eastern China one should keep in mind the influence of local shamanic cultures on the Chinese rites.

The first chapter (3–58) describes the system of shamanic spirits among the northern peoples, worship to the spirits of Heaven, Earth, stars, mountains and trees, as well as to clan ancestors among the Mongols of Inner Mongolia, the Nanai, Orochon, Evenk, and Manchu peoples. A table conveniently lists the names of spirits in the languages of the peoples studied (12–13). The authors state that the main cult was the worshiping of Heaven. At this point, I would like to add that this cult was the main one in Tengrism—an ancient religious system of almost all Central Asian and Eastern peoples, and that it remained later among the peoples studied in the book reviewed. Referring to historical documents, the authors come to the conclusion that the cult of worshiping ancestors of the Manchus is the oldest among the Tungus peoples (starting from their predecessors the Jurchens, [33]), while the Mongolian tradition goes back to the Yuan dynasty (35). It also became part of shamanic ritual much later among the other Tungus peoples. In my opinion, however, the cult of ancestors was borrowed from the ancient Chinese tradition, and appeared among the Jurchens and the Mongols during the period of their close relations with Chinese culture and the establishment of their dynasties in China proper.

The second chapter is titled “Ancient beliefs of nomadic peoples: Anthropological and cultural research on Mongolian shamanism” (59–94). It describes various shamanic ceremonies among the Mongols in Inner Mongolia. The reader will find interesting accounts on shamanic practices witnessed by Se Yin starting from 1987. He makes the valuable observation that the cult of Heaven among the Mongols is closely connected with the cult of ancestors. It is worth mentioning that the described ceremonies include some Buddhist elements: the shaman is holding a rosary and addresses various Buddhas in his songs. The author concludes that “Mongolian shamanism has got elements of Lamaist practices” (66). In connection to this, I would like to add that we find a similar situation in Buryat shamanism, as well as in other forms of shamanism where the people are also influenced by Buddhist culture. For example, the name of Buddha and a description of the ritual of “washing the statue of Buddha” are found in the text of “The code of shamanic sacrifices among the Manchus” compiled in 1747 by the order of the Qianlong 乾隆 emperor. The name “Fucihi-enduri” (Buddha) is mentioned in many other Manchu shamanic texts.

The third chapter, titled “Manchu shamanic ritual during the Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty” (95–204), introduces the Manchu-Chinese manuscript “The Complete Description and Illustration of Sacrifices,” which is kept in the Institute of Oriental Culture of the University of Tokyo. The manuscript dates back to 1771 and describes shamanic rites of the Shushu-Giyoro clan. The manuscript contains Chinese explanations of the sacrifices, Manchu shamanic songs, and illustrations with Manchu inscriptions. All illustrations and the Chinese text are reproduced in the book reviewed, but the content of the Manchu songs is only retold in short. Unfortunately, the authors do not mention the German publication of this manuscript by A. Pozzi in 1992. In this book all the texts (including the Manchu shamanic songs) are translated into German. It was the first introduction of this manuscript to the scholarly world. A. Pozzi reproduces the whole manuscript (and not only illustrations as per the book under review) and gives a transliteration of the Manchu texts. Nevertheless, the present Chinese publication is still valuable for the Chinese scholars and opens an additional access to this material.

The fourth chapter is about the shamans and their guardians (205–47) where the reader is introduced to extensive material on *hu xian* 胡仙, “fox spirit.” Huang Qiang has witnessed the shamanic session for calling the fox spirit to treat an illness. The author investigates old Chinese folklore to show that belief in fox spirits is an old Chinese tradition. He is entirely correct making such observation. However, he fails to mention that this belief has Taoist roots and was widely spread among the Chinese population, and that the fox always occupied a special place in this connection with Taoist spirits. Among the various Tungus peoples the fox plays different roles: for the Manchus it is a guardian of a storage room, for the Sibe it brings misfortune. The material collected in this chapter finally leads the reader to conclude that shamans of Jilin province included the fox spirit as a healer into their shamanic pantheon and worshiped it with special shamanic sacrifices.

Chapter five (247–79) discusses the structure of the northern shamanic ceremonies, the spring sacrifice of the Orochon people and the sacrifice at home of the Manchus. Huang Qiang gives his classification of rituals on life-cycle, calendrical and critical (249) and characterizes 15 Orochon shamanic sessions in tables (250–54). In 1999 he observed sacrifices at home of the Manchu Nimaca clan and lists the structure and aim of the rituals in a general table (262–66).

In conclusion, the title of the book, “Illustrated shamanism,” perfectly reflects its contents. Se Yin and Huang Qiang analyze shamanic traditions illustrating them with detailed descriptions of various rituals, comparative tables of the names of shamanic spirits among the Tungus and Mongolian peoples, personal photos, and illustrations reproduced from the manuscript. This book contains valuable material for future comparative studies of shamanism.

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