

MONGOLIA

HEISSIG, WALTHER. *Schamanen und Geisterbeschwörer in der östlichen Mongolei. Gesammelte Aufsätze* [Shamans and spirit mediums in eastern Mongolia: Collected essays]. Studies in Oriental Religions, volume 24. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992. xi+214 pages. Illustrations, facsimiles, map. Paper DM 128.—; ISBN 3-447-03197-2; ISSN 0340-6702. (In German and English)

In his lifelong study of Mongol culture, Walther Heissig has focused on two closely related areas: Mongol religion and Mongol epics/epic poetry. With regard to the former, he considered shamanism and popular religion to be of such importance that he allotted more than half of his treatise on Mongol religion (HEISSIG 1970) to these topics. Although his recent work has tended to concentrate increasingly on the presentation and analysis of Mongolian epic traditions, the present collection of articles is proof that he has retained his interest in religion, and in particular in Mongol shamanism and its struggle for survival.

In the present volume Heissig brings together seven previously published articles and a paper read at a conference. Altogether the works span a period of nearly half a century, from 1944 to 1990. As the collection's title suggests, the primary focus is on shamanism, in the particular form in which it has survived in the eastern regions of Inner Mongolia. The special characteristics of this type of shamanism were determined by two principal factors: its close coexistence (*enges Nebeneinander*) with lamaism, and the sedentary life-style of the agricultural population.

The introduction to the first article, in which Heissig describes a ceremony performed by the famous shaman Jangca for a radio station, may give one the impression that the coexistence between shamanism and lamaism was rather a peaceful one. However, the conclusion to this mainly descriptive article points to the problems involved in that coexistence, problems that resulted from the suppression of shamanism by lamaist missionaries, with the help of local rulers, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. This sets the stage for the following contributions, the most sizeable of which discusses the circumstances of the lamaist suppression on the basis of information contained in the biography of one of its proponents, Neyici toyin Lama (1557–1653). Neyici toyin tested his power against that of the famous shamans, bettered them, and made them follow the lamaist teachings. Instead of eliminating shamanism altogether, however, this simply forced it to camouflage itself by applying lamaist terminology to its own practices. This enabled it (as Heissig shows in, for example, his concluding text) to survive to this day and remain active in areas that were always its main domain, such as healing and midwifery.

This precarious and ambiguous coexistence with lamaism gave rise to two types of magic practitioners: the *layicing*, who uses lamaist formulas and texts in his incantations, and the *böge*, who can control the spirits and who is therefore seen to be an authentic shaman.

One characteristic of this collection (and one that has become almost a trademark of Heissig's studies) is the care taken to publish the original texts, such as songs and incantations, so that the reader might have some impression of the sources used in the analysis. This method enables Heissig to compare texts from different shamans and show that the shamans were relying on a common tradition—even a textual tradition—and not (at least for their main performances) on immediate inspiration. Heissig sees this as proof of a derived form of shamanism, although this may be a point requiring

further research. Heissig himself sees in Siberian (or even Tungus) shamanism the classic form (*Hochform*) of shamanism, and asserts that as such it is the most archaic form of religion. Such statements, which have to be taken as reflecting the state of research at the time they were written, lend a certain impression of outdatedness to some portions of the collection. Such portions (along with a number of misprints) make one wish that the articles had not simply been reprinted in their (untouched) original form.

The collection also exhibits a considerable degree of unevenness, which can at times try the reader's patience. Nevertheless, it is a document that speaks of a scholar's long dedication to an important topic and of the surprising discoveries he has made. It also speaks of the survival strategies of a popular belief under the not-so-peaceful impact of a missionizing religion claiming a higher truth and ethic.

REFERENCE CITED

HEISSIG, Walther

- 1970 Die Religionen der Mongolei [The religions of Mongolia]. In *Die Religionen der Menschheit* [The religions of mankind], ed. Christel Schröder. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

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PHILIPPINES

DUMONT, JEAN-PAUL. *Visayan Vignettes: Ethnographic Traces of a Philippine Island*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992. xxli+226 pages. Maps, photographs, figures, bibliography, index. Paper £13.50 (UK and Eire), US\$19.50 (all other countries except USA, Canada, Australia); ISBN 0-226-16955-3. Cloth £31.95 (UK and Eire), US\$45.95 (all other countries except USA, Canada, Australia); ISBN 0-226-16954-5.

Visayan Vignettes begins with glimpses into the life of the Visayan people, then proceeds to an introduction of the island of Siquijor, south of Cebu Province in the Philippines. The description of the island is enlivened with quotations from various documents. In the latter part of the work the author discusses the mythology concerning both the origin of the name Siquijor and the numerous earthquakes that shake the island. He also talks of the great fear these temblors cause, and of the rumors that they give rise to.

When the author is asked by the islanders what his purpose on Siquijor is, he answers that he came to write about the island's fishermen and farmers. His search for living quarters for himself and his wife lead him to the town of Caminggawan in Lazi, where, with the help of "Auntie" Diding, he finds a place to stay. Auntie Diding plays an important role in this work; indeed, the book centers on her, her friends, and her relatives. It discusses her marriage and those of her relatives, and uses various of her colorful acquaintances as a form of "source material." Ned Pasco, the local version of a capitalist, exploits the local fishermen; if the catch is good Ned is happy but still calls the fishermen lazy. An example of social climbing is provided by Minay, who married Ned to enter the upper crust of Lazi society. The author discusses the lineages of the important people of Lazi, including the authorities of