

Honko's call remains unanswered. On the other hand, the study demonstrates that these interrelations can take many forms, with traditional formulaic elements interrelating with the singer's creativity.

That Heissig does not limit himself to dry analysis but backs his arguments with numerous examples makes this small volume interesting reading even for the nonspecialist. *Oralität und Schriftlichkeit* is another demonstration, if such should still be needed, of Heissig's impressive command of Mongolian narrative. The volume is thus deserving of a far closer proofreading than it received to eliminate the many disturbing errors that mar the text.

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HEISSIG, WALTHER. *Heldenmärchen versus Heldenepos? Strukturelle Fragen zur Entwicklung altaischer Heldenmärchen*. Abhandlungen der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Band 85. Opladen, Germany: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991. 125 pages. Tables, bibliography, list of märchen and epics mentioned. Paper DM 42.—; ISBN 3-531-05103-2; ISSN 0171-1105. (In German)

Walther Heissig's aim in this volume is to give an argued answer to the question of whether märchen that are about heroes derive from heroic epics, or vice versa. He analyzes seven narratives collected among the western Mongols of Sinkiang, comparing their narrative structure and use of motifs with that of heroic epics. His material is particularly suitable for such an analysis since the seven narratives selected are not only acknowledged märchen but were in some cases narrated by people known to have sung heroic epics of similar content or parts of the Gesar-cycle. The material could thus be expected to reflect any existing similarities between epic poetry and märchen prose, and perhaps even establish a genetic relationship between the two forms (a distinct possibility, given the existence of a 1716 block print of the Gesar story in prose that suggests a change of heroic narratives from epic to märchen).

Heissig concludes that heroic märchen are an offspring of heroic epics, yet are not simply prose versions of those epics. The dependency of märchen on epics is revealed by the generally converging narrative structure and by the sequence of themes and episodes. Moreover, the märchen retain certain rhymed—and thus textually fixed—sequences from the epics within their prose text, and they appropriate a number of stereotype episodes with small (albeit significant) variations (the märchen tend to stress the mythical or magic features, or to relate them more explicitly to features of Mongol folklore). Yet the märchen does not simply adopt; it also transforms or reverses certain motifs and allows the association of ideas, so that the narrator can use and recombine ideas from a variety of sources. It is here that Heissig sees the narrator's personal inspiration at work.

The analysis of the märchen *Qan qarangγui* provides a chance to clarify its relation with the well-documented epic of the same title and so establish a general framework for the analysis of the following six märchen. Heissig traces the complex interdependencies of a great number of narratives, some of which show a strong local color and others of which tap sources of wide currency among Mongol groups. In general, the author retells the gist of the narratives or quotes certain formulaic sections to provide an idea of the narratives' characteristics. This should prove useful in helping the reader remain on course in the midst of an often quite complex argument that demands the retention of a large amount of detail.

Several of the points Heissig makes, though apparently corollary to his central arguments, are nevertheless important. He draws attention to the fact that the märchen introduce a significant change in the manner in which they treat the relation between the hero and his formidable enemy, the monster (*mangγus*). In the epics the hero kills the monster, while in the märchen the hero is killed and later revived by heavenly maidens. Heissig sees this as a

possible allusion to a shaman's initiation experience of death and rebirth.

Triads of heavenly or mysterious maidens introduce the swanmaiden motif, while three unmarried maidens give birth to sons of the hero, whose role suggests parallels to the *idéologie tripartite* Dumézil found in Indo-European mythology. In view of the wide-ranging activities and cultural contacts of the Mongol ethnic groups this is an intriguing notion, although Heissig excludes direct contacts between Mongol epics and the Indo-European traditions.

This very useful volume aids our understanding of the development of Mongol narratives and their complex web of interconnections, subjects that are of increasing interest even to non-Mongol scholars. Unfortunately, the book suffers from grammatical inaccuracies that more careful proofreading could have eliminated.

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### LADAKH

SCHENK, AMELIE. *Schamanen auf dem Dach der Welt: Trance, Heilung und Initiation in Kleintibet* [Shamans on the roof of the world: Trance, healing, and initiation in "Little Tibet"]. Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1994. 236 pages. 99 photographs, bibliography, glossary. Cloth Ös680.—; ISBN 3-201-01601-2. (In German)

Although the traditions of the Buddhist lamas have attracted more attention, there are in Tibet traditions of spirit-mediums that form an important feature of the living folk religion and that have strongly influenced Tibetan Buddhism as well. In spite of the significance of these "shamanic" traditions (as they may be called in a broad sense), they have been the object of relatively little detailed ethnographic research. Amelie Schenk's book, a richly illustrated study of oracular healers (*lhapu*, *lhamo*) in Ladakh, helps fill this gap. Drawing on extended interviews with twenty-one mediums and related persons, Schenk provides a lively account of this tradition, placing strong emphasis on the actors' narration of events and experiences.

Nearly half of the book deals with the "calling" of the healer, that is, with the process in which certain symptoms signal the entry of a *lha* (deity, spirit) into the body of one destined to be a medium. The personal accounts collected by Schenk show the wide range of avenues to becoming a *lhapa* (male) or *lhamo* (female). But despite individual variations — whether the calling occurred early or late in life, whether it involved inherited ancestral inclinations, etc. — it becomes clear that a similar pattern underlies all the biographical narratives. As in "classic" cases of shamanic initiatory illness, the calling begins with such things as dreams, psychic disorientation, physical pain, abnormal behavior, and loss of consciousness; in the course of time this crisis is diagnosed as the presence of divine forces that have to be controlled through proper training.

Schenk is particularly interested in the psychological aspects of the initiatory process. How, she wonders, is it possible for something that begins as a highly individual experience to turn into standardized and institutionalized behavior? The answer is that there is a close interaction between individual and group, between personal experience and cultural expectation. This is shown in further detail in the second section, "Apprenticeship and Initiation," which deals with the techniques that teachers employ to control the crisis. An interesting feature of the narratives is that they point to conflicts and deviations from the norm, as when a teacher declines to accept an apprentice for fear of competition.

The third section, "Metamorphosis in Trance," takes up the topic of greatest interest to Schenk: shamanic possession, or, as she calls it, the "drama of trance." Here the author shifts more and more towards a psychophysiological description of the *lha*-state. The oracular performance is seen as a series of trance-inducing techniques: breathing exercises (panting