

A woman in traditional Andean attire, including a red headscarf and a colorful, patterned poncho, stands in a grassy field. She has her eyes closed and her hands held out in a gesture of prayer or ritual. In the foreground, a fire burns brightly between two large rocks. The background shows a hazy, mountainous landscape under a cloudy sky.

An Encyclopedia of Shamanism

Volume Two
N-Z

Christina Pratt

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Christina Pratt



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Preface

An Encyclopedia of Shamanism is a two-volume reference work about shamanism in its many manifestations around the world. Shamanism refers to the activities and practices of the shaman, not to an ideology, religion, or formalized system of beliefs. Shamanism is a group of shared activities, practices, and experiences that link shamans and their unique understanding of the mechanics of our world.

This encyclopedia is composed of introductory essays that discuss ideas that are complex and fundamental to an understanding of shamanism, and entries that cover a range of topics that are relevant to shamanism in general or to shamanic cultures specifically. There are two types of entries: concept entries that provide a deeper understanding of concepts relative to shamanism cross-culturally and entries about peoples that provide a view into the way specific peoples practice shamanism.

All entries contain cross-references in bold to other entries for additional reading. Cross-references suggest further study for a broader understanding of concepts fundamental to the entry topic. They are also useful to expand one's investigation into the culture or practice described, as well as to compare and contrast practices around the world.

The essays and many entries conclude with a list of references. The list of references is limited to English language sources. These references serve two roles. First, they provide a guide for further reading and deeper investigation into the subject. Second, they represent the major works used as scholarly references for the entry itself. These same works are also included in the bibliography.

Acknowledgments

An Encyclopedia of Shamanism is the fruit of my training, experience, and research in the field, as well as the work of numerous scholars who have studied and written extensively on shamanism. I am indebted to those shamans and scholars whose activities have informed my research and I hope that I have represented their vision and ideas fully and accurately. Any shortcomings are my own. During the period of time that these volumes were written many excellent new sources were published in this field. Their exclusion as references in no way implies they were judged and found lacking. It was necessary as the sole author on a work of this scope to limit the times I could return to revise concepts already completed, no matter how superb the new resource.

I would like to acknowledge and thank my Ancestors and the helping spirits who stood behind me every day throughout the many years of this project. They were constant and inspiring, whether I could shape the words or not. I also want to acknowledge and offer a deep well of gratitude to the shamans themselves who held true to their practices through decades of persecution, ignorance, and poverty, preserving sacred ways and information for all of humanity with humor and without prejudice. I offer a special debt of gratitude to the Zulu *sangoma* women without whose talismanic blessing I would not have prevailed in this effort. Their shamanic gift, which I still wear today, enabled me to "to stand up in my place, be strong and forthright and speak these words in love and respect" and to connect with my Ancestors all the way back to the first people on earth.

I want to thank shaman, author, and teacher Malidoma Somé, the first initiated man and shaman I met in person, who taught me the true meaning of ritual and ceremony. I thank Michael Harner for founding the Foundation for Shamanic Studies, for the research and preservation of shamanism internationally supported by the Foundation, and for Harner's far-reaching introduction of shamanism to contem-

porary people before it was a fashionable or an acceptable course of study.

I thank Roger Rosen for the original idea of this book and for his unflagging support of this project. I am eternally grateful to Ann Hughes for the moral and spiritual support she offered every week like clockwork for the final two years of this project. Finally, I thank the talented staff at The Rosen Publishing Group for the painstaking work of bringing this book into manifestation in the world.

I send deep and heartfelt thanks to all of my students and clients who, through my work with them, have given me a deep and authentic understanding of shamanism. Without my experience with them this volume would be empty of the true spirit and practicality of shamanism. I send special gratitude for the blessing of my parents, Jim and Jacie Pratt, for their generous and ever-present support of this project and my work in the world. Finally, I give thanks to the rest of my family—Ian, Mary, Duncan, Olivia, Ed, and Dana—for their patience, support, and belief in this project over many years.

Christina Pratt
January 2007
Portland, Oregon

Introduction

“Non ideo negari quod est apertum; quia comprehendere non potest quod est occultum.”

Because the obscure cannot be understood,
does not mean the obvious should be denied.

— Latin proverb

A shaman is a healer who works in the invisible world through direct contact with “spirits.” The invisible world contains all aspects of our world that affect us but are invisible to us, including the spiritual, emotional, psychological, mythical, archetypal, and dream worlds. Shamans use an alternate state of consciousness to enter the invisible world to make changes in the energy found there in a way that directly affects specific changes needed here in the physical world. It is this direct contact with “spirits” through the use of altered states of consciousness and the movement of energy between the worlds that distinguishes the shaman from other practitioners.

The shaman’s power to help and to heal comes from the “spirits.” However, the word “spirit” is a misleading translation from the many words used by first peoples throughout the world to describe it. This sacred power/energy/spirit is called *mana* by the Maori and Melanesians, *orenda* or *oki* by the Iroquois, *wakan* by the Sioux, *coen* by the Athapaskan, *yok* by the Tlingit, and aspects of *manitou* by the Algonquian, to name a few. None of these words can be truly translated. This life-force-like power is inherent in all things. In the shaman’s world this power/energy/spirit is honored because it connects all things.

The shaman is concerned with the flow or pattern of energy and whether or not it is moving in a life-affirming direction. Energy itself is seen as neutral. It is not seen as good or evil. Energy can be patterned for a purpose and set in motion. The shaman is concerned with the intent behind the energy or the task on which the energy has been sent. The shaman discerns whether the intent is benevolent or malevolent. This will determine what the shaman must do. Shamans are looking for the root of fear, not evil. They look for the telltale disharmony or dissonance fear creates and act to bring the energies into harmony and balance, creating a harmonious connection between the visible and invisible worlds.

Shamans, both ancient and contemporary, are artists whose medium is the energy of the visible world. Ritual is their art. They draw on the energies of the universe and reweave them through trance, song, dance, and the power of intention to create unique healing rituals. Each shaman’s practice and methods for creating healing rituals is drawn from their mastery of altered states of consciousness, trance experiences, life experiences, their character, their temperament, and their own personal gifts and talents.

Shamanism is not a religion. The great religions of humankind are revealed religions. At their core are teachings that were revealed at some point in the past and are believed to be the word of whom or what that religion calls God. At the core of these religions is a book, such as the Bible or the Koran. An encyclopedia about any one of these great religions would explain or interpret the book. There is no book at the core of shamanism, no single revelation. There is no single belief system nor single god to describe. There is only the direct experience, again and again, between the shaman and the Great Mystery in the service of others.

Shamanism is a reality that is experienced. This means we cannot accurately say, “shamans believe this,” in the way we can say, “Zen Buddhists believe this.” We can only say shamans do *this* and in turn *that* happens. We cannot say shamans believe in doing *this*, and believe that *that* will happen. It may seem a subtle distinction but in that distinction lies the power of shamanism.

Shamanism is about direct personal experience and practical application. Shamans and the people in shamanic cultures do not *believe* in their practices and the

spirits. They experience them. That is the point of entering altered states of consciousness: to experience the world of spirit and the reality behind our world of physical form. It would be more accurate to call it a “lifeway” than a belief or faith. For example, you do not believe you are a man or a woman, you simply are and that shapes how you see the world. Similarly, a shaman does not believe he or she is a shaman. A shaman simply is a shaman, and that shapes how he or she sees the world.

The practice of shamanism is a living art. The forms change, evolve, and morph as is necessary to meet the needs of the people. Yet the functions within the forms have not changed over time or between cultures. It is precisely this consistency and adaptability that makes shamanism an effective healing practice today.

The challenge in explaining shamanism is much like the challenge in attempting to explain art. For example, were one to describe how a painter mixes his or her paints, the sequence of brush strokes, and the inspiration for the subject, the essence of the painting would still not necessarily be revealed. Describing disembodied details about shamanism does not capture the magic and the heartfelt power present in the experience of shamanic ritual.

There are many books available that gather facts, field research, and stories about shamans and effectively argue the existence and effectiveness of shamanism. This is not the aim of this encyclopedia. *An Encyclopedia of Shamanism* is based on the assumption that shamanism is a valid healing modality that is effectively practiced throughout the world. It is my aim to present information about shamans and their practices so that the reader is able to understand both through the eyes of the shaman. To this end, I will define shamanic concepts and concepts from other fields in this light. In doing so, I hope to provide a thorough and practical resource for contemporary people, contemporary shamanic healers, and practitioners of core shamanism.

Traditional shamanism in this book refers to shamanic practices before contact with the Western world. For some shamanic cultures contact with the Western world occurred thousands of years ago and for others it was only decades. Contemporary shamanism in this book includes the post-contact shamanic practices of indigenous and nonindigenous peoples today. Where possible the culture’s traditional word for shaman is used to remind us that all shamanic peoples have their own terms for shaman.

The spirits and the related shamanic practices are equally available to men and women, to all races, and without regard for sexual orientation. To stress this point I have used the cumbersome he/she pronouns throughout this encyclopedia except in those cultures where the shamans are traditionally of one or the other gender.

To understand shamanism through the eyes of the shaman, the reader must imagine what it would be like to live in a world where there is no separation between the physical and spiritual, no disconnection between humanity and God. The reader must imagine life before a concept of Ego. The mindset of the shaman is fundamentally different from that of a contemporary person. The introductory essays serve to assist readers in making the leap into another way of seeing the world. It will take some imagination for the reader to open his or her mind to other ways of knowing and to see as the shaman sees.

The entries provide specific information on particular concepts and the practices of shamanic peoples. It would be easy to oversimplify these foreign concepts and group shamanic concepts with somewhat related contemporary concepts to make the reader feel more comfortable with strange ideas. In doing so, however, we would lose the diversity of cultures, the complexity, and the uniqueness of shamans. Instead, I have defined concepts from the shamanic perspective in the hope that the reader will be able to see these shamans and their practices through new eyes.

Approximately fifty cultures are represented in detail in this encyclopedia. The same questions are discussed about each culture. What are the origin myths, the

essential shamanic cosmology, and the cultural symbols? What are the traditional mystical events or calling to a shamanic life, the rituals of initiation, and the training? What are the types or depth of trance used and who are the primary helping spirits that work with the shaman? What are the divination practices and tools? How is illness defined and what are the healing practices, rituals, and ceremonies? What is the role of storytelling, music, musicians, healing songs, instruments, dance, dancers, and art in healing? What are the uses and significance of the shaman's tools, paraphernalia, and costumes? Finally, what is unique about shamanism in this culture?

Shamanism is not routine. As soon as you touch it, even intellectually, the spirits touch you. Shamanism demands more of all of us, more humor, more imagination, more intelligence, and more room for the Trickster in all things.

“The shaman’s path is unending. I am an old, old man and still a nunutsi (baby) standing before the mystery of the world.”

— Don José Matsúwa, Huichol *mara’akame* (shaman)

SHAMANISM

“Because it is not an organized religion as such, but rather a spiritual practice, shamanism cuts across all faiths and creeds, reaching deep levels of ancestral memory. As a primal belief system, which preceded established religion, it has its own universal symbolism and cosmology, inhabited by beings, gods and totems, who display similar characteristics although they appear in various forms, depending on their places of origin.”

—John Matthews, *The Celtic Shaman*

The word “shamanism” does not express an ideology, like Communism or Buddhism, which are formalized systems of beliefs. Shamanism refers to the activities of the shaman and is used because these activities are found all over the world with a surprisingly high degree of similarity, given the normal variance over time expected in aspects of human culture and the natural variation among shamans. Anthropologist and author of *The Shaman*, Piers Vitebsky, who has over twenty years of field research with shamans, explains that the word “shamanism” is misleading because shamans and their communities do not isolate shamanic ideas and practices into an ideology or doctrine as is implied by the -ism suffix. Instead, the shaman’s beliefs and activities coexist freely with other more formalized systems of religion and government. The shaman’s worldview grows and changes to meet the community’s needs and adapts to the spirit energies available in the environment.

Shamanism is not a system of faith, either. Rather, it is a group of common activities and experiences that link shamans and their unique experience of the world. The shaman and the people they serve value shamanism because it works; it meets their needs in practical ways. What shamans experience in the ecstatic states of trance that are necessary for their work is as real to them and the people they serve as the houses they live in, the rivers they swim in, or the conversations they have with their spouses. These experiences reinforce and develop the shamans understanding of the universe as interrelated and interdependent energy vibrations and patterns. Their experience of life—both physical and spiritual—is also influenced and expanded by their experience in journeys and altered states of consciousness.

A System of Experience—The Elements of Shamanism

The shaman is distinguished from all other practitioners by his or her ability to enter into an ecstatic trance state, which frees the shaman’s soul to travel to realms of the invisible world. The shaman’s soul travel is referred to as journeying. Where shamans go in their journeys, and how they access their journey state, are important aspects of shamanism. It is also important to understand that where they go only matters because of the helping spirits the shaman meets there. It is the relationship with the helping spirits that gives the shaman access to the power necessary to create change in the physical world. Furthermore, it is not just the knowledge of how to access a powerful spirit that is important, but the ability to develop a long-term relationship with that power or spirit and to work with it again and again.

In *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, a classic study of shamanism, author Mircea Eliade describes five characteristics central to shamanism that are similar across cultures to a degree greater than can be explained by dissemination through human contact (see essay on page xvii: The Origins of Shamanism). First, shamans work in altered states in which they experience environments different than physical reality and interact with a vast array of beings who only have form in those environments. Shamans’ altered or trance states enable them to travel into the Upperworld of the spirit realm to work with the spirits of the Sky, the Celestial realm, and the Supreme Being. The metaphors used to describe these journeys in oral

traditions are flying with (or as) a bird, crossing a Rainbow Bridge, and climbing to the Upperworld on the branches of the Tree of Life or through the mountain at the center of the world.

Second, shamans' trance states also enable them to travel in the Lowerworld to work with the earth, animals, and other spirit beings found there and to visit the Land of the Dead. The metaphors used to describe these journeys in oral traditions are climbing down the roots of the Tree of Life, swimming down (or riding down) in a spirit boat, or entering through a cave or the base of the mountain at the center of the world.

Third, in these various realms shamans report the presence of helping spirits with whom they talk and interact. These helping spirits provide protection and guidance on the shamans' journeys and empower them in their ritual work.

Fourth, shamans often work with the spirits of their ancestors, honoring them for their wisdom and guidance. Shamans are distinguished from others of their communities by the depth and degree of their relationships with their ancestors. They often form working relationships with the spirits of a deceased ancestor as helping spirits in their shamanic practices.

Fifth, shamans' experiences with places and beings from non-ordinary reality help them to develop the understanding that the immaterial soul is found in all things in every material form of reality. This element of shamanism is called the immaterial soul. The immaterial soul is responsible for both conscious life and every organic development of life. The shaman enters into a working relationship with this immaterial soul in both ordinary and non-ordinary reality through his or her journey or trance. As a belief system this would be called animism; however, for shamans it is not simply what they believe, but the way they experience life. These five characteristics describe a coherent set of activities and an understanding of the nature of the Universe that are shared by shamans.

The Journey

The shaman is distinguished by his or her ability to journey. However, the capacity to journey, though the basic tool of the shaman, is not enough to explain the power in the art of shamanism. It is the capacity to act with intention while in the journey that makes shamanism effective and distinguishes the shaman's work from journeys of novices. Human beings, in general, are capable of reaching altered states of consciousness and of accessing many of the same realms of non-ordinary reality that the shaman does. Shamans, however, take action in these realms. The shaman creates change in the physical world by crafting a solution at the source of the problem in the spirit world. The shaman gives his or her experiences in the invisible realms meaning and shares them with others through metaphor, narration (storytelling), and ritual experiences.

What occurs in the journey, or trance state, is the essence of shamanism, and it is completely unchoreographed. However, the key elements—the shaman, the helping spirits, the patient, and the presenting problem—always appear as energies in the invisible world. During the journey in the invisible world, the shaman and his or her helping spirits must improvise to bring balance to the shifting dynamics of the patient's situation. Shamans learn to understand the invisible realm they are traveling in and develop the skills necessary to work within that realm. They often endure painful and frightening transformations, undergo arduous training, and make deep personal sacrifices to obtain this knowledge and to build long term relationships with helping spirits. The shamans' actions are inspired by their helping spirits which are made up on the spot and are never the same twice.

How the shaman enters his or her trance state depends on culture, geography, the actual needs of the session, and personal skill. Actions, such as drumming, singing, rattling, making offerings, and dancing, are tools for entering the trance state. They are the technology of the shamanic healing process and are repeated in every session.

The Shaman's Art

The invisible realm provides access to the sacred, to the Great Mystery, to the Unknown. These words are our human attempt to name our Kosmos (see entry on page 262), which is ever evolving and inherently creative. The technology of the journey gives the shaman the ability to act on the infinite, creative potential of the Kosmos. Each journey is an act of innovation, in which the shaman draws on the energies of the Kosmos to meet the needs of the patient. Whether the energy retrieved is information or a lost soul, each journey is an act of creativity, and often ecstasy.

What we see the shaman doing on a journey is not what the shaman is actually doing to bring about a change or cure. Even in community rituals, where much of what the shaman does is acted out in the physical world, the power of the ritual—the way it creates an opening for spirit to intervene in the lives of humans—occurs in the invisible world. How the shaman creates that opening is the art, and that is not found in his or her actions here, but in his or her actions in the invisible world.

The art of the shaman is in his or her ability to isolate the true source of the patient's problem, to innovate while in trance, and to give meaning to what he or she experiences in the invisible realm. Some shamans are more talented than others; some are simply better trained. As with all artists, the talented, but untrained, are occasionally brilliant and usually inconsistent and undependable. Conversely, the trained but untalented are consistent, though rarely inspired or innovative. The most powerful and effective shamans are those who have trained their natural talent. Shamanism is best understood as an evolving, esoteric art and the shaman's life as a path of mastery.

Ecstasy and Trance

In trance the shaman is connected to all things and in communication with spirit when he or she is working. Without that contact with the transcendental source, the event is not shamanic. Shamanism is often referred to as techniques of ecstasy. Ecstasy can be defined as the experience of Connectedness to All Things or Oneness. However, the techniques of the shaman are not so much techniques of ecstasy as they are techniques for working while in ecstasy. Ecstasy is not the end, but the means by which the shaman accomplishes the services provided to others. Shamanism is a practical application of the potential in mystical states of ecstasy.

Shamans utilize a range of altered states of consciousness to interact with the spirit world. Shamanic methods involve altered states ranging from the journey trance, during which the shaman's soul leaves the body and moves into the spirit world, to the embodiment trance, during which the shaman invokes a helping spirit within his or her own body, allowing the spirit to work on the patient through the shaman's physical form. The journey trance is often called "soul flight." It is used traditionally for divination (retrieving information from spirit), power retrieval (reestablishing the personal connection with spirit), soul retrieval (retrieving a lost part of the soul), and psychopomp work (escorting the souls of the deceased to the Land of the Dead). The embodiment trance is used traditionally for divination, cleansing (returning energy to the spirit world), and extractions (returning energetic intrusions to the spirit world). In practice, the shaman can move as is necessary between varying depths of these trance states, as well as between the two types of trance states.

Trance is the technology of shamanism. The type of trance—whether the shaman enters into a trance state of soul flight or spirit embodiment—and the depth of trance are determined by what the shaman needs to accomplish for the patient. What the

shaman does while in trance and where in non-ordinary reality the shaman goes to do it are also determined by need. Shamans do what is necessary and what works, always based on the guidance of helping spirits with whom they have developed a working relationship during their training and initiation.

When presented with a problem, the shaman enters a trance and asks for both a diagnosis of the true nature of the problem and a prescription for what actions need to be taken to restore balance to the situation. Diagnostic practices are highly individualized shaman to shaman and may change as a shaman matures in his or her practice. Most shamans use a trance state of some depth—either a soul journey to communicate with spirit in the spirit world or an embodiment trance—to invite a spirit to the physical world to communicate. Prescriptions may involve the shaman's actions in the trance state, as well as ordinary reality remedies like herbs, bodywork, or behaviors for the patient to engage in or abstain from and/or spiritual remedies such as rituals, offerings, and sacrifices. The shaman then carries out the prescribed actions and/or directs the individual or community to fulfill the prescribed treatment. At this stage the shaman may also direct the patient to seek remedies offered by other systems, such as Western medicine.

The trance portion of each shamanic healing ritual proceeds in a unique way based on the spirit's guidance. In some cultures, like the !Kung of Africa, the shaman experiences a relationship with a special energy, not special spirits. This energy and the energy of helping spirits function similarly, providing the guidance and power to innovate cures.

Each shamanic healing session involves several steps that are repeated session to session, which occur before and after the trance is induced. The actions that effect change occur in non-ordinary reality during the trance. The general structure of a shamanic healing ritual, or seance, begins with the shaman clarifying the intention of the ritual. Next, he or she creates the sacred space with blessings, prayers, or offerings. Finally, he or she opens the sacred space to spirit by invoking the trance state. The diagnosis, prescription, and healing work occur in trance. When the work in trance is finished, the shaman comes out of trance and completes the ritual by closing the ritual space. The shaman then clarifies any ordinary reality remedies that were prescribed in the diagnostic phase of the trance that remain to be carried out.

Individual Healing

The actions taken by the shaman while in trance involve either retrieving some form of energy from the spirit world to return to the patient or removing some form of energy from the patient and returning it to the spirit world. Many sessions involve some combination of both. The forms of energy retrieved for individuals are information, spirit help, or the patient's lost soul or soul part. The energies removed from individuals range from simple energies that need to be cleansed, to more coherent energy patterns, such as magical darts or obsessive emotions that need to be extracted. These energies could be highly complex patterns or spirit forms that must be exorcised, such as when the shaman acts as a psychopomp, conveying the soul of the deceased to the Land of the Dead. In this complex act, the shaman assures that the journey is safe and complete as he or she is returning the energy of the soul to the spirit world where it now belongs.

Community Healing

The forms of energy retrieved for communities through the preparation and execution of specific rituals are the spirit of places, such as a well or a rock formation, or the spirit of things, such as the crops or power objects. The purpose of community rituals may be to restore balance with an element, such as earth or fire. The ritual might be to find new resonance with the Ancestors or with some other being in the spirit world. The ritual might do so in order to honor with celebrations or ceremonies,

or to make an offering with the sacrifice of crops or animals (in some cultures), or to remedy transgressions against family, community, or the spirits. The energies removed from the community are most often the spirits of the dead who have not crossed over in due time, malevolent spirits who arrived of their own accord or were sent by sorcery, or the malevolent spirits found in places and things.

Traditional Shamanism

Traditionally shamanism was used to maintain a mutually healthy equilibrium between people and their environment, both physical and spiritual. The shaman met the needs of the community by escorting the souls of the dead on their return to the spirit world (psychopomp) because souls of the dead that linger are troublesome to the living. The shaman assured successful hunts by negotiating in non-ordinary reality with the Master or Mistress of the Beasts and conducting the prescribed rituals (hunting magic). The shaman guided the restoration of balance between the community and the animal world, spirit world, or the natural environment by creating the necessary rituals as guided by their helping spirits (divination). This task included determining if sacrifices were needed and of what type they should be. Community rituals sometimes focused on the healing of one individual when that individual's lack of balance led them to act in ways that disrupted the harmonious functioning of the community. The needs of the community varied continuously. Through the relationship with his or her helping spirits, the shaman was able to create new rituals to meet those changing needs.

Traditionally, the shaman was available to meet the healing needs of individuals as well. The shaman gained information from the spirit world through divination. He or she retrieved spirit help, good fortune, or *suerte* (luck) from the spirit world through power retrievals; retrieved soul parts when they were lost or stolen; cured illnesses caused by energetic intrusions with cleansings, sucking, or other forms of extraction; and recycled misplaced energy back into the spirit world through cleansings and rituals. Healing rituals often lasted throughout the night and the shaman was usually available at any time on any day.

Contemporary Shamanism

Shamanism has changed over time with the changing needs of communities and individuals. While in the past one of the shaman's primary roles was hunting magic, today shamans help people with professional concerns involving careers, success, and recognition. Career issues are perhaps a contemporary version of the ancient need to know "where to hunt" and "when to plant." These issues arise from the fundamental question, "How do I survive?" The need to survive has not changed, nor has the function of the shaman in answering the question of how to survive. What remains the same is the shaman's use of trance and the relationship with the helping spirits.

The outward forms of shamanic rituals have also changed over time, in response to changes in people's needs that are brought about by the influence of changing cultures, conquering governments, and dominant religious systems. Variation in ritual form is seen between cultures, primarily because shamanic work looks different with different spirits. Geography, mythology, indigenous flora and fauna, and dominant weather patterns are some of the many factors that influence the kinds of spirits with whom the shaman can work. Changes in ritual structure are also influenced by the shamans themselves, their particular gifts, and the practical fact that each journey is different from the last.

Contemporary people turn to shamans for essentially the same reasons their ancestors did, for practical and pragmatic solutions to the problems of everyday life. They believe that the solution lies beyond the ordinary physical-world dimensions of the problem. This belief may be culturally held or it may actually be contrary to the

individual's beliefs, but the shaman is sought out because all other conventional avenues of help have failed. Some people report an uncanny feeling or intuition that seeking a shaman is the right thing for them to do, though they know nothing of shamans or shamanism. How the shaman creates change is determined by need and varies case by case, as with traditional shamans. The result of shamanic healing rituals is to restore the integrity of the individual's soul (lifeforce), to restore the harmony and balance between the individual and the environment, or to restore the individual's energy (or power).

Contemporary shamans address a full range of health issues from the common cold to cancer, depression, fertility, and longevity; family problems, including issues that arise between spouses, parents and children, in-laws, and dead family members. Shamans can address the need for harmony between the individual and his or her social support system, both alive and dead; professional concerns; and the weather, though today the request for better weather may be out of concern for a sporting event as often as it is for the well-being of crops. Shamans also perform ceremonies of openings for new places or events such as roads, bridges, homes, maiden voyages of boats, as well as the closings of old spaces.

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THE ORIGINS OF SHAMANISM

The exact origin of shamanism is unknown. However, shamanlike figures appear in the art and stories of ancient peoples from all continents. The early presence of shamans may be depicted in the cave paintings at Lascaux, which carbon dating places between 14,000 and 12,600 B.C.E. We will never know for certain the intention of the artists at Lascaux. However, if we view the ancient walls with a knowledge of shamanism, we see a shaman lying in front of a wounded auroch (a wild ox, now extinct), an ancient symbol of the untamable creative power of the universe. The human figure is prone, a common body position for the shaman's trance. His penis is erect, indicating an ecstatic state and a bird perches on his staff, indicating a helping spirit, a messenger, or the shaman's soul in flight.

Similar images of male and female shamans, with the drums and rattles used to induce their trance states, are represented in petroglyphs (rock carvings) and pictographs (rock paintings and drawings) from the same time period. They are found in northern Spain (Altamira), southern France (Trois Freres, Teyat, Dordogne), the former Soviet Union (Lake Onega, eastern Siberia), Africa, and southern China. These images record a relationship between the life of ancient peoples and the use of ecstatic altered states. It was a relationship important enough to be preserved in stone.

These ancient people knew that Nature lives by her own will and that she continues to do so, cycle after cycle, with or without human beings. Human beings knew that if they wanted Nature to alter her course for their benefit—to sacrifice for them—they must be prepared to sacrifice in return. One of the shaman's original roles was to journey into the spirit world to speak with the Mistress or Master of the Beasts to negotiate the appropriate sacrifices with the spirits. This has been called hunting magic. Nature's sacrifice of the animals necessary for human survival was exchanged for human offerings and ceremonies that honored the departing animal spirits. These ceremonial observances allowed the humans to continue to live in a dynamic balance of mutual sacrifice with their environment, both physical, e.g., not overhunting a species, and spiritual, e.g., not offending the animal spirits whose help they needed. The success of the hunt was essential for survival, particularly in areas such as the Arctic where little else grows. Without the ongoing negotiations of the shaman's hunting magic, the oral traditions tell us that game grew scarce or the avenging spirits of the animals wreaked havoc on humans, creating illness and accidents.

The origins of shamanism exist in an extremely wide distribution—from Siberia to North America, South America, Australia, Asia, and Africa—and show remarkable similarities between cultures where there does not appear to be any direct human link. Scholars have struggled to account for these characteristics with the history of human migration and diffusion (the natural spread of linguistic or cultural elements from one area, tribe, or people to others through contact) from a common ancestor. For migration alone to explain shamanism, the diffusion of these skills would have had to begin at least 20,000 years ago. Within such a long period of time, language, social structure, and political regimes vary to significant degrees. Shamanic practices have varied much less than these other aspects of human culture over the same time period. It is difficult to explain why.

Simultaneous origin (the idea that different cultures on different continents developed similar practices without contact with each other) is considered by some scholars as a partial explanation for the wide distribution of shamans and the remarkable similarities in shamanic practices. Shamanism draws on innate human abilities to access altered states of consciousness and is therefore potentially accessible to all people. Roger Walsh, doctor, philosopher, and scholar of shamanism, suggests that shamanism was discovered and rediscovered at different times by different peoples when they came into similar times of extreme need. It is reasonable to

assume that humans with the same innate abilities to access the same source of information in the spirit world will return from trance states with similar answers for solving similar problems. Variations in form arise from interpretation (personal and cultural) and the spirits of the geography (the mountain spirits of the Andes versus the underwater spirits of the Arctic world). However the essence is the same. As the innate abilities of gifted individuals developed into the skills of a shaman, the shamanic role, rituals, and states of consciousness were then maintained in that culture. In this way different aspects of the shaman's practices were developed to different degrees within different individuals and societies.

Though human contact does not explain the degree of similarities in shamanism, it clearly affected the diffusion of shamanic practices and paraphernalia. Shamanic practices were essential to the survival and well-being of early humankind. It is safe to assume that in the uncertain and dangerous process of migration, people brought their shamanism with them. There is evidence in language, ritual structure, and the perceived structure (landscape and population) of the spirit world that suggests that people who came in contact with each other borrowed and shared these things between cultures.

The oral traditions of shamanic peoples offer another perspective on the origin of shamanism. In many diverse cultures there are stories of the heroic First Shaman, a being who existed on earth in a time when the animals and humans communicated in the same language and shamans could move between the physical and spiritual worlds in both body and spirit. The origin of the First Shaman's power was in the spirit world, though the specific source varied culture by culture, with some citing the Creator of All Things as the origin of shamanic power and others an animal messenger or the stars. Regardless of form, the spirit teacher, in an act of compassion inspired by humanity's need for healing, guidance, and survival, taught the First Shaman the trance techniques, songs, remedies, and dances used for healing and divination. In this way shamanism is believed to have come to humans from the spirit world.

Shamanism—what it is and how it is practiced—is defined by the helping spirits who work through the shaman and the needs of the people the shaman works for. Therefore, shamanism is defined by the earth, by the geography of the place where people are living. The reason for this is twofold. First, shamans work with the spirits of Nature, and the physical attributes of Nature—the flora, fauna, waterways, land formations, and weather patterns—indicate which spirits are found there. Second, the physical attributes of Nature greatly affect the survival needs of humans living in a place, which in turn determine the needs brought to the shaman. Shamanism arises out of the relationships of human beings to the land and the universe.

Geography influences how shamanism develops in a region for several reasons. All over the globe, geographic conditions affect how a culture changes or remains the same. They define the needs of the people, which define the questions they bring to the shaman. How people survive in their geography affects their beliefs about the structure of the spirit world and their needs for the shaman's intervention with that spirit world. For example, in areas where soil conditions and lack of water did not allow planting, cultures of nomadic pastoralists developed, such as the Evenki of north Siberia or the horsemen of Hungary. Nomadic life presents different survival issues than agricultural life.

Geography also defines the helping spirits available to a great degree. In part, the familiar geography supplies the metaphors that shamans use to describe and interpret the energy patterns they experience in the spirit world. However, this does not explain the power shamans draw from the presence of Mount Cotacachi in Ecuador, lightning in the canyonlands of North America, or Lake Baikal in southern Siberia.

Nor does it explain how shamans work with the spirits of animals that do not exist in their environment. It is not clear whether the appearance of these foreign animal spirits is due to diffusion or the introduction of these helping spirits by a culture that experienced that animal, or that the helping spirit is simply present in the spirit world.

Geography also influences how shamans enter their trance state. Shamans are practical; they use what works. Where hide drumheads can be kept tuned, drums are often used to induce trance. Where the climate is too humid for drums, click sticks and hollowed logs are used for percussion. Psychotropic plants are also often used to induce trance. In climates that are very cold, singing and dancing, which warm the body, are often used to induce trance. From a shaman's point of view, there is no reason to struggle with a form that is not suited to the geography when each geography provides at least one way to enter trance.

Human survival is intimately linked to our ability to maintain a balanced relationship with the environment. For shamanic peoples the environment is experienced simultaneously as material and immaterial, physical and spiritual. Shamanism arises from the shaman's mediations between the material and immaterial aspects of the environment to assure successful hunting, healing, safe passage in birth and death, and sound guidance in all other aspects of human life.

Humanity's needs range from the basics of physical survival and well-being to the existential needs of the soul. The shaman's ability to communicate and negotiate with the animals, the weather, and the land was essential to meet these needs. In each stage of human development some needs, such as locating water sources, healing, and community, have remained the same while others have evolved. Prehistoric man needed success in hunting and gathering. Nomadic cultures needed the location of good pastures and the knowledge of how not to overgraze. Farming cultures needed rainfall, sunshine, protection from floods, as well as information on how to rotate crops and when to leave fields fallow. As people's activities changed from hunting to herding and from gathering to horticulture (small-scale planting or gardening) to agriculture (large-scale farming), their needs changed and their shamanism changed in form. As humans change their way of life, they change their relationship with the natural world and their demands on it.

These changes are not simplistic because the relationship between things is both apparent and symbolic. For example, the body and spirit of a hunted animal had to be shown respect and honored as a being and as part of the wealth the universe offered. The spirits of hunted animals were often given offerings of food or alcohol or were escorted to the land of the dead as human souls were. In contrast, domesticated animals, though honored as beings, were considered an extension of a person's wealth. Domesticated animals were offered as sacrifices while one made sacrifices to hunted animals.

One aspect of shamanism remained consistent through all of these changes—the shaman continued to access altered states of consciousness to meet the needs of the people. As the community's needs changed, the shaman's questions changed and the guidance of the helping spirits changed accordingly. However, the technology of the shaman, the entry into altered states of consciousness to ask questions and receive answers, remained constant. For example, shamans continue to use trance to retrieve lost souls, though the reasons a person's soul leaves and the symptoms the loss creates have changed over time.

Human needs and corresponding forms of shamanism have changed since the cave walls of Lascaux were painted. However the shaman's use of trance states to meet peoples' needs has remained constant. There is a reason our ancestors bothered to paint and carve shamans into stone. Perhaps that reason was because shamanism works. It allowed our ancestors to survive, to adapt, and to thrive.

And maybe it was more than survival that inspired their art. Perhaps it was the artist's intention to record the techniques of ecstasy because humans have a basic need to come into the presence of the sacred. Perhaps the cave paintings were created to remind us how to get home.

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THE ORIGIN OF THE WORD “SHAMAN”

The word “shaman” (SHAH-mahn, pl. shamans) comes from an oral tradition. Therefore, the exact origin of the word is unknown. Anthropologists suggest that it comes from the peoples of northern Asia and is most closely related to *saman* of the Evenki (Tungus-speaking hunters and reindeer herders from the Altai Mountains of Siberian Russia). It is also related to *saman* of the Mongols and to the Turkish *kan* and *xam*. The Evenki word *saman* comes from the Tunguso-Manchurian verb *sa*, meaning “to know” or “to heat oneself.” It derives from the Vedic, *sram*, also meaning “to heat oneself” and *sramana*, meaning “ascetic.” *Saman* is most often translated as “one who is excited, moved, raised,” which refers to the shaking of the shaman’s body that occurs when he or she embodies spirits while in trance. As the term *saman* spread south to China and northeast to Japan it continued to be used to refer specifically to practitioners who utilize spirit embodiment, or intentional possession, to serve their clients and community.

Saman is also translated as “to burn up, to set on fire.” This is a reference to both the feverishness of inspiration from the trance state within which the shaman works and his or her mastery of inner fire. Mastery of inner fire is an essential part of the training of shamans in the northern Asiatic region. It involves the expert understanding, manipulation, and regulation of energies within the body.

Ake Hultkratz, an authority on native peoples of the northern hemisphere, believes that *saman* is related to another Tungus word, which stands for “a social functionary who, with the help of guardian spirits, attains ecstasy in order to create a rapport with the supernatural world on behalf of his group members.” These individuals, who served the community through controlled trance states, are found in many cultures and in the history of all cultures. Each culture has a word from its own language to denote the individual who, through ecstatic trance states, enters alternate states of consciousness (relative to the state in which he or she usually lives) and returns with information or energies from which the community can benefit.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Westerners began using “shaman” to describe not only the specialists described above, but also and inaccurately the medicine men, sorcerers, magicians, witch doctors, and anyone who appeared to be in contact with spirits. This general use of the word “shaman” dilutes the meaning of the word, which arose to describe a group of specialists who continue to practice among us today.

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THE SHAMAN

A shaman is a specific type of healer who uses a trance state, or alternate state of consciousness, to enter the invisible world. The invisible world a shaman enters is made up of all aspects of our world that affect us but which we cannot see, including the spiritual, emotional, mental, mythical, archetypal, and dream worlds. Once in the invisible world, the shaman makes a change in the energy found there so that it directly affects a need here in the physical world such as healing, hunting magic, weather. Furthermore, the shaman learns what energy to change, and how to change it in the invisible world through direct contact with spirits. Spirits are coherent energy patterns with presence found in the invisible world. They may have form—animal, plant, mountain, ancestor, deity, or element; they may be formless; or the spirit may be the presence of the universe as a being, often explained as That Which Created God. It is this direct contact with spirit and the use of the trance state that distinguishes the shaman from other practitioners.

Anthropologists and other scholars have not come to agreement on what criteria define the shaman, other than the mastery of altered states of consciousness. Broad, narrow, and mid-range definitions will be discussed below. They are presented with the understanding that listing criteria does not really explain how a shaman creates the powerful rituals that mend our souls. The definition of shaman that best serves the primary purpose of this book is a mid-range definition. Mid-range definitions attempt to differentiate shamans from practitioners who use altered states of consciousness but do not heal clients, and from other practitioners who heal clients but do not use altered states of consciousness to do so. Broad definitions often include those who use trance, but do not heal. Narrow definitions exclude many shamans and can be impractical when they obfuscate our ability to recognize the range of altered states of consciousness a shaman utilizes in a normal day of practice.

We will work from the following mid-range definition of shaman.

The shaman is a practitioner who has developed the mastery of:

1. accessing altered states of consciousness, controlling themselves while moving in those states, and returning to an ordinary state of consciousness at will;
2. mediating between the needs of the spirit world and those of the physical world in a way that can be understood by the community, and whose mastery of the above is used
3. to serve the needs of the community that cannot be met by practitioners of other disciplines such as physicians, psychiatrists, priests, and leaders.

This mid-range definition varies from the often-cited narrow definition of Eliade's *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Essential to Eliade's definition is distinguishing "spirit flight," the particular altered states of consciousness in which the shaman leaves his or her body and travels into the spirit world, as the only valid shamanic trance state. However, within a single healing session shamans often move between this type of journeying trance state and a possessionlike trance state in which, in contrast to spirit flight, they embody the helping spirits here in the physical world. Therefore, I have included altered states of consciousness within which the shaman embodies helping spirits as equally valid shamanic trance states. With this addition, the mid-range definition above is compatible with Eliade's definition.

Eliade further narrowed his definition of shaman by presenting other criteria which I have not included because these criteria apply in general to shamans of northern Asia and not to shamans of equal power and ability in other regions. The criteria in question state that shamans:

1. are masters of fire;
2. experience dismemberment and resurrection initiations;
3. have animal guardians.

For the following reasons the criteria listed above present a definition of shaman so narrow that it no longer supports the cross-cultural nature of this encyclopedia.

Mastery of fire, for example, is an essential step in training to become a shaman in some cultures, but not in all. It may be used to validate the depth of a shaman's trance state. Mastery of fire, however, is used in many cultures for reasons that have nothing to do with shamans. For example, in the traditional cultures of China, Sri Lanka, and India, non-shamans walk on fire in an act of faith or to demonstrate their integrity. Similarly, hundreds of contemporary Westerners walk on fire for personal empowerment in weekend workshops. Mastery of fire does not make any of these traditional or contemporary people shamans.

Another aspect of mastery of fire in the training of some shamans is developing magical inner heat from cold. This is an essential step in training Inuit or Japanese shamans. However, it is not necessary for the Midewiwin shamans of the Great Lakes region of North America or the Maori of New Zealand. In addition, there are other belief systems, such as those of Tibetan monks and Indian ascetics, that value developing magical inner heat (mystical heat) as part of their training processes. These practices do not necessarily develop shamans.

A dismemberment dream or vision in which the shaman is taken apart in some way by helping spirits is common in many shamanic traditions around the globe. However it is not essential to becoming a shaman in all cultures. For the Ammassalik Eskimos, the dismemberment occurs in a waking vision experience that is essential to becoming a shaman in that culture. Other cultures, such as the Yamana of South America, have highly involved initiations and training that do not directly involve dismemberment as the initiatory metaphor for death and rebirth. Dismemberment may not appear at all in cultures where the shamanic lineage is either inherited or the individual simply chooses to become an apprentice to an accomplished shaman. Dismemberment does not serve a defining role in the training of shamans in all cultures.

Shamans in many different cultures work with helping spirits in animal form. However, many cultures have developed intricate hierarchies of helping spirits in the forms of deities, ancestors, or other powerful human figures from their history. In these cultures the animals are often not considered by all shamans to be as reliable as those spirits from their hierarchies. Some shamans report that their helping spirits are their ancestors or simply elemental spirits, such as fire or water, or the spirits of nature, such as mountains or rivers. Although helping spirits in animal form are prevalent throughout shamanism globally, a relationship with them does not define the shaman, particularly in cultures, such as those native to North America, where gaining one's power animal during a vision quest is part of the initiation of every person into adulthood.

Broad definitions of shaman are too inclusive and thus do not serve the purpose of this encyclopedia. For example, anthropologist, psychologist, and initiated shaman Larry Peters presents a sound, broad definition, stating that the single defining attribute is that the shaman can control entrances into and exits out of his or her altered state of consciousness in service of his or her community. While this definition is compatible with the essence of the mid-range definition, it does not allow us to distinguish the shaman from other practitioners who use altered states of consciousness, but do not heal. The shaman is able to engage in the particular altered state necessary for soul recovery and to take action in that altered state to accomplish healing (the return of the soul). This distinguishes the shaman from other practitioners who use altered states of consciousness, but do not take action in those altered states (mediums) or who take action in altered states, but not necessarily to heal (sorcerers). The broad definitions, like the narrow definitions, are valid, but do not serve as well as the mid-range definition presented above.

Shamans have also inspired poetic definitions too numerous to include. However, in an introduction to *Shamans of the 20th Century* by Ruth-Inge Heinze, Stanley

Krippner is particularly eloquent and accurate when he states that shamans were the world's first physicians, first diagnosticians, first psychotherapists, first religious functionaries, first magicians, first performing artists, and first storytellers. They are "community-assigned magico-religious professionals who deliberately alter their consciousness in order to obtain information from the 'spirit world.' They use this knowledge and power to help and to heal members of their community, as well as the community as a whole."

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SHAMANS AND NON-SHAMANIC HEALERS

Shamans have been confused with medicine men, witch doctors, sorcerers, and healers who work in trance states. The shaman is distinguished by his or her ability to utilize a particular trance state in which the shaman's soul leaves the physical world and travels into the invisible world to make an experiential connection with spirit. Once that connection is established, the energies of the spirit world (helping spirits) aid the shaman in diagnosing what needs to be done and help in doing it, often right there in the invisible world. The shaman's soul then returns to the physical world and the shaman returns to the community to share the wisdom gained in that altered state. This movement between the physical world and the spirit world is an act of discipline. The shaman is in control of the trance state in all stages of the initiation, interpretation, actions, exit, and return.

The deep, ecstatic trance state, known as spirit flight, in which the shaman's soul leaves the body is not necessary in every shamanic healing session. The depth and type of trance necessary for a particular healing depend on where the source of the problem lies. The shaman clarifies both where the source of the problem lies and what is necessary to resolve the problem at the source through the diagnosis. Shamans tend to diagnose in uniquely personal ways that all involve contact with the spirit world. Regardless of the specific diagnosis, there are two aspects that are similar in all sessions. One, the shaman becomes an energetic bridge between the physical realm and the spirit world through trance. Two, the shaman takes action; he or she moves energy across that energetic bridge either by retrieving energy that belongs in the patient's body (e.g., returning with the lost soul part of the client in a soul retrieval) or by removing energy that is in the patient's body and should not be (e.g., removing the intrusion of a harmful spirit in an extraction).

To contemporary eyes the outward, physical action necessary to practice shamanism sometimes looks like performance or entertainment. This does not discount the healing work done by shamans. The amount of performance expected from the shaman is defined by the culture in which the shaman is practicing. In cultures such as that of Korea, the shaman is expected to act out the whole journey experience as he or she is experiencing it in the invisible world. In other cultures, such as Indonesia, evidence of possession is expected. Other shamans may simply prefer quiet, private places and work with little or no drama. Regardless of cultural expectation, it is never assumed that the drama or the performance is the healing. However, dramas may serve to focus the attention of the clients on the healing, and performance can transform the invisible energies of the ritual into a form the community recognizes.

Taking action in the unseen world is essential to the practice of shamanism; it is what sets the shaman apart from psychics, mediums, priests, and other energy healers. The shaman's actions may be taken on an individual level or on a communal level through ritual or ceremony, but always to restore harmony and serve others. In some cultures serving the needs of others means to defend and protect the community from its enemies. In these communities shamans may be expected to be sorcerers as well as shamans.

Magicians, Witches, and Sorcerers

Magicians and wizards explore the alchemical realms of magic. Witches and warlocks draw power from Nature to make magic. Sorcerers explore other realms to gather personal power for personal aims. Magicians, wizards, witches, and sorcerers are not shamans. However, shamans may perform magic in the service of their communities.

Magicians and wizards perform illusions, sleight of hand, and potentially real alchemical magic. They tend to draw their power from the spirits of the four

elements, earth, air, fire, water; from elemental spirits, such as caves, rocks, stars, or trees; from the forces of Nature; from totem spirits; and from deceased wizards. Magicians and wizards are the scholars of magic. They tend to serve the pursuit of learning and the power that comes from that information.

Witches and warlocks draw on the spirits of Nature and the energies of the universe to serve their own intentions, which may be benevolent or malevolent. Shamans do work with these same energies, but their intention is to surrender to the direction of spirit and the energies of the universe to serve the needs of others. Wiccan (contemporary witchcraft) practices emphasize the feminine and work with a traditional set of gods and goddesses. Unlike witches, shamans do not emphasize one type of energy over another because they work to balance all energies in dimensions where there really are no divisions into dualities such as male and female. Shamans may work, as witches do, with a traditional set of spirits recognized by their culture. However, they are usually not the gods and goddesses accessed through witchcraft.

Sorcerers work between the realms of the physical and spirit worlds as does the shaman, drawing on the help of the spirits and energies found there. Sorcerers however, explore other realms in the pursuit of personal power for personal aims. The shaman's intention is always to serve. The intention of a sorcerer's actions may be malevolent or benevolent. When shamans use their skills and their relationship with the helping spirits to malevolent ends, they have crossed the line into sorcery. Most shamans are aware of how dangerously easy it is to cross that line and do harm with any of their healing techniques. There were and are shamans who practiced sorcery. They may make this choice because serving the needs of their culture also means to defend and protect the community from its enemies or because they allow themselves to be seduced by the illusion of their own absolute power. Most shamans do not choose to become sorcerers, and the sorcerer's orientation toward gathering power for personal aims means the sorcerer cannot be considered a shaman.

Mediums and Psychics

Other practitioners have also been confused with shamans. They include mediums and psychics, who, through possession, allow spirits to utilize their bodies as vehicles to convey information; oracles, prophets, and diviners, who utilize trance states or other divinatory practices to access information from the spirit world; priests; and healers. Mediums, diviners, priests, and healers are not shamans. However, shamans may perform divination, guide the spiritual direction of the community, and perform acts of healing.

Shamans and mediums are experts in spirit possession. This means that they control their own entry into and exit from the possession-trance state. They can both be distinguished from the mentally ill who may slip, unintentionally and uncontrollably, into possession states, and from the novice who intentionally invites the possession, but cannot yet control the resulting trance state. Furthermore, skill and discipline are necessary to utilize the presence of spirit gained from the possession state. It is this opportunity to utilize the presence of spirit that is the purpose of the intentional possession for both the medium and the shaman.

Shamans use intentional possession trances to embody helping spirits. This allows them to remain in ordinary reality to perform the traditional services of extraction (removing spirit intrusions from the body), cleansing (removing harmful energies from the body), and divination (the art of seeking information from supernatural sources). For example, the Nepalese *tumung* (shaman) embodies the tiger spirit to perform extraction healings. The *houngan* (shaman) of Haiti is open to be "mounted (possessed)" by the "*loa* (spirits)" to do his or her work. Scandinavian shamans are provided access to the wisdom of their goddess Freiya by entering trance, traveling to her home in the spirit realm, embodying her there, and returning to ordinary reality as

the goddess who enables members of the community to ask Freiya questions. These are just a few examples of how shamans use intentional possession to serve their community.

There is a clear distinction between shamans and mediums who both use possession states as a means to connect with spirit to gain information for others. The primary distinction is action. Both have developed the discipline necessary to utilize the presence of spirit for divination. However, the shaman also takes action in the altered state to move energies from the physical realm into the spirit realm toward a particular end, such as removing a harmful spirit in an exorcism or removing the blocked energy of a tumor in an extraction. In contrast, mediums are conscious or unconscious channels for spirit to speak through and they do not take action in the altered state. Shamans enter a wide range of alternate states of consciousness throughout any one session. It would not be unusual for a shaman to embody a helping spirit for extraction work and then journey into the spirit realms to find a lost soul part in a single session. Therefore it is important to understand that although shamans function as mediums at times, this does not preclude them from being considered shamans. However, mediumship alone does not make an individual a shaman. Shamans are potentially mediums; however, all mediums are not shamans.

Oracles, Prophets, Diviners

A similar explanation can be made for divination techniques that do not involve possession trance states. In many traditionally shamanic cultures the shaman divines information through some process that does not involve possession states or deep trance states. He or she may use a light trance, such as scrying (reading the ordinary, such as a bowl of water or tea leaves), casting bones (Africa), casting coins (China), or reading the intestines of guinea pigs (South America). As with mediumship, there are individuals who have developed their innate psychic talent for divination and may utilize any of these same divination tools. This alone does not make them shamans. Shamans do divine information from the spirit world. However not all who divine information are shamans.

Priests

Shamans are often called the earliest priests, and they may be the precursors to today's religious functionaries. However, there are two distinct differences between priests and shamans. Priests teach a particular doctrine, and they usually have little or no experience in altered states. It is not necessary for a priest to have had a mystical experience to perform a social role. For a shaman the experience of the mystical is essential. It is also the role of the priest as the religious functionary to express the doctrine of a church as the God-given truth. Although the shaman uses his or her contact with the mystical to rebalance and sustain the moral conduct of the community, the shaman does not teach a particular belief system or doctrine. It is interesting to note that there are priest exorcists in the Roman Catholic Church who exorcise harmful spirits by following a procedure described in the *Rituale Romanum* of 1614. Their exorcism procedure is quite similar to the exorcism ritual used by shamans. Nonetheless, the ability to exorcise malevolent spirits alone does not make one a shaman.

Healers

In many shamanic cultures there are healers who practice the arts of physical healing with methods such as herbal medicines, massage, or acupuncture. These healers are not shamans, but practitioners who traditionally practice in conjunction with the shaman in the community. Any number of these healing arts may be practiced by particular shamans. For example, most Amazonian shamans have a vast knowledge of the medicinal and hallucinogenic uses of rain forest plants. However, the practice

of these arts does not make one a shaman, because this healing does not require mastery of trance states.

For the shaman the authority is the helping spirit(s)—not belief, tradition, dogma, or the particular way a healing worked yesterday. The shaman is not involved in maintaining the status quo. The shaman's task is twofold—first, the accurate diagnosis of the seen and unseen energies at the root of the problem, and second, carrying out the specific choreography of energies needed to resolve the problem. The shaman knows that similar symptoms do not necessarily imply the same root problem. Therefore, the shaman consults the spirit realm first and proceeds as directed by his or her helping spirits. What works is all that matters. Shamans work in complete trust that the helping spirits know what will work and what won't. Through their practice, shamans bridge the perceived gap between the physical and spiritual realms in order to restore harmony within the individual, between the individual and the community, and between the community and the spirit world.

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CONTEMPORARY SHAMANS

Contemporary shamans are found in three general categories. First, there are shamans who come from an unbroken shamanic tradition and continue to practice within that tradition today. Second, there are those who come from a shamanic tradition and see themselves as a bridge between their world and the Western world. These shamans have added ceremonies and rituals to their traditional practice that enable them to fulfill their additional role as a bridge between cultures. Lastly, there are those who come from cultures long separated from their shamanic roots, but who are nonetheless called by the spirits to serve the needs of their communities as shamans today.

The ability to adapt and change is inherent in any shaman's practice. A shaman must continually respond to new information from the spirit world as the seen and unseen environments change over time. Although the form of specific practices may change in response to changes in the environment, the function of the shaman's work has not. Evidence of shamans is found in hunter and gatherer societies or fishing societies across every continent around the world. Contemporary Westerners feel most comfortable seeing shamans in that early image. However, shamans can be recognized in agricultural, industrial, technological, and urban settings when we look with a deeper understanding of how they practice. Today's shamans may come from shamanic traditions, but practice in cities, requiring adaptation of traditional techniques to heal the wounds of contemporary urban life. Or they may be born in cities or into cultures with long-dead shamanic traditions and feel the call nonetheless, leaving them to find their way through the teachings of the helping spirits, without the guidance of elders or apprenticeship.

In traditional cultures that have converted to organized religion the call to shamanism can create great internal conflict between one's desire to live by new beliefs and the need to respond to the call. These individuals must struggle to return to their traditional awareness that they are of spirit and connected to all things—not fallen from God and needing to return to him. Contemporary shamans can lose power and efficacy from the belief that they are separate from God. Shamans draw their power to heal and the ability to sustain their own health in the process of healing others from their experiential connection to all things.

Worldwide, missionaries have been effective in convincing indigenous families that it is in their children's best interests to allow the children to be taken from the native culture and raised by Western standards with organized religion. Max Beauvoir (Haiti), Malidoma Somé (Dagara, West Africa) and Akuete Durchback (Togo, West Africa) are three examples of contemporary people who were taken from their families as children, yet were called by the spirits of their birth culture to become shamans. This type of contemporary shaman is exposed to Western ideas, technology, and organized religion and then chooses to return to their culture's traditional ways. They respond to spirit's call and learn the ways of shamans of their native cultures, yet they do not forget what they learned from the West. This allows them to serve as a bridge between the traditional and modern cultures while they serve the shaman's traditional role as a bridge between the spiritual and physical worlds.

Because the ability to adapt and change is both inherent and necessary in shamanism, we can expect the emergence of the third type of contemporary shaman whenever people in an environment feel the need for the care and healing of their souls. As these contemporary shamans are called into service they will translate the information from the spirit world into the day to day language of that community.

Shamans can rise up out of any society to fulfill peoples' needs for healing the wounds of their souls and to connect with the Divine. Though the way these needs are expressed has changed over time, particularly due to the demands of contemporary

life, the existential needs remain the same. People want to come into the presence of the sacred. We are still humans in an infinite and inscrutable universe. Without belief in their own ability to connect with spirit, people turn to shamans to help them in connecting deeply with the Divine and returning safely to the physical world.

The following are examples of shamans emerging in urban environments to serve the needs of culturally diverse communities. In Singapore, an Indian dockworker began to see an altar in his dreams and, after finding the altar, Hindu gods and goddesses began to manifest in his body. This shaman's training came directly from the spirits who worked through him. When embodying the deities, the shaman performed exorcisms, healings, blessings, and offered solutions to alleviate the personal problems of clients from diverse Asian cultures. On the days the shaman did not go into full possession trance, he moved in and out of lighter trance states to communicate with spirit as necessary to counsel his clients.

In another example, a shaman of Chinese descent, in Jurong outside Singapore, cultivated his facility for shamanic healing through study with a Taoist priest and Buddhist monks and through direct revelation while in meditation. In his practice, he divines the source of his clients issues, cures spirit-related illnesses, exorcises cases of "mass hysteria," and works in the Singapore Mental Hospital. He also teaches what he has learned in his years as a shaman to students who are called to become shamans.

Contemporary shamans often hold positions of power in urban social structures. In Bangkok, sixty to seventy shamans hold high positions in the Ministry of Education and other positions of official power. Upon deciding to become a shaman, they may seek out the appropriate training to learn divination and the trance techniques necessary to intervene on behalf of their clients in the spirit world. While in trance these shamans are as likely to embody Indian deities as they are to embody Buddhist monks or high spiritual teachers.

Contemporary shamans are actively and successfully working in the modern world, as well as in traditionally shamanic cultures. Shamanic practices can flourish in all cultures, and shamans may hold Ph.D. degrees and other positions of official power.

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RITUAL AND CEREMONY

Ritual and ceremony are tools used by shamans to engage the powers of the invisible world to effect specific changes in the physical world. They are two unique tools and are not interchangeable. Ritual is used to change the status quo, upset the order of things, and to create chaos where necessary. Ceremony is used to restore or reinforce the status quo, grounding people in the right order of things (natural laws) and strengthening the community. Ritual is the domain of the shaman, magician, and sorcerer. Ceremony can be used by any leader or religious functionary who has the skills to connect with and engage the unseen energies. This is common in indigenous North American cultures, where spiritual leaders conduct powerful ceremonies, such as the sweat lodge ceremony, but do not consider themselves shamans.

Both ritual and ceremony are designed to engage the spirit world in helping human beings. The essential distinction between the two tools is the intended outcome. The outcome of ceremony is known and predictable, while the outcome of ritual is unknown and unpredictable. Without the connection to the powers of the spirit world, neither is an effective tool for creating change. Any ritual or ceremonial form can be practiced by rote in a way that does not engage spirit, either because the form is not appropriate for the current situation to which it is applied, or the individual officiating is not able to open an authentic connection with spirit and engage the help of the spirit world. When spirit is not engaged, the ritual and ceremony are both empty and powerless as tools for change. In this case ritual and ceremony are no longer distinctly different and the words could be used interchangeably. These empty rituals and ceremonies cannot be compared to shamanic ritual and ceremony. In this book, ritual and ceremony refer to shamanic ritual and shamanic ceremony unless specifically defined otherwise.

The structures of ritual and ceremony have similar functional elements. First, the intention is clarified so that when humans call on the spirits, they do so with a specific purpose. Next, the sacred space for the conversation with spirit is created by cleansing and preparing both the physical space and human beings who will be present in that space. After the sacred space is created, it is opened in a way that honors the spirit powers being called upon so that the shaman can initiate the conversation with them. At this point, the process becomes either a ritual or ceremony depending on the intention. Either way, when the work with spirit is complete, the sacred space is closed, the completion of the dialogue is acknowledged, and gratitude is offered for spirit's intervention in human concerns.

It is essential that each of these functions occurs. How they occur—the actions taken or the form used—varies among cultures, tribes, and practitioners. The form used is influenced by a multitude of variables, including, but not limited to, where, why, and when the event is happening, and who (human and nonhuman) will participate. As these variables change, new ways open for humans to accomplish these functions, and some old ways lose their efficacy. The perfect performance of an old ritual or ceremonial form does not assure that an authentic connection with spirit will be created today. Conversely, the fact that the form does not work today is not proof that it did not work in the past. What is perhaps more surprising, given all of the variables involved, is how much of the old ritual and ceremonial forms are still potent and powerfully effective today.

The primary difference between ritual and ceremony occurs after the sacred space has been opened and a connection with spirit has been established. In ritual, no one—including the shaman—knows exactly what will happen or how the effect of the ritual will play out in the lives of the participants. Ritual always involves this risk. For peoples living with a shamanic worldview, facing this risk is fundamental to all initiations, child to adult, individual to shaman, and for the ongoing health of the

individual and community. It is the shaman's responsibility to guide the energetic flow of the ritual, which the shaman does through the interaction with spirit in an altered state. The shaman aims to keep the flow within the bounds of the intention and the general safety of the humans involved. However, complete safety is not always possible in ritual, and the very real result can be illness, insanity, or death. This element that produces risk, the connection with spirit, is the same element that makes ritual a powerful healing form. The healing effects of ritual can be as complete a positive transformation as death or insanity are a negative, undesired outcome.

In contrast to creating change, ceremony reaffirms the natural order. After the sacred space is opened in ceremony, the shaman and any participants familiar with the ceremony know exactly what will happen and what the effect will be in their lives. That is the power of ceremony. The ceremonial conversation with spirit is scripted and familiar, as in weddings and baptisms. The Maya state shamans developed this ceremonial form to its extreme, using ceremony not only to affirm the natural order in present-day events, but also to connect those events with historical events to draw power from the past. In this way ceremony was used to reaffirm the status quo and to affirm its repetition as a reoccurring pattern over time.

Shamans use ceremonies to restore balance. Ceremony offers the opportunity to release energies, like secrets or transgressions against others, enabling the confessor to return to balance with the community or the spirit world and to ground the participants as they participate in familiar songs, dances, and prayers. The tools the shaman uses to carry out the ceremony, such as songs and sacrifices, are chosen to accomplish the intention of the ceremony. The results of ceremony are often communal. For example, a ceremony to celebrate a successful harvest may involve the sacrifice of a portion of the harvest in gratitude for spirit's part in that success. It is a way of giving back to Nature in gratitude for the fact that Nature has bent her will to favor the humans and expressing hope that she will do so again next year. Without ceremonies of celebration and gratitude, humans slip into energetic debt with the natural order of things, which creates a need for deeper healing through ritual. Thus ceremony can be seen as preventative medicine and ritual as acute care.

The tools a shaman uses to engage spirit in ritual, such as drumming or chanting, should not be confused with the actions the shaman takes once in trance. For example, a shaman usually enters trance the same way—using the same songs or chants—or performs the same technique, such as a sucking extraction or depossession. However, what the shaman finds while in trance is unique to each situation and what he or she extracts is also particular to the situation. The actions the shaman takes while in trance are improvised based on what the shaman finds through the connection with spirit—the diagnosis. The form is never the same twice. However, the tools the shaman uses to open the ritual space and to enter trance are the same ritual to ritual because they work.

The results of ritual are unique for each participant. The desired outcome of healing rituals is to restore balance in ordinary reality either by bringing energies back from the spirit world, as in soul retrievals or divinations, or by returning energies to the spirit world, as in extractions, depossessions, cleansings, and escorting spirits to the Land of the Dead. Ritual is used for purposes such as initiation and healing, as well as communal healing. The function and effect of the ritual are unique for each participant. For example, the same physical symptoms may have different diagnoses in the spirit world, which result in different treatments. Similarly, the same healing ritual may produce different effects in each patient.

The function of ceremony is the same for each participant, though experience of the effects may vary. For example, the sweat lodge ceremonial form is repeated to create a known outcome—purification that clears and reinforces the individual's connection with self and spirit. However, the personal experience of purification is

largely dependent on what toxins are being cleansed and released. Thus, each individual's experience of the sweat lodge ceremony may be quite different, though the function—to purify—is the same.

The distinction between ritual and ceremony is understood by the keeper of the ritual or the leader of the ceremony. The keeper/leader holds the knowledge of the forms. They are engaged on a plane very different than the participants; they are engaged in the direct conversation with spirit, while the participants are experiencing the results of that conversation.

Shamans use ceremony and ritual when necessary. However, the healing work of a true shaman is not ceremonial. Every time a shaman enters trance, he or she engages spirit in ritual. What happens in the shaman's journey or embodiment trance is not known until it is complete. The shaman's sessions are unique, though the same tools or processes may be repeated. Each shamanic healing session (or seance) involves risk. This is the reason shamanic healing sessions are powerful tools for healing. It is the risk inherent in ritual that allows it to be truly transformational, and the ability to manage risk that allows the shaman to be a powerful agent of change.

THE SHAMAN'S TRANCE

The shaman uses specific practices or sacred technologies to enter into a narrow range of altered states of consciousness. This particular range has certain qualities that allow the shaman to work in partnership with his or her helping spirits. These trance states are essential and fundamental for shamanic work. They enable the shaman to forge, maintain, and utilize the working relationship with spirit. The partnership between the shaman and the spirits, whether in the physical or spiritual realm, generates the power for shamanic healing and ritual.

The shaman's trance is not one state, but a range of states between embodiment and journeying. For some tasks the shaman undertakes, it is most effective for the shaman to go into the spirit world to work with the spirits there. When the shaman travels into the spirit realm, the trance state being utilized is referred to as journeying or spirit flight. For other tasks, it is most effective for the spirit to come into the physical world through the shaman's body to work here in the human realm. This trance state is referred to in this encyclopedia as embodiment to clearly distinguish it from possession, which is an illness. Journeying and embodiment are the trance states at opposite ends of the narrow range of altered states that together compose shamanic states of consciousness.

In *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus* (1935), one of the most authoritative ethnographic studies of Siberian shamanism, author Shirokogoroff posits that the most basic attribute of the shaman's trance is the mastery of spirits, or embodiment of the helping spirit. The Tungus distinguish between an involuntary possession trance, which is an illness, and the voluntary embodiment trance of the shaman. The shaman intentionally possesses spirits as a part of curing the possession illnesses in others. This type of embodiment trance is reported in the shamanism of a wide range of cultures.

In contrast, other scholars, most prominently Eliade in 1964 in *Shamanism: Techniques of Ecstasy*, contend that the true shaman's trance is the visionary ecstasy of spirit flight, or the shamanic journey. In this trance state, the shaman's soul journeys into the spirit realm and the shaman sees or has visions of ascending and descending to other worlds. Eliade, also looking at Siberian shamanism, notes that embodiment is a later degenerate form of spirit flight, in spite of his observation that the shaman's embodiment trance was an effective, universally distributed phenomena. The journeying trance, or spirit flight, is also reported in the shamanism of a wide range of cultures.

The issue is not the type of trance state, but mastery of the art of shamanic trance states. The embodiment state is not found only in shamanism, nor is spirit flight. However, this does not preclude the fact that they can and often do relate to shamanism. Not all possessions are shamanic embodiments because possession alone does not fulfill the criteria for a shamanic trance state. Not every journey is a shamanic journey, again because entering into a journey does not fulfill the criteria for a shamanic trance state. Human beings enter trance, have deep lucid dreams, and experience other unexplained spontaneous events. It is their nature. What distinguishes someone as a shaman is whether the individual can do anything with the trance state and, more important, whether or not he or she can do anything for others.

Any theory of whether embodiment or soul flight is the original or classical form of the shaman's trance is conjecture. These theories often reflect more of a cultural bias than any facts. Both types of trance state are widespread in shamanism. Furthermore, in his work with LSD in the 1970s, Stanislav Grof determined that "both are primordial spiritual phenomena, belonging to not culture in particular but to humanity as a whole." Animal possession, spiritual mediumship, and visions of traveling through the universe all develop spontaneously during LSD-induced altered

states. Grof also found that, as in shamanic altered states, the person in trance was lucid, experienced controlled visualizations, and retained memory of the altered state experience after returning to ordinary consciousness.

Academics with years of field research with shamans as well as shamans themselves caution against viewing the shaman's trance as exclusive to either embodiment or journeying. The type of trance used by a shaman is determined primarily by what the shaman is trying to accomplish through the trance and secondarily by cultural expectations. Any comprehensive definition of the shaman's trance must include spirit flight and spirit embodiment and the full range of altered states between. Furthermore, we must understand that in a shamanic healing ritual these trance states can exist separately or coexist to various degrees.

Trance is a term widely used, often with negative connotations, and imprecisely defined. In general use, trance implies unconsciousness and an inability to direct one's thoughts and actions with intention. Trance can mean a state of partly suspended animation or inability to function, such as a daze or stupor in which the individual is unaware of the environment and unable to respond to stimuli. In more extreme definitions, often associated with spiritual states or mental illness, trance is defined as a hypnotic, cataleptic, or somnolent state, characterized by limited sensory and motor contact with the environment and an inability to retain memory of the trance experience after returning to ordinary consciousness. Not one of these definitions of trance applies to shamanism.

The shaman's trance is an intentionally induced state of rapture. The shaman leaves ordinary consciousness and a primary awareness of the physical environment to focus attention and sensory awareness on the invisible spiritual environment. The shaman's trance is characterized by focused attention on task (the healing at hand) with reduced awareness of objects, stimuli, or the environment outside of the experiential context of the trance. Shamanic trance is characterized by its flexibility in the range from spirit flight to full spirit embodiment and the flexibility of the shaman while in the trance. Shamans use intention and discipline while in the trance state to adjust the type and depth of trance as is necessary for the healing to succeed. Contemporary scholars, especially those who do extensive fieldwork with shamans, consistently observe shamans using both spirit flight and spirit embodiment in their work.

The shamanic trance is a tool that is variable, ranging from a light diagnostic state, to a deep journey state, and to full embodiment by spirit. The shaman varies the altered state according to the needs of the healing. Shamans have control at all times over the nature, depth, and qualities of their trance states. In practice, shamans often pass through a series of alternate states or depths of trance during any one session until they reach the level at which they operate best or the level that is necessary for the different stages of the healing to occur.

The ability to enter an altered state of consciousness is a human ability. An altered state of consciousness is experienced as qualitatively different from the normal for the individual. Consciousness, in this context, is an individual's total pattern of thinking and feeling at any given time. Ordinary consciousness is an individual's day-to-day experience of thinking and feeling, being awake versus sleeping or dreaming. Ordinary consciousness serves as an individual's baseline. In non-ordinary consciousness, or altered states, the mind processes information and registers experiences differently. In altered states, mental functions operate that do not operate at all ordinarily, and perceptual qualities are spontaneously accessed that have no ordinary counterparts.

Renowned anthropologist Erika Bourguignon looked at the practices of culturally patterned forms of altered states of consciousness in all parts of the world. Gathering statistics from 488 societies (57 percent of the societies represented in the ethnographic atlas), she determined that 437, or 90 percent, of the societies have one or

more institutionalized, culturally patterned forms of altered states of consciousness. Bourguignon's conclusion was that the ability to enter altered states of consciousness is a psychobiological capacity available to humans in all societies.

The capacity to experience a range of trance states is a basic human potential. Solid, scholarly research shows that it is statistically normal for humans to access altered states of consciousness. Scholar Barbara Lex states that trance "arises from manipulation of universal neurophysiological structures of the human body (and) lies within the potential behavior of all normal human beings."¹ Humans are physiologically designed to enter a wide variety of altered states. The capacity to enter altered states of consciousness makes us human, not shamans.

Different cultures recognize different types of consciousness. Some cultures have a highly refined awareness of different states of consciousness, while the awareness of consciousness in other cultures is quite limited. For example, the Buddhist *Abhidhamma*, the third great section of the Buddhist Scriptures thought to be the earliest product of Buddha's thought directly after Enlightenment, lists 108 different states of mental cultivation. In contrast, contemporary Western cultures recognize only three states: consciousness, sleeping, and dreaming. In cultures with an awareness of consciousness, it is believed that adults must cultivate the ability to enter specific altered states in order to maintain mental health. In contemporary Western cultures, the ability to enter altered states is believed to be a symptom of mental illness.

Meditation and yoga are examples of traditional disciplines designed to produce specific altered states of consciousness. Similarly there are traditional disciplines used in shamanic cultures that are designed to produce specific shamanic altered states. These shamanic altered states have different qualities than those entered through meditation and yoga. In shamanic altered states, there is a relatively high awareness of the non-ordinary environment, awareness of self in that environment, awareness of unseen beings and energies, and a very high goal orientation or focus on task. The shaman's capacity for trance is not unique; the shaman's training, discipline, and capacity to use the trance state are.

The shaman and the shaman's trance are distinguished from other humans and their innate capacity for trance states by the shaman's ability to control and use his or her trance states. In other words, the shaman is distinguished by his/her mastery over an otherwise normal human trait. Most people do not have, or make, the time to cultivate mastery of their innate ability to connect with spirit through altered states. Furthermore, when they do connect, they are often unable to reach the higher levels of mastery accessible only through initiation and discipline exercised over time. As with singing, dancing, and painting, trance work is an expressive art. We are all able to sing, dance, and enter trance. However, some of us are gifted. Some gifts can be transformed through training and experience to mastery. Shamans are masters of the ancient arts, the techniques of ecstasy used to induce and utilize the shamanic altered states.

The essential characteristics of shamanic altered states are voluntary control of entrance and duration of altered state, the ability to communicate with others during the altered state, and memory of the altered state experience after returning to ordinary consciousness. Shamanic altered states are also characterized by a type of self-awareness that allows for single-pointed task focus, direct relationship with the unseen world, and working relationships with specific helping spirits. When a plant hallucinogen is ingested to induce trance, there is also a working relationship between the shaman and the spirit of that plant.

There are shamans, particularly in African cultures, who attain full control and mastery of their trance states without any reference to spirit journeys or spirit embodiment. For these shamans the healing powers are non-ordinary in origin; however, they are believed to originate in an energy and magic inside the shaman, not from the

spirits. Even in these cultures, the trance state is acknowledged as a non-ordinary, altered state of consciousness. This trance state is necessary for these shamans to activate and utilize their healing powers, as with shamans in all other cultures.

The common element among all shamans is their mastery of shamanic altered states, regardless of the perceived origin of the non-ordinary energy utilized in the trance state. To display mastery the shaman must remain in control of his or her self whether in spirit flight or spirit embodiment. The shaman must be able to utilize the trance state for the specific reasons the shaman entered the trance to begin with. The shaman must be able to direct the powers available in the trance state to effect the change needed in the patient or community.

The shamanic trance is variable in quality and flexible in depth. For example, an experienced shaman of the Amazon rain forest will have a familiar and well-developed relationship with the spirits of the indigenous plants. The observer will barely notice this shaman slipping in and out of the light trance needed to receive or confirm his or her diagnosis and remedy for using plants to treat a particular illness. Apprentices of this shaman must journey deeply to communicate with these same plant spirits to get the same diagnosis and remedy. That same experienced shaman must also journey deeply when working in a new environment to speak to the spirits of the new plants to learn how to utilize the new plants in new remedies for the same illness.

For the shaman, trance states are tools. The type of trance used is determined primarily by what is necessary to do the work at hand. However, there are a variety of cultural expectations that may influence the shaman's trance states. For example, the Siberian peoples of Northeast Asia expect mastery of spirit flight from their shamans, while the peoples of Southeast Asia expect mastery of spirit embodiment states. Even with the cultural expectations, the shaman's trance is first and foremost adjusted to the task at hand. It is not simply a recital of old rituals, a dramatization of the audience expectations, or a conditioned reflex. The shamans' trance provides an opportunity for authentic connection with the spirit world. It is important for people to experience regular and literal contact with the Divine. For many in the audience, this contact is in itself the healing.

The symbols, spirits, and stories brought forth from the shaman's trance are unique and authentic to each healing ritual. While a practicing shaman must adapt his or her interpretations of the invisible world to the expectations of the community, those expectations do not define what the shaman finds in the invisible world. It is not enough that a shaman has visions and enters into controlled trance states. The shaman must be able to interpret the energy patterns found in the spirit world and give them form in a way that provides effective healing or service to the community.

The symbolic system used by the shaman to express the trance state experience is crucial for the contact with the divine to be translated to the audience. The symbols must have meaning and power in the context of the healing at hand, but they must also be accurate. The symbols, spirits, and stories that emerge from the shaman's trance are energy. They are coherent patterns of energy in the great sea of flux that is the invisible world. They are real energetic things that must be translated into meaning and power.

The shaman's trance allows these coherent energy patterns to be "seen" in the invisible world and interpreted with subtlety and accuracy. This process is very much like the way all people learn to identify the forms of things in the physical world. Physical reality is also composed of coherent energy patterns. Most people can tell a kidney from a tree. Most people can identify the energy of anger from that of compassion, or the energy of their mother from that of the postman. However, people trained in identifying trees can tell a sycamore from a maple. Similarly, shamans are trained in accurately distinguishing subtle differences in the energy patterns in the invisible world so that a helping spirit is clearly distinguished from an illness-inducing spirit or a random ghost wandering by.

Shamans in trance can distinguish between energy patterns of the invisible world with great detail. These energy patterns are what the shamans call spirits. The shaman's trance is the tool used to see the spirits, or energy patterns, whether they are in the invisible world generating disharmony in the physical world, or they have actually entered the physical world, causing illness and distress.

The shaman's trance is the essential characteristic of shamanism. The shaman's work with the spirits in trance defines shamanic healing and shamanic healers relative to all other types of traditional healers. The shaman's experience in trance is conceived of as real, though of a realm other than the physical. In the shaman's trance the invisible world of spirit becomes visible. The problems of humanity can then be clearly defined and the solutions to those problems can flow to us through the shaman from the Divine.

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SHAMANS AND SPIRITS

The shaman's power to help and to heal comes from the spirits. This life-force-like power is inherent in all things. In the shaman's world, where the manifestations of this energy can be frightening and the related dangers grave, it is always honored for it connects all things.

The idea that a human being could control a power so vast and diverse is absurd. However, some humans can master the art of being in relationship with this sacred power. The shaman is this type of human. In this relationship the sacred power provides the energy and awareness while the shaman guides this energy and awareness into the physical realm in a way that helps those of us in physical form.

This relationship between the shaman and the spirits is often misunderstood. This misunderstanding arises in part because we don't have the words to accurately describe the relationship and in part because we don't have the experience to understand it easily. Nonetheless, understanding the true nature of the relationship between the shaman and the spirits is essential to understanding shamanism. Simply put, the relationship between the shaman and the spirits is a practical, working relationship.

As with all effective working relationships, each party brings something unique to the relationship and derives something from it. The spirits bring the guidance and the power the shaman needs to do the work. The shaman brings the ability to translate and focus these energies from the invisible world into the physical world to accomplish the specific tasks. The shaman gains the ability to be a shaman, to work with powerful forces to create healings and what looks from the human perspective to be miracles. What the spirits gain is a mystery. Perhaps it is the opportunity to express their own essence in the world. Whatever it is, they do gain something for they reach out to humans again and again. They initiate us and make some of us shamans as if it is important for them to do so. In this mysterious way, the relationship between the shaman and the spirits is interdependent.

The most common misunderstanding of this relationship is the idea that the shaman controls the spirits, that he is the master of spirits. It is easy to understand how people looking through the lens of Western culture, a culture that defines power in patterns of dominance, would interpret the relationship in terms of control. Yet we know from the words of the shamans that the spirits give everything that makes a human a shaman and that they take it all away just as easily. Shamans claim no control over this aspect of the relationship. In fact, they explain that around these issues the shaman must remain truly humble. What the shamans do claim is success in the struggle to gain control of his or her personal state while existing in the extreme altered states necessary to work with the powers of the invisible world. In other words, the shaman becomes the master of relationship with spirit, not of spirit.

This mastery of oneself while in relationship with spirit is the defining difference between the shaman and a mentally impaired person. The shaman's ability to control his or her altered state of consciousness without physical illness, mental instability, or death is essential. So is the shaman's ability to make sense out of the experience in a way that heals and does not harm the intended recipient.

A shaman is able to control him- or herself in a range of altered states, to enter and exit these states at will, and to interpret accurately these states in a way that is effective for others. The shaman uses this range of altered states as tools, selecting the correct altered state necessary to accomplish the task at hand. In contrast, a mentally ill person unintentionally enters altered states and is usually inaccurate or unclear in naming the invisible beings to whom he or she is speaking. There is no accuracy, self-control, precision, or efficacy in the altered state experience of the mentally ill.

The misunderstanding about the shaman's working relationship with spirit is further confused by the assumption that possession, an illness, is the same state of

consciousness as embodiment, a trance state employed by shamans. A shaman uses embodiment to bring a known helping spirit into his or her physical body to allow that spirit to work through the body to heal other people. Mastery of this trance state is essential for extractions and other cleansing work. The entry of the spirit into the body of the shaman is intentional and focused by the shaman. The shaman directs the power of the spirit toward a defined goal, such as removing a source of illness from a patient's body or giving guidance to a community. In contrast, the entry of a possessing spirit into the body of the victim is unintentional. The power of the possessing spirit overpowers the intention of the victim, thwarting the victim's control over his or her own personal state. One cannot work in a state of possession. Any shaman said to be in a state of possession is actually working in an embodiment trance.

When a shaman "goes to work," he or she enters an altered state in the way that you enter the office or retail shop. Shamans meet the helping spirits in the altered state in the way that you meet your coworkers at the office or meet salespeople behind the counter. The shaman goes about performing the tasks with the spirits in the way that you work with your coworkers. It is not necessary for you to control or possess your coworkers, nor they you, to get the job done. The best results come when all workers communicate accurately, respect each other, and do their best to perform their part of the job. The same is true for the shaman and the spirits. It is a working relationship of communication and mutual respect in which each party does its unique part to get the overall job done.

Shamans are in relationship with the spirits in a very deep, at times complex, and always very real way. The relationship is always experiential; it is not faith based. Shamans do not believe in spirits; they experience them. Shamans work with the power that flows to them while in relationship with spirit. This power is complex to define. It is in part the raw power of nature that is in form all around us and in part the power of the Unknown that is not yet manifest in form.

There are three defining characteristics in the working relationship forged between the spirits and shamans. First, a non-ordinary energy of sacred origin enables the shaman to heal others. Even the few peoples, such as the !Kung, who conceive of the shaman as the origin of the healing energy, also emphasize that it is a non-ordinary energy of sacred origin. A shaman must make a direct connection to a sacred source of non-ordinary energy to perform the acts of shamanism. Second, a shaman must cultivate his or her working relationship spirit personally. Each individual must survive meeting spirit, being tested by spirit, and being trained by spirit to forge successfully a working relationship. Finally, the spirits choose the shaman. Shamans do not choose to be shamans. All the shaman can do is attempt to forge a working relationship with the spirit who chooses him or her.

These three characteristics are powerfully and clearly illuminated in the words of an Eskimo *angakok* (shaman) below.

*It is not enough for a shaman to be able to escape both from himself and from his surroundings. It is not enough that, having the soul removed from his eyes, brain, and entrails, he is able also to withdraw the spirit from his body and thus undertake the great "spirit flights" through space and through the sea; nor is it enough that by means of his powers (qaumanEq) he abolishes all distance, and can see things, however far away. For he will be incapable of maintaining these faculties unless he has the support of helping and answering spirits. . . . he must procure these helping spirits for himself; he must meet them in person. He cannot even choose for himself what sort he will have. They come to him of their own accord, strong and powerful.*¹

The relationship with spirit is fundamental in the beginning, middle, and end of a shaman's career. The daily practices of the shaman are primarily to maintain good relationship with the spirits. The shaman develops this relationship through communication and supplication and strengthens it through offerings and other practices of gratitude. If the spirits choose to leave, and they do so in response to arrogance or disrespect, the shaman is left without the power to function as a shaman. The shaman's humility and knowledge that the power is extended to him or her from spirit is reflected in the words of power songs, sung by shamans around the world as they prepare to work. Loosely translated the words are, "Please come help me. I am just a human. Please give me the power to do what needs to be done." In the power songs where the shaman appears to be bragging, it is the spirit speaking through the shaman, naming and claiming its power. Maintaining empowered humility is essential in the cultivation of the shaman's working relationship with spirit.

The working relationship between shaman and spirit is not general or random. It is a very specific partnership forged over time. Below, a Goldi shaman describes his experience of being chosen by his helping spirit, or *ayami*. Note the distinctions made between the initiating/teaching *ayami*, her various forms, and the assistant spirits the shaman acquires from the *ayami* over time.

Once I was asleep on my sick bed, when a spirit approached me. It was a very beautiful woman . . . She said, "I am the ayami of your ancestors, the shamans, I taught them shamaning. Now I am going to teach you." . . . She has been coming to me ever since, and I sleep with her as with my own wife, but we have no children. . . . Sometimes she comes under the aspect of an old woman, and sometimes under that of a wolf. Sometimes she comes as a winged tiger. I mount it and she takes me to show me different countries. . . . She has given me three assistants—the jarga (panther), the doonto (bear), and the amba (tiger). They come to me in my dreams and appear whenever I summon them while shamaning. When I am shamaning, the ayami and the assistant spirits are possessing me, whether big or small, they penetrate me as smoke or vapor would be.²

Not every helping spirit is the same, nor do they each bring the same energy and teachings to the shaman with which to work. The qualities of a particular working relationship are defined by who the spirit is, what is necessary for the shaman to do to remain in connection with the spirit, and how the energy can be used to benefit people. Shamans must create different types of working relationships with different types of spirits. The hierarchy of the spirits themselves often defines these relationships, as with the Goldi shaman's *ayami* above. Generally, a shaman has a primary partner, usually the spirit who initiated and trained the shaman in the first place. Then, with time and experience, the shaman acquires additional relationships with spirits who bring additional power, unique teachings, or perform specific tasks. These spirits do not always have a relationship to each other. Often they are connected only through the circumstance of working with the same shaman.

All working relationships are experiential. However, they are not all the same quality of experience. Some are quite adversarial, with the shaman gaining the spirit's help only through clever trickery, bargaining, or all-out battle. Others can be quite erotic and sexual, often resulting in spirit children in the spirit world. Most working relationships fall somewhere between these two extremes. Only one quality is consistent among all the relationships forged between shamans and spirits. They are all ecstatic; they engage the universal power of the heart to connect to all things in a state of Oneness.

The fact that these working relationships are partnerships forged over time allows the shaman to distinguish between helpful spirit energies and misplaced spirit energies that cause disease and disharmony. The shaman always knows with whom he or

she is in relationship even when he or she takes on a disease-causing energy in the course of a healing. The issue of healing is not seen as one of good and evil. It is seen as the challenge to identify accurately the problematic energy, determine its right placement, and get it to that place. With the clarity and guidance of the spirits the shaman is able to replace misplaced energies, return wandering spirits to their homes, and guide the lost souls of the dead along their journey to the Land of the Dead. Even in a battle to the death for a patient's soul, the adversary is honored, not villainized, for it is a source of great power.

This is not to say that everything is nice in the shaman's world. The evil intent of others is clearly identified where it is present. However, at the core of shamanic healing is balance and restoring the right relationship of all things. The shaman understands that it is wise and practical for a human working between the realms of matter and spirit to proceed with humility and respect. It is even wiser when one understands that all things are literally connected to work together with the powers who are willing to help restore that life-sustaining balance.

This connection of all things, which is the root of our need to restore balance, may be the only explanation for why the spirits help us. Whatever their reasons, they do. The spirits contact us. They choose, initiate, and train the shamans so that the shamans can help us. When contemporary shamans re-create ancient shamanic practices that have lain dormant for centuries the first words from the spirits are, "Where have you been?" It is as if we have missed an appointment and kept them from a very important engagement. We see that we do matter to the spirits. This interdependence lies at the core of the working relationship between shamans and spirits.

The relationship between shaman and spirit is not idealized. The relationship is not established in a search for enlightenment or personal ascension. It is a practical relationship that must work here in the realm of the living. The shaman must have the ability to enter the type of relationship needed to get the job done and possess the personal power necessary to hold his or her own in that relationship. The shaman must have great courage of heart to sustain action within the relationship and the clarity of vision to understand when the task is accomplished. If the shaman has all of this then his or her relationship with spirit enables the shaman to do for humans what can't be done without the intervention of spirit. It is through this practical working relationship with spirit that shamans perform everyday miracles.

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2 Grim, John A. *The Shaman*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

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THE SHAMAN'S UNIVERSE

We live in interesting times. Our foremost scientists, to whom we have given the task of explaining the material nature of our universe, are now describing a universe that the shamans have been describing for thousands of years. The scientists have arrived there through fact and experimentation and the shamans through their experiences in altered states of consciousness. We are coming full circle. It is as if the shamans have stood still and the developed world has gone around the circle the long way, through rigorous scientific exploration, and arrived where humanity started, in the shaman's universe. The purpose of this essay is to describe the shaman's universe in a way that we, as contemporary people, can reenter it. We will try to do so by starting with what we understand—science—and move through science to spirit, which we understand less well but know in our soul. This place in time and space where science and spirit merge is the revelation of the shaman's universe.

As scientists describe the physical nature of the universe, they describe a universe made up of energetic elements: electrons, protons, photons, and neutrons that break down further into subatomic particles. Nonetheless, all of these energetic elements are connected, atom to atom, in a very real energetic way. Shamans use altered states of consciousness to see the true nature of the universe, which is energy. Shamans see that the universe is made of vibrational energy; that it is one continuous, multidimensional fabric of vibration. The quantum physicists agree. Their theories indicate that the universe is made from energy vibrations and those vibrations connect everything.

Connection and Vibration

Vibrations, as they are understood in physics, are repetitive patterns in physical systems. Examples of vibrational movement are sound moving through air as well as light moving through the universe. The theories of quantum physics explain vibrations on subatomic and atomic levels. Vibrations, or quantum waves, are called probability waves because they have a vibrational pattern that is relatively stable and more probable than other possibilities. That pattern determines how probable physical events are on the atomic level, which eventually determines physical events on the human level. According to quantum physics, everything in the universe has an inherent probability-vibrational pattern.

Shamans believe in a similar vibrational understructure of the universe. They deal with a world of vibrations, cycles, and circles. The key to understanding the shaman's world is to realize that it is a vibrational world and that a vibrational world can be affected by the vibrations of sacred songs, chants, and rhythmic drumming. All the tools of the shaman's trade are designed to alter the vibrational state of the shaman and/or the patient or a particular situation in the community.

Probability and Spirits

It can be challenging to understand that the solid reality we call home is really only a probable reality. While we live in the most probable physical state, simultaneously there are an infinite number of possible states. This is one of the oddest characteristics of our physical world, and it is precisely this characteristic that allows shamans to work in alternate states. Principles of quantum physics explain that, if no observation is made of an evolving system, then all possible states will evolve together. For example, an unobserved atom in motion does not occupy a single position in space until that position is actually observed. This means that until an observer "sees" the atom, the atom occupies an infinite number of possible positions simultaneously. This characteristic of our universe is known as the observer effect—wherein the choice of an observer to measure a particular property of a system forces the system

to emerge from a probable state into an actual one. This means that the observer of the quantum system disturbs the system by observing it.

We cannot escape the observer effect, and the shaman uses it. By entering an alternate state of consciousness, the shaman enters other possible realities and, utilizing his or her observational power in that reality, the shaman makes new possibilities emerge. This is the importance of the shaman's interpretation of the spirit realms and of their narration of their experiences there during the healing ritual. By making new possibilities emerge, the shaman causes the physical world to adapt to include that reality. The shaman uses these other possibilities to create change in the physical world, such as healing or bringing rain.

The observer effect of quantum physics is one primary connection between science and the shaman's universe. Both quantum physicists and shamans alter reality, though in different ways and from different points of view. An important point to make here is that there can be no objective reality in the scientific or spiritual realms of our universe. The observer always affects that which is observed. Both scientists and shamans interpret their experiences subjectively; there is no other way any of us can view things.

Quantum waves exist for the physicist in the same way that spirits exist for the shaman. Quantum waves are invisible; they are constructs of human thought necessary for us to understand atomic and subatomic matter, the building blocks of our world. Even though we have never actually observed them, we believe in them. Quantum waves are theorized to be coherent energy patterns in a greater field of energy. They are invisible and vital for us to understand our universe. Spirits are invisible and vital for shamans to interpret their universe. The spirits the shaman "sees" are also coherent energy patterns within a greater field of energy. However, unlike the physicist who believes in his or her theories of the invisible world, the shaman experiences the invisible world. They do not need to believe in spirits any more than they believe in the home they live in or the children they play with.

Quantum physics asks us to accept theoretically what the shamans know from their experiences in altered states of consciousness. Shamans know our world is actually a composite of many other realities. Some of them are very probable, so much so that we do not notice the differences from one to the other. These nondiffering realities form what we call simply physical reality—the world as we see it. However, there are always the other realities that are not so probable. They are off the beaten path. These are the other realities the shaman travels through to bring healing and change into the present reality.

Simultaneous Possibilities, Simultaneous Worlds, and the Kosmos

Physical reality is a very convincing illusion. Our waking experience is that of being in just one world, the most probable, when in fact quantum physics tells us that we are in an infinite number of worlds all the time. A possible world in quantum physics is physical; it is a set of experiences that take place within a region of space and over a period of time. Shamans are aware of living simultaneously in parallel worlds. Mastering this ability is an important element of their training. These simultaneous worlds are constantly interacting, coming together and flying apart in dimensions we normally do not experience. By entering an altered state of consciousness, shamans move from one world to another.

How did the ancient shamans come to understand the universe in ways so similar to our modern scientists? They did it by experiencing the universe while in altered states of consciousness. Through repeated visits to other realms, shamans learn the terrain of the vibrational fabric of the universe. The shaman's universe, like scientists', is one of connections and vibrations, probabilities and spirits, simultaneous possibilities and simultaneous worlds. The shaman moves through the many realms of this universe, traveling effortlessly between the vibrational realms of matter, the pulsing

realm of life, the resonant realm of the mind, and the harmony of the spirit realm. The shaman embodies not only the true nature of the universe, but of the complete Kosmos in the Greek sense of the word.

Pythagoras, the Greek philosopher and mathematician from the sixth century B.C.E., explained the Kosmos as “the patterned nature or process of all domains of existence, from matter to mind to God.” Ken Wilber, a writer on psychology, religion, and philosophy, explains that ordinarily we experience the cosmos—the physical universe—as the boundaries of our consciousness. However, the Kosmos is actually the whole that contains the cosmos (matter, physiosphere), the bios (life, biosphere), the nous (psyche, noosphere), and the theos (divine domain, theosphere). The shaman gains a working knowledge of the Kosmos, as Pythagoras intended the term to be used, from training and initiation.

Wilber explains that the Kosmos has direction; it is evolving, pushed by its own inherent nature which is creativity. Both Wilber and the shamans refer to this creative force as Emptiness or the Unknown. Shamans often call it the Void. It is the potential energy of the Kosmos that does not yet have form. Even though it is unqualifiable, it is not inert and unyielding. The direction of the Kosmos gives rise to a manifestation of itself; new forms emerge, and that creativity is ultimate. This is the shaman's Universe.

Shamans must sacrifice and work for their understanding of the Universe, and for the ability to use it. Through long and arduous training, shamans gain knowledge of the Universe. As they master the ability to intentionally enter and exit altered states of consciousness, they begin to experience other possible realities and the infinite nature of space and time. Though the metaphors they use to communicate these experiences are drawn from the ordinary world, the experiences themselves are quite extraordinary. These experiences often demand great sacrifices, culminating in the self-sacrifice of the initiation. It is through the ego death, essential to initiation, that the shaman surrenders to spirit and finally gains the power to apply their new knowledge and skills.

The Call

Shamans are called into service; they are chosen by spirit. The nature of the call may be severe, like a seven-year illness, or as simple as a dream. Whatever the nature of the call, the novice often goes with great reluctance, knowing that the training is often frightening, always intense, and that the personal sacrifice will be great. Training helps the novice to understand the experiences from a context that includes other possible worlds. It culminates in an initiation, during which the novice's ego identification is stripped away or released. This transformation aligns the shaman's will with service to the community.

Training

Through training the shaman develops the ability to enter into a relationship with reality that transcends the apparent separation between people, things, and their environment. Training may follow a set tradition or proceed on a spontaneous path guided by the shaman's helping spirits. As the shaman learns to move from physical reality into other possible realities, he or she learns to perceive the pulse of the universe in all things. The shaman does not seek to influence or change that pulse, but to make changes in vibrations of the people and things, to bring them into resonance and harmony with that pulse. The shaman's approach is based on unity with the life-force inherent in all things and on empathy for the fear and pain others experience when they fall out of harmony with that universal life-force.

Although the shaman must experience unity with spirit to work, he or she must also remain detached, emotionally and mentally, from the spirit world. The discipline of detachment is one of the most important distinctions learned in the shaman's training. Until the shaman's death, he or she is only a temporary, though frequent,

visitor in the spirit realms. The shaman must move as carefully as a tightrope walker in the spirit realms, in full control of his or her emotional state, remaining unattached to what he or she sees and does. Developing this detachment of consciousness in all realms of the spirit world demands the ability to transcend personal self, or ego, and to view their experience through the eyes of the universe. They must proceed without judgment, which would lead to attachment, and with the ability to discern the flow of the universe and determine what is necessary to bring dissonant vibrations into harmony with that universal flow. To do this shamans draw heavily on their relationship with their helping spirits.

Mastering detachment is essential before the shaman can serve others. Thus shamans are rarely allowed to practice before puberty and their initiation into adulthood. In some cultures every boy and girl is expected to transcend their ego self in their initiation into adulthood. In other cultures, only the shaman excels in this transformation.

When working with illness, the shaman enters the patient's vibrational state with the same complete presence and conscious detachment that he or she enters the spirit world. This enables the shaman to experience the symptoms and pains, to diagnose the true source of the illness, and to determine the appropriate course of action without getting attached to the illness itself or the patient. This ability to fully experience different vibrational states with detachment is essential to the shaman's safety and efficacy. Mastering that ability is a primary purpose of training. Practitioners experience this detachment, in part, through following direction from the helping spirits or by succeeding in allowing the spirits to act through them.

Degree of Power

It is the shaman's capacity to function with intention within the trance state that determines the degree of power of the shaman. Any one shaman's capacity to act is affected by a multitude of variables. However, these variables are mostly related to the shaman's ability to grasp the limitless, infinitely powerful reality of the universe and to work with that potential power. The shaman's ability to act in the spirit world is bound by his or her capacity to reach beyond his or her own human limits and grasp the vast implications of the true nature of reality, what the true source of the problem is, and how the prescribed actions will actually restore balance. This dictates the need for initiation.

Initiation

Though the initiation occurs in an altered state, it is not a hallucinatory vision of death. Initiation strips the shaman of all his or her social and mental habits, religious and philosophical ideas, and prior roles in the community. This transcendence of self calls for a willingness to suffer a genuine death of ego and not merely a mytho-poetic imagination of death in the form of allegories and archetypes. The shaman's ego death experience may resolve just short of real death or permanent insanity. However, without it, the shaman cannot freely serve the will of spirit.

The function of initiation is to free the novice's soul from their ego. Only those who transcend their ego-bound motivations can interpret the experiences in altered states through the eyes of the Universe or spirit. Personal attachments to the past, impurities, fears, and expectations of the future are recognized as illusions and no longer color the experiences of the spirit world or the altered states. The psychic transformation that results from initiation creates a clear mind, enhanced perception, greater capacity for compassion, and true gentleness.

The shamanic apprentice gains his or her true power—the relationship with spirit—only after initiation. Once the ego identity has collapsed the shaman's soul can experience true Oneness with nature, animals, plants, and the world. This experience of a transpersonal self is the reward for all the sacrifices of the shaman's training, initiation, and the life of service to come. The initiated shaman represents the bridge between the probable world of physical reality and all the possible worlds of our infinite universe.

Interpreting the Invisible World of Spirit

It is the shaman's responsibility to communicate his or her altered state experiences to others, thereby giving these formless possibilities image and meaning. The shaman narrates or describes his or her experience in the altered state and the actual energetic (psychospiritual) transformation that occurs using concepts and images taken from the physical world. The actual transformation cannot be conveyed by language alone, so it is understood that the physical world images used by the shaman are only metaphors for the larger experience. The power of metaphor allows the shaman to use this kind of language shorthand, borrowing concepts from the everyday world, instead of constructing new and complicated psychological terminology for each experience. After giving the experience form through images the shaman gives them meaning through interpretation. This is all part of the shaman's process of bringing possible realities into manifestation (such as traveling out of time to retrieve a lost soul part) and effecting change in the physical world (such as changing the weather or numbers of game animals).

Many shamanic cultures view the universe as a continuous whole where the physical and spiritual worlds are distinct but contiguous. Others see the physical and spiritual worlds as day and night mirror images of each other that invert with each sunset and switch again with the sunrise. The majority of cultures see the spirit world divided into three realms which expand infinitely up, down, and outward while containing the physical world. Recent findings in the field of consciousness research make it apparent that we can no longer argue that these descriptions of the spirit world are merely unconscious productions, archetypes, or symbols without any real and practical consequences. They are places humans are able to travel to and return to in altered states of consciousness, including those induced by general anesthesia and near-death experiences. The shaman's view of the Kosmos transcends thought or belief; it is the result of his or her experiences in alternate realms of reality. Furthermore, the ability of shamans to take action in their journeys into the spirit world allows them to effect real change in the physical world.

Symbols of the Shaman's Universe

The following are the images shamans around the globe use to communicate the true nature of the Kosmos as they experience it: the Tree of Life, or World Tree; the Spiral; and the Circled Cross. The images are ordinary, such as a tree, but the interpretation gives them extraordinary meaning. Though visually simple, each image conveys multilayered meanings and true insight into the nature of the Kosmos.

Tree of Life

The Tree of Life is a cross-culturally recurrent symbol for the connection between the three realms of the spirit world: Upperworld, Middleworld, and Lowerworld. The Tree of Life is simultaneously the center, the balance, the axis, and the Whole of the shaman's universe. The tree is used by shamans as an entry into non-ordinary reality, the branches providing a means to go to the Upperworld and the roots providing access to the Lowerworld. By merging with the Tree of Life, the shaman stands in the center of the Kosmos, connected to the Whole, and able to travel to any corner of it. Mountains and pillars are cross-culturally recurrent images that bear the same meaning and function as the Tree of Life. They represent the mythical mountain at the Center of the Earth and the pillar that holds up the sky, respectively.

The three realms of the spirit world extend out in all directions from the center as we perceive it in physical reality. The way these realms are accessed varies culture to culture as do the spirit inhabitants of each realm encountered by the shaman. Generally speaking, the Upperworld is accessed from the branches of the Tree of Life, mountaintops, rainbows, smoke, and mist. It is the place of the stars (in a vast, spiritual sense), as well as the sun, the moon, the spirit of the sky, other heavenly bodies, gods, goddesses, the

Divine, and many helping spirits in other forms. The shaman can view the entire Kosmos from the Upperworld and move out into it for teaching and inspiration.

The Lowerworld is accessed from the roots of the Great Tree, through caves, wells, or holes in the ground. In the Lowerworld the shaman can enter the Land of the Dead, the realm of the ancestors, and meet spirits of the earth, fire, animals, and the spirit of the earth as a being. In seafaring cultures, the Lowerworld also involves an underwater realm where the Mistress of the Sea Animals lives, caring for her animal children and releasing them to be killed only by those who demonstrate through appropriate sacrifice that they are worthy of the lives of the animals.

The Middleworld stretches out from the trunk of the Great Tree in all eight cardinal directions. The Middleworld is inhabited by the spirit of everything that exists physically—weather, landscapes, animals, people, plants, air, and water. The shaman also encounters many of the animal totem spirits that are passed on within families or clans here. The Middleworld contains both the physical world that we inhabit and its otherworldly dimensions, which exist out of ordinary time and space. The physical and spiritual planes of existence overlap here and interrelate in such a way that portals are created, allowing access between the worlds. The connection is multidimensional, which the Celts interpreted poetically as ribbons of energy which encircle and entwine all three realms of the shaman's Universe. A change in one part affects every other part.

In many cultures the spirit world is not simply one Upperworld and one Lowerworld, but each world containing a number of levels, typically three, seven, nine, twelve, or infinitely unfolding levels. Though the levels do not represent a hierarchy of value, a soul traveling in these realms must move through the levels in succession. They correspond to stages of personal development, or insight, development of psychic skills, or mastery that enables the shaman to adjust his or her energy to resonate with the energetic vibration of that level. Movement between levels can be instantaneous for those who have met the challenges of a level in a prior visit or who have mastered multiple levels of psychic development. Others may remain in a level until they evolve some aspect of their being, or fail to, and return to ordinary reality, unable to pass beyond that level. For those who have mastered their personal state, like the initiated shaman, movement between the levels is an endless journey of evolving consciousness, containing brilliant moments of revelation and ecstasy.

Spiral of Creation

The Spiral of Creation is recorded in the stone and clay remnants of the symbolic languages of people on every continent. It results from the interrelationship of space and time seen through the shaman's unique understanding of both.

Space

For the shaman the spirit world is where possibilities exist; space (the physical world) is where the most probable possibility is already manifest. Shamans understand space as the place where the dream (the possibility we and our ancestors see for the future) continually manifests in physical reality. Therefore, for the shaman, the most efficient way to change physical reality is to travel outside of it to change the dream from whence it came. When the shaman creates a ritual for personal or communal healing a portal is created between the worlds. In every ritual the shaman establishes a sacred space in ordinary reality, containing the portal that allows passage into the spirit world and the Dream.

Time

Time is represented in shamanic societies with the circle, whose deceptive simplicity is symbolic of a much more complex relationship with time. Some shamanic cultures have no concept for time at all. The Dagara of West Africa, for example, do not even

have a word for time. They are aware of linear time as an illusion we accept because we do not know time as it really exists. They have learned to live outside of linear time and are concerned only with timing. Timing a ritual with the phase of the moon or a festival with the summer solstice is valuable, while time is not. In the shaman's view of timing, every event affects the Whole, therefore the mechanical notion of one to one, cause and effect is irrelevant. The shaman uses timing to move in harmony with the Whole and in synch with the rhythms of Nature and the Universe.

Scientists tell us that the shape of time is not a straight line reaching into infinity at both ends, but an irregular fabric, full of inconsistencies, that loops back on itself. Shamans have developed a relationship with this irregular, polychronic nature of time. As the quantum physicist who sees a universe composed of waves of energy vibrations within which time cycles back on itself in the vibration's periodicity (movement that comes back to itself in harmony over and over again), the shaman experiences time as the simultaneous, creative expression of all that is, that was, and all that will be.

The Spiral of Creation is woven of space and time and winds simultaneously upward and downwards. The Spiral exists in such a way that any one point can touch any other point at any time. In terms of quantum physics, the Spiral represents the infinite, simultaneous possibilities within the Kosmos. Likewise, for the shaman, the Spiral of Creation represents the Void, or the as yet unknown potential, alive and pulsing between occurring and reoccurring.

The Circled Cross

The basic pattern of two crossed lines enclosed in a circle appears carved on stones, worked into jewelry, and painted on cave walls throughout the world. The Circled Cross is a shorthand symbol of the shaman's universe and is found in cultures as distant and unrelated as the Celts of the British Isles and the Mapuche of Chile, South America. The circle aspect represents both the circle of time and a foreshortened view of the Spiral of Creation. The crossed lines represent both the four directions of the physical world, space, as well as the movement of the shaman out into the other dimensions of the spirit realm. The center where the lines cross is the Tree of Life, the balance, the center, the axis, and the understanding that from the center point the shaman can move in all directions in an infinite universe. The Circle Cross is the Kosmos, symbolic of the shaman's Universe.

Shamanic Ritual

The shaman accesses the Universe through the creation of each shamanic ritual. The shaman opens the center point of the Circled Cross, the Tree of Life, and moves between the worlds in an altered state of consciousness. Thus ritual, which is vital and created anew in each session, is the way the shaman accesses the Unknown. The shaman's ritual is always unpredictable. To engage the power of ritual, the shaman must disengage from time and enter the cyclical, mythical nature of the Universe's timing. As the shaman alters his or her state of consciousness while in trance, the shaman's soul moves out of physical space and into other possible realms. When the purpose of the ritual is completed in the spirit realms, the shaman returns to ordinary space and time and the ritual is closed.

Shamans are more than visionaries for they are able to apply their knowledge of the Universe, through ritual, in the service of their community. They are able to do so by entering altered states that give them a connection with spirit that empowers their actions. In these states, shamans see the true causes of illness and threatening events in the lives of their people, diagnose cures, and carry them out. Not all shamans are great visionaries; not all understand the universe at the same depth. However, they all apply the knowledge they have. The more powerful the shaman, the greater his or her insight into the true nature of the shaman's Universe.

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A

Aboriginal

Aboriginal, from the Latin phrase *ab origine* meaning *from the beginning*, refers to the **first people**. When capitalized, Aboriginal refers to the first people of **Australia**. Otherwise, aboriginal refers to the first people of a particular land or region. For example, many Indians or Native Americans prefer to be called the “First People” of the land of their **ancestors**.

Achnucek

The *achnucek* is a **transformed shaman** of the Aleut and Kodiak peoples of the southern **Alaskan** regions. Their gender variance was recognized when they were children, sometimes infants. These boys were raised as girls, wearing feminine clothing and hair styles and plucking their facial hair. After adolescence their *achnucek training* began as with all other Aleut *angakok*.

Mature *achnucek* were highly respected *angakut*. As boys between the ages of ten to fifteen the *achnucek* were often wed to older men during their training. The Aleut considered it lucky to have a *achnucek* as a partner. See also **gender variant** and *shopan*.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Achuar

The Achuar are an indigenous people living deep in the Ecuadorian rain forest. Their total population ranges somewhere between 6,000 to 8,000 people, and, when maintained at this population, they can live sustainably in the rain forest. They were contacted only recently, within the last thirty years, by Western civilization. As a result of the impact of contemporary forces, the Achuar run the risk of losing their traditions and **culture** within the next generation.

The Achuar, in partnership with Ecuadorian Daniel Koupermann, have built an ecotourist lodge in the community of Kapawi. The intention of the lodge is to give people from other countries a place to come and visit, to learn about the wonders of the rain forest, and the Achuar culture. The highest dream of the Achuar is that these visitors will then take their experience home and pass it on to others and from that will be generated a means for preservation of the Achuar traditions, their sustainable way of life, and the rain forest they live in.

Africa

A continent of geographical contrasts, incorporating desert and scrub, rolling savanna, and dense tropical rain forest. The contemporary states are primarily products of colonization, first by the Arabs (7th–8th century) and then by the Europeans (19th–20th century). These states are not defined by natural geographic borders or traditional ethnic **domains**. The exceptions are Morocco, Egypt, and Ethiopia.

The Arab invasion and settlement of North Africa have made that region essentially part of the Middle East and

Mediterranean Europe. As Islam spread south and black slaves were taken north, indigenous African spiritual practices, like the Hausa bori and the Ethiopian zar, spread north. Traditional African spirituality and **shamanism** are thoroughly integrated with **healing, medicine,** and agriculture. One cannot think of one without thinking of the others and their interrelationships. The **shamans** of the various African tribes perform their healing rituals and ceremonies in this context. This “wholism” is the defining awareness from which concepts of reality arise. Though each tribe has its own view of wholism, it is the heart of traditional village life. See also **Bwiti; Dagara; Ju!’hoansi; Zulu.**

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Aghula

The *aghula* is a traditional **dance** of the **Eskimo**. It provides preventative **medicine** for the community and an inner **journey** for the dancers back to the roots of the people’s origin and memory of the **time** before time when the **spirit** and human worlds were one.

The Eskimo live simultaneously in the world of daily tasks and hunting and the world of spirit power and magic. These worlds are distinct but equally real, intimately interconnected, and each profoundly affected by the other. The Eskimo move easily between these worlds in the *aghula*. The dancer’s movements, the beat of the heart, and

the **sound** of the **drum** together create a passage for the dancer to move between the worlds.

The drummers, all men, are the caretakers of the past. They keep separate from the participants, avoiding conversation and direct contact before the **ritual**. They begin the *aghula*, playing the one-two *kallengneq* beat in unison in a steady **rhythm**. The *saguyak* drums are made from the stomach of the walrus, the giver of life. Each drum has a power of its own. It is a valued **possession** and a **sacred** tool.

Some dancers dance *sayugh*, ancient ritualized patterns involving complex sets of movements and nuance. The women tend to dance from direct inspiration and spontaneous trance states. In contrast the men often dance the story of their hunting exploits and village life. Older men dance the teaching stories from the **shaman’s visions** and journeys recounting how the animals taught the humans to survive.

One by one, the dancers enter an **altered state of consciousness**, allowing their consciousness to enter the spirit world under and around the sea. The dances begin to dance the dancers. The spirits enter and the dancers become beings of mythical times. The *aghula* is much more than ritualized drama or creative release. It is a sacred gathering of **power**, invoked by the chanting and drumming and made manifest in the dancer through the dance. See also **Yup’ik**.

Air

Air, one of the elemental **powers**, can be used for **healing** in both its physical form and in its energetic form, as when the **shaman** works with the element in the invisible world during his or her **journeys**. Air is considered to be **spirit** and breathing in is to draw **spirit** into one’s body. Shamans use this “breath of spirit” in their healing, particularly blowing “the breath of life” into the patient.

The role of the element air in **shamanic healing** rituals is to provide

the ease of swift change and to inspire creativity, illumination, and vision. The **energy** of air may be used directly by blowing air, alcohol, or ignited alcohol on the patient with the intention of infusing him or her with a connection to all things. The shamans of many **cultures** use the energy of the air directly from specific sites by conducting their healings or **vision quests** on mountainsides or vistas where the open **sky** and view inspires vision, revelation, and communication with spirit. Shamans also retreat alone into such sites to restore their own vision and connection with their spirit guidance.

Shamans use the energy of air in their journeys in similar ways—for example, breathing life into a dead or dying **soul** part, or filling the patient's spirit body with the breath of life.

The role of air and its priority as a spirit **teacher** vary and are defined specifically culture by culture. See also **elements; helping spirits; ritual**.

Aka

According to Hawaiian shamans, the stuff of which everything in the Universe is created and connected. A vast web of *aka* threads connects all things.

These connections can be created with thoughts or intention. *Aka* threads are receptacles and/or conductors for **mana**. They can be activated with attention and sustained concentration. The Hawaiian **kahuna (shaman)** manifests change and affects the desired outcome by establishing *aka* threads and working through those connections.

The Hawaiians perceived of a level of action where everything is connected through *aka* threads. This is a second level of existence beyond physical reality, that includes the subjective level of thoughts, emotions, and psychic phenomena. See also **Hawaii**.

King, Seide K. *Kahuna Healing: Holistic Health and Healing Practices of Polynesia*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1983.

Alaskan

The Alaskan region is comprised of the various Alaskan **Eskimo** groups and the people of the Aleutian and Kodiak islands. The main linguistic and political groups are the Inupiat and **Yup'ik**. The traditional life in this region revolved around hunting whales, seals, and walrus in the winter and spring and, for those on the mainland, living off caribou in the summer and fall. Within the communities people strive to live according to a system of **taboos** that kept them in good relationship with the **spirit** beings in their environment. The **tungralik** (shaman) was called on for crises, famine, and **illness**.

The winter season is a time of *tcauyavik*, **dance** festivals involving **masks**, songs, and celebrations designed to connect the people with the spirit world. Some dances are focused **healing** rituals, like the masked dancing **ritual** *agayuliyararput*, which means "our way of making **prayer**." The focus of some dances like *aghula* is more diffuse, functioning as preventative medicine for the community. Whatever the focus, drumming plays an important role in these sacred rituals and **ceremonies**.

Many rituals involving the *tungralik* take place in a semisubterranean men's ceremonial house called *kashim* or *kazigis*. The *kashim* is used publicly as the community dance house and privately for secret men's rituals. The *kashim* is designed to serve as a dry-heat **sweat house** for **purification** purposes.

The First Shaman

All *tungralik* learn the **art** of the shaman in a spiritual lineage from the first brother shamans. The **myth** describes why there are two kinds of *tungralik* in many regions, those who communicate with the spirits in **journeys** of spirit flight and those who communicate through the use of **divination** tools.

Two spirit brothers lived in the **Upperworld** and desired to be reborn. One brother found a gleaming woman who had nothing dark about her. He

crawled into her and was born remembering his brother. He grew quickly and was soon recognized as a great shaman because he could fly through the air to consult with the spirits. Meanwhile, the other brother found a nearly gleaming woman. He crawled into her and was born forgetting all about his brother. This brother too became a shaman, but having forgotten his origin as spirit, he was never able to fly. He consulted the spirits through divination tools, a spirit wand, and **amulets**.

Helping Spirits

There is a great variety of spirits and **helping spirits** in this region of the world. The most important are the **animal** spirits; however nearly all spirits are able to assume a human form. **Tunax** is a general term for any kind of spirit on the islands, while *kala* is the general term used on the mainland. The **tunghât** is a helping spirit that takes human form with a grotesque face and has the ability to take the form of an animal or monster at will.

Also called *tungat*, among many other variations, the *tungai* (pl) can be spirits of the **air** or the **earth** or the spirits of deceased animals or **ancestors**. The *tungralik* makes a mask of each *tungat* in his service. The masks are usually grotesque human faces, though the *tungat* can take many other forms. These helping spirits are distinguished from *inyusuaq*, the **soul** of a dead person, and *ilitkosaq*, the soul of the *tungralik* while it journeys in the spirit world.

Initiation

The *tungralik*'s **initiation** experience often involves a spontaneous intervention by the spirits, who haul the unsuspecting individual's soul into the spirit world and teach it the techniques of the *tungralik*. The individual has little choice in the matter, particularly if he or she wants to recover from the strange unexplained illnesses that often accompany this type of initiation experience.

For example, a man was walking along the shore when a boatload of

spirits stole his soul away to the land of the whales. His body was found and brought to his home where he lay unconscious for eight winter months. In the spring, after his soul had learned all those spirits had to teach he returned as a whale and allowed the men of his village to harpoon him. In that way his soul returned home, his body regained consciousness, and he became a *tungralik*. He retained the special skill of communicating with whales, calling them to the boats of his village and sending them away from the boats of others.

In another initiation, a young man is running along when he receives a powerful **vision**. The spirit of an old shaman comes to him in a boat from the **moon** to talk. Then a spirit helper, in the form of a man with one eye, wearing fine clothes and mittens with pieces of **metal** that rattle, dances for him. Then come the **power animals**, ermines, one white and one brown.

In spite of its power, the young man forgot the vision. For four days he wandered about doing strange things in the temporary madness of an initiation crisis. Eventually he recovers his consciousness enough to enter the men's ceremonial house. There he drummed and entered a trance in which the helping spirit in the fancy clothes with the rattle mittens was able to take full **possession** of him and teach. In this way he learned eight songs for healing and the spirit's name with which to call on him. Over time with the assistance of the rattle-mittened spirit and the ermines, he became a great shaman.

Drum

The *tungralik*'s drum is the **sauyit** or *iputar*. It is the core of the *tungralik*'s practice and of the sacred rituals and ceremonies of the people. The *tungralik* plays the *sauyit* to induce trance or the assistant plays while the *tungralik* sings and beats a **rhythm** on the floor with a small baton.

The *sauyit* is an 18-inch, circular, wooden frame with a walrus or seal bladder stretched over it and held in

place with a hide cord, or *oklinok*. The *sauyit* is held aloft when played beaten near the rim. The beater, or *mumwa*, is a small stick adorned with a piece of white ermine or a fox tail.

Masks

Masks, or *kinaroq*, are important **power objects** for the *tungralik*. Each *kinaroq* houses a helping spirit and, when worn during the dance rituals, the *kinaroq* allows the *tungralik* to draw the spirit of the mask into his body and enter a full embodiment trance.

These masks are carved secretly, exactly as they are seen in the *tungralik's dream* or journey. When completed the *tungralik* conducts the necessary rituals to invoke the spirit in the *kinaroq*. Once housed in the mask, the spirit must be "fed" *yutir (mana)* on a regular basis.

Some *kinaroq* created by the North Alaska Eskimo are so large that they have to be suspended by a rawhide cord from the ceiling of the *kashim*. The dancer performs behind the *kinaroq*. Once a *kinaroq* is put on and danced, the spirit associated with it will enter the body of the dancer or shaman.

Tools

In addition to the drum and masks, the shamans of this region create **charms**, amulets, and **fetishes** to serve various functions in their rituals and ceremonies. The *pogok* is a fetish, carved from wood and created to embody a spirit or **energy**, like the masks. The *pogok* is usually burned after being used in a ceremony to release the spirit or energy within it. The *qologogoloq* is a charm whose **power** is inherent in it. It is carved from wood and can be an animal figure or a mask. The *qologogoloq* is used and reused in a variety of ceremonial ways.

Illness

Illness is believed to be caused by **soul loss** or **sorcery**. Soul loss is considered the cause of most illness, particularly when the illness manifests as general

debility or malaise. The soul has been either stolen, frightened, or wandered and become lost in the spirit world. The *tungralik* drums and **chants** to enter a trance and **diagnose** the cause of the soul loss and then proceeds into the spirit world to recover the lost soul for the patient. When the soul has been restored to the body the patient will recover.

Sorcery is suspected when the illness manifests primarily as a localized pain. In such a case the sorcerer has created an **energy intrusion** and succeeded in sending it into the body of the patient. The *tungralik* drums and chants to enter an embodiment trance and proceeds to drive out the energy, possibly sucking and/or pulling the energy out. See also *angakok; torngraq*.

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Algonquian

The Algonquian **language** family in Canada is the most diffuse, reaching across northeastern **North America** from the Eastern woodlands to the subarctic and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Rocky Mountains. The Algonquian language family includes: the Blackfoot, Cree, **Ojibwa**, Ottawa, Algonkin, Naskapi, Montagnais, Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, and the now extinct Beothuk of Newfoundland.

McMillan, A. D. *Native Peoples and Cultures of Canada*. Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1995.

Altai

Shamanic people of the Altai Mountains in Central Asia, including the **Yakut**, Buryat, and Tatar peoples.

The general patterns found in the **shamanism** of this region are those of **Siberian shamans**.

In the important divination rituals of Altai shamans the soul of a sacrificial horse is ridden by the shaman's soul to the ninth level of the **Upperworld**. There the horse's soul is given as an **offering** to the supreme **sky** deity, *Bai Ulgen*. If the offering is received, *Bai Ulgen* gives the shaman the answers to his or her questions.

The Altai recognize three types of shamans. There are shaman-**priests** who work only with the **spirit** and deities of the Upperworld and who do not necessarily work in trance. There are shamans who work in trance and specialize in working with the spirits of the **Lowerworld**. The majority of Altai shamans do not specialize; they work in trance with the spirits of all the realms of the Otherworld. See also **Buryuat (Buriat)**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

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Altar

An altar is a physical home for **spirit** here in the physical world. An altar may be permanent, as with the altar in a **shaman's** workspace, or impermanent as with altars created for specific rituals or gatherings. Altars can also be portable, as with the *mesa* used in small personal and large group rituals of **Q'ero** shamans, high in the Andean mountains of Peru.

An altar is composed of **power objects** placed with the intention to create a home for the energies in these objects on the altar. Some altars look like a pile of rocks, while others are laid out in recognizable patterns like a medicine wheel or other symbol of a shaman's cosmology. The structure is determined by how the altar will be

used, tradition, and personal preference. When a shaman creates an altar it is a threshold between the worlds.

Altars also serve to ground spirit **energy** in the **space** in which they are created. This is particularly important when created as the focal point or center of a **ritual**. As the shaman invokes the spirits to open the ritual space, the spirits enter and take their place in the altar and its objects.

Like a **shrine**, an altar is a place to be in communication with the spirits of the altar. It is a place to leave fresh **offerings** and make requests of the spirits. It is a place to exercise and strengthen the working relationship between the shaman and the spirits.

Altered States of Consciousness

Altered states of consciousness are mental states that can be subjectively recognized as representing a difference in psychological functioning from the individual's day-to-day, alert waking state. Altered states of consciousness are fundamental to **shamanism**.

An altered state of consciousness has been entered into when the individual feels, or is observed to display, signs of a clear qualitative shift in his or her mental functioning. The individual in an altered state not only feels a qualitative shift of consciousness, but also a difference in the quality or qualities of how his or her mind is processing information and experiences. In an altered state mental functions operate that do not operate at all ordinarily and perceptual qualities are spontaneously accessed that have no ordinary counterpart.

Altered states of consciousness are accessed by manipulating universal neurophysiological structures of the human body. This ability lies within the potential behavior of all normal human beings. Many indigenous peoples assume that a normal adult has the ability to go into a trance state and connect with the spirit world. The adult who cannot do this is considered a psychological cripple.

Scholar Erika Bourguignon gathered statistics from 488 societies, which comprise 57% of the societies represented in the ethnographic atlas. She looked at the use of altered states in all parts of the world and determined that 90% (437 societies) have one or more institutionalized, culturally patterned forms of altered states of consciousness. She concluded that the ability to access altered states is a psychobiological capacity available to all societies.

Any discrete state of consciousness is a system. This system has two basic components, structures and energies. Structures are the various human potentials which are expressed, suppressed, tapped, or untapped. Energies are the energetic flow routes of awareness, attention (partially directable awareness), and biological and psychic energies that keep the structures connected and interacting with one another in a relatively stable and habitual pattern.

This system also involves three potential components. They are the input from the environment filtered through the individual's selective attention, untapped structures which remain available though not connected, and other possible **energy** routes for connecting the structures. Using new energy routes creates a system with a different configuration. This allows the individual to experience a radically altered state of consciousness.

An altered state is more than a change of awareness or mood. A discrete altered state involves a change in the system, in how the structures are connected, and what structures are connected. This is an important distinction relative to shamanism in which discrete altered states of consciousness are intentionally invoked for the purpose of **healing** or rebalancing the human relationship with Nature, crops, or game.

A discrete altered state of consciousness results when energy routes not normally used are used to connect the structures and/or to connect different structures. This rerouting creates a

system with a different configuration. A new configuration results in a radical reorganization of the selection of structures making up the consciousness and/or the pattern of energetic and informational flow between structures.

Ordinary consciousness is a relatively stable and habitual pattern. When the stabilization of that baseline state of consciousness is disrupted, a radical rerouting can occur. This allows a transition from the patterned state into an unpatterned, chaotic state. If re-patterning forces are able to establish a new pattern, an altered state of consciousness stabilizes for a time. In this way the disrupted system reshapes into a new system, potentially, the desired altered state of consciousness. It is the ability to do just this, to control the destabilization and restabilization of states of consciousness, that makes the shaman a master of altered states.

When this process is well learned, the shaman is able to destabilize his or her baseline state of consciousness, get to the desired, discrete, altered state of consciousness, to stabilize that desired altered state, and to destabilize that desired altered state and return to his or her baseline state of consciousness. The intentional control of this entire process for a variety of altered states is mastery of **trance**.

The human being is capable of entering a vast array of different altered states of consciousness. In mapping the different qualities of altered states it is apparent that shamanic trance states, shamanic **initiation** crisis states, yogic states, and meditative states are all distinct states of consciousness. It is also apparent that none of these states are pathological. Though altered states have functional and experiential commonalities, they are not the same. There is a broad range of healthy altered states of consciousness.

For the shaman the importance of the altered state is its function, not the form or the techniques used to enter the state. Each of these altered states is invoked intentionally to serve a specific

purpose. Their functions are different and the states are unique. See also **alternate states of consciousness**.

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———. "The Basic Nature of Altered States of Consciousness: A Systems Approach." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 8, no. 1 (1976): 45–64.

Walsh, R. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. Palo Alto, California: Transpersonal Institute 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Alternate States of Consciousness

Alternate has been suggested to replace the term *altered* when discussing states of consciousness. Alternate does not carry the pejorative connotations of altered states which suggests that these states are a deviation from the way consciousness ought to be. Furthermore, alternate is a plural, all-inclusive term, unlike *usual*, which is merely one specific state of many useful **altered states of consciousness**.

Altered is employed here because it is in standard usage. However, the author agrees that different states of consciousness prevail at different times

for different reasons for all human beings, particularly in **shamanism**. Please note that altered is not meant to carry pejorative connotations and means simply changed, different, or adjusted for a better fit.

Zinberg, Norman E. "The Study of Consciousness States: Problems and Progress." In *Alternate States of Consciousness*. Edited by Norman E. Zinberg. New York: Free Press, 1977.

Alto Mesayoq

The *alto mesayoq* is a high level of *paq'o*, a **shaman** of the **Q'ero** in the **Andes**. There are three levels of *alto mesayoq*. They all specialize in the cultivation of a relationship with the *apu*, the **spirits** of the mountains. They are consecrated to the service of a mountain and are responsible for listening to and speaking to that *apu*. Each *alto mesayoq* is also consecrated into the service of a star that serves as the *alto mesayoq's* guide, with the *apu*.

Alyha

The **gender-variant** spiritual functionary of the Mohave people of the **North American** southwest. The **shaman** and *alyha* had unique and related roles in Mohave **culture**.

The Mohave valued bravery above most other virtues in men. However, **power** obtained in a **dream** was even more highly prized. Thus the *alyha*, though known as a peaceful person, was highly respected by men and women because of the special powers he received in his dreams from the **spirits**.

The *alyha* is not called to his unique vocation so much as his special relationship with spirit is recognized by his relatives in childhood. All Mohave children between the ages of nine to twelve are initiated into "the functions of their gender," or adulthood, before puberty. At this time the relatives of a boy who

has expressed behavior considered odd for Mohave boys will discuss his tendencies and potential as an *alyha*. In secret, the relatives prepare for an **initiation ritual** that is meant to take the boy by surprise and test his true inclinations.

The initiation ritual is an open, public event. Without being told the purpose, the boy is led into a **circle** of tribespeople and guests. His willingness to stay in the circle, exposed, indicates his willingness to go through the ritual.

A singer, positioned out of sight of the boy, begins to **sing** a series of four particular songs. If the boy does not **dance** then he is not inclined to become an *alyha* and he will be initiated as are other boys. However, if his spirit is *alyha* the **song** will go straight to his heart and he will be unable to stop dancing. As the four songs progress the intensity of the boy's dance increases. After the fourth dance his role and status of *alyha* is confirmed.

In completion of the ritual the novice *alyha* is bathed, presented with a woman's skirt, and dressed as a traditional *alyha*. He then returns to the dance ground and in a **naming ceremony** he publicly receives his new feminine name. His male name will no longer be used. See also *berdache*.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Amanita Muscaria

The *amanita muscaria* **mushroom** is possibly the oldest recorded **entheogen**. It was used primarily by **shamans** across Eurasia and in **North America**. The **Koryak** name is *wapaq*, the universal Russian name is *mukhomor*, and it is also referred to as **fly agaric**. It is the most prominent **plant hallucinogen** used in the Asiatic region of the world and has been identified, potentially, as the god-narcotic, **Soma**, of ancient India.

For Finno-Ugrian shamans of eastern and western **Siberia**, *A. muscaria* was

consumed to induce trance states that enabled shamans to leave their bodies and fly into the spirit realms. It was known in that region as the "Mainstay of the Heavens." Different preparations of *A. muscaria* are also used to treat a variety of **illness** and health problems. *A. muscaria* is used in North America by several groups of Athabaskan peoples of northwestern Canada.

A. muscaria grows in thin forests under trees, usually birches. A mature *A. muscaria* may grow to 8–9 in. (20–23 cm) high and its cap 3–8 in. (8–20 cm) across. There are several varieties, found in both hemispheres, which vary in the color of the cap. The variety with a blood-red cap sprinkled with white warts is found in Asia, eastern and western Siberia, **Africa**, India, and in northwestern North America. The variety with a yellow to orange cap sprinkled with yellowish warts is found in eastern and central North America.

There is evidence of the use of sacred mushrooms in ancient Sweden, Denmark, and Finland. *A. muscaria* is thought to be the plant used by the Aryans in the sacred hallucinogenic drink central to their magico-religious rituals, **ritual** practices now called the cult of Soma, recorded in the *Rig veda*. These Aryans invaded the Indus Valley from the north in 1500 B.C.E., bringing *A. muscaria* and its ritual use as a sacred mediator with the gods.

The Indians adopted the practices of the cult of Soma, revering the sacred hallucinogen not just as a mediator, but as a god itself, fathered by Parjanya, the god of thunder. Though the name of the sacred plant was lost after the original cult died out, Soma ceremonies are still practiced today using surrogate plants. Given new evidence from diverse fields, the original Soma plant is believed to be *Amanita muscaria*.

In **Mesoamerica**, the **Maya** of Guatemala call *A. muscaria*, *Kakuljá-ikox*, the "lightning mushroom," a name which connects the mushroom's hallucinogenic powers to Rajaw Kakuljá, the Lord of Lightning. Similarly, the

Quiche-Maya name, *Kaquijá*, refers to the mushroom's origin in thunder and lightning. *Amanita muscaria* is associated with thunder and lightning in both hemispheres and it has the ability to induce trance states that transport the soul into supernatural realms.

In North America the Dogrib Athabaskan people of northwestern Canada use *A. muscaria* in their shamanic practices. Initiates ingest preparations of the mushroom during **training** to induce journeying trance states. The initiate's first journeys induced by *A. muscaria* are often characterized by sudden and disturbing lack of control as the soul leaves the body. Descriptions of journeys from later in their training show increased control and understanding of the induced experience and the meaning of the spirit realm experiences.

A. muscaria is also used by the **Ojibwa** (Anishinabeg) people living on Lake Superior in Michigan (USA). *A. muscaria* is known there as *Oshtimisk Wajashkwedo*, the "red-top mushroom," and is used as a sacred hallucinogen in an ancient, annual Ojibwa **ceremony**.

Use

The primary **aboriginal** use of *A. muscaria* among Siberian shamans is to induce the ecstatic states necessary for **healing** journeys, in which the shaman's soul travels into the spirit realms. The shaman's purpose for entering the spirit realm via *A. muscaria* is four-fold: **soul retrieval, divination, diagnosis, or psychopomp** (guiding the souls of the dead through their death transition).

Preparation

The mushroom is harvested by hand with cap and stem intact and the dirt that clings to the base. The remaining hole is filled with dirt. Trading the mushroom is believed to displease the *A. muscaria* spirit, weakening its **power** and prohibiting future growth in that area. The Koryak perform a **dance**, while beating the drum before harvesting the mushroom.

Traditionally, shamans harvest only the stronger, smaller mushrooms and only those that grow singly. They dry the mushrooms in the shade with the cap up. After they are dry the mushrooms are ingested only in odd numbers, like three or five, and with **water**. They use *A. muscaria* to induce trance and medicinally in preparations for topical and internal use.

After harvest, *A. muscaria* are sun-dried or toasted over a **fire**. The drying process induces the chemical transformation of ibotenic acid into muscimole, the active principle. The mushrooms are eaten by first moistening their dried flesh before swallowing. In some accounts, the women take the dried mushroom flesh into their mouths and then roll the moistened mushroom flesh into pellets for the men to swallow.

The dried mushrooms are also prepared as an extract or liquor. The extract is added to one of the following liquids and drunk: water, reindeer milk, or the juice of sweet plants like *Vaccinium oliginorum* or *Epilobium angustifolium*.

Because the active compound in *A. muscaria* is not metabolized, the urine of intoxicated individuals is also hallucinogenic. **Ritual** urine drinking is an additional means of ingesting the hallucinogen and is found in accounts of both the Siberian peoples and in the Indian Soma rituals.

Active Principle

Muscimole, the most active principle, results from the chemical transformation of ibotenic acid during the drying process. Muscazone, another active principle, has also been isolated. Muscarine, isolated from *A. muscaria* a century ago, is no longer considered the active constituent.

Muscimole is a unique hallucinogenic compound in that it is excreted unmetabolized in the urine. Most other hallucinogenic compounds are broken down or chemically transformed through the body's metabolism. Drinking one's own urine after ingesting and metabolizing *A. muscaria* increases

the effects of the mushroom for up to five hours.

Ritual of Receiving the Plant Spirit, or Plant Medicine

Details for the ritual use of *A. muscaria* are scarce due to the **persecution of shamans** in the regions in which they traditionally use *A. muscaria*.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

In general, *A. muscaria* intoxication is characterized by feelings of euphoria, the experience of colored visions, and macropsia (objects appearing larger than their actual physical size). Light intoxication is characterized by a heightened degree of animation and spontaneous movements. Strong intoxication is characterized by a shift of the senses causing surrounding objects to appear smaller or larger than life size, powerful hallucinations, spontaneous movements, and, occasionally, convulsions.

Strong intoxication also induces periods of **song**, dance, and heightened animation. During this phase of deep trance the shaman is observed to gesture and converse with the spirit beings encountered in the journey into the spirit realms. These periods of sacred activity alternate with periods of withdrawal from the spirit world, rocking side to side, or conversations with family members. Note that the above are primarily observations. They are not accounts made by shamans and therefore do not express the full range of this **altered state of consciousness** experience.

Songs and Dances

The spontaneous expression of **singing**, dancing, and drumming is characteristic of *A. muscaria* use, even when used recreationally. The spirit of the mushroom is known to inspire people to compose songs and **power songs** and to participate in long sessions of drumming, dancing, and singing. The shamans of peoples, like the Koryak who traditionally used *A. muscaria*, are known for the vast array of songs used in their shamanic work. Contemporary

shamans in these regions are believed to be less powerful in part because they have fewer songs. It is important to note that *A. muscaria* use has also decreased, thus removing the primary source of the powerful spirit songs of their **ancestors**.

Use in Western Medicine

Preparations of dried *A. muscaria* continue to be used to treat common health problems in Siberia. However there is no known use in Western **medicine** at this time. The mushroom is commonly treated as poisonous throughout North America and Europe. Eating the mushroom raw is quite toxic and induces harsh and unpleasant symptoms. See also **entheogen**.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Salzman, E., ed. *Shaman's Drum*. Vol. 41, 1996.

Amazonia

The Amazon basin—the area drained by the tributaries of the Amazon River. These river systems drain areas in six countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and a small part of Venezuela. Amazonia is the source of one fifth of the world's freshwater and the most diverse flora on the globe. Amazonia is the home of several hundred tribes of indigenous **South American** peoples.

The indigenous peoples of the Amazonia traditionally fell by hand only enough rain forest to clear the area for homes and the cultivation of plants for a family's food and medicinal use. These clearings are abandoned after eight to ten years allowing the forest to recover the land within 75 to 100 years.

When large areas are cleared, the rain forest is unable to reclaim the land and reestablish any forest, and certainly not a climax rain forest full of medicinal plants. When a million acres are felled, burned, and used as pasture for a few

years, then abandoned, the whole area will be no more than scrub desert or weedy growth for billions of years.

Simply raiding the rain forest for its medicinal information will not bring the amazing **powers** of the *payé's* **healing** out of the rain forest. As ethno-botanist and author Mark Plotkin states, "The secret of healing does not lie only in the biochemical weaponry of the plants themselves. The healing of serious ailments in indigenous Amazonian societies almost always involves ritual." The *payé*, or **shaman**, conducts these rituals. There are a few useful generalities that can be made about the *payés* in this region of the world with the reservation that there will always be individuals for whom these generalities do not apply.

The role of *payé* is not necessarily hereditary, although it is often passed down from father to son, or grandson, and mother to daughter, or granddaughter. More important are certain psychological and intellectual qualities and abilities recognized in childhood. These psychological characteristics must include a deep interest in **myth** and tribal tradition and an ability to communicate with the spirit world. The intellectual qualities include an educational aptitude for memorizing songs, **chants**, ceremonies, and the vast array of medicinal and hallucinogenic plants and their preparation. The individual must also possess a good **singing** voice and the physical well-being to endure sleep deprivation and the toxicity of the hallucinogenic plant sacraments.

Even more essential than all of these qualities is a willingness to serve and the ability to make repeated personal **sacrifice**. The *payé* must be available in constant service of the tribe and in that service be willing to fast often, pass many sleepless nights, abstain from sex for extended periods of time, take hallucinogenic plant preparations, and intervene on behalf of the community with powerful beings of the spirit world.

In addition to all of the above, the *payé's* soul should shine with a strong, inner light. This light must radiate from

the *payé*, when he or she sings, communicates with the spirit world, or shares the messages of the spirit world.

The following are beliefs or practices that generally apply to the peoples of Amazonia: The powerful *payés* can **shapeshift**, transforming themselves into jaguars, anacondas, or bubbles of air, which enable them to negotiate for days, underwater, with the **Master of the Fish**. The *payé* also negotiates with the **master of animals** for permission to hunt and kill game.

The *payé's* negotiation with both of these Master Spirits is essential for the humans to remain in right relationship with their physical and spiritual ecosystem. Killing game without permission is an offense that the animal's spirit has a right to avenge. The Master Spirits avenge the wrongful deaths of those in their care by sending **illness**, poisonous snakes, or severe **weather** like tornadoes to destroy homes and crops.

The Master of animals, *Vai-mahsë*, lives in the cliffs and dark recesses of the flat, sandstone mountains covered with the tangled, shrubby plants and close growing vegetation. *Vai-mahsë*, a *payé* himself, is usually seen as a red **dwarf** dressed as hunter with bow and arrow.

Master of the Fish lives in the rivers with many spirit beings. The Master of the Fish is the intermediary between the *payé* and these water spirit beings, who are particularly active in rapids and falls. They are all consulted, appeased, and pacified by the *payé* to secure safe passage, food, and numerous water-related needs for his or her people.

For the peoples of Amazonia, the rivers are snakes, undulating through the rain forest. The river is the home of the anaconda, who is symbolic of the celestial anaconda who brought the first man and woman from the Milky Way in a canoe with the *yuca*, **Coca**, and *yajé*, all that they needed to start a new life.

Dance, **music**, songs, and chants are universally important. Panpipes, flutes, and bows are common musical instruments. The music and dances are

taught to the young and the boys learn early how to accompany the dances on their panpipes. The *payé* often uses the songs and dances to teach the mythological history of the people. The *payé* teaches the creation of the world and the origin of his people.

Music is an essential tool in the *payé's* ritual and healing work. The *icaros*, chants or songs of the *payé*, communicate directly with the spirits of the sacred hallucinogenic plants used in the *epená* and *ayahuasca* and help to guide the healing **journey** of the patient. The accompaniment on the panpipe or bow is played before and during the rituals to please the spirits and engender their power and guidance.

Generally, Amazonian cosmology recognizes the underwater, forest, and **sky** realms while simultaneously conceiving of the spirit world as one large realm. Illness is attributed to **soul loss**, contamination, or **sorcery** caused by humans or the spirits of the plants, animals, or natural phenomena. The *payé* uses medicinal and hallucinogenic plants, *icaros*, *tsentsaks* (**magical darts**), and phlegm to heal these illnesses and do battle with sorcerers. See also **Shuar**.

Plotkin, M. J. *Tales of a Shaman's Apprentice: An Ethnologist Searches for New Medicines in the Amazon Rain Forest*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1993.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Ambil

Ambil is **tobacco** syrup made by the Witoto of **South America** for medicinal use. The Witoto boil tobacco leaves down to a molasseslike consistency. In a separate step water is leached through the alkaline *ashes* of various burned forest trees. The **water** is allowed to evaporate, leaving a "salt." This salt is added to the syrup to release its bioactive compounds, making *ambil*, which is

applied to the gums or tongue, licked, or used as an enema.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Ametra

Ametra is a project in Peru founded by a Shipibo **shaman** to teach health care workers to use plant remedies alongside pharmaceutical drugs. The use of plant remedies is based on **knowledge** of the spiritual **powers** of the plant as well as the physical properties. See also **plant medicines**.

Amulet

In **North America** an amulet is a **charm** worn by its owner for protection. For example, "**witch doctors**," or **shamans**, create amulets for patients to wear to protect them from witchcraft. In other parts of the world there is no distinction between **talisman** and amulet. See also **charm; fetish; medicine**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio Inc., 1996.

Anakua

Anakua is the **spirit** given an ability to "see" beyond the physical realm in the shamanic traditions of the people of the American Arctic regions. *Anakua* manifests within the novice *angakok* (**shaman**) as a light felt within the body and head that allows him or her to see in the dark, literally seeing spirits in the dark and metaphorically seeing into other realms.

The *anakua* experience is induced by extended hours of meditation and calling on the **helping spirits**. When *anakua* manifests the *angakok* can see at a distance, into the future, into all the different spirit realms, and into the

spirit substance of what is going locally, for example, locating lost souls. See also *qaumanEq*.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio Inc., 1996.

Ancestors

The **soul** of a deceased ancestor returns to the physical world in **spirit** form to aid living family members. This spirit may be the soul, or one aspect of the multiple soul, that has crossed over to the **Land of the Dead** and returned to offer wise counsel and protection. Ancestor spirits function as **helping spirits**.

Ancestors often present themselves as helping spirits for **apprentice shamans**, particularly if the ancestor was a shaman himself or herself. For example, the **Sora shamans** of India enter a **trance** state in which their soul departs for the **Lowerworld** while the spirit of the ancestor, often a shaman, speaks through the living shaman's mouth and leads the **healing** session.

In **Nepal** the *yidam* (heart soul) of an ancestor shaman becomes the guru, or **teacher**, of the living shaman. Three days after the death of the shaman, his or her shamanic gear, **drum**, and **power objects** are laid out with an effigy of the deceased shaman. As the **ceremony** proceeds a rainbow light, the *yidam*, enters the effigy and it begins to shake. Enlivened by the shaman's *yidam*, the effigy will then speak to answer questions, often clarifying to whom in the family lineage the *yidam* will pass and why. Once the *yidam* has entered the descendant, it will teach that shaman **mantras** to call the *yidam* forth and to use in healing.

It is the responsibility of the ancestors to hold the memories and the wisdom gained from the past back to the dawn of humankind. It is the responsibility of the living to heal the past, to learn from the Ancestors' mistakes, and create change. Through the Ancestors,

the shaman draws on the collective wisdom of humankind, recalls the teachings of the past, and translates these **visions** of what has gone before into appropriate **rituals**, ceremonies, and healings for the present situation.

Ancestor spirits are the spirits of dead family members who are not only dead, but who have successfully completed their transition into the spirit world where they now belong. Ancestor spirits are also called the Ancient Ones, the Old Ones, and Grandmothers or Grandfathers, depending on the culture.

Ancestor spirits should not be confused with ghosts, spirits of dead family members who have not completed their death transition and are lingering in the realm of the living where they no longer belong. This may occur when the newly dead are unresolved about their life or when the death is sudden and they do not understand that they are dead. These **spirits of the dead** may possess a relative or otherwise cause disharmony, **illness**, accidents, or bad luck for the living.

How a culture attends to the souls of the newly dead affects how they relate to their ancestor spirits. Generally, in cultures where care is taken to be certain that all who die are crossed over (**psychopomp**) to the spirit realm, all ancestors are considered helping spirits. In cultures where the souls of the dead are not attended to and the safe completion of their death transition is uncertain, ancestor spirits are not necessarily helping spirits. See also **multiple soul belief; possession; ritual**.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

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Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Ancient China

Ancient China was shamanic, pantheistic, and matrifocal in character. The spiritual functionaries were predominantly female, the *wu*. Males, the *xi* or *hsi*, served traditional roles within the spiritual service, some as **shamans** and some as **transformed shamans**. In practice the shamans were called *wu*, regardless of **gender**.

The *wu* communicated with the **spirits** and deities in **trance** states induced with drumming, dancing, meditation, and **song** to perform **divination**, diagnose and heal **illness**, guide the souls of the deceased to the next life (**psychopomp**), foretell the future, and perform magic, particularly to control the **weather**. In early Chinese traditions rituals were conducted to honor the **Ancestors**, offer **sacrifices**, and maintain harmony between Heaven and **Earth**. Some *wu* performed these functions on a familial level, while others performed them for the court as **state shamans**.

The ancient Chinese believed that all the wisdom affecting human affairs lay in the **Upperworld** and that access to that wisdom was necessary for political authority. The *wu* were responsible for communication between Earth and deities of the Upperworld. Therefore the *wu* were a crucial part of every state court.

Women and **shamanism** in China were seriously harmed by the widespread acceptance of Confucianism as the organizing cultural belief system in approximately 100 B.C.E. Women lost not only spiritual, but political and economic **power**. Today approximately one quarter of ethnic Chinese shamans are women, indicating that Confucian influence pushed women from their prominent role as shamans, as well as their traditional roles in the rest of Chinese society.

Training

The means of selection in ancient China is unclear. There is reference to *wu chia*, "shaman family," which is interpreted

by some to mean that the role was inherited. However, among the common people in northern China, every family had a shaman to attend to their shamanic needs. The eldest daughter was designated the *wu-êrh*, "shaman child." She was trained to perform the family rituals and remained unmarried.

Wu rarely joined in traditional marriages. They were believed to be married to the deities and spirits who aided them in their shamanic practice. In ancient songs used to call on the spirits in **ritual**, the *wu*'s relationship with the deities and spirits is represented as a kind of divine love affair. The *wu* were, however, free to engage in intimate sexual unions, as was common in that time.

Novices train in apprenticeship to an elder, practicing *wu*. The **apprentice** learns the methods necessary to divine by reading bones and summon particular spirits. Then the apprentice can learn the techniques to master the trance states necessary to exorcise malevolent spirits and perform **healings**, **soul retrievals**, telekinesis, and weather magic.

Part of the ancient **training** involved ingesting unusual foods and drink, thought to alter the body in ways that would aid in the ability to enter **altered states of consciousness**. These foods included herbs (angelica, sedge, melilotus, asarum, valerian, castor, cinnamon), flowers (chrysanthemum, magnolias, orchids), **mushrooms**, lichens, and gem elixirs (jade and jasper). These substances were believed to provide a rich supply of vital **energy** (ch'i) when ingested and to satiate the body in a way that ended cravings for mundane foods. Eating these substances was believed to lighten and energize the physical body in a way that enabled the *wu* to fly through the air, literally.

The Divine Feminine

In ancient China there were many manifestations of the Divine Feminine. The *wu* prepared to meet a manifestation of the Divine Feminine by bathing in purified **water** scented with iris and orchid

and dressing in the garments of the manifestation of the deity she intended to invoke. During the ritual, which often involved drumming and **singing**, the *wu* danced into a trance state, holding a bouquet of herbs and flowers or other **offering** preferred by the deity. Once in trance the *wu*'s soul traveled through the spirit world to the home of the deity.

Many deities are associated with aspects of ancient Chinese shamanism. For example, Fu Fei, Goddess of the Luo River, is associated with the invention of the drum used to aid the *wu* in entering altered states. Fu Fei manifests as a male/female being in a serpent, dragon, whale, or swan form. Another goddess associated with ancient shamanism is the bear goddess, Lady of Tu Shuan Mountain. She invented the style of singing used by the Chu *wu* to invoke the spirits and deities.

The Divine Feminine was believed to dwell in water in its many forms. The *wu* worked with water and entities and objects associated with water, e.g., the **moon**, rainbows, water dragons, serpents, carp, and crabs in their rituals. Seas, lakes, rivers, springs, and pools were the common sites for offerings, rituals, or **initiations**.

An offering of sacrifice to an aquatic goddess was often dropped into the water as part of a ritual. The *wu* used a special boat painted with floral designs or decorated with fresh or dried flowers and embellished with figures of phoenixes and dragons, symbolic of the sacred feminine and masculine energies. The *wu* sailed the boat to the middle of the body of water, a shoreline **shrine**, or island and showered the water with offerings.

Transformed Shamans

Trance states were considered by the ancient Chinese to be a yin activity, used by all women as part of their personal spiritual practice. Because it was a yin practice, any boy who demonstrated shamanic potential as a child was given a female name and dressed as a woman all his life. These boys became transformed

shamans, called **shih-niang**, meaning "master girl."

The *shih-niang* were described as "not male and not female," referring to their **gender-variant** nature, and "not dreaming and not awake," referring to their ability to move between the physical and spiritual worlds in trance. The *shih-niang* dressed in a fusion of feminine, masculine, and sacred dress. They were employed by various cults, including Pan Hu of the canine warrior deity and Ta Wang Shen of the serpent king.

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Ancient Maya

A people who lived in independent states covering more than 100,000 square miles of forest and plain in what is now Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador. The history of the Maya is to Central America what the history of the Egyptians is to Europe and that of the Chinese is to Asia.

The Maya inherited their worldview from the Olmec, the **first people** of this region. The Maya transformed themselves from agricultural villagers to people of a great civilization of high **religion**, extraordinary statecraft, epic battles, and refined **arts**. The remains of Maya sites show that in one thousand years of development (200 B.C.E.–C.E. 900), they spread south to the Pacific Ocean, west along the Usumacinta River in the Mexican states of Chiapas and Tabasco, north to the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean coastline,

and east to the Ulua and Lempa basins in the Honduran highlands.

Unique and enigmatic, the Ancient Maya ruled over an area about the size of modern Italy that was very rich in art and architectural treasures. The ceremonial cities used for the performances of the **state shaman** *ahau* (ruler) numbered well over 100. This high period of Mayan rule lasted longer than the Roman Empire.

The ancient Maya are noted for inventing ideas that harnessed social energy, allowing them to transform the old ideas of village life, the extended family, the shaman, and the patriarch, into highly organized, civilized life. Through the creation of new visions of **power** arising from the interrelationship of the physical and spiritual worlds, the Maya invented a hierarchy to solve the social and cultural problems of that time.

For the egalitarian Maya the equal flow of wealth was one of the highest values and it was carefully maintained. Historically, social tensions converged and threatened that carefully maintained balance. The wealth and status of a few Maya grew due to trade with non-Mayan neighbors, the new technologies of raised-field agriculture and **water**-management were developed, and labor pools were organized.

The hierarchy and the ruler's role as a state shaman were developed to address this problem of growing inequality, a state illness, and to maintain the flow of wealth. The ruler wielded his social influence and spirit-given **knowledge** to create advantages for his people. The people reaped the benefits of well-being and social balance from the ruler's intervention on their behalf in the spirit world. They all shared the material wealth his successful ritual performance brought to the community.

Worldview

The Maya worldview is similar to that of shamanic peoples around the world. The physical world and the spiritual world were seen as two planes of existence,

inextricably locked together, in which everything is alive and sacred. The physical world was the material manifestation of spirit forces and the spirit was the essence of all things material. Objects, people, and places in the physical world acquired dangerous power when the connection between the two worlds was made manifest through ritual and trance.

The actions of the spirits affected prosperity, misfortune, health, illness, victory, disaster, life, and death of the living, while the actions of the living provided the only nourishment for the inhabitants of the spirit world. In the exchange of energies between the worlds, the spirit world influenced the overall well-being of human life while the human world influenced the well-being of the Spirits. At its essence the Mayan worldview is this: the waking **dream** of the inhabitants of one plane creates the plane of existence of the other. And the waking dream of the other creates the plane of existence of the original dreamer, again and again, cycling through Eternity.

This reciprocal relationship is expressed in Maya art. For example, the Acasaguastlan pot shows the Sun God in the midst of a vision, a waking dream of the humans and the world in which they live. The waking dream of the humans, expressed in the state shaman's ecstatic trance, gave birth to the gods and the world in which they live. Through the ritual actions of the state shaman *ahau*, the beings of *Xibalba* (the spirit world) materialized in the ritual objects, features of the landscape, and the shaman himself.

The *ahau*, meaning "living god," or ruler, were shamans for the state, performing shamanic community **healing** rituals on a vast, enormous scale. The *ahau's* authority to rule was assured by his ability to operate in both planes of existence in rituals designed to exchange the energies between the worlds that were necessary to keep both planes in balance and bring prosperity to the lives of the people.

Time and Space

For the Maya time was not linear, but cyclical. Time plays out in repeating patterns woven directly into the **space/time** fabric of the Universe. The Maya not only saw the past returning in endless cycles of historical symmetry, but they chose to act on particular dates to replay that symmetry and use that symmetry to draw power from the past into the present time.

For the Maya to remember a date is not to recall a single event from the past, but to reiterate the essential things that happened, continue to happen, and will always happen. On any given day the shape of space and time was affected and was effected by the patterns of actions and interactions of hundreds of gods. History was not simply the past, it was living and it affected time. Through ritual, both time and space (matter) were directly affected because they were all interrelated.

To use contemporary terms, one could say that the Maya saw time and space as a matrix of energy fields. These fields of energy affect the beings within them, both human and spirit. Simultaneously, the actions of the beings in the field affect the patterns of the matrix. For the Maya, this relationship of inextricable interaction was obvious and they exploited it to their advantage, as all shamanic peoples do to greater and lesser degrees.

Cosmology

The Mayan world is made up of three interrelated **domains** which are each alive and imbued with sacred power. The **Upperworld** is the **sky**, the starry arch that is represented by the great crocodilian Kosmic monster. The **Middeworld** is the **earth**, the human world that floats on the **primordial sea**. The **Lowerworld** is the dark, watery world of *Xibalba*, filled like **ordinary reality** with animals, plants, beings, landscapes, and structures. *Xibalba* rotates above the earth at sundown, becoming the night sky and returns below the earth at dawn, becoming a

mirror image of the earth and its beings.

The *wacah chan*, or **Tree of Life**, creates an axis through all three realms, coexisting in and connecting them. The branches of *wacah chan* reached to the highest layers of the Upperworld and the roots touched the deepest layer of the Lowerworld, providing a means by which the shaman traveled between the worlds. *Wacah chan* is represented by the color blue-green and is associated with specific **birds**, gods, and rituals.

The four cardinal directions provided the grid for the Middeworld and Maya community. The Maya utilized the matrix of power points in the land, particularly mountains and **caves**, which were created by the gods when the gods created the cosmos. Exercising their reciprocal relationship with the spirit world, the Maya built their own mountain-like temples and cave-like inner sanctuaries, creating a human-made matrix to merge with and complement the god-created matrix.

The Ahau, Ecstasy, and Bloodletting

The function of the *ahau* as state shaman was extremely important to the Maya social structure. In Maya writing and symbolism the kingship is represented as the Double-headed Serpent Bar or the Vision Serpent, both symbols of the act of communication with the spirit world. The Double-headed Serpent Bar is found entwined in the branches of *wacah chan*. The Vision Serpent, who is embodied during ecstatic trance states, is symbolic of communion with the **ancestors** and gods.

The **state shaman** *ahau* was central to the bloodletting vision ritual. Bloodletting served two primary purposes: the **blood offering** gave food to the gods and the act of bloodletting (with dancing) was a means of inducing trance and communicating with the spirit world. Through this trance state the *ahau* became the *wacah chan*, the central axis connecting all realms of the world. Through the ecstatic *ahau*, the ancestors were spoken to and the gods

were made manifest in the physical world.

The practice of bloodletting was an act of piety carried out by royalty and villagers alike for **rituals** of all kinds. The Maya saw their relationship with the cosmos in the life cycle of maize, the staple of Mayan life. The maize cannot renew its life cycle without human hands to plant the seeds. The Maya believed that the Universe could not renew itself without the **sacrifice** of human **blood**. For the Maya, ritual sacrifice was the highest act of spiritual devotion.

Representation of bloodletting on stelae show the participant drawing a finger-thick paper rope through the wound to guide the blood onto the paper, which was then given in **offering** within the ritual. The act could be a simple offering from any body part of a few drops or an act of mutilation, releasing a large flow of precious fluid. All important dynastic and calendric rituals required blood sanctification and the important rites required the blood of the penis or tongue.

The Ancient Maya Shaman

The glyph of the ancient shaman is composed of an *ahau* face half covered with a jaguar pelt. This glyph is interpreted to mean “way,” “to sleep” or “to dream,” “to metamorphose or transform,” and “animal spirit companion.” These are easily recognized as elements of the shaman in an ecstatic **trance** state moving in the spirit world with his or her **helping spirit**.

From ancient Mayan art, glyphs, and archaeological remains of ritual practices, it is apparent that the Maya had both shamans, in the traditional sense of shamanic healer, and rulers who had to possess shamanic skills. The presence of obsidian artifacts found throughout the Maya social structure shows that shamans performed rituals and assisted their community at every level of the social structure.

The Maya shaman healer performed **divinations** by casting obsidian flakes

or pieces of jade smeared in blue bituman and human blood. The shaman worked in trance states to serve as mediator with the gods, ancestors, and supernatural beings. The shaman performed **blessings** of temples, *ahau*, and **power objects**. The shaman as **psychopomp** sang to souls of dead along their **journey** to Xibalba. When an *ahau* died without an heir, the shaman contained the ruler’s energy and power until a successor was found.

The shamans who served the royalty created and conducted the rituals within which the *ahau* danced into his vision trance. In the course of conducting the ritual with its drumming, dancing, chanting, and bloodletting, the shaman oversaw the offerings: the correct kind, amount, and placement. The shaman also oversaw any building necessary in the creation of a new place of power.

Rituals of the Ancient Maya Shaman

The Maya used ritual to control the dangerous and powerful energies they released by exploiting the patterns of power in time and space. The Maya worked with their interrelationship with the spirit world through rituals of Dedication (opening), Containment, Termination (closure or **cleansing**), and Burial and Ascension

Termination rituals were used to terminate an older version of a temple, place, or power object. Objects that contained power were broken, effaced, or opened by drilling or pounding a hole. Portraits of humans and gods were effaced often by destroying the nose and left eye. Color was removed or whitewashed. Sculptures were broken, burned, or carefully sealed with plaster. Jade artifacts, particularly earflares, were smashed and often ground into powder and left as an offering. For example, remains of charcoal and stingray spines used in termination rituals imply that there was an earlier version of a temple at Copan, and the careful burial of the old facade at Cerros is evidence of its ritual termination.

Termination in temples often involved complex, symbolic, and abundant offerings and bloodletting which was added to whatever part of the old temple was being sealed. The termination was only part of the greater ritual in which the termination was followed by an ecstatic trance, communications with the spirit world took place, and the ritual to open or dedicate the temple to its new purpose or ruler transpired.

Containment rituals were necessary because the objects, people, and places in which the energies of the spirit world manifested during the bloodletting rituals accumulated power with each successive use. In some situations it was not safe to simply terminate the object of power. Instead, that energy was contained in a ritual to carefully seal it. Through containment the accumulated power in the person, place, or **power object** was added to the growing **power place** and available to support the new purpose, not freed or lost.

Burial rituals assured the safe travel of the dead in their passage down the *wacah chan*. Appropriate blood **sacrifices** were made so that the dead would have company on the journey and symbolic food and objects were included with the body to support the journey and enable the soul to outwit the Lords of Death. In this way a soul called to Xibalba in death will become venerated as an ancestor.

Ascension rituals marked the coming to power of a new *ahau* and displayed his power as the new **state shaman**. They were timed to replicate another ascension in history. In this way, the ascending *ahau* redefined the bloodline succession as a supernatural rite of ecstatic communion between the new ruler and the dead ruler now in Xibalba. Maya history and its replication affected the structure of time, just as ritual affected the nature and power of matter.

Rituals did not always take place in the temples or with the performance of the state shaman. There were natural sites of ritual and social gathering in

deep natural wells in the northern regions called *cenotes*. Much of the underground water supply ran in limestone **caves** under the soil. When the water dissolved the ceilings of these limestone caves, they could be entered using wooden ladders or stone steps carved into the limestone walls. The *cenotes* were entrances to the Otherworld, naturally present in the geography of the Maya land.

The height of the ancient Maya **culture** can be seen in the royal iconography of the major ceremonial sites, such as Uaxactún, Tikal, Palenque, or Uxmal of the Maya Classic period (C.E. 199–900). From that peak it appears that the power of the ancient Maya system began to dissipate, finally trickling to a close in 1697 when the last independent Maya kingdom fell to the Spanish.

The Maya saw the end of their time in a prophecy very like the **Inka** and Hopi prophecies. The Maya saw their culture's life span as seven "heavens" of decreasing choice and nine "hells" of increasing doom, after which the "Lord of the Dawn" would return. Each "heaven" or "hell" is a cycle of fifty-two years. At the end of the fifty-two year cycle of the seventh "heaven," the Spaniards arrived and began the conquest of Mexico.

Paraphernalia

Obsidian was prized for its ability to make clean, quick cuts. Though obsidian was used for a variety of cutting tasks, its main function was bloodletting in ritual. Obsidian was believed to be the fingernails of the Lightning Bolt or the remains of Chac-Xib-Chac striking the rock of the earth.

Psilocybe Mushroom

Archaeologists have long been uncovering curious stone figures with an umbrella-like top in the remains of Highland Maya culture. The majority date from 1000 B.C.E.–500 C.E. These figures vary in size, but are usually about a foot in height. Recent studies support

the contention that they represent **mushrooms** and imply a relationship between **psilocybe mushrooms** and Mayan shamans.

The dome-shaped top on these figures is often a very realistic depiction of a mushroom. The figure includes a human or an animal on the stipe (stem) of the mushroom or directly under the cap. Most of the animal figures represented on the stones are associated with **shamanism**: the jaguar, bird, monkey, hare, and coati. The human figures are rendered in positions and with facial expressions that imply the contemplation or ecstasy characteristic of the shaman's **altered state of consciousness**. See also **Hopi Prophecy** and **Mesoamerica**.

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Andes, South America

The indigenous peoples of the Andes region in **South America** were influenced by **Inka** thought and practices, making their original shamanic practices hard to distinguish, particularly in regions that became part of the **Inka** Empire. Shamanic practices and traditions vary in specifics **culture** to culture along this vast mountainscape. However, they all work with the powerful spirit energies of that region, the mountains and the **earth** herself, *Pachamama*, and therefore shared patterns do emerge.

The indigenous people of the Andes explain that there are two realities: **ordinary reality**, or all that we associate

with the world, and **non-ordinary reality**, or all that we associate with the spirit world. The **shamans** or *yachaqs* of the Andes connect with the unfolding of unknown energies that are ever-present in all things through this spirit world. And, essential to Andean philosophy is the understanding that everything in these two realities is connected to everything else. Therefore, humans are One with all things and everything that humans say or do affects everything else.

The spirit world is believed to be the real world from which everything in the physical world is the result. Therefore, the cause of **illness** is an imbalance in the patient's relationship with the energies of the spirit world. This disequilibrium is attributed to several causes, for example, *susto* (fright), *brujería* (**sorcery**), and the malevolent influence of **ancestor** spirits, the earth, and God or to more basic energies like *frio* or *caliente* (cold or hot) foods or *wayra* or *mal aire* (draft).

In the traditional Andean health system there is an array of medical practitioners who are distinguished from one another by methods, level of **training** in a particular area, and the extent to which they engage the spirit world in their curing. A list of Andean practitioners includes, but is not limited to, **curanderos** (folk doctors), *parteras* (midwives), *herbalistas* (herbalists), *entendidos* or *curioso* ("those who understand" or "who are skilled"), **alto mesayocs**, *yachaqs*, *llatiris* (sages), *pusangeros*, and *ayahuasceros*.

Aneglakya

The **plant hallucinogen**, *Datura innoxia*, is used medicinally by the Zuñi people of the **North American** southwest. *Aneglakya* (*datura*) has trumpet-shaped, white-tinged flowers in a range from pink to violet. The fresh roots are chewed as an analgesic or put into a poultice used to heal wounds and bruises. A powder from the roots was also used to heal eye injuries.

Zuñi legend tells of the origins of *Aneglakya*, their most sacred plant. A'neglakaya and A'neglakyatsi'tsa, brother and sister from the interior of the **earth** world, often came to the surface and walked about the outer world. They always wore flowers on each side of their heads as they walked and observed everything, remembering every detail to tell in the stories of the outer world they shared with their mother.

The twin sons of the **Sun**, the Divine Ones, heard these stories and decided that A'neglakaya and A'neglakyatsi'tsa knew too much of the outer world. They banished A'neglakaya and A'neglakyatsi'tsa for all time and the brother and sister disappeared into the earth forever. However, in the spot where they descended, *Datura* grew, blossoming in many **colors** exactly like the flowers worn by A'neglakaya and A'neglakyatsi'tsa. Now *Datura's* children have scattered all over the earth, blossoming in the colors of the four cardinal directions—yellow, blue, red, or simply white.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Angakok

A term for **shaman** that is used by the peoples of the American Arctic Coast, meaning one who has a **spirit**, or **torngraq**, a **helping spirit**. There are many variations of the word; *angakut* is the plural form.

The *torngraq* are the *angakok's* primary **teachers** and the source of the *angakok's* **power**. To acquire *torngraq* the novice must spend time alone in the vast **emptiness** of the Arctic and pray for one or more of the powerful **animal spirits** to come to his or her aid. As with all shamans, the spirits choose the shaman. The novice has no choice in the *torngraq* who comes, or whether one comes at all.

Eskimo peoples of the **east** and the **west** expect an **initiation** crisis during

which the candidate is being chosen by spirit. In the east, candidates can deliberately seek power by fasting and staying alone in the wilderness for long periods of time. In the west, candidates are spontaneously chosen by spirit.

The *angakok* gains his or her main body of **knowledge** in training directly from the spirit world. In both the east and the west this training is augmented by training with elder *angakoks*, often with several elders since each one is a specialist in a particular technique.

Death is the central theme in *angakok's* initiation. Death by drowning is common, as are rituals in which the candidate is shot dead and later revived by the power of his or her *torngraq*. A preliminary *qaumanEq*, or *anakua*, initiation may occur spontaneously, or the novice can ask an older *angakok* to perform the transmission. Any power derived with the assistance of older *angakok* can only be maintained through the novice's acquisition and relationship with his or her own *torngraq*.

Training continues for years with the *torngraq*, often in secret. The new *angakok* must also master the ability to use drumming and dancing to intentionally enter the journeying **trance**. In most shamanic rituals there is an intense, prolonged period of dancing, drumming, and chanting to the point of frenzy, before the *angakok* enters trance. During the dancing the *angakok* often contorts and cries out in the way of his animal *torngraq* or speaks in the unintelligible shamanic **language**.

Once the *torngraq* are summoned in the **dance** the *angakok* is tied, hands behind the back and a leather thong around the knees and neck. The *angakok* sits behind hanging skins or at the back of the hut with all lights extinguished. The *angakok* journeys with the help of the *torngraq* into the spirit world to discover the reason for a scarcity of game or a patient's **illness**, among other things. When the *angakok's* soul returns from the **journey**, he or she is magically now free of the bonds. The lamps are lit

and the *angakok* recounts the adventures of the journey.

The *angakok*'s first priority is helping to provide food for the community and the next is to cure illness. Both of these functions often involve the **taboo** system and the need to make amends for violations. The *angakok* is also called upon to change the **weather**, prevent or repair injuries, battle the harmful effects of **sorcery**, divine the source of issues in the present or future, and to enhance personal success in a variety of areas.

The *angakok*'s primary **power object** is the **drum**, which is constructed as directed by the *torngraq* during the *angakok*'s training. Other power objects include the *kikituk*, a wooden or ivory figure created by the *angakok* and animated with his or her helping spirit for use in healing. The *angakok* also create a *tupilak* for **healing**, made from bones and animal parts and empowered with a spirit. **Amulets**, made of teeth, claws, shells, **feathers**, or other animal parts, are created for protection for the patient of the *angakok*.

The *angakok*'s skills were highly valued across the Arctic. **Inuit** *angakut* were traditionally women. Men who were called to become *angakut* transformed their **gender** as part of their training. The male *angakut* were generally **transformed shamans** who comprised a special class of shamans. They practiced **divination** and healing, as well as training young women in the observation of social customs and dancing.

As boys these *angakut* showed an inclination toward the feminine gender role. Parents noticed these characteristics and dedicated their boys to this valuable vocation in early childhood. The boys were dressed as girls in clothing and haircut and taught the skills necessary to fulfill the female gender role of their culture, including the tools, language, walk, and entry into the home.

At fifteen a boy whose gifts had been noticed early was given to an elder

angakok to focus on the process of becoming an *angakok*. At this age a boy whose aptitude had not been noticed often experienced a spontaneous calling by a *ke'let* spirit in a **dream** or trance state. At this point his training and gender transformation would begin.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Angakoq

A term for **shaman** used in the Arctic Coast, *angakut* (pl) means those who have a spirit, or **helping spirit**. Also used by the Iglulik, inland North **Alaskan**, Baffin Island, Labrador, Polar, West **Greenland** and East Greenland Inuit. Also *angatkoq*, *angutkok*, *ahngutkok*, *angalsqoq*. Others used *tunghak*, *tunghalik*, *tunralik*, *tunerak*, *tonngag*, or *torngevok*. See also **angakok**.

Angaqoq

See **angakok**.

Anglo-Saxon

This is one of the two major cultural groupings in early western Europe. While it is clear that the early peoples of western Europe were shamanic in ideology and practice, details about their practices are relatively uncertain compared to those of Siberians or South Americans who are still practicing today. The shamanic practices of the Anglo-Saxons and Celts were driven underground many hundreds of years ago. The traditions and creation mythology of the Anglo-Saxon people is perhaps best preserved in Germanic and Norse myths and stories.

The early Anglo-Saxon **shamans** served as healers, diviners, and spell-casters, particularly through the use of the magical languages of **runes**. They

led sacred **rituals** and celebrations, were the custodians of tribal wisdom, and were advisors to warriors and chieftains.

Male and female practitioners were equally prominent and status was based on the **power**, accuracy, and efficacy of one's performance. Men and women followed different paths of **initiation** and **training**; however these paths were accorded equal status. Entering the shamanic world of the other **gender** was considered the most advanced shamanic training, which could only be undertaken after the full mastery of one's own course of study. The shamans held in highest regard were those who were able to gain the wisdom, insights, and techniques of the other gender.

Many shamanic functions were performed equally by men and women, like healings and conducting rituals. Female shamans were also specialists in **divination** and reading the future of individuals, communities, and the land. Female shamans and **medicine** women had authority over all rituals dealing with conception and childbirth.

Helping Spirits

Dwarves, the **embodiment** of the powers to transform the **elements**, featured significantly in the initiatory visions of Anglo-Saxon shamans. Dwarves are particularly prominent in Norse stories of shamanic **vision quests**. **Giants**, the embodiment of the **earth**, were cultivated as **helping spirits** for the power to influence or direct the elemental forces of Nature. **Animals spirits** and a wide variety of other types of spirits were also cultivated as helping spirits to acquire shamanic powers and specific skills.

Divination

Runes, used as a divination tool, were an important form of sacred communication with the spirit world. The process of carving runes was a way of centering, meditating, and communicating with the Earth. Carving a runic message to the spirit world was an integral part of most healing and divining rituals.

Runes were traditionally carved into wood, rock, and occasionally bone. They were also worked into **metal** jewelry and weaponry to transform these ordinary objects into **power objects** through the power of the **wyrd**, the mysterious force of the supernatural.

Seeing stones, another divination tool, were actual stones, usually marked with a shape resembling an eye. The seeing stones were used during healings and initiations. They allowed the shaman to gaze into the spirit world and accurately assess the state of another's spirit.

Healing Rituals

Anglo-Saxon rituals begin by creating a **circle** to contain and concentrate the flow of life force, believed to be made up of physical, psychological, and psychic energy. The shaman continues with a **diagnosis** either through the use of the seeing stone or a drum-induced **journey**. This divination reveals the true nature of the **illness** and the remedy necessary for healing.

The healing itself often involved using an **incantation** to create a healing web of energy for the patient, called "**singing** the patient better." The incantation was usually created specifically for the patient to weave together the patient's own ability to heal, the powers of the helping spirits, and the healing powers of the web of **wyrd**.

If the diagnosis revealed that the patient was possessed by harmful spirits, the shaman would extract the spirit or drive it away. If the diagnosis revealed that the patient's soul had been lost or stolen, the shaman performed a **soul retrieval**, journeying into the spirit world to recover the lost soul and return it to the patient.

Paraphernalia

The most important tool of the Anglo-Saxon shaman was his or her staff. These staffs were carved with runic inscriptions and decorated with metalwork and objects of power. Norse sagas describe the **volvas** carrying staffs decorated with

ornate stonework. These power objects had a variety of uses and were believed to aid the shaman in his or her ability to enter trance.

The **costumes** of Anglo-Saxon shaman often contained the **energy** of his or her helping spirits. These energies were often embodied in the costume through the application of **feathers**, stones, and other magical objects, which contained the energy of the helping spirits. To don the costume was to engage the process of embodying one's helping spirit, and thus gain its powers.

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Animal Spirits

Animal spirits are **helping spirits** in animal form who are able to transcend the abilities of that animal in its ordinary existence, e.g., anacondas flying without wings or fish swimming through mountains. Though they express their **power** through their extraordinary abilities, they are most easily understood as the **spirit** of the entire species of that animal. In practice this means that while many **shamans** may work with Bear spirits, there are not many different bear spirits that work with different shamans. Animal spirits are also called guardian spirits, spirit allies, spirit helpers, **power animals**, totem animals, and **tutelary spirits**.

Animal spirits may appear in human form or part animal-part human forms. For some peoples of **North America** and **South America** it is traditional for animal spirits to appear in **dreams** in human form while they appear in **journeys** or **visions (waking-dreams)** in animal forms. Just as animal spirits can shift into human form, shamans are believed to be able to transform into their power animal's form. This practice of **shapeshifting** is ancient and global.

Animal spirits can be further categorized by the function they play in the shaman's work. There are power animals

who help the shaman in general in the healing work, **totem spirits** who are inherited through the family line by all members of the family and may help the shaman in healing, and tutelary spirits who represent the shaman's identity in the spirit world and often become the form the shaman takes in the **non-ordinary reality** healing work.

The fact that an individual has a relationship with a power animal does not make them a shaman. Most children have guardian spirits and, in many **cultures**, all adults must connect with a helping spirit as an aspect of their initiation into adulthood. The desire to connect as an adult with one's animal spirit is one aspect of the **vision quest** practiced by many tribes and cultures.

The shaman is empowered by his or her relationship with the power animals and other helping spirits. Shamans believe that the animals are manifestations of a natural power that is stronger and wiser than human beings. However, shamans do not lift animal spirits up to the status of deities, nor do they lower them to the status of a mere psychological metaphor. The shaman knows that there could be no power for healing without the spirits of animals, plants, Nature, and the **Ancestors**.

Helping spirits do not belong to the shaman nor are they controlled by the shaman in any contemporary sense of the word. The relationship is a partnership, one forged in large part on the **sacrifice** of the shaman and his or her ability to communicate with the helping spirits and surrender to their wisdom. In return the shaman receives the power and **knowledge** to help others to heal. This relationship is often honored by the shaman through animal-like dancing that occurs when the shaman merges with the spirit of the animal and allows that animal to **dance** through his or her body.

One theory suggests that animal helping spirits appear predominantly in the earliest stage of **shamanism** when the people are hunters and gatherers. Then, when people began to cultivate

gardens, a shift to regarding the spirits of nature, e.g., Sun, **Moon, Sky**, Wind, Mountains, etc., as **teachers** occurred, as with the Shinto of **Japan**, the **Huichols** of Mexico, and most of the peoples of **Southeast Asia**. However, in the practices of contemporary shamans around the world animal spirits are still regarded as teachers and power animals, as are the spirits of Nature, the Ancestors, and a vast array of gods and goddesses.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

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Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Anishinabe

Anishinabe, a term meaning “person” or “first man,” is preferred by many **Ojibwa** people. In contemporary times the concept of an Anishinabe Nation has emerged to link the widespread speakers of the Ojibwa **language**; the Saulteaux, Ottawa, Nipissing, Mississauga, and Algonkin.

Anukite ihanblapi

A **Lakota** society of **transformed shamans**. *Anukite ihanblapi* means “they who **dream** of face-on-both-sides” and refers to Double Woman, the **helping spirit** who calls the boys to their vocation and is necessary for **gender** transformation. The *anukite ihanblapi* dress and wear their hair in the tradition of females of their tribe and serve the community at large as shamans.

Lakota boys receive their call from Double Woman, a goddess who visits them in a **dream**. She is a **shapeshifting** helping spirit and **teacher**. She appears as twins, a female warrior, a beautiful maiden, a buffalo calf of both genders, or a deer who drinks blood.

To complete his transformation, the male initiate must begin to function sexually as the receptive partner with other men. The fully initiated *anukite ihanblapi* is considered a unique, third gender. The marriage of an *anukite ihanblapi* to a heterosexual, traditional male was common and sanctioned within the community.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Apprentice

Long apprenticeship periods are the norm in traditional **training**. The length of training varies culture to culture, but all shamans endure training at the hand of **spirit** teachers. Some will apprentice with human teachers as well. In all cultures, even the initiated shaman's training continues over his or her entire lifetime. Much of what a shaman learns over a lifetime can be codified and taught to an apprentice: ceremonies, dances, **healing** songs, and plant remedies and preparation. While learning these things may make one a healer, it is the mastery of **trance** states that makes one a shaman. An individual with the **knowledge** of traditions, but without the ability to access the spirit world for new information to keep those traditions alive, is not a shaman.

Apprentices must learn to alter their consciousness and control their trance states so that they can intentionally connect with the **helping spirits**, work with their **power**, and effectively mediate between the humans and the invisible world. The effectiveness of ceremonies, dances, songs, and remedies will diminish over time without new information from spirit to rejuvenate the magic and the power of the shaman's work.

Shamanic practices gather and focus great power. For that reason, **humility** is essential in a practitioner. Therefore the character of the apprentice must be

assessed before power is placed in their hands through training.

In many cultures, like the **Zulu** of **Africa** or the **Ojibwa** of **North America**, an apprentice may live with his or her teacher, spending the first year working at menial tasks, without any formal instruction, or **cleansing** himself or herself. The student's worthiness for real training is assessed at this time. There are many tests along the way, from both the spirit and human teachers. The majority of apprentices do not make it through training to **initiation**.

Araucanians

See **Mapuche**.

Arctic Shamanism

Arctic shamanism and general **shamanism** are the two prominent forms of **North American** shamanism as defined by scholar and authority on shamanism, Åke Hultkrantz. In the Arctic form of shamanism the dominant form of **trance** is the ecstatic **journey**. The **shaman** and his or her **helping spirits** often merge in the journey to accomplish the purpose of the trance state.

The journey trance is used in the recovery of lost souls when the patient is in a state of **soul loss**. It is used for **divination**, **healings**, to discover information about future events, and to observe individuals at a great distance. When the shaman performs an **extraction** healing to remove an energetic intrusion he or she works with the helping spirits in a trance state in which the shaman's awareness is present, but deeply connected to the **altered state of consciousness**.

Whether classified as general or Arctic, North American shamans use the depth and type of trance state necessary to accomplish a variety of tasks. How a shaman determines the trance state necessary depends on many variables including cultural expectations, type of helping spirit used, the **diagnosis**, and personal preference or specialty.

Hultkrantz, A. "Spirit Lodge, a North American Shamanistic Séance." In *Studies in Shamanism*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962.

Art

Art is used in **shamanic healing** to contain, connect, and protect **energy**. Visual arts like a **sand painting** or **Peyote** bead work create a container for new energy that the patient can not yet hold in his or her body. By stepping into the sand painting, for example, the patient enters the vessel containing the healthy energy, merges with it, and allows unhealthy energy to be transformed into a healthy state.

This type of sacred art can also serve as a bridge, or connection, between the worlds. Whether it's visual, like paintings, or a **dance** or **song**, the act of creation creates a bridge to the spirit world. **Shamans** all over the world used dance as a means to **embody** spirit energies. Visual arts are also used to invite **spirit** into the physical realm. For example, **Zulu** shamans begin work with a community that is in trouble by creating something large and beautiful and placing it in the center of the community. This act creates a bridge to the spirits from whom they are asking for help.

Art is also used to employ spirit in the protection of a shaman or patient. Often called a **talisman**, art created for protection is made as a home for the protecting spirit. Ritual is used to bring the spirit into the object after which the object's presence in the home or with the wearer provides protection.

Art used in this way, as a living container for spirit, is also called a **power object**. Power objects are anything found or created that embody spirit power. The artistic process of creation is often used by shamans to create power objects, which are secondarily objects of artistic merit.

In some cultures the artist and the shaman work together in **healing**. For example, in Ethiopia the *dabtaras*,

artists who create traditional talismanic art, work closely with *zar-tanguay*, shamanic healers. The *zar-tanguay* enters a **possession trance** during which the *zar* (spirit) diagnoses the client's problems. The *dabtara* then prescribes a cure that usually involves exorcising *ganén* (malevolent spirits) and making a magical scroll to protect the client from *ganén* intrusion in the future.

Arunta (Aranda)

A tribe of **Aboriginal** people of central **Australia**, near Alice Springs. There are three methods in the traditional "**making**," or **initiation**, of a **shaman**. While all three types of practitioners will practice together, those initiated spontaneously by the *Iruntarinia* or the *Oruncha* **spirits** are more powerful than those initiated by other shamans.

The most powerful shamans, both male and female, are initiated by the *Iruntarinia* spirits of the *Altjiringa* or **Dreamtime**. The candidate sleeps at the mouth of the *Iruntarinia's* **cave**. At day-break the *Iruntarinia* discover him, piercing him with a lance through his tongue that comes out his mouth. The first lance makes a large hole in the tongue that remains throughout the life of the shaman. The hole is the only outward sign of the *Iruntarinia's* initiation and is present in all genuine Arunta shamans. A second lance pierces the candidate from ear to ear and he falls into a deep **trance**, believing himself to be dead.

The *Iruntarinia* take him into the depths of their cave where they open him up, removing his internal organs, inserting *atnongara* (magical quartz stones) and a new set of internal organs. The *Iruntarinia* **sing** him back to life and lead him back to his people where he will be a bit insane for a few days. When his spirit returns fully from his initiation trance, he begins **training** with other shamans to learn to use the power of his *atnongara* stones.

During this **time** the newly initiated man is forbidden to practice. He trains

for at least twelve months. If during that time the hole in his tongue closes, it is taken as a sign that his powers have left and he returns to normal life. If the hole remains and he becomes proficient in the craft he is recognized as a shaman.

The second initiation process is the same; however the *Oruncha* are the initiating spirits. Like the *Iruntarinia*, the *Oruncha* are spirits of *Altjiringa*. They are mischievous by nature. They often snatch a candidate spontaneously, taking him or her suddenly into the **earth** for initiation.

In the third initiation process, initiated shamans, or *Nung-gara*, perform the function of the *Iruntarinia* spirits in a somewhat more painful version of the process. The *Nung-gara* extract small *atnongara* from their bodies, which were originally received from the spirits in their initiations. They score the candidate's skin and press the **crystals** into the body. The process is repeated each day for three days, after which the characteristic hole is made in the tongue. The candidate remains in the men's camp to heal, while observing **silence**, sexual abstinence, and strict food **taboos**.

Atnongara Stones

The *Iruntarinia* exchange the initiate's internal organs and implant a supply of magic quartz crystals before they close up the body. These *atnongara* stones are the source of the shaman's power. He will learn to project them into the body of the patient to counteract the harmful effects of sorcerers' intrusions.

As long as these *atnongara* remain in the body or under the direction of the shaman, the shaman's powers can be used for **healing**. However, the *atnongara* can be withdrawn by the spirits, if the shaman breaks taboos. For example, the shaman may not eat fat or warm meat, inhale the smoke of burning bones, or allow himself to be bitten by the "bull-dog" ants. If the shaman's *atnongara* are withdrawn he must return to the site of his initiation and

repeat the ordeal to have them replaced.

Healing

Serious ailments, with no obvious physical cause, are considered the result of malevolent **sorcery** by a human or spirit. For example, the **diagnosis** may show that a human sorcerer who wears special feathered shoes, a *Kurdaitcha*, has inserted a bone in the patient or one of the *Iruntarinia* has inserted an *Ullinka*, a short, barbed stick with an invisible string attached, which the spirit pulls, causing the patient great pain. The shaman must extract the energy intrusion.

In ordinary cases the patient lies on the ground while the shaman call on his **helping spirits** and powers. The shaman sucks vigorously at the affected part of the body, spitting out pieces of wood, bone, or stone. Among the Western Arunta some shamans have a special lizard as a helping spirit who adds great power to the sucking **extraction**.

In a serious case, as with an *Ullinka*, two or three shaman may work together. The patient is brought into the cleared space and supported in a half-sitting position. The shaman stands close by, gazing at the patient and locating the offending object. The shaman suddenly goes off some distance and looking fiercely at the object within the patient, he bends slightly forward and repeatedly jerks his arm outward at full length, with the hand outstretched. This action projects *atnongara* from his own body into the patient's to counteract the effects of the sorcery. He then dances across the **space** with characteristic high knee action and repeats the movements that project the *atnongara*.

Finally, the shaman returns to the patient, searches for the offending substance, and sucks it out. If it is an *Ullinka* the shaman cuts the string and sucks the barbed stick out. When the offending object is removed, the patient will make a full recovery. The *atnongara* stones return to the body of the shaman when the healing is complete.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Arutam

The *arutam* is a type of soul that does not exist at birth; it must be acquired in a **Shuar** ritual at a sacred waterfall. The *arutam* serves as a protector and guide for men. A person may possess two *arutam* souls at a time and endeavors to do so. The *uwishin* (**shaman**) always possesses *arutam* souls, which appear as an inverted rainbow in a person's chest when viewed under the influence of *natem* (*ayahuasca*).

Ash

The alkaline ash is added to plant preparations to release the bioactive compounds in alkaloid **plant hallucinogens**, stimulants, and medicines. Ash is prepared by burning the wood of several different, but specific, trees. The resulting ash is mixed with water and the ash filtered out. The filtrate is then boiled down or allowed to dry, yielding an alkaline residue or "salt."

Examples of this practice in **South America** are the ash prepared with *ambil* (**tobacco** syrup), to release its bioactive compounds and the coating for *epená* pellets when they are not to be used immediately. Ash is also used in the preparations of **Coca**, betel nut, *Duboisia*, and *yopo*.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Atnongara Stones

Atnongara stones are the source of the **Aboriginal shaman's** power in **Australia**. The *Iruntarinia*, **Rainbow Serpent**, or

other initiating spirits insert a supply of magic quartz **crystals** into the body of the novice during his initiation. He must learn control of the *atnongara* stones, moving them in and out of his body at will. They are used to aid in **healing** and are projected into the body of the patient to counteract the harmful effects of **sorcery**.

As long as these *atnongara* remain in the body or under the direction of the shaman, the shaman's powers can be used for healing. However, the *atnongara* can be withdrawn by the **spirits**, if the shaman breaks **taboos**. If the shaman's *atnongara* are withdrawn, he must return to the site of his **initiation** and repeat the ordeal to have them replaced by the initiating spirits.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994.

Auditory Driving

See **sonic driving**.

Australia

The Australian Aborigines are indisputably the oldest continuous **culture** on **earth**. The chronological dating is academically disputed, with the most conservative estimate being 40,000 years and the most liberal 150,000. However, the **Aboriginal** elders know they have been here on earth since the time before **time** began, the **Dreamtime**. They trace their ancestry to the original beings who emerged directly out of the Dreamtime as it birthed all that we call physical reality from the **big bang**. The traditional Aborigines explain that since then they "have lived and kept the earth as it was on the First Day."

The Dreamtime is called by different names in different tribes, though the concept remains the same. The Dreamtime is *Altjiringa* to the **Arunta** (**Aranda**) of Alice Springs (central Australia), *Djugur* to the Aluridja of Musgrave Range, *Bugari* to the Karadjeri

of southwest Kimberly (northwestern coast), *Unggud* to the **Ungarinyin** of north Kimberly, and *Maratal* to the **Wiradjeri** (southeastern Australia), to name just a few.

Cosmology

In the time before time, Divine Oneness placed many spinning discs in the void. Earth was one of these discs, flat, featureless, and silent. Divine Oneness created light and gave knowing to each disc. From this knowing, or consciousness, came water, atmosphere, land, and all the great beings of the Dreamtime. Thus the Creative Conscious is everything that came from Divine Oneness. Then Divine Oneness created the female and the world was sung into form by her.

The great celestial Rainbow Snake is a representation of that line of consciousness energy that began as total peace in Divine Oneness and became all that is. Through the **Rainbow Serpent** the conscious energy changed, expanding into a range of vibrations that became **sound**, color, and form. Contact with the **Rainbow Serpent**, common in Aboriginal **ritual** and **initiation**, is a return to Source and the original creation of all things.

The Dreamtime before time was a period when great **powers** and beings pervaded infinite space with incomprehensible intensity and force. These powers and beings lived out their dreams unencumbered by the physical limitations of space and time, which did not yet exist. The Dreamtime stories tell of the adventures of these powers and beings who lived prior to the manifest world. It is from the adventures of these Dreamtime **Ancestors** that the vibrational patterns of every imaginable physical and psychological characteristic, interaction, and relationship came into being.

As this Dreamtime epoch gave over into the next, these vibrational patterns and energies congealed, shaping the initially limitless space into the forms, topography, and geography that we now experience as the material universe.

Each prominent landform is the direct manifestation of some aspect of a particular Dreamtime Being. Each deep canyon, rocky outcrop, body of water, etc., holds spiritual significance for individuals or groups who are descendant of that Dreamtime Being. Thus the Aboriginal people do not own the land, they are related to it literally, in both a physical and spiritual sense.

During this second epoch of transformation the Dreamtime Ancestors tried different forms, those of plants, humans, and animals. This is the time of the mythological journeys of the initiated Dreamtime heroes like emu, kangaroo, dingo, and ant and Wati Kutjarra, two traveling **clever men** who moved over Australia creating the landscape, or the Dreamtime women who brought the Law, rituals, and ceremonies into the world.

As the Dreamtime Ancestors entered the third epoch, they retired to their abode beneath the earth and in the **sky**. The human, plant, and animal species became distinct, though always related, species. Like the Dreamtime Ancestors, human **spirits** await rebirth in the earth or retire at death into the landscape to become the spirits of nature.

Aboriginal society drew its laws from the Dreamtime and transferred them from generation to generation. The Dreamtime laws concern marital patterns, familial respect, and responsibility codes as well as a strict ethic in regard to their relationship with spiritual reality and the sacred nature of the earth. The rigorous **taboos** of familial relationships, both physical and psychological, are based upon the belief that the original patterns of the Ancestors are reflected in human relationships today.

Traditionally, Dreamtime stories were not expressed simply in verbal or written form but were enacted, chanted, painted, costumed, danced, sung, and visited in deep **trance** states. In this way the Laws came alive as creative energies and relationships hidden beneath the natural world were brought into awareness and action.

As a result of following the Dreamtime laws Aboriginals keep few material **possessions** and live a nomadic life and are therefore considered one of the world's most primitive cultures. However, scholars argue that they are also the most sophisticated in the world. They have sustained a way of life which is organized around allowing individuals access to the collective cultural wisdom. Through this connection to the Dreamtime they can maintain a consciousness in which everything is alive and connected. Day-to-day life is timeless, filled with meaning, and influenced directly by human thought and intention.

This connection to cultural wisdom goes beyond handing down oral traditions and enters into an experience of ancestral memory accessed in the waking and **dreaming** states that are part of traditional life. Through the Dreamtime each individual connects to the Source, the Divine Oneness that is all things. It is not an essence that surrounds things or a presence inside of things. Oneness is everything.

Traditionally there is a quietness and **silence** to much of Aboriginal life. Time is spent alone in thought, reflecting on dreams, and being ready at any moment to enter into a state of rapport with the Dreamtime. For the Aboriginal, dreaming is part of their spiritual discipline and an aspect of serious meditation.

There were 500 to 600 distinct nomadic tribes: the saltwater people, the Emu people, the wild people, etc., speaking 200 different **languages** or dialects in the early 18th century when the Aboriginal alone inhabited the Australian continent. There are now distinct Outback Nations struggling to maintain their nomadic way of life and the rights to enough land to live it on.

The traditional way of life and general beliefs of the Aboriginal people, pre-contact with Europeans, are dying with the Aboriginal people. There were 350,000 Aboriginals in 1788 and only 206,000 by the 1986 census. What is

more telling is that 66 percent of the Aboriginal population lives in cities, no longer practicing their nomadic way of life.

Communication

From the Aboriginal perspective everything has a silent **song**. Everything wishes to be “heard” and sung to in return. Therefore, Aboriginals are in constant, silent communication with Everything or **singing**. Normal Aboriginal communication occurs silently from the head/heart in a multi-dimensional, experiential way that there is no adequate English word for. Auditory communication (voice) is used for singing, praying, chanting, celebrating, **healing**, and to communicate with humans who have forgotten how to head/heart talk.

This head/heart communication with Everything insures the survival of peoples traveling in the Outback. Aboriginals can create spirit markers on the landscape and in the Dreamtime landscape to alert each other to places of vital resources, like food and water, and vital importance, like **ritual** sites and **caves** containing their recorded history.

Soul

Ungud, the Rainbow Serpent, is the source of human souls. These souls have the appearance of small snakes and are found in **dreams**. After death, they return to the *ungur* (sacred) places where they lived before their human manifestation.

Aboriginals believe that souls preexist, living outside the physical world where they wait to enter the body of a mother on earth. Some tribes believe the soul chooses the mother and others believe the soul has no choice in the matter. Either way all humans are believed to be animated by a spirit that is an eternal being who is visiting the world in human form.

Each human has at least three spirits: the Yowee, the equivalent of the soul; the Doowee, a dream or journeying

spirit; and a Mulloowil, or **shadow** spirit. During **training** the **shaman** must learn to exercise complete control over his or her own Doowee. When this skill has been mastered, the Doowee is called a Mullee Mullee.

Initiation and Death

Death, seen as transformation at its most profound, is considered the great **initiation** rite and is the template for all other initiation rites. Aboriginal men have elaborate formal **ceremonies** that include death enactments and deep trance experiences. In traditional aboriginal life childbirth brings a woman literally to the threshold of physical death. There is no need for formal ceremonies. Aboriginal women undergo initiation through natural processes: childbirth in particular, the onset of menstruation and menopause, as well as deep trance experiences. Initiations and other major life transitions are considered to be death and rebirth, marked by ceremonially conferring a new name and often a specific body of secret **knowledge**.

Initiation

The full function and purpose of Aboriginal initiation rituals are complex and in part kept secret. There is no single ritual for which we have all the secret knowledge and understanding. Full knowledge of the rituals and secret life of adult males is reserved for initiated men and full knowledge of the rituals and secret life of adult females is reserved for initiated women. The deepest secrets are not shared between genders nor are they shared with the uninitiated, which includes outsiders. The pursuit of knowledge is even more occluded when we inquire into the rituals and training through which shamans acquire power.

Initiation into Adulthood

The initiation process brings each young adult into connection with his or her helping spirits, and through them, into a full realization of the Dreamtime. This generates the necessary

level of awareness of the Whole, the laws that maintain the Whole, and his or her place in that Whole. Maintaining this level of awareness, an adult can fully participate in community life as a person of power, unlimited by ordinary space and time.

Aboriginal boys and girls who are approaching or have reached puberty participate in a series of rituals that extend with intervals over several years. For adolescent boys of some regions the first ritual involves circumcision. The form of the ritual varies region to region, however the general pattern and purpose of these rituals are the same. The child-self of the initiate dies and with it the child's ignorance of esoteric knowledge. From that death the self is reborn to a new life of knowledge, power, and adult responsibility. Without that death no other transitions in life, including death, can be accomplished with a clear **vision** and deep spiritual understanding.

An entire complex of rituals, chants, sacred sites, dances, myths, and laws for behavior on which life and the future depend is transmitted through the initiation process. This information is passed on over time in stages. Each stage must be learned perfectly in word and action for the purpose is not only to build the character of the adults, but to preserve the sacred heritage and ensure the future of the tribe. Completion of a portion of esoteric knowledge and training is marked by participation in a ritual of the secret symbols, chants, and dances showing the individual's integration of that degree of initiation.

After a man has obtained the highest degrees of male initiation he may become eligible for initiation into the women's law. The pattern of this initiation is laid down in one of the most ancient Dreamtime stories, that of Djankawu and his sisters. In short, the two sisters of Djankawu discover that he has stolen their dilly bags full of **power objects** and the secrets of sacred rituals. The older sister realizes that this is a sign that it is time to allow the men, for

a period, to take control of the power accessed by possessing the sacred bag. The sisters understand that as women the knowledge and power is innate within them in their **wombs**, which hold not the symbolic but the actual power of creation.

This is an example of the Aboriginal understanding of the necessity to modify the intense and extreme aspects of the ancestral patterns through their customs and laws. The characteristics and qualities displayed by Dreamtime Ancestors are extreme, distinct, and absolute. The Aboriginal people act to reflect patterns of the Dreamtime in their way of life while incorporating and harmonizing the patterns with physical and social reality.

Helping Spirits

Every initiated individual inherits his or her family or clan totem animal. This helping spirit can bring the individual information in a waking or a trance state. In addition, a shaman connects with an individual, personal helping spirit(s), a *yunbeai*, who assists the shaman. The shaman can draw on the *yunbeai* for help in performing **healing** and magic or transform into the *yunbeai* in times of danger.

Shamanic Initiation—"To Be Made"

Shamanic initiation begins only after an individual has completed his or her initiation into adulthood. An individual who has completed this process has "been made," or transformed, which refers specifically to the existential changes that occur during shamanic initiation. The initiation of male shamans across Australia follows a general pattern that involves the following six stages.

1. The candidate is called. **The call** comes spontaneously by spirit, through heredity, or by selection, approval, and acceptance by initiated shamans, due to natural talents.

2. The candidate is "killed" by the initiation spirits or by the shamans acting for those initiation spirits. How this occurs

and whether it is perceived as a “death” or a trance varies by region and tribe.

3. **Dismemberment.** Body parts, usually the internal organs, bones (**skull**, thigh, ankles), and/or joints are removed, cleansed, and replaced.

4. Magical objects and substances are added to the candidate’s body. These animals spirits and objects, for example, **crystals**, liquid crystal, pearl shells, and spirit-snakes, embody the power of the Rainbow Serpent.

5. The candidate is restored to life. He may appear a bit mad for several days before returning to **ordinary consciousness**.

6. The candidate establishes his own contact with the **spirits of the dead** and the spirit beings of the Dreamtime. Professional training begins.

The Shaman’s Power

Through the initiation ritual the candidate receives power from the spirit Beings of the Dreamtime, a power that is coalesced in the magical objects placed in the candidate’s body. Each tribe attributes the shaman’s power to a specific spirit or spirits. In the southeast, candidates are prepared by **Baiami** in the **sky** or on the spot. In the **north** and far northwest, candidates go to the sky Beings. In central Australia, candidates are operated on by Dreamtime heroes. In the southeast and far west, Murray River, Kimberleys, and Arnhem Land, candidates receive power directly from the **Rainbow Serpent** who lives in the water and is connected with the sky.

Miwi

All Aboriginal adults can access the Dreamtime awareness to some degree while waking or sleeping using breathing techniques and concentration. This power or ability is called *miwi* by some tribes. *Miwi*, located in the body in the pit of the stomach, is present in all people and especially developed in shamans. Shamans learn to use their *miwi* and the shamanic powers that come during initiations directly from the Dreamtime Ancestors and heroes.

The shaman is a specialist who is called in when a person is uncertain of their own interpretation of psychic or spiritual communications or when the situation calls for an extreme, complex, or extraordinary solution. For example, anyone who applies himself can learn **sorcery**, for it is easy to set things asunder. However, only the shaman understands the powers with enough depth to heal the victim of the sorcery and return things to right order and flow.

Aboriginal Shamans

Each tribe has a word for shaman. Many tribes have many **words** distinguishing between gender, different aspects of the profession, like rain-making, healing by sucking, or **divination**, as well as words to distinguish between witchcraft, sorcery, and healing.

Gender

Both men and women are initiated for example by Kalera, the Rainbow Serpent, from whom they obtain the magical stones that are the source of their power. Both male shamans (*baramambin*) and female shamans (*baramambil*) can cure **illness**, affect the **weather**, and visit the spirits of the dead to obtain magical, curative, and injurious powers. In addition *baramambin* can divine a murderer and other aspects of dealing with sorcerers, which is considered man’s work.

There is no gender bias in the Dreamtime stories. Men and women are equally able to use and misuse the powers granted humans through their connection with spirits. Men and women are equally able to perform as shamans. The roles of male and female shamans flow along the lines of gender roles in the community at large. In general, women are the guardians of the natural laws and the protectors of bodily life, while the men are the guardians of the spiritual realms and protectors against sorcery.

There is significantly less information about the initiations of female shamans, in part because there were

significantly fewer female anthropologists at the time of contact, leaving scholars with no access to the women's information. Speaking historically, there have been less time and **energy** spent gathering information on female shamans in Australia, as with many indigenous peoples.

Training

Training is necessary after initiation to learn to use the spirit powers received in the form of the magical substances, such as quartz, shells, stones, bones, spirit snakes, and cords. Any of these objects can be projected into another person where they will create either sickness and death or healing. The new shaman must learn to use them with clear intent. The shaman must also learn to use the *bukkur*, a coil of magic rope that is absorbed into the body. The *bukkur* is extended from the body to provide a means by which the shaman travels to the **Upperworld**.

In many tribes there are taboos against practicing too soon after an initiatory experience. New shamans train with experienced shamans, usually for at least twelve months, to learn to control the magical substances placed in the shaman's body and to move them in and out at will. In many tribes the shaman only comes into his true power when the spirit of a dead ancestor becomes a helping spirit. From these spirits the shaman learns the songs and dances for healing and ritual.

Reasons for Shamans

Traditional reasons for calling on the service of a shaman are: illness, death, and to counteract the harmful effects of spirits of the dead or mischievous or malevolent spirits. Shamans are called on in cases of chronic misfortune or bad luck, particularly in love, hunting, or fighting. Shamans affect the weather, particularly in bringing rain, and perform divinations. Divinations are used to determine the nature of something or an event occurring out of sight relative to which we must take precautions or

the steps to overcome the various challenges to obtaining an object or goal.

In some tribes the shaman also acts as a coroner. For example, after a death among the Dieri, the *kunki* (shaman) divines who the murderer is by looking for an aspect of the murder's spirit who unknowingly will hang around the corpse or the grave. The shaman may also question the corpse to determine cause of death and/or the appropriate path of revenge.

Healing

Illnesses, **pains**, and deaths that do not have obvious natural causes are diagnosed to be the result of sorcery or malevolent magic. Sorcerers perform black magic with clear malevolent intent toward the victim. Spirits tend to perform black magic in response to a prior act by the victim, usually the breaking of a taboo or a Dreamtime law.

To counteract the harmful effects of sorcery the shaman must extract the bad blood, bone, quartz, or other stone that has been shot into the victim by the sorcerer. To perform the **extraction** the shaman rubs the afflicted part, generally the abdomen, at times with enough vigor to induce vomiting. In some cases the shaman will take a magical substance from his own body and insert it into the patient to aid in the healing. As the rubbing progresses the shaman is able to extract the offending object by hand or by sucking. This may be a material or a magical object.

Sorcerers and malevolent spirits can also cause death by stealing the victim's soul. When soul theft is diagnosed, the shaman travels into the spirit realms where the soul is lost or being held and retrieves the lost soul.

Plants are used medicinally and in various steps of different healing processes. Aboriginal knowledge of medicinal herbs is usually regional, covering a range of remedies for colds, coughs, diarrhea, and fever, as well as oral contraceptives, sedatives, ointments, and intoxicants. Knowledge of their land and its plant life enables

Aboriginals to find water and, in times of drought, to find plants to serve as sources of water.

Death

If the shaman determines that a healing will not be successful, he or she will then begin to prepare the victim and his or her group for death. After death it takes three days for the soul to complete its initial disengagement from the body. It is important that the deceased's name is not spoken by the living, or the soul may be tempted to stay on earth as a despairing ghost, creating havoc among the living. It is important that all those connected to the deceased are careful and cared for.

After the burial the deceased's spirit emerges from the grave and is met by his or her ancestors, who will help the spirit on the difficult journey to the **Land of the Dead** in the sky. The spirits of the dead travel along a straight **energy** path that passes through the Pleiades and on to the constellations of Canis Major and Canis Minor. Within these constellations the spirit finds the great star Sirius, the gateway to the Realm of the Dead.

Spirit Songs and Dances

Communication with the Ancestors is maintained and renewed by shamans who go to visit the spirits of their dead Ancestors to receive inspiration for songs and dances. The shaman must follow a formalized sequence of spirit realm experiences that require specific responses from him. When all goes well the Ancestor guides the shaman to a place where the spirits of the Ancestors gather to dance and **sing**.

The shaman must behave modestly, sitting and covering his eyes with a branch in order not to see too many spirits at once. The shaman may not remove the branch to watch until the helping spirit who brought him tells him it is time to do so. At that time the shaman is attentive, learning the songs and dances he is directed to learn. When the dancing is done, the spirit

escorts the shaman's soul back to where his body lies.

The shaman may continue these journeys for many nights to gather dances and songs and to remember the words, tunes, and all movement and choreography of each dance and related **song**. Eventually his wife will ask after his soul. He responds by telling her where he has been and teaching her the songs and dances. He will then teach them to everyone else so that they can be performed in a community **dance** ritual.

Community Ritual

The continuation of the Dreamtime Law is assured by the constancy of ritual and ceremonial life. This expression of these social laws has enabled the Aboriginal culture to flourish for 100,000 years or more. Through the songs and dances gifted to them by their Ancestral spirits, the people are able to enter ecstatic trance states to contact and listen to the voices of the Ancestors.

In the center, the sandy ground has been cleared of bush and stones creating a dancing space surrounded by large **trees**. The dancers prepare by painting their nude bodies with white and **red ochre** mixed with rushcomb flush and sticky fluids. The ritual dynamic is set up on the corroboree ground between the seated chorus of women in the **south** and the dancing men in the north. The **singing**, led by the **clever man**/poet, reaches an ecstatic pitch into which the dancers step moving forward toward the singers and back, again and again.

Some dances are performed at sunset, after which people return to their camps for dinner. Later, in darkness, the dancers and singers assemble again. Particular dances involve specific movements or choreography to accomplish certain ritual ends. With growing ecstasy of movement and song, people begin to fall into trance. Some disappear into the bush to experience their trance journey in the Dreamtime.

Those who entered trance emerge slowly as the **sun** rises, gently coming out of rapport with their Ancestors. The singers greet the sun in song and the singing stops. People slowly disperse for breakfast and to make ready for the day.

Community Power Objects

Waningi are created for the dances from a structure of sticks upon which string is wound and woven, similar to a God's Eye weaving (**thread cross**), but much more elaborate. *Waningi* are places for the Ancestor spirits to enter when they are called by the singing and dancing. The *waningi* are held by their creators even while in trance.

Longish pieces of wood and stone disks play an important part in rituals and myths. The wood, often decorated with largely abstract anthropomorphic figures, represents the living presence of Dreamtime Ancestors. Other objects contain the beings who lived before.

Broken Link

At times a shaman may lose his powers to find the gathering of the Ancestors. In this case all the men gather around the shaman who lies on the ground. They sing and slowly rub the shaman's body for hours. The shaman eventually slips into trance and his spirit roams, singing a specific song and looking for an Ancestor spirit. The Ancestor spirits, hearing this particular song, send out a spirit to look for the wandering soul of the lost shaman. The Ancestors value the active relationship with their descendants, just as the descendants value their connection to their Ancestors.

An Ancestor spirit finds the shaman's soul and promises to return in a specific number of days to help him find more songs and dances. The shaman's soul returns to his body and the singing and rubbing end. In the number of days given the shaman hears a distant call and wanders off into the bush where he will sleep and enter trance. His soul is met by the Ancestor spirits who tear him to pieces, renewing his original

initiation experience. The Ancestors carry all the pieces deep into the **Lowerworld** where the shaman's soul is reassembled and taught the dances and songs.

Blood Sacrifice and Cannibalism

For Aboriginal people, blood is the physical connection to the Ancestors. Blood communicates in ways that are hidden and spiritual between the Dreamtime world and **ordinary reality**. To share the blood or a small piece of flesh was to enter into a deep, metaphysical rapport with another and to assimilate a desired quality or energy of that being. This process holds psychic, psychological, and physical meaning for Aboriginal people.

While technically cannibalism, the practice of this ritual was infrequent and limited. For example, a young man might ingest a portion of the thigh with the intent to assimilate the skills of a highly accomplished deceased hunter, or the body fluids of a revered elder might be ingested or rubbed onto the skin in order to assimilate the essential qualities of the deceased. Aboriginal cannibalism occurred only within the context of a natural death and did not include human sacrifice.

Complementary Medicine

In the 1970s, non-Aboriginal Australians recognized that the shaman had to play an essential role if health services were ever going to adequately serve the Aboriginal population. The cooperation of shamans in Central Australia was sought and gained in several centers by medical officers from Alice Springs. Due to the success of this practice, the combined effort spread to other health centers.

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Avá-Chiripá

The Avá-Chiripá, who call themselves Avá-Katú-Eté, meaning "the true men," are an indigenous people of what is now Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil in **South America**. The Avá-Chiripá, along with the Mbya and Paí Cayuá (and possibly the Guayakí), are the large subgroups comprising the Guarani people.

The *Avá-Katú-Eté* discussed here are highly acculturated, having returned to their forest habitat after 150 years living under the rule of the Jesuits. The Christian beliefs and practices did not succeed in altering the symbolic content or the spiritual practices of these indigenous people at the deepest level. The majority still maintain the structure of tribal life that is centered around the revered *nande'ru*, the **shamans**. There was little or no interruption in the transmission of tribal myths and cosmological concepts over the years.

Cosmology

The father of the first *nande'ru* (meaning "our fathers," common-*paí*) was *Nanderú Guazú*, "our great father." In the *Avá-Katú-Eté* creation **myth**, *Nanderú Guazú* creates the world and then places it upon the eternal wooden cross, which embodies the power of the four cardinal directions. Immediately, *Nanderú Mbaé Kua'a*, "our great father

who knows all things," appears and together the two creator gods copulate with the first woman. She becomes pregnant and is transformed into *Nandé Cy*, "our great mother."

Nandé Cy doubts *Nanderú Guazú* and provokes his anger. He abandons her on the recently created **earth** and returns to the **Upperworld** with *Nanderú Mbaé Kua'a*. Meanwhile, *Nandé Cy* gives birth to cosmic twins, *Kuarahy* (**sun**) and *Yacy* (**moon**), the offspring of her double copulation with the creator gods. *Nandé Cy*, alone on earth with the infants, is devoured by *añag* (jaguar spirits) of the future whose grandmother attempts to kill the twins and then adopts them.

The cosmic twins live to avenge their mother, fighting the *añag* in a series of mythical adventures that result in the creation of food, plants, **fires**, the **bow**, edible animals, kinship rules, and the social law. *Kuarahy* in an effort to communicate with his father, *Nanderú Guazú*, develops shamanic techniques and becomes the first great shaman or *paí guazú*. He makes the first *mbaraká* (**rattle**) and with it he is able to enter a trance that allows him to reach his father in the Upperworld, who then takes his son from the earth.

Nanderú Guazú does not intervene directly with humankind from the Upperworld. He sends his messenger, *paraka'o ñeengatú*, the parrot. This is why parrot **feathers** are central to the shaman's **costume**. *Kuarahy* communicates with shamans through his messenger, *mainó*, the hummingbird. *Kuarahy's* brother, *Yacy*, is both the **trickster** and the keeper of the cyclical nature of life. His messenger is the *kurusuvá* bird.

The eternal palm tree, *pindó vyjú*, connects the earth with the spirit realms, serving as the **axis mundi** in *Avá-Katú-Eté* cosmology. *Pindó*, the **Tree of Life**, connects paradise in the Upperworld, *oka-vusú*, and the **Land of the Dead**, *ñe'eng-güery*, with the earth.

The Name and the Soul

“Vital words,” or names, are sent by the spirits of the Upperworld or of “the country of the dead.” The name is an aspect of the soul totality of the person. The “vital word” and the **vital soul**, or divine soul, are synonymous, not as one, but as a unification of the two. The name is the person. It is essential that *Avá-Katú-Eté* children are given the correct name.

Some shamans have the power to receive the “vital word” in their **dreaming**. The power is given by particular **helping spirits** and not given to all shamans. Those who have this power can perform *mitá-mbó-ery*, the **ritual** for **naming** children. During the ritual the women **chant prayers**, while the shaman sings and rattles to enter a trance that will enable him to clarify the correct name and the origin of the name in the spirit world.

If it becomes clear during the *mitá-mbó-ery* that the child’s soul is the reincarnation of an Ancestor, the child’s parents and the living relations of that reincarnating Ancestor are told. Today, the *Avá-Katú-Eté* have two names, their vital word name that is shared within the **sacred** community and a second Christian name that is shared with outsiders and strangers and to which no great importance is attached.

Soul

The *Avá-Katú-Eté* conceive of the soul as having two parts. The *ñe’eng*, or divine soul, guides one in living by the social laws defined by the spirits, like vegetarianism, meditation, and practicing spiritual tranquillity. The *asynguá* is responsible for base passions, evil appetites, and other behaviors that violate the socio-cultural order, like adultery, meat eating, and excesses in sexual activity and alcohol.

Cultivation of the *ñe’eng* while simultaneously balancing the passions of the *asynguá* is a central focus of *Avá-Katú-Eté* life, especially for their shamans. They desire entry into “the land without evil,” *Ywy mará ey*, which

is on the earth in **ordinary reality** for ordinary people. However the right to entry must be earned through an immensely rigorous lifetime exercise in spiritual practice and discipline.

The purpose and the goal of life are to achieve a state of *agüyjé*, spiritual perfection and to gain entry into *Ywy mará ey*. This requires a lifetime practice of special techniques of concentration, strict vegetarian **diet**, and absolute observance of all rituals and sacred laws. This practice is thwarted by the disrespect of people of different **cultures**, excessive behaviors, and the introduction of **taboo** foods, like fats and alcohol.

Beyond the state of *agüyjé* is *kandire*, an even higher state of spiritual perfection requiring even greater discipline and extraordinary practice. When one is “becoming *kandire*” flames spring from the chest as the heart is set afire by the illumination of *tatá-chiná*, divine wisdom.

Death and the Psychopomp

At death the *ñe’eng* travels either to the home of the deity who originally gave its vital word name or to *oka-vusú*, paradise in the Upperworld. The *ñe’eng* must pass through a series of tests to get to either destination. The **energy** the individual has given to his *asynguá* over his lifetime creates imperfections in the soul that make it more difficult to traverse the obstacles along the soul’s path. The shaman’s role is to **sing** the funeral chants that describe the journey with all of its tests and challenges to guide the *ñe’eng* along its path as it leaves the body at death.

Only the *ñe’eng* can reincarnate and thus a third destination is *ñe’eng-güery*, “the country of the dead” where the *ñe’eng* await their reincarnation. Reincarnation is not automatic; it only happens in certain circumstances. For example, a shaman can perform a ritual to induce the reincarnation of a particular soul, like a deceased shaman or great leader.

It is not the nature of the *asynguá* to reincarnate, though it will try. At death the *asynguá* transforms into the *angüery*, “the spirit of death,” who will roam the earth disturbing the living with **disease**, madness, and death in an attempt to reincarnate by taking the place of a living *ñe’eng*. After a death, the shaman performs a set of complex rituals to protect the living and to persuade the *angüery* to move on.

Chants

Chants are received from the spirit world, often in dreams, and they are a source of power. Every person has the potential of receiving his or her own personal chant or **power song**. *Avá-Katú-Eté* chants are either sacred, *guaú*, or common, *koti-hú*, and both are used in rituals and ceremonies though at different times. Sacred songs are either *guaú eté*, true sacred songs sung in an unintelligible sacred **language**, or *guaú-ái*, little sacred songs sung in archaic Guarani. In all cases it is the tone of the chant that carries its power.

The shaman’s chants are more potent than those of ordinary people. This potency comes from the fact that the performer of the chant is a person of power who is **singing** a chant of power. The powers combine in a way that the shaman can direct and utilize. For example, while the shaman is chanting, he is in communication with helping spirits and divine messengers. The *paí-gauzú*, the great shamans, have significant power and numerous chants which they can direct into healing and conducting ritual, among other things.

Initiation

The selection of *Avá-Katú-Eté* shamans is a spontaneous act of spirit in which the spirits reveal the initiate’s power song. Traditionally, the revelation of one’s personal chant and its corresponding shamanic powers is received in a dream or in a journey to the country of the dead experienced in a dream. In either case, both take place in the dream state with the participation of

helping spirits (spirits of nature or Ancestor spirits) who transmit the personal chant to the initiate.

Today, some initiates are selected and trained by *paí-gauzú*. However this must be followed by a mystical experience that occurs during sleep in which the spirits visit and teach the initiate his power song. Often this type of selection is simply an affirmation by a prestigious shaman of a selection already made by spirit.

The *paí-gauzú* discusses the attitude toward life the novice *nande’rú* must strive for, the necessary diet, and the need to govern all acts by love. The initiate must concentrate on his dreaming practice and allow his faith to grow while observing all social and spiritual laws and avoiding excesses.

Initiation and Training

Initiation continues in stages with the training over several years. After selection the novice must learn the correct behaviors and meditations that induce the potent dream journeys of *Avá-Katú-Eté* shamans.

The *nande’rú*’s dreaming is the source of shamanic knowledge and power. If the novice is disciplined and works with the content of these dreams, his wisdom accumulates and he can cultivate the lightness and purity necessary to travel to *ñe’eng-güeri*, the country of the dead. There he can communicate with the dead *paí-gauzú* and learn sacred prayers, songs, and healing skills.

Early in his training, the *yasaa* (feathered sash) energy is sung into the initiate’s chest by spirit in a dream or by a *paí-gauzú*. When this step of the initiation is performed by a shaman, he will sing sacred songs continuously while he attaches the parrot feathers to the sash, breathes on it, and places it on the initiate’s chest. The energy is sealed into the initiate with a prayer and the circular hand motions of the *paí-gauzú*. The initiate is informed of the proper taboos to observe with the *yasaa*. When the novice shaman has received his personal chant,

he can learn to use the feather bunch along with the sash in healing.

Years later, when the *nande'ru* has mastered the journey to the country of the dead and integrated the wisdom of the ancestral *paí-gauzú*, he will begin to receive visits from the *mainó*, the sacred hummingbird messenger of the **sun**. *Mainó* conveys more wisdom and teaches the *nande'ru* to communicate with the “spirits of all things,” meaning the plants and animals. The *nande'ru* can then cultivate a relationship with a helping spirit who will assist him in healing and other acts of shamanic power.

The *nande'ru* continues to learn from the spirits, practice in the community, and cultivate the lightness and purity of his soul. Only *Avá-Katú-Eté* shamans of the highest rank will be taught to use the double-crossed band of feathers, which indicates the *paí guazú*.

Functions of the Shaman

The *Avá-Katú-Eté* perceive that the shaman's powers are derived directly from the powers that rule the **kosmos** and inform all earthly and human order. The primary function of the shaman then is to maintain the continuity of that order. Through his dreaming the shaman is guided to see the true nature of things and to take the actions necessary to restore the divine order.

The *nande'ru*'s dreaming is consulted to determine suitable and fertile places for cultivation and the most auspicious time for planting or harvesting. After a plot has been cleared, the *nande'ru* is called on to clear anything manifest—like ants or vermin, or spiritual—like sorcery or malevolent spirits, that could be harmful to the crops or create disease.

The *nande'ru*'s dreaming is called upon to guide the hunter into a successful hunt; to locate honey, hearts of palm, and fruits and to assure the safety of women and children gathering them; to control the **weather**, and to foretell the future.

The *nande'ru*'s dreaming is called upon to divine the identity of robbers, to define appropriate reparations, and to find lost community members. The *nande'ru*'s power can also be used to punish an individual who has seriously and consistently transgressed the social law. However, it is rare for shamans of rank, the *paí guazú*, to act in this way as their great power and spiritual insight give them other options for deterring misconduct.

The presence of a *nande'ru* reassures the community that they are in good relationship with their environment. If they were to be out of balance the forces of that environment could attack the whole group as well as individuals. The misuse of power by a *nande'ru* to induce pestilence, disease, or death causes an immediate reaction against him. The community feels unprotected from the malevolent powers he has set in motion that will affect the balance of their relationship with the environment.

Finally, the *nande'ru* is called on for healing and to doctor the effects of sorcery. Sorcery is usually attributed to the *nande'ru* of other groups who send malevolent spirits to attack the *Avá-Katú-Eté*. In these cases the *nande'ru* must doctor those affected by the sorcery and send his own helping spirits to punish the suspected sorcerer in the neighboring community.

Illness

The *Avá-Katú-Eté* distinguish between two basic types of **illness**. There are those illnesses that are the result of an increased imbalance between the two parts of the soul, for which the patient is ultimately responsible. His excessive or improper social behavior has overloaded his soul with negative forces that must now be removed before he can be cured. Other illnesses are the result of activities of malevolent spirits. In this case the spirits are able to enter invisibly by taking advantage of the weakness created in the souls of people who lack piety. These spirits must be removed before the illness can be cured.

Illness is thought of as more a social disease than an individual disease, as it is the result of imbalance in the relationship of the individual within himself and/or with the community. The result, however, is the same. An alien element is allowed inside the body which the shaman must dislodge before health can be restored. The healings by sucking, magical breath, and prayer all work to dislodge and expel the alien element.

Healing Techniques

Prior to any of the following treatments the shaman enters his dreaming to discover the cause of the illness, the treatment necessary, the number of sessions needed, and any necessary herbal preparations.

Treatment by sucking:

An alien element (energy intrusion) causing persistent illness is located in the patient's body, sucked out, and expelled with great force. The shaman will continue with subsequent sessions until he knows from his dreaming that the body is cleared. The shaman's power prevents the intrusion from entering his own body. In addition the shaman purifies his throat with a shot of alcohol immediately after each spitting expulsion of the intrusion.

Treatment by magical breath:

A *paí guazú* who has received divine power can transmit it to others on his breath or on a combination of breath and **tobacco** smoke. The *paí guazú* breathes into the soft spot on the top of the head or into the affected body part. The power that enters the patient will struggle with the misplaced spirits who are creating the illness until those spirits are dislodged from the body.

This technique is also used in the initiation and training of novices. The power enters the initiate's body on the breath, causing it to shake with tremors as it attempts to suddenly absorb the power. The initiate himself is moved into an extreme emotional state by the transmission.

Treatment by prayer:

Prayer is not used in the general sense to simply pray for someone's health. The prayers, or chants, are specific, learned from the spirits, and are in that sense "**medicine**." This treatment is called for in serious cases when the shaman needs to invoke the spirit of the deity who is the source of his power, so that they may combat the source of the disease together.

Prayer is a common treatment, for example, in the case of poisonous snake bites. The prayer is chanted without further application of herbs or the laying of hands. These anti-venom prayers are unique to each shaman, given to him by the spirits in his sleep, and often very successful. The power of these prayers reaches beyond psychosomatic suggestion because this treatment is used effectively to heal animals, who are not believed to be suggestible.

Treatment with herbs:

The average adult knows many herbs used for everyday complaints. The shaman is asked to **diagnose** serious illnesses and determine any herbs necessary in the particular healing. When herbs are used the spirits of these medicinal plants are being called on to attack the spirits creating the illness. The spirits also show the shaman how the plant is to be harvested and what chants are to be recited during the gathering and preparation.

Treatment with the Name:

As a last resort in cases of serious illness and imminent death, the shaman can change the name of the patient, sending death off with the old name. After this healing ritual the old name must never be spoken again. To do so would renew the threat of death.

For the *Avá-Katú-Eté*, the success of a healing rests in part on the shaman and in part on the community. The collective behavior of the community affects the socio-sacred field in which the shaman functions. His success requires social cohesion in good

relationship with its spiritual environment. Failure is attributed both to the shaman and to the psycho-spiritual balance of the community.

Costume

In the beginning *Nanderú Guazú* ceded a portion of his powers to *Kuarahy*, the **first shaman** along with the use of his costume. From this tradition the *nande'ru's* costume is made up of the *yasaa*, a sash of cotton plaited with feather ornaments to be worn across the chest, the *poapi-guaá*, a bracelet of cotton and feathers, the *acaan-guaá*, a crown of multi-colored feathers, and the *kuruzú-ipoty*, the feathered cross, which is sometimes replaced with a handful of large, red parrot feathers.

Tools

The shaman's tools are, for the most part, the only traditional objects still in common usage. These include the *mbaraká*, **dance** rattles, the *kuruzú*, feathered crosses, and the *takuapú*, **rhythm** sticks used by women in the rituals and dances. Every adult male has a *mbaraká* to use during ritual, however they lack the potency of the shaman's. The *kuruzú* is symbolic of the eternal wooden cross on which the world was placed after it was created. The four sacred cardinal points each correspond with a wind and a specific deity spirit.

The shaman's basic tool is the *mbaraká*. The *Avá-Katú-Eté mbaraká* does not contain a spirit, but can be used to invoke other spirits. The small, black fruit used inside the rattle is from the *ibahú* shrub, the template for which is found in *oka-vusú* in the **Upperworld**.

Community Healing and Ritual

The most important ceremony of the *Avá-Katú-Eté* is the *ñemboé kaagüy*, or prayer of the forest. The date is determined in the dreams of the highest ranking shaman who will officiate the **ritual**. The ceremony traditionally lasts for nine days, involving eight days of sacred chanting, dancing, and praying that transition into the ninth day of festive celebration.

The *ñemboé kaagüy* used to be performed once a year, but is performed much more frequently now in response to contemporary stresses on the community. The power of this ritual not only heals those who participate, but it activates other forces which are summoned to help the community to heal situations of crisis with the outside world like epidemics, incurable illnesses, and unfamiliar spirits the shamans have not yet determined how to deal with.

The *ñemboé kaagüy* is an example of how the practices of the *nande'ru*, while showing adaptation to wider social and cultural pressures, continue to guide the spiritual life of the *Avá-Katú-Eté* and to be the axis around which their cultural identity revolves. The *nande'ru* have effectively reinterpreted new socio-cultural forces through their own symbolic code and looked to traditional cultural patterns to guide their actions in response to a new age.

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Axis Mundi

The *axis mundi* is a conceptual place where creation and entropy, the essential generative and destructive forces of the universe, exist together, mirror images of each other. The *axis mundi* joins the diametrically opposite forces of the universe as One within the **Great Mystery**. It connects the centers of this world with that of the Otherworld.

While the *axis mundi* is an important concept in many philosophies and **religions**, its relationship to **shamanism** is unique. The *axis mundi* is not just a metaphor for the **shaman**, but an actual place through which the shaman

moves, albeit in an **altered state of consciousness**. Nonetheless, the shaman feels the **ecstasy** that results from experiencing the Oneness-with-all-things that is the nature of the *axis mundi*.

Through the *axis mundi* the experienced shaman can travel anywhere in the **Kosmos**. These journeys are often ecstatic, though not always. Ecstasy is not the purpose of the shaman's journey; however, it is often a byproduct. The *axis mundi* is for the shaman both a practical tool and a spiritual awareness.

As the connection between the seen (physical) with the unseen (spiritual) worlds, the *axis mundi* is most often visualized as a great tree connecting all of the Kosmos; its branches reaching into the **Upperworld**, its trunk residing in the **Middleworld**, and its roots reaching into the **Lowerworld**. Wherever this **Tree of Life** reaches, the shaman can travel. In the physical world the *axis mundi* is embodied in **trees**, stone monoliths, central structural columns, and in the shaman him/herself.

Shamanic **cultures** conceive of the universe in different ways. For some there are two worlds, the seen and the unseen. For others there are the three worlds described above, or more. Regardless of the number of realms, the *axis mundi* is consistent. It is the connection between the realms, the Cosmic Center through which different transcendental planes and realms connect.

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Ayahuasca

Ayahuasca has been an important hallucinogenic sacrament for the **South American aboriginal** peoples from the beginning of their time on earth. This plant **entheogen** is woven deeply into the fabric of their lives, mythology, and

philosophy. The *payé* (**shamans**) of **South America** drink *ayahuasca* to release their souls from their bodies so that they can hear the **spirits** of the plants and animals of the rain forest and those of the invisible world speak to them.

Ayahuasca is a **Quechua** word that has several translations: "vine of the soul," "vine of the dead," "Vine of Spirit Wisdom," and "taking new form or changing," which is a reference to death and **shapeshifting**. For the Quechua these translations all mean the same thing. They are similar in meaning to the various names given *ayahuasca* in other languages. *Ayahuasca* is also known as *caapi*, *kahi*, *natema*, *pindé*, *yagé*, *yajé*, *mihí*, and *dápa*.

The central ingredient in *ayahuasca* is the giant forest *liana* (large woody vine), *Banisteriopsis caapi*, which grows throughout the Amazon and Andes of South America, the tropical zones of **North America**, and the West Indies. *Banisteriopsis* is revered as a sacred plant for its psychotropic properties.

The actual plant **medicine** is made from several species of lianas of the Malpighia family. *Banisteriopsis caapi* is the one ingredient that does not vary. Different tribes and different shamans within tribes blend *B. caapi* with different plants or admixtures. *Ayahuasca* is used primarily in the northwest and the surrounding areas of Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, western Brazil, and parts of Venezuela.

Indigenous peoples make distinctions between "kinds" of *Banisteriopsis*, though western botanical systems, which are not morphologically based, do not recognize these distinctions. Nonetheless, these "kinds" are used to prepare different remedies and blends which do have different physiological effects. The aboriginal distinctions may be due to age of the *liana*, the different parts of the *liana*, soil conditions, light/shade conditions, and amount or pattern of moisture. It is conceivable that these variations could alter the

plant's chemical composition enough to produce the variety of effects observed. However, the energy of the spirit of the plant and of the *icaros*, the *payé's* songs *camayed* (blown) into the drink, must also be taken into account.

Use

Ayahuasca is used primarily for **diagnosis** and treatment of physical **illness**, and secondarily for **divination**, **initiation**, and inducing prophetic **visions**. Divination often involves determining the plans of enemies to ward off disaster, **sorcery**, and enemy attacks. *Ayahuasca* is not only the shaman's tool. It is used by the people to reconnect with their ancestors, to see the gods and the origin of human and animal kind, and to understand the establishment of their social order.

In a **healing ritual** the *payé* drinks *ayahuasca* to diagnosis the true spirit origin of an illness or disease or to contact spirits who can identify the problem and suggest appropriate measures. Illness is often diagnosed as the result of energy intrusions in the body of the patient, or sorcery. The *payé* uses **tsentsaks** (invisible darts) while in trance to "see" inside the patient's body and to help remove any foreign **energy intrusions**.

The patient often drinks *ayahuasca* as well, particularly when detoxification of the body is the prescribed. Both *payé* and patient drink *ayahuasca* in cases where **ritual** removal, **purification**, and replacement of body parts are necessary for healing. *Ayahuasca* is used by the *payé* to locate and retrieve lost or stolen souls from the spirit world for their patients.

Ayahuasca is used secondarily by the peoples of South America as a visionary sacrament, particularly during initiations into adulthood or shamanic training. While in the induced trance state, the individual's soul travels into the spirit realms and returns to the source and origin of all things. The reality of the spirit world and illusory quality of the "real" world is revealed. Day-to-day

life dissolves into a fantasy and the true nature of existence, the order of the universe, the origin of humankind, and the individual's place in the universe are revealed. In this state, the individual is able to communicate with the Ancestors for guidance and direction in life.

Preparation

Ayahuasca is prepared from *Banisteriopsis caapi* and/or *Banisteriopsis inebrians* in diverse ways, most of which are variations of two basic procedures. In the first type of procedure, bark is scraped from a stout vine and kneaded in a cold water process, practiced in most of Colombia. In the second procedure the vine is boiled in a longer, multi-step, hot water process, practiced in the western Amazonian regions. The hot water process produces a bitter, thick liquid of greater potency that is taken in small doses. The cold-water process produces a less concentrated liquid that is consumed in larger doses.

The admixtures used are chosen to enhance the magical, ritual, and/or medicinal properties of the drink relative to the purposes for which the drink is being prepared. For example, the bark from the lipuna nigra tree is added when black magic is suspected to help the shaman pinpoint the source of the magic that is causing the illness. The *payé* determines the particular mixture of plants used under the guidance of the spirits, particularly the spirits of the plants themselves.

The plant additives, or admixtures, are often highly toxic and hallucinogenic themselves. The most frequently used admixtures are the leaves of *ocoyajé* or *chagropanga* (*Diplopterys Cabrerana*), which increase the strength and length of the journey; chacruna (*Psychotria viridis*) which activates the psychotropic effects of *Banisteriopsis*; *Psychotria carthaginensis*; or the leaves of *Banisteriopsis rusbyana*. In addition, the leaves of *Nicotiana*, or the psychoactive *Burgmansia* and **Brunfelsia** may be added to further increase the

potency and duration of the psychotropic effect. Admixtures are also selected for their medicinal properties, such as emetic, analgesic, purgative, etc.

The *payé* often gather the plants in the rain forest with younger **apprentices**. During this time the apprentice is taught the stories of the sacred plants and instructed in the distinction between the “kinds” of *Banisteriopsis* and their relative potency. Apprentices are also instructed in the different admixtures and their medicinal properties.

Cultivation

This *liana* is fast growing and easy to cultivate, though *payé* prefer older *lianas* growing wild, which are considered stronger in their psychoactive effects. As the plants become more scarce in the wild, practitioners compensate with cultivation in their **Coca** plots or near the *maloca* (large communal house).

Active Principle

Until the 1990s the active constituents in *ayahuasca* were believed to be the *beta*-carboline alkaloid compounds isolated from *Banisteriopsis caapi*. However, the active constituents are now believed to be DMT and other tryptamines found in the admixtures, for example, *chagropanga* (*B. rusbyana*) and *chacruna* (*Psychotria viridis*), the two more common admixtures. Though normally not orally active, the monoamine oxidase inhibitors found in *B. caapi*, harmine, harmaline, and tetrahydroharmine, allow the DMT to be absorbed through the intestines. The activated tryptamine increases the potency of the drink making the visions more vivid, the **colors** brighter, and the trance state longer lasting.

Ritual of Receiving

Ayahuasca is widely used in South America and the rituals for receiving *ayahuasca* vary **culture** to culture. However, the use of light and **song** is relatively consistent. Light is considered incompatible with the trance state

induced, therefore the rituals usually begin after sunset and any lights are extinguished after the first portion of *ayahuasca* is consumed. The spirit of *ayahuasca* and the spirits who participate in *ayahuasca* rituals are drawn into the ritual by the *payé's icaros*, or songs. After the *ayahuasca* is consumed the *payé* sings a long series of chants, often accompanying himself on a **bow** or with a leaf **rattle**.

In some cultures participants are cleansed before participating in the healing ritual. A bath is prepared with the leaves, stems, and blossoms of flowers known for their purifying qualities. The purpose is twofold: to cleanse the physical body and to open the senses to the *ayahuasca* experience. After drying, participants enter the ritual **space**.

The *payé* sings to the *ayahuasca* to call in its spirit and to the spirits needed for the journeys and healings to be performed that night. He blows **tobacco** smoke on the *ayahuasca* from a pipe or *mapacho* cigarettes and then calls people one by one to drink. The *payé* sings *icaros* to invoke spirits, to send others away, and to shape the visions of the patients. At the same time the *payé* works directly on the patients, **singing** over them, blowing, and working with leaves and *tsentsak* to clear the body of unwanted energies. The *payé* works continuously throughout the night.

When the patient drinks the *ayahuasca* there are several energetic components engaged in the healing: the *ayahuasca's* hallucinogenic properties, the *ayahuasca* as a “*doctor*,” the environment or setting, the guidance in the *payé's icaros*, and the *payé* as a “*doctor*.”

Ayahuasca can also be taken “blown.” To prepare a portion of “blown” *ayahuasca* the *payé* sings and **camays** (blows) his or her own **spirit/energy/power** into the drink. In this way the spirit/energy/power of the *payé* is ingested with the spirit/energy/power of the *ayahuasca*. Working from the inside out, the *payé's* energy guides the individual on a more directed and potent healing journey.

After taking *ayahuasca* “blown” the patient must observe **taboos** to protect the spirit/energy/power of the shaman that will remain in the patient’s body for several days or weeks. Restrictions may involve abstinence from certain foods, medications (other than *ayahuasca*), sexual activity, upsetting situations, or shock. These restrictions may be quite strict and required for a duration of several days to several months.

Characteristics of the Ayahuasca Experience

The psychoactive effects of *ayahuasca* vary with the age of the *liana* used, the environment the *liana* grows in, the admixtures used, the preparation process, and the amount consumed. The effects are also influenced by the physical environment, the ritual or ceremonial environment created by the *payé*, and the **music**, songs, guidance, and suggestion of the *payé* administering the drink. There are potentially many more physical and psychic variables that affect the experience.

The psychic effects begin 20 to 40 minutes after drinking the *ayahuasca* and may last from six to eight hours, depending on the variables listed above. *Ayahuasca* typically causes vomiting within the first two hours after ingesting the **medicine** and/or diarrhea. Purging and **cleansing** is one of the health benefits of drinking *ayahuasca*. Vomiting and diarrhea are considered positive, medicinal side effects from the indigenous point of view, not signs of illness.

The wide-ranging and sometimes bizarre psychic effects of *ayahuasca* vary greatly with different admixtures and different individuals. There are certain constant characteristics for both indigenous people and outsiders. They include extremely heightened senses—smell, sight, hearing, and touch, normal to hyper-normal muscular coordination, and the appearance of light and other visual effects distinguished by multicolored geometric patterns that repeat, merge, and form kaleidoscopes.

The trance state induced can be either euphoric or aggressive.

The euphoric, or ecstatic, characteristic of the trance state is experienced as the soul leaving the body. The Tukano people of **Amazonia** explain that the soul is pulled by a strong wind along the Milky Way and beyond to the place of origin of their ancestor. The Zaparo of Ecuador explain that they feel themselves lifted into the air while in trance. The Shipibo-Conibo *payés* of Peru explain that they leave their bodies and transform into **birds** that fly to the Upperworld of the spirit realms.

Indigenous practitioners report a broad range of common characteristics, including: visions, sometimes in dull blue, gray, or purple and sometimes, with certain additives, quite brilliant in color; night vision or a heightened ability to see in the dark; visions that can be seen with eyes open or closed in day or night; heightened sense of hearing; change in physical coordination, either increased or decreased; macropsia (objects appearing larger than life), appearance of animals, particularly snakes and jaguars, appearance of multitudes of people or spirits in human-like forms, and the appearance of dangerous waterfalls or veiled mountains.

The frequency with which jaguars and anaconda snakes appear to individuals under the influence of *ayahuasca*—whether native or foreign to the rain forest—is significant enough to be intriguing to psychologists. It has been suggested that the jaguar and anaconda appear because they are the most powerful and dangerous animals in the tropical forest, commanding both respect and fear. However, this does not explain why the same animals appear for non-natives, nor does it correlate with the explanation of the indigenous peoples. The **Shuar** *payé* explain that the jaguar and anaconda spirits have the most power in the spirit world of the tropical rain forest and those who drink the *ayahuasca* are asking for help and thus calling out for power.

It is common for the *payé* to shapeshift into a jaguar while in trance. Yekwana *payé* roar, allowing the jaguar spirit to speak through them. Tukano *payé* report feeling themselves encoiled in a large snake or devoured by jaguar jaws. Shipibo-Conibo *payé* acquire great snakes while in trance who defend the *payé* in spirit world battles against sorcerers and other *payés*.

Songs

Icaros are the **power songs** sung during *ayahuasca* rituals to invoke specific shamanic powers. They are sung to induce different altered states of consciousness and to influence the content of specific *ayahuasca* visions. Shamans learn *icaros* directly from the *ayahuasca* and from the plants they work with. Like other power songs, the **words** are secondary to the power of the melody.

The *icaros* are learned during training by ingesting a plant **teacher**—most frequently *ayahuasca*. A master *payé* may know as many as three thousand *icaros*, each learned for a different purpose. Each *payé* has a main *icaro*, or power song, that resonates with the essence of his or her power.

Art

Indigenous peoples explain that much of their **art** is inspired by the visions and trance experiences induced by *ayahuasca* and other plant entheogens. The mythology of the various people is found in the art largely because the *ayahuasca* experience reconnects them with their ancestors and the place of their origin in the spirit world. The **colors** used, the abstract designs, and the figures represented all have very precise interpretations. In addition, the subject matter of the art, whether abstract or figurative, consistently correlates with ingesting a particular plant entheogen, a specific blend of admixtures, or even a specific amount of either.

Traditional Tukanoan art, for example, is inspired by *ayahuasca*-induced visions. The Tukano paint beings, like *Pamuri-mahsé*, the germinating **Sun**, or

the Master of Animals, abstract designs, like concentric **circles** and chains of diamond-shaped links, and the story of their own cosmology on the bark wall of their *malocas*. The drawings often depict *Pamuri-mahsé*, who came to earth from beyond the Milky Way, as the originator of the people and the *ayahuasca*. Yellow and off-white are used to represent both the Sun and its germinating semen. Red symbolizes the fertility of women, the uterus, blood, **fire**, and heat. Blue is symbolic of **sacred** tobacco smoke and thought.

Peruvian **vegitalista** Pablo Amaringo has created some of the most elaborate and eloquent depictions of what he sees and experiences in *ayahuasca*-induced trances in *Ayahuasca Visions: The Religious Iconography of a Peruvian Shaman*. These pictures clearly depict the rich interweaving of the energies of ordinary and **non-ordinary reality** experienced by the *payé* in the tropical rain forest.

Use in Western Medicine

An extract of *Banisteriopsis caapi* is sometimes used during delicate eye operations to dilate the blood vessels behind the eye. Several studies in Brazil, where the religious and psychotherapeutic use of *ayahuasca* is legalized, have shown the entheogen is useful in the successful treatment of alcoholism and cocaine addiction.

Luna, Luis E., and P. Amaringo. *Ayahuasca Visions: The Religious Iconography of a Peruvian Shaman*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1991.

Peixoto, B. Anthropologist, Brazilian language specialist, and shaman. Personal communication.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

———. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Ayahuascero

An *ayahuascero* is a **shaman**, indigenous or **Mestizo**, who uses *ayahuasca* in his or her shamanic practice. *Ayahuasca* is an **entheogen**, a vision-producing drink made from **sacred** plants. Drinking *ayahuasca* enables the shaman to identify the spiritual causes of illnesses, to treat **illness**, to affect the **weather**, foresee the future, find lost objects and people, find fish and game, or to engage in **sorcery** and acts of psychic warfare.

Teaching

The *ayahuasca* itself is both a healer and a **teacher**. For those who drink *ayahuasca*, the **plant spirit** heals even when it does not induce **visions**. When *ayahuasca* does induce visions it is a great teacher who teaches anyone able to open himself to the teaching. Non-shamans drink *ayahuasca* to learn about their vocations and professions, the health of their soul, their place in the Universe, and how to heal themselves.

For the *ayahuascero*, *ayahuasca* sets the pace, course, and content of their training. While in an *ayahuasca*-induced trance, the spirits of the plants show the shaman a plant and often where to find it and how to use it. The next day the shaman looks for a plant with leaves and bark of the same shape and color as shown in the journey. The plant is prepared as instructed and given to the patient as **medicine**. In this way *ayahuasca* gives prescriptions to the shamans and shamans learn to use the vast resources of the rain forest.

The spirit of *ayahuasca* also presents special **diets** and **taboos** to follow for a prescribed time which will enable the shaman to learn about the plants and roots or **icaros** (songs) necessary to heal the more serious problems. The shaman may be directed to spend months to years secluded from society and family, abstaining from sex, and following a special diet to learn to see and hear the spirits and to work with them in **healing**. During this time the

shaman ingests a plant, merging with it and learning from it how it can be used.

Training

Training varies in difficulty and **sacrifice** from **culture** to culture; however, *ayahuasca* is always the primary teacher for the *ayahuascero*. In many cultures the rigors of training, which involve long **purification** processes that can be emotionally, psychologically, and physically traumatic, are quite difficult. There are six different levels of working with *ayahuasca* and each takes approximately six years of commitment and sacrifice to master. These levels are student, *muraillo*, *murayo*, *alto muraya*, *altomando muraya*, and *banco*. Each level involves a special **plant diet** and seclusion, different types of study, and different levels of dedication and ability.

A typical diet is rice and plantains with no meat, butter, fruit, sugar, or salt for six years. During this time the *ayahuascero* drinks *ayahuasca* at least twice a week and ingests the plant he or she is learning from daily, if it is other than the *lianas* from which *ayahuasca* is made. Over time the *ayahuascero* learns not only of the medicinal uses of different **trees** and plants, but also to hear and **sing** the *icaros* of the trees and plants necessary to empower the remedies, to heal, and to call the spirits into the healing rituals.

These prolonged periods of dieting with the *ayahuasca* provide the *ayahuascero* with the mental and spiritual energy needed to communicate with the powerful spirits who do the healing. These spirits are, for example, the *sacharuna*, the spirits of the forest, and the *ninaruna*, the spirit of the fire, a very powerful spirit called on to heal life-threatening illnesses like cancer. The *yacaruna*, the spirits of the water, are so powerful that there is no illness they cannot cure. The *ayahuascero* learns to travel under the water into the world of the *yacaruna* to gain their help in healing.

Though the spirits do the healing, the shaman must be able to call the spirits into the healing ritual and to communicate with them. The shaman's role is essential for healing to happen. Without authentic communication between the spirits, the shaman, and the patient, the energy necessary for healing is not translated from the spirit world into the physical world and healing does not occur.

Cause of Illness

Traditional causes of illness are **soul loss**, soul theft, and energetic intrusions in the body, usually caused by an act of **sorcery**. Today most mental and physical illnesses are brought on by the spiritual problems that are caused by stress, fear, exposure to pollution and to electromagnetic fields—all of which overload our nervous system, interfering with our ability to experience, interpret, and integrate our life experience accurately.

Healing

For minor illnesses the *ayahuascano* may work without *ayahuasca* using **tobacco** smoke, brushing or cleansing the body with plants, sucking, sucking with *yachai* (magical **phlegm**), or magical hand movements. However, *ayahuasca* and the help of powerful spirits are needed for major illnesses like cancer or soul loss. *Ayahuasca* allows the shaman to travel in the spirit world or to travel into the patient's body in a way that enables the shaman to operate, cutting out the illness with the mind or hands.

If the illness is identified as an energetic intrusion, the shaman may cough up some *yachai* and spit it into the area of the intrusion. The *yachai* is sucked out with the source of the illness. Then the shaman must decide whether or not to swallow the intrusion. The intrusion can become a source of energy for the shaman after the illness dies, if it is good. If the intrusion is bad, the shaman's body rejects it and the shaman will vomit and purge the intrusion.

Ayahuasca is a very powerful healing medicine when consumed in a healing **ritual** guided by a trained *ayahuascano*. Even when physical illness has progressed to the degree that curing is not possible, the *ayahuasca* taken by the patient can bring spiritual healing. People who have no training with *ayahuasca* have been shown the truth about themselves so clearly by the *ayahuasca* that they can heal themselves.

Ayahuascanos believe that *ayahuasca* reveals the truth about ourselves so that we remember who we truly are. Simultaneously, the *ayahuasca* cleans out the body and the visions of demons, the manifestation of negative thoughts, emotions, and fears, gives over to **visions** of real spirits, whom we can only see when our bodies are cleansed of toxins and fears. With repeated use of *ayahuasca* people begin to see beyond their personal **pain**, to see themselves in the context of their **ancestors**, other people, and the universal forces that connect us all.

Ayahuascano's Paraphernalia

Paraphernalia includes **altar** cloth or tarp, kerosene lamp, *ayahuasca*, *aguardiente* (sugar cane liquor) infused with garlic and camphor, rosewater perfume, *mapacho* black tobacco cigarettes, matches, **huacas** (special stones), a *maroella* or *chacapa* leaf fan, which is used like a **rattle** or to brush people.

Aztec

A record of the **sacred plant hallucinogens** used by the ancient Aztecs appears to have been rendered in stone. Xochipilli, the Aztec "Prince of Flowers," was discovered on the slopes of the volcano Mount Popocatepetl. His face is rendered in ecstasy, as though seeing visions in an **altered state of consciousness**. His head is slightly tilted as though he is listening to voices.

His body is engraved with stylized flowers which have been identified as a variety of sacred plants, most of them

entheogens. The glyphs on the statue depict *Teonanacatl* (**psilocybe mushroom**), *Tlililtzin* (**Morning Glory**), **tobacco**, and Sinicuichi. The pedestal on which the Prince sits is decorated with a design representing cross-sections of the caps of *Psilocybe aztecorum*, an hallucinogenic **mushroom** found only on this volcano. Xochipilli represents not just the Prince of Flowers, but the Prince of Flowers that enable one to communicate with the Divine.

Teonanacatl, the “divine flesh” of the Aztecs, are psilocybine-containing mushrooms which are still employed by shamans in healing rituals today. These “Little Flowers of the Gods” are referred to as “flowers that intoxicate” in Nahuatl poetry and chants. At least twenty-four species of fungi are employed in southern Mexico today demonstrating that shamans use a wide range of different mushrooms depending on the season, **weather** variations, the specific purpose of the healing, the shaman’s relationship with the spirits of the mushrooms, and the shaman’s personal preference.

Use of *Ololiuqui* can be traced back to the sacred ceremonies of the Aztecs. The seeds of *Ololiuqui* (*Turbina corymbosa*, or *Rivea corymbosa*) were used in Aztec rituals as a hallucinogen and in healing as an analgesia.

Tlililtzin, prepared from the seeds of the Morning Glory, *Ipomoea violacea*, was highly valued by the Aztec people for its hallucinogenic properties. The Aztecs prepared *Tlililtzin* for use in **divination** and other shamanic rituals. *Tlililtzin* was used in the same way as *Ololiuqui*.

Toloatzin, made from *Datura*, the “Holy Flower of the North Star,” was a sacred entheogen and valued medicinal Aztec plant. It is also known as **Toloache**. The most extensive use of *Datura* occurs in Mexico and the Southwestern United States where the most common species used is *Datura innoxia*.

The Aztecs also used a very potent aquatic species of *Datura*, *Datura ceratocaula*, that grows in the marshes and shallow waters of Mexico. This species is an extremely strong narcotic. This sacred medicine was treated with great reverence by the Aztecs before being used. The Aztecs call this *Datura* “Sister of *Ololiuqui*.”

Sinicuichi, one of the plants depicted in the glyphs that adorn the Prince of Flowers, is *Heimia salicifolia*, a probable plant hallucinogen used by the ancient Aztecs. *Sinicuichi* is a tall shrub with slender leaves and single yellow flowers along the stem that grows abundantly in moist places and along streams in the highlands of the Americas and West Indies. In preparation the leaves are harvested and slightly wilted, crushed in water, and the whole mixture is allowed to ferment before drinking.

The ancient Aztec narcotic *Pipiltzintzintli* is suggested to have been *Salvia divinorum*. The perennial herb with ovate leaves and bluish flowers is still used by the **Mazatec** people who call it *Hierba de la Pastora* (“herb of the Shepherdess”) or *Hierba de la Virgen* (“herb of the Virgin”). The Mazatec cultivate *Hierba de la Pastora* in plots in forests away from roads and homes. This plant is used as an aid in divination in rituals. The leaves are chewed fresh or crushed and diluted in water to be drunk.

Tzompanquahuitl, a hallucinogen and medicine of the ancient Aztecs, may have been made from the bright, red-orange seeds of the *Erythrina coralliodes*, a small tree that grows in the hot, dry regions of Mexico and the American Southwest.

Solandra brevicalyx and *Solandra guerrensis* are reported to be either *Tecomaxochitl* or *Hueipatl* of the ancient Aztecs. In Mexico, a hallucinogenic tea is made from the branches. *Solandra*, an erect shrub with thick leaves and yellow to cream colored, funnel-shaped flowers, is closely related to *Datura*. The plant contains tropane

alkaloid with active principles:
Hyoscyamine, scopolamine, nortropine,
tropine, cuscohygrine, and other bases.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

B

Bad Medicine

Bad medicine is one of three major classes of **Ojibwa** medicine, along with curing **medicine** and protective medicine. It is any execution of a medicine practice with the intent to manipulate another into doing something that they would not ordinarily do. Bad medicines include: love medicine, **hunting medicine**, gambling medicine, and other medicine practices executed for the exclusive benefit of the practitioner.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Badoh Negro

Badoh Negro is the Zapotec name for the **plant hallucinogen** made from the seeds of **Morning Glory**, *Ipomoea violacea*, for use in **divination** and shamanic **rituals**.

Baiami

Baiami is the creator **spirit** of the first man for the **Wurunjerri** of **Australia**. *Baiami* is the source of all magical and shamanic **power** of **Wurunjerri** shamans. *Baiami* is the initiating spirit invoked in the body of the master shaman to execute the final three stages of **Wurunjerri** shamanic **initiations**.

In the **Dreamtime** history, before *Baiami* left humanity, it summoned all the doctors and called upon them to continue practicing their magic and to avoid wasting their power through conflict with each other. See also *karadji*.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Bala

Bala is a hereditary **totem spirit** that is handed down from grandfather to father to son to grandson during the boy's **initiation** into adulthood. The *bala* is "sung" into the body of the initiate during the rite. He must then learn the **chants**, **rituals**, and concentration to call the spirit forth in the future. During the rite of transmission from **teacher** to student the *bala* duplicates itself without dividing or losing power. See also **helping spirits** and **Wurunjerri**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Balian

Female **shaman** of the **Ngaju Dyak** of Borneo. The *basir* is her **gender-variant male** counterpart. Both the *balian* and the *basir* embody the *sangiang* deities while in **trance**. Masters of trance, these shamans utilize **embodiment** trance states to allow the *sangiang* to speak through them directly and **journeying** trance states to travel to the **Upperworld** to visit the "village of the gods."

The *balian* is "chosen" spontaneously by the *sangiang* and acquires her shamanic powers through this spiritual event. Traditionally, only those who are called and who forge a sacred relationship with the divine can serve as shamans among the **Ngaju**.

Training

The novice is taught shamanic techniques by elder shamans, who were primarily women. The *balian* is taught to enter the necessary trance state by allowing the *sangiang*, the possessing spirit, to enter her body through the stomach.

The novice is also taught traditional **chants, songs,** and dances. Together the *balian* and *basir* officiate at **sacred** events, like the New Year's ceremonies.

Trance

The *balian* and *basir* work in an embodiment trance state that is considered feminine or receptive. The *sangiang*, whether a male or female deity, is considered masculine or the dynamic, entering force. The nature of this relationship—the shaman as the vessel for the energy of the *sangiang*—is illuminated in the Ngaju terms for trance. The shaman's **altered state of consciousness** is called *bandong*, meaning boat, and *mangumpang*, both **words** with additional meanings which connote male/female sexual intercourse.

The Ngaju worship *Mahatala-Jata*, an androgynous deity. *Mahatala* is the male aspect, a hornbill who lives on a mountaintop and rules the Upperworld. *Jata* is the female aspect, a watersnake who lives in the sea and rules the **Lowerworld**. The two aspects are joined by a jeweled bridge, the rainbow, and so joined become *Mahatala-Jata*, the total Ngaju godhead.

The *balian* and *basir* were seen as the embodiment of this androgynous deity when they served the temple as hierodules (one who functions as a sacred sex partner for those who worship at the temple). During this sacred sexual activity *balian* and *basir* were referred to as *tambon haruei bungai*, “watersnakes which are at the same time hornbills.” Through sexual union with the *balian* or *basir*, a Ngaju man was brought into the presence of *Mahatala-Jata*, his god.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Banisteriopsis

Banisteriopsis caapi is a giant forest *liana*, or large woody vine, that grows

throughout the Amazon and **Andes** of **South America**, the tropical zones of **North America**, and the West Indies. *Banisteriopsis* is the central ingredient in *ayahuasca*, a plant **entheogen** used widely by **shamans** throughout South America, and is held to be a sacred plant for its psychotropic properties.

Banjhakri

Banjhakri is the **forest shaman** (*ban*—primitive, *jhakri*—shaman) who, with his lover/wife *Banjhakrini*, is the initiator of **Tamang** shamans. He kidnaps children believed to be pure of heart and takes them to his *gufa* (**cave**) where he trains them in shamanic skills. If the child proves to be pure of heart, gifted with shamanic skills, and clever enough not to be killed by *Banjhakrini*, the child is initiated.

Initiation occurs in the *gufa*, traditionally a place of transformation, like a **womb** or tomb. *Banjhakri*'s cave is full of **power objects**. He teaches the use of a magic net, golden **drum**, the **mastery of fire**, and how to use the powers of different animal helpers.

Banjhakri can be seen in both worlds, a 4-ft-tall, monkey-like man who is a descendant of the **sun** and thus a deity. He is often golden and seen with a cone-head, a sign of Buddha. He is known to be a **trickster** and a lusty, sexual being. He is also a stern judge of compassion and the purity of one's heart. *Banjhakri* works as a team with *Banjhakrini* to initiate **shamans**. They are considered by some to be the two sides of one great being. See also **Nepal**.

Peters, L. G. Personal communication, 1998.

Banjhakrini

Banjhakrini is the Queen of the Sorcerers. She is the fierce initiator of **Tamang** shamans with her husband/lover, *Banjhakri*, the **forest shaman**. She is the dismemberer, known as a man-eater and hunter. She

is dangerous, but without her there is no **initiation** of the shaman. She wields a golden blade which connects her to the beginning of **time**.

Banjhakrini can be seen in both worlds as a large, dark, bear-like being with long hair. Her cone-head associates her with Buddha and, like her husband, she is a deity. *Banjhakrini* works as a team with *Banjhakri* to initiate shamans. They are considered by some to be the two sides of one great being. See also **dismemberment**.

Peters, L. G. Personal communication, 1998.

Barasana

The Barasana are one of many indigenous shamanic peoples living in the western regions of the Colombian **Amazonia**. The Barasana **shamans** use a particular narcotic snuff obtained from thunder. A resin that suddenly appears on the leaves of *Pagamea macrophylla* (a small caatinga tree of the coffee family) is believed to be a gift from thunder. When the resin appears the leaves are picked, dried, and pulverized to be used as snuff in **divination ceremonies**.

Songs and Dances

Common to people of Amazonia is the drinking of the plant **entheogen** *ayahuasca*. The Barasana practice a particularly intricate line **dance** during their *ayahuasca* **rituals**. The dancers accompany themselves with gourd **rattles** in the right hand and the shoulder of the dancer in front in the left. They move in unison, dancing in complex foot patterns and **rhythms**.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Basir

A **gender-variant** male **transformed shaman** of the Ngaju Dyak people of

Borneo who practiced until the early 20th century. For the Ngaju, **balian** (shamans) are female and called to their profession by the *sangiang* (deities). The *sangiang* also call men, who must serve or suffer **illness** or death at the “hand” of the *sangiang*. To serve the *basir* must become a woman in dress and social behavior and a *balian* in **training**.

The culture’s relationship with the *basir* is complicated, involving fear and respect and ridicule. Ridicule often arose as a way others tried to alleviate their discomfort around the *basir*’s spiritual power and gender variance. *Basir* means “unable to procreate, impotent”; however, it is unclear whether or not the *basir* was a true hermaphrodite, or simply functioned as a transformed shaman, whose primary social role was not to father children.

Training

The novice is taught shamanic techniques by elder shamans, who were primarily women. The *balian* is taught to enter the necessary trance state, by allowing the *sangiang*, the possessing spirit, to enter their body through her stomach.

The novice is also taught traditional **chants**, songs, and dances. Together the *balian* and *basir* officiated at **sacred** events, like the New Year’s ceremonies.

Trance

The *balian* and *basir* work in an **embodiment** trance state that is considered feminine or receptive. The *sangiang*, whether a male or female deity, is considered masculine or the dynamic, entering force. The nature of this relationship—the shaman as the vessel for the **energy** of the *sangiang*—is illuminated in the Ngaju terms for trance. The shaman’s **altered state of consciousness** is called *bandong*, meaning boat, and *mangumpang*. Both **words** have additional meanings which connote male/female sexual intercourse.

The Ngaju worship *Mahatala-Jata*, an androgynous deity. *Mahatala* is the male

aspect, a hornbill who lives on a mountaintop and rules the **Upperworld**. Jata is the female aspect, a watersnake who lives in the sea and rules the **Lowerworld**. The two aspects are joined by a jeweled bridge, the rainbow, and so joined become *Mahatala-Jata*, the total Ngaju godhead.

The *balian* and *basir* were seen as the embodiment of this androgynous deity when they served the temple as hierodules (one who functions as a sacred sex partner for those who worship at the temple). During this sacred sexual activity *balian* and *basir* were referred to as *tambon haruei bungai*, “watersnakes which are at the same time hornbills.” Through sexual union with the *balian* or *basir*, a Ngaju man was brought into the presence of *Mahatala-Jata*, his god.

The Transformed Shaman

To complete his transformation, the *basir* must function sexually as the receptive partner with other men. Primarily the *basir's* sexual activity was in service to the temple. However, it was common and sanctioned by the community for the *basir* to enter into long-term, marriage-like relationships with non-gender variant, masculine men.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Bear Ceremonialism

An anthropological term for shamanic **rituals** and **ceremonies** focused on the bear that are widely practiced across North Asia and **North America**. The persistent presence of this ritualized relationship shows the longstanding role of the bear and Bear spirit in the lives of humans. The Cult of the Bear flourished in northern Eurasia from 40–35,000 to 15–10,000 B.C.E.

The Ainu of **Siberia**, for example, consider the bear is lord of the forest, who influences the abundance of forest

game. When a bear is killed in self-defense or the bear is sacrificed in an elaborate ritual, the bear's spirit is appeased by inviting it to a feast, where it is honored and offered food and vodka.

Among the **Eskimo** the bear is a reoccurring figure in the **initiation** of new shamans. Eskimo shamans revered bears as the strongest protector of the **helping spirits**. The bear is a source of shamanic power and a highly valued helping spirit among the Eskimo, **Saami**, and many Siberian and **North American** peoples.

The skin of the bear is often worn as the shaman's **costume**. These shamans **dance** to call on the spirit of the bear and, as they enter **trance** and merge with the Bear spirit, they become bears in the performance of their rituals. The bear is one of the three most prominent animals represented in the costumes of shamans around the world. **Birds** are the most common; the deer/reindeer being the third.

The bear is one of the **earth's** most powerful **healing** spirits. The bear is not called on for **displays of power**, so much as for the real healing work of the shaman. When a shaman who works with bear spirit as one of his or her helping spirits is presented with a particularly serious or complex healing problem, he or she calls on the bear for assistance. In many cultures it is the “bear shaman” who is called on for healing when other shamans have failed.

In North America the **Lakota** considered the bear a curing animal. The most powerful Lakota shamans acquired their powers of curing from the bear spirit. Even the Lakota who have worked with the bear spirit for centuries are consistently astonished by the **power** of the bear shaman and his or her ability to bring the gravely ill back from near death.

The Lakota associate their medicinal herbs with the bear. The Bear Dreamers Society explain that the bear is the only animal dreamed of that offered herbs as

remedies for healing. Any Lakota who dreamed of bear gained the powers of healing with medicinal plants.

Most of the tribes in North America associated bears with curing. The Cherokee performed a bear dance highlighting the winter **ceremony** to protect against the epidemic **diseases** brought by Europeans. The Cheyenne and other Great Plains tribes believed that bears not only healed humans, but that they could heal themselves and other bears with herbs. The Miami Indians hung bearskins smeared with green dye in their homes to prevent sickness from entering.

Among the Zuñi, the word for doctor is the same as the word for bear. The bear spirit was considered a Priest of Long Life who gave **plant medicines** and the power to heal. When the doctor performed healing he wore a necklace of bear claws and bear paw mittens pulled over his hands. "Bear medicine" or "bear root" is one of the strongest **medicines** used by Pueblo healers. The medicine induces a trance-like state when ingested. It was given to the patient and ingested by the doctor to aid in diagnosing the cause of illness.

Anthropologists hypothesize that this consistency of the bear as the healer is because bears are very like humans. They are omnivorous, stand upright, and their bones resemble those of humans. Their characteristic behavior of hibernating and of giving birth while in hibernation makes them potent **teachers** of rebirth and the regenerative powers of turning within.

However, the bear shamans explain that when they ask for help in healing, the bear spirit showed up then and continues to show up today. For the northern hemisphere it is the pattern of **energy** of Bear that resonates most powerfully with healing.

Barnett, H. G. *Culture Element Distributions, No. IXV: Gulf of Georgia Salish*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1939.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Belladonna

Atropa belladonna, of the nightshade family, is one of Eurasia's most potent psychoactive plants. The round, soft, blue-black berries, commonly referred to as "love apples," contain psychoactive constituents. *Belladonna* is also known as Sorcerer's Cherry, Witch's Berry, Devil's Herb, Murderer's Berry, and Dwaleberry (the English *dwale* derives from a Scandinavian root meaning "trance").

Belladonna means "beautiful lady" in Italian and refers to the practice among fine Italian ladies of putting drops of *Belladonna* sap into their eyes to dilate their pupils. The resulting deep, dark eyes and dreamy, intoxicated stare were considered the height of beauty and fashion. See also **Deadly Nightshade** and **hexing herbs**.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Berdache (Berdach)

Berdache is a term used by anthropologists to refer to an androgynous, morphological male who fills non-masculine social roles. *Berdaches* served as dreamers, sages, healers, and artisans. They have special ceremonial roles in many **religions** and important economic roles in their families. The *berdache* is trained to fulfill female **gender** work responsibilities. He adopts much of the behavior, **language**, and social roles of women and mixes both men's and women's clothing with garments denoting his sacred status.

The *berdache* has a clearly recognized social role and an accepted social status, often based on **sacred berdache** characters in the tribal mythology.

Berdaches gain prestige by their spiritual, intellectual, and artistic contributions to their societies and by their reputation for hard work, excellent craft work, and generosity.

Berdaches are known for their talents in **divination** and **dreaming**. The *berdache's* role is usually distinct and complementary to that of the **shaman**. In some cultures, and with some unique individuals, the *berdache* was also a shamanic healer. In these instances the individual's skills have expanded beyond the boundaries of the *berdache* and he is considered a **transformed shaman**.

Ordinarily the *berdache* and the shaman fill complementary yet unique roles in **ritual** and **ceremony**. The *berdache* embodies a unique perspective which the shaman utilizes in ceremony and as counsel in problems affecting the community.

History

The first Europeans to the New World were surprised to see men dressed as women, and referred to them as "*berdache*." The foreigners assumed that these people displaying mixed gender were hermaphrodites (having both male and female genitalia). However, they proved to be anatomically normal males. Thus the use of hermaphrodite as a synonym for *berdache* is incorrect.

Berdache is used in this volume to indicate this alternative gender role in general, because no other accurate English word exists and to avoid using a term belonging to a particular culture.

The majority of Native American cultures accept the existence of more than two genders. Some individuals who are physically men have male **spirits** and some have female spirits. The same is true for women. The *berdache* is a man accepted spiritually as "Not Man." The spiritual orientation of the *berdache* ranges from a quality of spirit between that of men and women to a quality of spirit distinct from either. The *berdache* is considered a third gender.

The social position of the *berdache* is different from that of women, though he does women's work. There is a distinction between feminine and non-masculine. The *berdache* is a non-masculine male—not a woman, or a superior woman, not even a socially defined woman. The character of a *berdache* is seen as distinct from either sex. The alternative gender role is a mixture of diverse **elements**.

Each individual's relationship with spirit overrides other expected relationships. The *berdache* is expressing a spirit that is unique and androgynous. It is also the expression of a desire to be creative and a gift of powerful dreaming. Religious, occupational, sexual, and gender roles are all equally important in defining the *berdache*.

The traditional activities of the *berdache* are similar culture to culture though the specific activities do vary, e.g., weaving versus making pottery. All these activities are derived from abilities given the *berdache* by spirit. The *berdache* is what his dreams make him and he is given certain **powers** by the nature of his "go-between" spirit.

Activities of the Berdache

The *berdache* is believed to have sacred powers arising from his sexually androgynous being which increase his skills in dreaming, prophecy, and negotiation. The *berdache's* activities include **blowing** ceremonies, providing lucky names, offering spiritual protection, and divination. The *berdache* performs specific roles in rituals and ceremonies. For example, it is traditional for the *berdache* to bless the central tree in the **Sun dance** ceremony of the Plains Indians.

Mediation

The *berdache* was a respected mediator, valued for his unique perspectives on issues, particularly those arising between women and men. The *berdache* was believed to be able to see situations more clearly than those viewing it from the perspective of a single

gender. This unique perspective begins in childhood. The *berdache* child sees the basic concepts of life differently from others, and sees how things could be more and better than they are.

Divination and Dreaming

The *berdache* is also a mediator between the physical and the spiritual realms. His relationship with **helping spirits** is a defining characteristic of the role and an aspect of all his activities. The *berdache's* strong gifts in divination and prophetic dreaming were exercised for the community as a whole. When gifted in this way, a *berdache* was trained in spiritual matters and played a prominent role in rituals and ceremonies.

Teachers and Parents

The *berdache* often adopted orphaned children and children from overcrowded families. *Berdaches*, given their higher than average intelligence and aptitude for balance, were often responsible for educating the children. The *berdache* taught the tribal history through the narration of legends and moral tales, passing on the culture's morals and values to prepare the children to be the future of the people.

Caretakers, Healers, and the Dead

Unlike the female shamans, the *berdache's* maleness suited the tradition of all male hunting expeditions and war parties. The *berdache* traveled with the men, serving as healer and caretaker and bringing the party luck in their hunt or raid. The *berdache* had the physical strength to carry the wounded to safety and at least some healing ability. In many cultures the *berdache* was the person responsible for preparing the dead for burial and conducting the funeral ceremony.

The rare *berdache* did at times fight in the war parties. However, he put on men's clothes to do so, distinguishing this activity as distinct from his role as *berdache*.

Though rare, there are a few North American tribes in which *berdache*

status from the beginning did not involve participation in ritual and ceremony. The *berdache* role did vary in specifics and was not restricted to cultures where the *berdache* took part in the spiritual leadership.

Calling to Become Berdache

A boy's inclination toward female activities and communicating with the spirit world was noticed in early childhood. The role of the *berdache* could not be forced on him by others nor could he grasp at it for status. It was believed that a true *berdache* would act out his basic character and the true nature of his spirit given the opportunity. Most cultures presented the boy with a ritual in early adolescence. The boy then chose the role through his own actions in this ritual context. Based on the outcome of the ritual the boy was (or was not) recognized as *berdache* and his **training** would begin.

Some individuals reported feeling reluctant to take on the role of the *berdache*. Reluctance is often a sign of the authenticity of **the call**. It is common for people to initially feel reluctance when accepting the responsibilities and burdens of any kind of **sacred** person. No matter how clear the call to a spiritual duty, the person being called knows the path will not be easy.

The spirit world is the determining factor in assuming the *berdache* role and in leaving it. Like the shaman, if a boy was called by spirit to become a *berdache* he had to assume the role. If not, mishap or **illness** would befall him, his family, or his tribe. Families felt it was a great honor to have a *berdache* for a child just as it was to have a shaman in the family. Both were sacred people.

A range of attitudes towards the *berdache* is found in **aboriginal** cultures around the world. Overall the *berdache* is an accepted and respected role; however, there were exceptions. For example, a few North American Indian cultures, the **Iroquois**, Apache, Pimas, and Comanches, did not respect the *berdache*. The mythologies of these

cultures presents the *berdache* in an unfavorable light.

The role of the *berdache* can be treated as a loose, global pattern that does not always apply to peoples even in nearby areas. This pattern is found in four areas of **North America**: the Prairie and western Great Lakes, northern and central Great Plains, and lower Mississippi Valley; Florida and the Caribbean; the Southwest, Great Basin, and California; and the Northwest, western Canada, and Alaska. The pattern is also found throughout Asia, the islands of the Pacific, and to some extent **Africa**. Similar roles have also been described in regions of Central and **South America**.

Sexuality of the Berdache

The sexuality of the *berdache* is non-masculine. The *berdache* may be asexual or he may be the receptive sexual partner in sacred sex with masculine men. He may also be the receptive partner in normal sexual relations with traditionally masculine men, though not with another *berdache*.

In some cultures the *berdache* marries, taking a husband in a long-term committed relationship. In other cultures where the *berdache* can prosper alone, he might live alone and accept visits from different men. Men visiting the *berdache* are not required to make a choice between being heterosexual or being homosexual. With the role of the *berdache* institutionalized, he serves the sexual needs of many men without competing against the institution of heterosexual marriage.

There is great variation in the sexual aspects of the *berdache* role between tribes and between individual *berdache*. Indigenous cultures make a distinction between physical hermaphrodites and the *berdache* who is hermaphroditic in spirit alone. The *berdache* is sexually androgynous, not homosexual. None of the contemporary generalizations, like transsexual, homosexual, and transvestite, used to describe the *berdache* are accurate. The *berdache* is “halfmen-

halfwomen”; their spiritual essence defines them as a third gender while they are anatomically male.

The *berdache's* sexuality is accepted in the same way as his androgyny; both are seen as reflections of his spirit. The *berdache's* unique sexual behavior is a characteristic of *berdache* status, as is his special ceremonial role. However, the sexual behavior alone does not distinguish the *berdache* without the personal and spiritual characteristics. Personal character, gender role, ceremonial role, relationship with spirit, and sexual behavior together distinguish the *berdache*.

Female gender variation was recognized in a number of cultures. A woman's assumption of the masculine, hunter-warrior, gender role did not involve the ritual and **initiation** necessary to recognize a *berdache*. Female gender variation had a separate and distinct status of its own. In native languages, the words for *berdache* and for gender variant females were different, unrelated words. A generic term comparable to *berdache* could be the term *amazon*.

The following is a list of cultures that respected and incorporated the role of the *berdache* into the fabric of their societies. Listing these names does not imply that they are exactly the same roles. In some cultures the role is that of a transformed shaman, in others it is the *berdache*, while in others it is the role of the sacred *heirodule*. The distinction is not always clear because the information was suppressed due to its sexual variance, misunderstood, or traditionally not shared with people of other genders. For some of these **cultures** the traditional name has been lost while the role lives on in the oral traditions:

Acoma: *mujerado*

Aleuts: **shopan** or **achnucek**

Arapoho: *haxu'xan* or *a-whok*

Araucanians (Chile)

Assiniboine

Cheyenne (northern): **he man eh**

Chippewa (**Ojibwa**): *a-go-kwa*

Chukchee: *yirka-la lu*
 Chumash: *joya*
 Cora
 Cree: *ayekkwew*, meaning “neither man nor woman”
 Creeks
 Crow: *badé*, meaning “not man, not woman”
 Flatheads
 Gabrielino
 Gros Verde
 Guajiro (Venezuela)
Hawaii (Polynesia): *mahu*
 Hidatsa: *miati*
 Hopi
Huichol
 Hupa
 Illinois
 India: *hijra*
 Klamath
 Kodiak Island Eskimo: *shopan* or *achnucek*
 Kutenai: *stammiya*, meaning “acts like a woman”
 Kwakiutl
 Lache (Colombia, SA): *cusmos*
 Laguna Pueblo: *mujerado*
Lakota: *winkte*
 Kansa
 Luiseño
 Maidu: *osa’pu*
 Mandan: *mihdacke*
Mapuche (Chile)
 Maricopa
Maya
 MicMac: *geenumu gesallagee*, meaning “he loves men”
 Mohave: *alyha*
 Navajo (Athabaskan): *nadle*, meaning “one who is transformed”
 Nez Percés
 Omaha: *mexoga* or *min-gu-ga*
 Oman: *xanith*
 Papago
 Pima: *wi-kovat*
 Pomo: **Daoism**
 Potawatomi: *nowkansas*
 Puerto Viejo (Peru)
 Quinault: *keknatsa’nxwix*, meaning “part woman male”
 Samoa: *fafafini*
 Santee: *winkta*

Sauk & Fox: *i-coo-coo-a*
 Seminoles
 Shoshoni: *ma ai’pots*
 Tewa Pueblo: *kwih-doh* or **quetho**
 Timucua
 Tolowa
 Winnebago: *siange*
 Yokuts: **tongochim** or *tunosim*
 Yuki: **i-wa-musp**
 Yuma: *elxá* or *marica*
 Yupik (S Eskimo)
 Yurok: *wergern*
 Zapotec: *ira’muxe*
 Zoque
 Zuñi: **Ihamana**

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.
 Russell, P. *The Gay 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Gay Men and Lesbians, Past and Present*. New York: Citadel Press, 2002.
 Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Bes

A dwarfish, lion-headed Egyptian god, who is the ancient **shaman** protector of women in the critical moments of conception and birth. He is most often seen dressed in leopard skins, dancing and playing a **frame drum**. His dancing and drumming ward off malevolent influences during these vulnerable moments.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Big Bang

The “big bang” is a scientific theory explaining the origin of the universe in cosmological terms. The theory holds that billions of years ago there was absolutely nothing in a vast **emptiness**. Then a violent eruption of a point source exploded, beginning the manifestation

of our universe. This scientific theory is relevant in that it explains in scientific terms the creation stories of shamanic peoples around the globe. See also **evolution** and **Kosmos**.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

Birds

Birds have both a symbolic and a literal relationship to **shamans**. In visual and oral records of the exploits of shamans, the presence of a bird is symbolic of the ecstatic **trance** state, during which the shaman's soul leaves the body and flies through the **spirit** realm with the ease of a bird in flight.

In a more literal sense, bird spirits work as **helping spirits** with shamans. In **Siberia**, **Africa**, Indonesia, **North America**, and **South America**, for example, bird spirits participate with the shamans in their activities in the invisible world. The bird may be a guardian spirit, a guide, or the form into which the shaman transforms to enter the altered state. Bird-like **dance** movements and **sounds** are used by shamans to call on the bird spirits to aid them in entering **altered states of consciousness**.

The bird figures prominently in **shamanism** throughout the world. For example, the primary relationship with parrots and the raptors in Amazonian shamanism can be seen in the exquisite feather headdresses worn by shamans. These birds are ancestral figures who populate the mythological stories of South American peoples from the beginning of time.

Parrots are essential helping spirits for the shaman, connecting the shaman through association with the limitless power of the **sun**. Parrot **feathers** are used to make some of the most powerful shamanic tools. The macaw itself is seen as a shaman who takes the hallucinogenic *viho* snuff and transforms into a jaguar, like the human shaman.

The raptors—vultures, buzzards, hawks, falcons, and eagles—were assistants, companions, guardians, and helping spirits of the Ancestral shamans. Today the vulture transforms into human form by removing its feather cloak, allowing the shaman to don that same cloak and transform into a vulture to enter the spirit world. As a vulture the shaman gains the gifts of vulture's exacting sight and ability to fly in the spirit world.

The vulture, like the macaw and *viho*, is a shaman associated with the **plant hallucinogen**, *ayahuasca*, the visionary vine. The vulture's gift is its extraordinary sight and ability to move between the worlds. The vulture, like the eagle of North America, can soar so high that it disappears from view, seeming to enter the **Upperworld**, and then drops back down to **earth** with lightning speed and pinpoint accuracy. The shaman gains these powers in the invisible world through association with the vulture spirit.

The harpy eagle, the largest eagle in South America, is another primary helping spirit in the Upperworld just as the jaguar is in the **Lowerworld**. The harpy eagle and its feathers figure prominently in the novice shaman's initiatory journeys and in the initiated shaman's dress.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Black and White Shamans

In some **cultures**—Siberian, **Saami**, and Indonesian for example—**shamanism** is found in black and white forms. Black **shamans** employ full **possession**, or ecstatic **trance** states; work with **helping spirits**, particularly animals; perform **healing** rituals; and involve the spirits of the **Lowerworld**. This traditional shamanic form is involved in treating **illness** and **disease** and exorcising the lower spirits associated with

these maladies. Black shamanism is shamanism, as defined in this volume.

White shamanism developed later in some pastoral cultures. Called **priests** in other parts of the world, white shamans engage the spirits of the **Upperworld** exclusively, through **prayer, blessings** and ceremony. White shamans do not use trance states, rituals, or work with animal, plant, or elemental helping spirits for healing.

In cultures with black and white shamans, they are usually different people. The black shamans can make blood **sacrifices** when necessary and the white shamans only make sacrifices that do not involve blood. In most cultures the features of black and white shamans are combined in one person, as with the **Tamang** of **Nepal**. These shamans work with whatever spirit and in whatever way is necessary to accomplish the desired outcome.

Eliade, Mircea, ed. *Ancient Religions*. New York: Citadel Press, 1950.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Co., 1995.

Blacksmith

In many **cultures**, the blacksmith is responsible for the magical transformation of the body and soul of the **apprentice** into the **shaman** through **initiation**. In some cultures the blacksmith is the only person considered more powerful than the shaman because his soul is protected by **fire**. The blacksmith's awesome **power** is that of transformation through the **mastery of fire**, making him both **teacher** and initiator.

Blacksmiths embody the skills to transform the **elements** of the universe. They take the basic element of the **earth** and transform it, working the **metal** into tools, weapons, and jewelry. Stories tell of shamans who encountered blacksmiths in their journeys. Those who survived their initiation at the hand of the

blacksmith received unbreakable **swords**, knives, jewelry, or other shamanic **paraphernalia** with magical properties. For example, the dress of Siberian shamans is covered with essential metal ornaments that connect the shaman to the blacksmith and the mastery of fire. See also Siberia.

Allen-Coombe, J. "Weaving the Way of Wyrd: An Interview with Brian Bates." *Shaman's Drum* 27 (Spring 1992): p. 200.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Co., 1995.

Blessing

A blessing is the simplest form of **power retrieval**, which is a type of **shamanic healing**. A **shaman** uses a "blessing" to replace health, balance, unity, and the **energy** of good will towards one's own life or *suerté* (luck) to a patient. A typical **Celtic** blessing, used to restore energy, places the **power** of something in Nature onto the person. For example, "May the power of the Winds be on you."

The energy returned in a blessing can be conveyed to the patient in a variety of ways including the touch of **feathers**, smoke, a **song, dance**, or **camaying** with liquor or flower essences in **water**. Blessings are often conveyed to participants in **healing** rituals, like **sweat lodge** ceremonies or meetings of the **Native American Church** during which **peyote** cactus is given as a sacrament. There are as many ways to convey a blessing as there are cultures.

Cowan, T. Personal communication, April 1997.

Perkins, J. *The World Is As You Dream It*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1994.

Blood

Most shamanic **cultures** recognize the extraordinary **powers** associated with blood and menstruation. The Yurok of

California, for example, believe that a woman is at the height of her powers when she is menstruating. This time is used for **healing** and **divination** for the benefit of the community, not wasted in mundane tasks and social distractions.

Menstrual blood was believed to contain the essential energies of the feminine and the creative energies of the unfertilized egg. Both energies are life-giving, cyclical forces of Nature which can be utilized as potent healing energies. The association between blood and the feminine can be observed in ancient **languages**, like Sumerian, in which *Adam* signifies blood and *adamu* the “principle of female matter” or “matter of life.”

Red ochre is believed to be the remnants of the menstrual blood of the goddesses who inhabited the **earth** at its beginnings. It is a **sacred** substance, particularly in **Africa** and **Australia**. Red ochre is rubbed on bodies, **costumes**, **power objects**, and instruments for sacred rituals to connect these things to the power of those first Ancestral goddesses. Menstruation opens a crack between the worlds within the body of the bleeding woman. This opening is like the crack between the worlds that is opened whenever a **shaman** conducts a **ritual** or enters **trance**. The particular energetics of menstruation create a heightened connection to the other worlds for women from two days before bleeding begins until she is flowing. For female shamans this bleeding time increases her power in the **altered state of consciousness** making her particularly agile and clear.

Høst, A. *Learning to Ride the Waves*. København: Scandinavian Center for Shamanic Studies, 1991.

Bodily Fluids

The **shamans** of many cultures used different bodily fluids, including bone marrow, saliva, sweat, cerebrospinal fluid, the synovial fluid of the knee, semen, and menstrual blood in **healing** and **sacrifices**. These fluids, whether

from animals or humans, were believed to contain different essential energies from their source. These essential energies were embodied by consuming the fluids or accessed by using the fluids in healing rituals or sacrifices.

For example, saliva is used to store and transmit energies, like the *tsestak*, the invisible darts used by **South American** shamans to heal and sorcerers to harm. Australian **Aboriginal** healers applied menstrual blood directly as a healing salve and remedy. Semen was used by **Eskimo** sorcerers to give life to a *tupitkaq*, a supernatural being created from dead animal parts and sent out on missions to do harm to others.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Bön

Bön is the ancient **shamanism** of Tibet, believed to be both animistic and magical. It preceded the arrival of Padma Sambhava (C.E. 749) in Tibet and the spread of Buddhism. There are many Tibetan legends that tell of the confrontation, suppression, and subjugation of the early Bön practices by **Lamaism** (Tibetan Buddhism). However, the Bön system survived, was still prevalent in 1920, and continues to be practiced alongside Buddhism today.

The essential wisdom of Bön shamanism is that by establishing and maintaining good relationships with the **spirits**, through respectful communication and appropriate **offerings** of gratitude, the human imbalances that result in **disease** and misfortune can be harmonized and brought into balance. Bön **shamans** utilized ecstatic **trance** states induced with drumming and **chanting mantras**. They are believed to have used both **journey** trances and

embodiment trances to communicate with the spirit world. In their original form the ecstatic rituals of the Bön shamans involved hundreds of people.

Bön-Po is an ancient practice. The first stage of Bön shamans was known as “the black sect.” The second stage ended during the reign of a mythical king, Gri-gum Tzan-po, and the third stage began (C.E. 620–649) during the reign of the first Buddhist king of Tibet, Srong Tsen Gampo. White Bön evolved out of the third stage. The ancient Bön shamans of the black sect were able to display marvelous acts of **power** while in trance. They are said to have licked hot **metal** and other acts of **mastery of fire**, pierced their bodies with weapons without harm, flown physically through the air, and cut iron with feathers.

Black and white Bön are entirely different spiritual practices. The white Bön **religion** is close to Buddhism. It has assimilated almost all Buddhist literature, and although the names of the deities and scriptures are different, their functions and ideologies correspond to Lamaism. In contrast, black Bön is a spiritual practice that is animistic, shamanic, and passed on through the oral tradition. **Tamang** shamanism is believed to be very close to the ancient black Bön shamanism.

The First Shamans

There was a **time**, Bön mythology explains, when a “rope” connected earth and heaven. Through this rope of white light or rainbow light the realms were interconnected and the humans enjoyed immortality. On earth this rope of rainbow light connected to the heads or helmets of the first kings. Then this attachment was unintentionally severed, humans became mortal, and illness and demons entered the world.

This is the reason the shamans wear a crown of peacock feathers, symbolic of the rainbow that extends from the heads of initiated shamans. The rainbow **colors** of the feathers recreate the Rainbow Bridge during the shaman’s ritual, allowing the shaman to ascend to the heavens

again. At death each human soul follows the Rainbow Bridge and ascends, returning to the source of all life.

Initiation

Candidates are chosen spontaneously by spirits. The soul of the candidate is taken into the spirit world to be tested, and if it should prevail, initiated. There is one story of a boy who was abducted by spirits and roamed with them for thirteen years in the wilderness. During that time the boy learned to speak with the spirits of the animals and to utilize their powers to perform shamanically.

Bön shamanism involves a complex system of spirits. There are powerful deities and **animal spirits**, who are called on by the shaman for help, and other types of spirits, like the *üör* (harmful **spirits** of humans who die violent unnatural deaths), who cause illness and death among humans. The **helping spirits** can enter the body of the shaman to perform tasks in **ordinary reality** and they can be dispatched to perform tasks for the shaman in **non-ordinary reality**. The spirits are typically summoned by **singing** the **prayer** or mantra that invokes the desired spirit or deity.

Bön shamans perform rituals for **divination**, **healing**, psychopompic work, and **weather** making, and some black Bön shamans could be employed for acts of **sorcery**. They also create a variety of **amulets** and **charms** for protection from harmful forces. The simplest amulets are a protective prayer or **spell** and symbol written on a piece of paper that is tied in colorful string. Other amulets include herbs, beads, small clay or dough figures, and the like that are blessed by a **priest** or shaman. **Thread crosses** are also created for protection.

Weather Making

The role of the weather maker in the country is to protect the crops from hail and drought. The most important tools for weather making are the **drum**, thunderbolt, and a bell, *phur bu*, the human

thighbone trumpet, the sound of which frightens away the demons that prevent the rain. The **weather shaman** is also well versed in reading the physical and spiritual signs of coming weather.

Healing

Much of Bön curing was **soul retrieval** work. Bön soul retrieval rituals were performed in several different ways, though the original reasons for the different techniques are no longer known. In one technique the deer spirit is asked to retrieve the lost soul. In another method the shaman conducts a ritual in which the spirit that has stolen the patient's soul is summoned and offered a *torma*, an offering cake, in return for the patient's soul. The *torma* represents the union of the five pleasure senses and its consumption brings complete satisfaction. The offending spirit, hungry for satisfaction, trades the stolen soul for the *torma* and the shaman returns the soul to the patient.

In a third soul retrieval ritual Bön shamans reinforced, repaired, and refastened the patient's lifeforce to the body through the recitation of the Mantra of the Life Deity. Through the **power** of this mantra the shaman is able to recall the straying lifeforce, refasten it in the body of the patient, and restore the patient to a state of health.

Bön shamans also performed **exorcisms** when necessary.

The Bön shaman also performed as the **psychopomp** in funerary rites. In these rituals the shaman utilizes ecstatic **soul flight** to enter the spirit world and locate the soul of the deceased. If the soul has been captured by malevolent spirits, it is freed, and if the soul is lingering in the earthly realms with the living, it is conveyed into the spirit realms. Wherever the soul is found, the shaman escorts it to its final destination so that it does not return as a ghost and cause harm for the living.

Divination

Bön shamans use a variety of methods for divination. A rosary is used for simple

divinations. The question is posed, the rosary is rolled between the hands, and then the beads are counted off. The remaining number of beads are interpreted for the answer.

The drum is used in a more ancient form of divination, the *rnga mo*, similar to practices used by Siberian shamans. White Bön priests perform *rnga mo* with a large drum and the black Bön shamans use a half drum, or small drum. *Rnga mo* is performed to divine the cause of illness primarily, and less frequently to answer questions concerning relationships and business.

The face of the drum is specially prepared for each performance of *rnga mo* with symbols representing the patient, other humans involved, and the various spirit forces potentially involved. Onto the symbols on the drum are placed a drop of milk with a seed. When the drum is prepared, the diviner, playing a second drum, summons the helping deities and presents the divination question. The movement of the seeds on the drum are read. If the patient is to recover, then the drumming, questioning, and reading of the seed movements continue until the cause of the illness and the necessary remedies are clear.

Paraphernalia

The drum plays an important role in trance **induction**. The rhythmic drumming is often accompanied by **rattle** or chanting, which invokes the spirits. The Bön shamans use a single-headed, **frame drum** called a *phyed rnga*, or "half-drum."

Simple effigies, called *lekan*, are made from wood, cloth, and fur. A *lekan* is made as a home for *ongons*, or spirits. If the *ongon* is harmful, the *lekan* may be used as a prison or if the *ongon* misbehaves, the *lekan* is beaten or destroyed.

An arrow decorated with multi-colored silk ribbons and copper buttons called a *nda' dar* is used for a variety of purposes. It is used in divination especially with the spirits of **fire**, in soul retrieval healings, and as a tool to aid in

sucking healings performed to suck the illness out of a patient's body.

The Bön shaman also wears a **metal** headdress crafted with prongs that represent antlers. Some scholars believe these originally represented the antlers of a stag.

Belyea, Charles. *Dragon's Play: A New Taoist Transmission of the Complete Experience of Human Life*. Berkeley, CA: Great Circle Lifeworks, 1991.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Dieties*. Delhi: Book Faith India, 1996.

Peters, L. G., and D. Price-Williams. "Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism." *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 3 (1980): 397–413.

———. *Ecstasy and Healing in Nepal: An Ethnopsychiatric Study of Tamang Shamanism*. Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1981.

Bön-po

Pre-Buddhist spiritual practices of the Bön shamans in Tibet. Mongolian **shamanism** is very close to that of the ancient Bön shamans, as is the shamanism of the **Tamang of Nepal**.

Bow

A single stringed instrument, like the bow used to shoot an arrow. The bow is used by shamanic peoples across **Siberia** and in **South America** to induce **trance** and support the **shaman's** journey while in trance. The bow is usually used alone and instead of a **drum**. It is less demanding than the drum in inducing **altered states of consciousness**.

Saami shamans string a reindeer antler to construct their bows. A bow is used by the Lebed Tatars and certain Altaian peoples in Siberia. Kirgiz Tatars use a *kobuz*, a stringed instrument that accompanies trance-inducing dancing. Bows are also used by the **Shuar** of **Amazonia**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Brain Waves

Brain waves are the rhythmic fluctuations of voltage between parts of the brain which result in a flow of electric current. That current pulsates in the human brain in a range of frequencies measured in cycles per second, or hertz (Hz).

Beta waves vibrate between 14–20 Hz. The state of awareness characterized by beta waves is associated with active, waking attention, focused on everyday external activities, and states of anxiety, tension, and fear.

Alpha waves vibrate at 7–14 Hz. The state of awareness characterized by alpha waves indicates a relaxed internal focus and a sense of well-being. The alpha state also correlates to the electromagnetic field of the earth and is the basic rhythm of nature.

Theta waves vibrate at 4–7 Hz. The state of awareness characterized by theta waves is a drowsy, semiconscious state, usually experienced at the threshold of sleeping or waking, and shamanic states of consciousness.

Delta waves vibrate at 1–4 Hz. These waves characterize deep sleep or unconsciousness.

Hemispheric synchronization is another characteristic of shamanic states of consciousness. In very young children the two hemispheres of the brain are synchronized. They develop as one and share control of mental activity.

At about five years of age each hemisphere begins to specialize, the right hemisphere in **pattern recognition** and the left hemisphere in logical and rational recognition. The two hemispheres begin to operate in different modes and at different rhythms.

Hemispheric synchronization may be induced in adult brains, allowing both hemispheres to operate again in a synchronized **rhythm**. This state of unified whole-brain functioning can be

induced during periods of intense creativity, deep meditation, or monotonous rhythmic **sound**, like the shaman's drumming.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Brugmansia Aurea

Brugmansia aurea, or *Solanaceae*, is an aborescent shrub or small tree with beautiful, fragrant flowers, which is closely related to *Datura candida*. All species are dangerously toxic and appear to have been used as hallucinogens for thousands of years. *Brugmansia aurea* is highly valued by **payé** (**shamans**) throughout **South America** as a **medicine** and as the hallucinogenic plant sacrament called **Toá**.

Brugmansia species are widely used and highly cultivated by **payé** in South America. Therefore there is a great variation in the specifics of its many preparations and uses. In general, *Brugmansia* is used as a **plant hallucinogen**, as an admixture in **ayahuasca** (also a plant hallucinogen), and in a range of medicinal preparations.

The *Brugmansia* species prefer the cool, wet highlands above 6000 ft (1830 m), though they do grow in the warmer parts of South America. Many species have beautiful, tubular, trumpet-shaped flowers, that blend from one color at the top to another at the base. *Brugmansia suaveolens* (formerly *Datura suaveolens*) is the one species that grows well in the low, hot lands of southern Colombia and Ecuador. *B. suaveolens* is used by the Ingano and Siona of the Putumayo region. In the Valley of Sibundoy in the Colombian **Amazonia** *Brugmansia* is highly cultivated, though only the **payé** drinks the hallucinogen. The Kamsá and Ingano of this area use *Brugmansia aurea* in a wide range of preparations and applications.

Brugmansia has been cultivated and manipulated for centuries because it is

of high value as a hallucinogen and a **medicine**. *Brugmansia aurea*, or *Buyes*, is no longer found in its wild state. It is suspected to be a cultigen with *B. suaveolens* and *B. insignis* considered the probable hybrid origins.

Brugmansia aurea is used in its "normal" form and a variety of "atrophied," or cultivated, forms. These rare cultivars are "owned" by the shamans who cultivated or inherited them. Their bizarre appearance is associated with the different physiological effects induced by the varying chemical composition of the different cultivars. Not all cultivated forms are used; some are too toxic and some not potent enough.

Cultivars

Kinde Borrachero, or *Quinde*, is the most widely used *Brugmansia* species in the Sibundoy Valley. It is a cultivar whose leaves have been reduced to slender strands giving the plant a chaotic, disheveled look. The leaves of *Munchiro Borrachero*, another highly prized cultivar, look as though caterpillars have eaten them into random, irregular shapes. This species has been cultivated for its high alkaloid content, resulting in potent psychoactivity. During the deep trance induced by this cultivar, the **plant spirit** speaks through the **payé** while a young initiate interprets, later informing the **payé** of the results of the **trance**.

The most potent cultivar is *Culebra Borrachero*. It is prepared in an infusion with only the leaves due to its high concentration of the psychoactive compound scopolamine. *Culebra Borrachero* is preferred by the Kamsá **payé** for **divination**, foretelling the future, for healing in the most difficult cases, and as a remedy for rheumatic or arthritic **pains**.

Brugmansia sanguinea is the **sacred** plant hallucinogen of the Chibcha people of the high Andean Colombia. It is used in their rituals at their Temple of the **Sun**. In Peru *Brugmansia sanguinea* is known as *Huacacachu*, "plant of the tomb," because the **payés** use it to induce trance states that allow them to communicate with their **Ancestors**. *Huacacachu*

leaves are made into a tea or the seeds are powdered and added to fermented drinks. The onset of the trance state can be quite violent. Physical restraint is often necessary until the onset of the deeper **visions**-filled trance.

Use

As a hallucinogen the function of the *Brugmansia* species is two-fold. First, the plant induces a trance state in which the *payé* can enter the spirit world to **diagnose**, divine information, and combat acts of **sorcery**. Second, the plant **spirit** informs the *payé* how to harvest and prepare the plants to heal and cure **illness**.

For a wide range of illnesses *Brugmansia* is the plant the *payé* is instructed to prepare as a medicinal remedy. *Brugmansia* species are used medicinally to treat rheumatism and arthritis, to induce vomiting, to expel gas, to expel worms or parasites from the intestines, to treat infections, and to expel pus from infected wounds.

B. suaveolens and *B. insignis* in particular are used as admixtures to increase the psychoactivity of other plant **entheogens**, like *ayahuasca*.

Brugmansia-induced trance states tend to connect the individual with his or her ancestors. The **Shuar** use this quality as a unique way of disciplining disobedient children. The child is given a drink of parched maize and *B. sanguinea* that induces an **altered state of consciousness** in which the child is connected with his or her ancestors. The ancestor spirits discipline the child and remind the child of his or her place not only in the communal structure, but in the unfolding of the ancestral **dream**.

Preparation

All parts of the plant contain psychoactive constituents to varying degrees, therefore there are many preparations for many different purposes. Teas or infusions are prepared in hot or cold **water** from crushed leaves and flowers. The leaves can also be mixed with an infusion of **tobacco**.

The leaves and/or flowers are crushed and the juice is taken straight, in a cold water preparation, or in **trago** (sugar cane alcohol) when used as a hallucinogen. The soft green bark of the stems can be scraped off and soaked in water, as another method of preparing the hallucinogenic drink. The seeds are powdered and used widely as an additive in **chicha**, a common drink made of fermented *manioc* (cassava) root.

Active Principle

The active principles of *Brugmansia* are similar to **Datura**: atropine, scopolamine, and hyoscyamine. These tropane alkaloids antagonize acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter, inhibiting any bodily functions dependent on acetylcholine's ability to transmit neural impulses in the brain. Scopolamine is found in the largest quantities and responsible for the hallucinogenic effects in all the *Brugmansia* species.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

Brugmansia induces a powerful trance with violent and unpleasant effects, sickening aftereffects, and at times temporary insanity. This is a heavy price to pay to speak to spirit and the reason the *payé* is often the only person allowed to use *Brugmansia* in many cultures. The *payé* will choose to use *Brugmansia* in cases of serious illness or illness that resists other treatment or in situations in which the results of the *payé's* divination will have a serious effect on a large number of people.

Brugmansia preparations induce full sensory **visions** and experiences with sight, **sound**, and taste that can be quite terrifying and distressful. The specific effects of *Brugmansia* vary with plant, preparation, and the individual drinking it. Generally, the plant induces a deep and violent altered state initially, during which the individual may need to be restrained. The individual slips into a stupor, with eyes fixed and mouth closed, then in approximately fifteen minutes the whole body goes into

convulsions, with eyes rolling and mouth foaming.

Eventually the physical distress passes and gives over to an extended sleep that is interrupted with sudden waking visions. In these visions the *payé* communicates with beings of the spirit world, the Ancestors, and the souls of the dead. *Brugmansia* is used by non-shamans who are in deep need of particular prophetic visions.

Songs and Dances

Once the plant hallucinogen is ingested, the *payé* usually **chants** to the spirit of that plant, to focus the trance state on answers to the problem and the **power** to help. For example, after drinking the hallucinogenic tea the Ingano *payé* begins a long, monotonous chant to the spirit of *Munchiro Borrachero* asking for the insight into the cause of the illness and the power to cure it. Songs or chants are also necessary components in the proper preparation of the different hallucinogenic or medicinal preparations.

Use in Western Medicine

Alkaloids like scopolamine and atropine have been used in modern **medicine** for over one hundred years. Scopolamine is commonly used to prevent motion sickness. Atropine is used in ophthalmology to dilate the pupil. Together scopolamine and atropine are used to decrease muscle spasm and gastric motility.

The traditional preparation of *Munchiro Borrachero* is used to treat a specific strain of streptococcus and *Brugmansia aurea* is considered effective by modern medical standards in the treatment of rheumatic pains.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

———. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Brujo

A brujo is a sorcerer who works with fear and other malevolent energies. The brujo works toward malevolent or benevolent ends depending on personal interest or gain. Traditionally they are feared for their ability and willingness to use an individual's fearful feelings of exclusion, isolation, and separation against them in acts of **sorcery**.

Shamans and brujos use similar techniques to work in **altered states of consciousness** with the energies of the invisible world.

Brunfelsia

Several species of *Brunfelsia* are used as **sacred plant hallucinogens** in the Colombian, Ecuadorian, and Peruvian Amazon. *Brunfelsia* grows in the tropical zones of **North America, South America**, and the West Indies. It is a woody shrub or tree with flowers of five petals, unfolding from a bell-shaped calyx and ranging from blue to violet. *Brunfelsia chiricaspi* is found in western **Amazonia** where it is known as *Chiricaspi* and *Chiric-Sanango*. *Brunfelsia grandiflora* is wider ranging, growing from Venezuela to Bolivia in western South America. In Colombia it is commonly known as *Borrachero*.

Use

Brunfelsia chiricaspi has a wide spectrum of medicinal uses, ranging from treatment of yellow fever to snake bites. *Brunfelsia grandiflora* subspecies *Schultesii* is widely cultivated in western South America for medicinal purposes.

Brunfelsia is also considered a sacred plant and spirit guide because of its hallucinogenic properties. The roots, and less frequently the leaves, of *Brunfelsia* can be prepared alone or as an admixture to preparations of **ayahuasca**. Prepared alone, *Brunfelsia* is used only when the shaman is faced with a particularly difficult or persistent problem. The use of *Brunfelsia* as the primary hallucinogen is decreasing due

to its potent toxicity and unpleasant side effects. Today *Brunfelsia* is primarily used in preparations of *ayahuasca*.

Preparation

Brunfelsia chiricaspi leaves are used by Kofán, Siona, and Ingano shamans to prepare the hallucinogen, which has harsh side effects due to its high toxicity. The Kofán and the **Shuar** add *Brunfelsia* to heighten the hallucinatory effects of **Banisteriopsis** when making *ayahuasca*.

Active Principle

The *Brunfelsia* species found in western Amazonia have highly toxic psychoactive properties, though the active principle has not been isolated. Scopoletine, which has been isolated, is not known to be psychoactive.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

The distinguishing characteristic of *Brunfelsia* intoxication is a sensation of chills, which gives rise to the name *Chiricaspi* or “cold tree.”

Use in Western Medicine

Brunfelsia grandiflora subspecies *Schultesii* is under investigation as a potential drug affecting cardiovascular activity.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

———. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Bullroarer

A sound-making device used by **shamans** in many **cultures** around the world. It is often associated with thunder and lightning and shamanic acts to influence the **weather**, like rain making or diverting storms. The bullroarer is made from a flat piece of wood fastened to the end of a string. The free end of the string is held while the end attached to

the wood is twirled around above the head. The **sound** emitted is much like an eerie wind. *Rhombus* is the bullroarer's technical English name.

Buryat (Buriat)

A shamanic people of the **Altai** Mountains in Central Asia. The Buryat practice an independent and indigenous tradition of esoteric **knowledge** more ancient than **Daoism (Taoism)**, Buddhism, or Hinduism. The Buryat and Mongol **shamans** are the bearers of what remains of the spiritual tradition, philosophy, and science shared by the Central Asian peoples. The general patterns found in the **shamanism** of this region are those of **Siberian** shamans.

At the foundation of Buryat shamanism is a unique system of values based on the unity of all things. Unity allows harmonious functioning of people and nature. Unity requires that each person have a clean **energy** connection to the environment. This relationship exists in time and space and must be acted upon regularly, though actions influence both sides for better or for worse.

Buryat shamans are the *odigon* female and the *boo* male. The strength of a shaman is determined by his or her *udkha*, or line of mystic continuation. The power of the **helping spirit** who calls the shaman into the vocation and initiates him/her determines the power of the shaman. The strongest shamans were initiated by *tengeri*, the **Sky**, and called *tengeri duuddamshi* ‘incantators to the Sky.’

The Buryat shamans who practiced in the beginning of the twentieth century possessed knowledge, much of it secret knowledge, and power unknown to the Buryat shamans of today. Contemporary Buryat shamans do not have the power and knowledge to fully follow the classical traditions of their shaman **ancestors**.

Cosmology

The spirit world is composed of three realms, the **Upperworld**, **Middeworld**, and **Lowerworlds** that are inhabited by beings. The realms have levels, or

planes, that are represented in seven, nine, or twelve (*tapty*) notches, steps, or rungs that appear in myths, **dreams**, and shamanic rituals. In the Buryat Upperworld, for example, the **Moon** inhabits the sixth level, the **Sun** inhabits the seventh level, and *Bai Ulgen*, the supreme sky deity, inhabits the ninth level. Merkyut, the bird of the Upperworld, assists shamans in traveling to the Upperworld.

In the beginning of time the Buryat explain that there were only Buryat *Tengri*, the gods. The *Tengri* in the west created humans who lived happily and the *Tengri* in the east created humans who suffered. The western *Tengri* gathered to discuss how to help the eastern humans and decided to send them a shaman. They sent Eagle from the east who flew down to **earth** to help the humans. But Eagle could not speak the human's **language** and, unable to communicate, Eagle returned to the Upperworld unsuccessful.

The *Tengri* gathered again and decided the Eagle should return to earth and bestow its shamanic powers on the first person it met. Eagle flew back to earth and came upon a woman sleeping. Eagle had intercourse with her and transmitted its shamanic powers to the woman. This woman became the **first shaman**. In other versions of the story the son born of her union with the Eagle became the first shaman.

The early Buryat shamans who acquired their shamanic powers from the *Tengri* were said to perform displays of great power. They traveled across great distances like lightning, they could see at a distance, locate lost items, and foretell the future with great accuracy. They were able to see the spirits, into souls of men, and to hear the voices of the dead. These powers are said to have waned because the first shaman (son) wasted his powers by continuously challenging the gods and incurring their punishment.

Tree of Life

The birch tree is the Buryat **Tree of Life**, the Cosmic Axis that connects the spirit

realms and allows the shaman to communicate with the gods. The birch is called *udesi burkhan*, "the guardian of the door," referring to the function of the Tree of Life as the entrance to the spirit world for the shaman. It is also called *sita*, meaning "**ladder**" and *geskigiir* meaning "step." It stands in effigy in the shaman's tent as a mark of office.

Soul

The Buryat conceive of the human soul as a **multiple soul**. The first soul resides in the bones and at death it remains in the skeleton. The second soul resides in the **blood** and at death it is eaten by spirits. This soul can leave the body and is roughly equivalent to the **free soul**. The third soul resembles the person and at death this soul appears to humans as a ghost. The primary cause of illness is the theft of loss of one of the souls.

Helping Spirits

Traditionally, Buryat shamans received their *utcha*, the shamanic divine right, or powers, directly from the *Tengri*. It is a later **evolution** that shamans receive their power from Ancestor spirits. The Ancestor spirits and **animal spirits** function similarly as **helping spirits**. They convey the shaman into the spirit world, reveal the mysteries of the vocation, and teach skills, techniques, and songs. The shaman sings to call on the helping spirits, like Merkyut who comes **singing** in response and sits on the shaman's right shoulder.

The animal helping spirit is the *khubilgan*, a term interpreted as "metamorphosis," from *khubilkh* which means "to change oneself" or "to take on another form." The shaman can merge with the **power animal** and assume its form and powers. Buryat shaman challenge one another, fighting the battles in animal form. If a shaman's *khubilgan* was killed in the fight, the shaman died soon thereafter.

The Call

The candidate is called by the spirits, either the *Tengri* or a shaman ancestor. The candidate's soul is forcefully taken

into the spirit world, often leaving his or her body in a state of mental or physical illness. The spirits of the Upperworld teach him or her. They visit the gods of the Center of the World, Tekha Shara Matzkala, the god of the **dance**, fecundity, and wealth, who lives with the nine daughters of Solboni, god of dawn.

These deities work only with shamans and only shamans make **offerings** to them. Much of the teaching transpires as energy transmitted through sexual intercourse with the spirits. While leaning and **training**, the candidate's soul learns through sexual relations with Tekha's nine wives. When the training is finished, the candidate's soul meets his or her future celestial spouse in the **sky**. The shaman will continue to learn through this relationship for the rest of his or her life.

Training

For many years after **the call**, the candidate's first ecstatic experience, training continues in dreams, **visions**, journeys, and dialogues with the spirits. The candidate prepares in solitude, often taught by old master shamans, particularly the master ("father/mother shaman") who will perform the candidate's **initiation ritual**, during which she is consecrated and recognized by the public as a shaman.

Initiation

After at least two to three years of training, *kharaga-khulkha*, the public initiation ritual, is performed. Prior to the ritual, a **purification** ceremony is performed, during which the candidate is purified in **water** three to nine times traditionally.

This purification by water is obligatory for shamans at least once a year, but is often performed every month coinciding with the new moon. This purification process is used each time the shaman becomes contaminated during a **healing** ritual. If the contamination is especially grave or involved **sorcery**, the purification may be performed with blood instead of water.

The birch plays a central role in the *kharaga-khulkha* initiation of the Buryat shaman. A birch is cut and placed in the center of the yurt, with its branches extending through the central hole above the tent roof. The chief birch inside the yurt is connected by one red and one blue ribbon to a traditional arrangement of birches outside. The ribbons represent the rainbow the shaman traverses to reach the Upperworld. The initiate ascends the tree, with a saber in his or her teeth, performing in the physical world what is happening in the Upperworld. The shaman climbs the nine levels to enter the realm of *Bai Ulgen*.

There is **singing** and dancing with at least nine dancers. Nine pigs are sacrificed and the initiated shamans drink the blood and enter into a long, ecstatic trance. The festival continues for several days, and eventually transitions from **sacred** ritual into a public celebration. The candidate's family and numerous guests participate.

Healing

The shaman performs **divinations** to make diagnoses and prescribe remedies. When **soul loss** is diagnosed the shaman utilizes **trance** to enter into the spirit world, locate the lost soul, and return it to the patient's body. The shaman also functions as **psychopomp**, escorting the souls of the dead to the underworld.

In a Buryat **soul retrieval ritual** the shaman and patient are surrounded by **power objects**, among them an arrow. A red silk thread is attached from the point of the arrow to the birch set up outside the yurt. The patient's soul will travel along the thread on its return, through the open door and re-enter the body. The Buryat believe that the horse is the first to perceive the return of the soul and shows it by quivering.

On a table in the yurt offerings of cakes, *tarasun* (a **libation**), brandy, and **tobacco** are laid out, along with anything the person particularly enjoyed. Friends and people of the age of the

patient are invited to the healing. All of this is done to remind the soul of the pleasures of life in the body and to help entice it to return.

Black & White

Traditionally, Buryat shamans worked with the spirits of the Upperworld and Lowerworld without prejudice. However, possibly due to the influence of outside **religions**, there evolved a clear distinction between the “white” shamans, the *sagani bö*, and the “black” shamans, the *karain bö*. The *sagani bö* communicate with the spirits of the Upperworld and the *karain bö* communicate with the spirits of the Middle- and Lowerworlds.

The **costume** of the *sagani bö* is white and for the *karain bö*, blue. This dualism, which appears in Buryat mythology, became more pronounced in the culture over time. For example, there are innumerable classes of demigods divided into black Khans and white Khans who share a fierce and mutual hatred. The black Khans are served by the “black” shamans who are the only practitioners able to intercede with these spirits.

Power and the Gods

According to Buryat legend the first shaman possessed unlimited power. *Khara-Ghyrgen*, the first shaman (son), continuously tested his power against the gods, tricking and angering them. In one legend *Khara-Ghyrgen* declared that his power was boundless. A god, hearing this, stole a girl’s soul and shut it up in a bottle to test him. The god put his finger in the bottle to be certain the soul did not escape.

Khara-Ghyrgen beat his two-headed shaman’s **drum**, entered trance, and flew through the sky, sitting on his drum. He found the god with the soul in the bottle. *Khara-Ghyrgen* transformed into a spider, stung the god’s face, and rescued the girl’s soul when the god pulled out his finger from the bottle to strike the spider. Furious, the god curtailed *Khara-Ghyrgen*’s power and from

that day forward the magical abilities of shamans diminished.

The Drum

The original shaman’s drums were two-headed **frame drums**. They were used to induce trance for the shaman’s journeys to the **Land of the Dead** to retrieve lost souls. The Buryat tell an ancient story about the Lord of the Dead and how he grew angry at the shamans for stealing these souls back. In an effort to destroy the shaman’s powers, the Lord of the Dead struck the shaman’s drum with a thunderbolt, splitting it in two. This is why most of the Buryat shamans work with single-headed drums today.

The Buryat Costume

Spirits and their powers are embodied in the Buryat shaman’s **costume**. The costume of the female shaman includes two sticks with one end fashioned into a horse’s head and encircled by bells, thirty black and white pelt “snakes” that hang from each shoulder to the ground, a number of metallic figures sewn onto the costume, representing horses, **birds**, and other **power animals**, and her cap made of iron fashioned into three points representing deer antlers.

The cap and stick horse mark levels of initiation. At the first initiation the cap, in the shape of a lynx, is not **metal** and the “horse” is made from the wood of the birch, of which care is taken to be certain that the tree does not die. After the fifth level of initiation the shaman receives the iron cap with representative deer horns and a horse of iron sculptured into a horsehead decorated with numerous bells.

Paraphernalia

The Buryat have numerous **paraphernalia** which are kept in a chest with the cap, drums, stick-horse, furs, bells, etc. Also included is the *abagaldei*, a large grotesque **mask** made of hide, wood, or metal and fashioned with an enormous beard. Finally, attached to the chest or the costume directly is the *toli*, a metal **mirror** with the figures of twelve animals attached to it.

- Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.
- Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.
- Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Bushmen

A term used by outsiders to indicate the **!Kung** or Ju|'hoan people of the Kalahari Desert of **Africa**. "Bushman" has been used as a racist term by outsiders in the past. Today some value a conscious political decision to enoble the term by using it to mean an independent and nonconforming individual who is not controlled by the central authorities. Other peoples of this region simply choose to use the general term "**San**" for themselves. See also **Ju|'hoansi**.

Bwiti

A **religion** practiced cross-culturally in the Gabon and Congo regions of **Africa**. To enter the Bwiti religion initiates must see Bwiti, the **Ancestors**. The only way to see Bwiti is in the **altered state of consciousness** induced by *Iboga*, the **sacred plant entheogen** utilized by Bwiti followers.

Through *Iboga*, members of the Bwiti religion can connect with their Ancestors and maintain a direct, personal relationship to their common origins as these Africans. This experience changes the once hostile individualism of warring tribes into the unifying individualism of a common origin. Bwiti practitioners are able to maintain a sense of identity apart from the Western world and stop the destructive influx of foreign ideologies, societies, and religions like Christianity and Islam.

Zame ye Mebege, the last of the creator gods, gave the people "*Eboka*." The Bwiti origin story explains that one day *Zame* saw the Pygmy *Bitamu* gathering fruit high in an *Atanga* tree. *Zame* wanted *Bitamu's* spirit. *Zame* made *Bitamu* fall to his death so that *Zame* collected

the Pygmy's spirit. Then *Zame* cut the fingers and toes from the body of *Bitamu* and planted them throughout the forest. The Pygmy's fingers and toes grew into the *Eboka* bush.

Iboga is found primarily in the wet, tropical zones of west-central Africa, primarily the Congo and Gabon. A root of the Dogbane family, it is the most prominent **plant hallucinogen** used on the African continent.

Use

Iboga is essential to the Bwiti spiritual practice as well as to other secret societies in Gabon and the Congo. Within the Bwiti spiritual practice *Iboga* is used for two purposes. First, it is used in the initiation **ritual** to "break open the head" of the new candidate and allow the Ancestor spirits in. Second, it is used by initiated members to connect with the spirit world for guidance from their Ancestors.

For initiation into the Bwiti religion, initiates are given massive doses of the pulverized root. One to three basketfuls are consumed over an eight to twenty-four hour period in one or two portions during the course of the ritual. After consuming these large amounts of *Iboga*, the initiates sit in the middle of the ceremonial building. They wait for the desired physical collapse and hallucinations through which they will visit or be visited by their ancestors. The contact is essential for the initiates.

During the initiate's comatose-like collapse, his or her soul has left the body and the initiate is now a *banzie*, roughly translated, an "angel." *Banzie* refers specifically to the freedom of the soul from the physical body. The soul, now in the spirit world, begins to wander with the ancestors to visit the gods. One *banzie* recalls his initiatory experience, "I walked or flew over a long, multi-colored road or over many rivers which led me to my ancestors, who then took me to the great gods."

Regularly a limited dose is taken before and in the early part of the **ceremony**. A much smaller dose is taken

again after midnight. The **altered state of consciousness** desired is characterized by the feeling of floating or flying and a visual sensation of rainbow-colored spectrums of light surrounding objects. These rainbows are interpreted as the **sign** that the soul is nearing the realm of the ancestors and the gods.

Nyiba-eboka refers to the religion, spiritual practices, and rituals developed around *Iboga* and the Ancestors. There are complex ceremonies with dances and songs that are essential to the Bwiti spiritual practice. These vary

greatly by locale because the Bwiti practice unites peoples of many different tribes, who all bring their traditional dances and songs. The cultural importance of *Iboga* and the related Bwiti spiritual practices are seen everywhere, particularly in the growing number of followers.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.



Caapí

See *ayahuasca*.

Caduceus

The pair of intertwined snakes in the classical symbol of health. In this symbol the snakes represent balance between opposites, which describes the state of health of the human body. Historically the snake is associated with health through its eternal relationship as a **helping spirit** for the **shaman**, and the snakes of the *caduceus* (Egyptian) survive as a symbol for health and **medicine**.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

California Region

The indigenous peoples of north-central and north-coastal California have a view of **disease**-causing agents that is unique to **North America**. **Illness** is believed to be caused by the intrusion into the body of “**pains**,” as they are referred to in the anthropological literature. Pains are the cause of all disease, death, and trouble. These same pains are also the source of the **shaman's** power, so much so that the measure of a shaman's **power** is directly proportional to the number of pains held in the body.

Pains are **energy intrusions** sent by a spirit, sorcerer, or someone with intent to harm the victim. Pains are in and of themselves supernaturally powerful and are in that way distinguished from the energy intrusions that cause illness in other **cultures**. Other energetic intrusions are

given power by the spirits or sorcerers who create them; their power is not innate.

Pains manifest in a variety of forms, frequently forms clear and sharp at both ends. They are able to fly from source to victim and continue to move even after being extracted from the body of the victim/patient.

The shaman takes the pains into his or her body after they are extracted from the patient. In this unique way, the shamans of California gain **healing** power through an acquisition and control of pains. Additional pains can be acquired by dancing and fasting at isolated spots or by extracting them from patients.

There are other unique sources of power for the shamans in this region. **Dwarves** are a source of power for the Shasta, Atsugewi, Northern Maidu, and Yuki shaman. In these regions the *axeki* (pains) are conceived of as having human form. They are found in rocks, streams, lakes, mountains, the **sun**, **moon**, and some stars. The *axeki* become **helping spirits** for the shamans.

Among the Yokuts, Wishram, and Tenino, power is acquired from water-monsters. These long-haired beings live in the **water** and are another source of supernatural power for the shaman.

Generally in North America the shaman and the **priest** have distinct and sometimes antagonistic functions. The priest can be considered a keeper of **ceremony** whose position is secured through **knowledge**. The shaman can be considered a creator of **ritual** whose position is secured through the ability to enter **trance** and direct the powers of the spirits to the aid of humans. Among the California tribes the distinction between priest and shaman is sharply drawn in the **north** and **south** and all but disappears in the central region.

There is also a strong tradition of the **transformed shamans** throughout the California region. The traditional Klamath, Pomo, Tolowa, Yokut, Yuki, and Yuma—to name a few—recognize

female, male, and **gender-variant** shamans. The transformed shamans are generally believed to be the strongest spiritually, in that they were able to draw from both realms of humanity. The women are considered the next strongest spiritually and the male shamans the least strong spiritually. Many transformed shamans were renowned for their power and ability to cure illness.

Park, W. Z. *Shamanism in Western North America*. New York: Roman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1975.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Wissler, C. *The American Indian*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938.

Camay

A technique widely used by **shamans** to blow balance, unity, and health into people, plants, and minerals. To *camay* is to convey a **blessing** onto another. *Camay*, the Peruvian **Quechua** word for this technique, is difficult to translate. Roughly it means to blow the Connection-of-all-things, the life-giving **spirit** of all things, onto another being. The creator, Viracocha, *camayed* the **dream** that became the universe into existence.

Shamans *camay* with the breath alone. However, *camaying* is more often performed with a **sacred** liquid which the shaman sprays in such a way that the patient is enveloped in a fine mist. A highly refined liquor, like *trago* (cane alcohol) is used, as is freshwater, flower essences in water, and freshly ground spices, like cinnamon, in a sacred liquor.

Shamans also *camay* with **fire**. The shaman *camays* a liquor, like *trago*, across the open flame of a candle. The mist of liquor ignites and the patient is enveloped in flames that cleanse, but do not burn.

Perkins, J. *The World Is as You Dream It*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1994.

Candomblé

Candomblé is the oldest and purest of the many Afro-Brazilian spiritist traditions. The teachings and practices are directly descended from the ancient and traditional African **religions**, primarily Yoruba (originally of the peoples of southwestern Nigeria).

African people were brought across the Atlantic to work as slaves on the sugar plantations in the northeastern part of Brazil in the 16th century. These people retained large segments of their culture and religions even though people of tribal nations were separated and their **languages** and customs outlawed.

As a way of concealing their outlawed spiritual practices, slaves worshipped when their Catholic plantation owners did. Gradually the African *orishas* (gods/goddesses) became syncretized with the Catholic saints, but the *orishas*, beliefs, songs, dances, and musical instruments survived. With emancipation in 1888, Afro-Brazilians began to practice their religions more openly.

Orishas are living, energetic forces that manifest themselves in elemental forces of nature, social functions, and directly through **incorporation** into human beings during Candomblé rituals. These **possessions** or **embodiment trances** are intentional and desired. The ability to enter and exit these trances is cultivated. Master adepts of the Candomblé traditions are referred to as *babalorixa* (male) and *yalorixa* (female).

The Candomblé in Salvador were primarily of Yoruba origin. Originally the mediums were only women. The Candomblé de Caboolo in Salvador added cultural elements of the indigenous peoples. Today Candomblé remains a religious practice of the lower class in Brazil.

Goodman, Felicitas D., J. H. Henney, and E. Pressel. *Trance, Healing, and Hallucination: Three Field Studies in Religious Experience*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974.

Cangkdeska Wakang

The “**sacred** hoop” or **medicine** wheel ever present in the rituals, **altars**, and ceremonies of the Plains peoples. In its simplest form the medicine wheel is symbolized by a limb bent into the shape of a hoop. An equal-armed cross is often added, dividing the hoop into four quadrants and symbolizing the four winds or four directions. Even in these simple forms the *cangkdeska wakang* implies all of the **colors**, winds, directions, spirits, and teachings associated with the wheel as a whole.

In the medicine wheel the **Lakota** associate black with the **west** and the home of the Thunderbeings who send them rain. White is associated with the **north**, the source of the great white **cleansing** wind. Red is associated with the **east**, the source of light and home of the morning star who gives humankind wisdom. Yellow is associated with the **south**, the summer, and the power to grow. See also **shamanic symbols**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Cannibal Dancers Society

Ojibwa healing society. See *windigokan*.

Cave

Caves, used as portals between the worlds, are often the sites of **shamanic** initiations. They are places between here and there, functioning both as earthen **wombs** of creation and receptacles for the dead. Caves embody the essence of initiation, death, and rebirth.

The **Arunta (Aranda)** of **Australia** initiate must sleep at the mouth of a cave, allowing the spirit of the cave to kill him and take him into the **earth**. There the **spirit** replaces his internal organs with magical viscera and returns his soul to his body, to awaken a new man. In **Nepal** initiates fall into trances during which their souls are taken to the cave of *Ban jhakri*, the **forest**

shaman. There *Ban jhakri* and his wife test the initiates’ cleverness and purity of heart, discarding those who fail. The initiatory spirit for the Dancing Societies of the Kwakiutl (**North America**) also resides in a cave.

Caves are the **domain** of powerful spirits or **power** spots in and of themselves. In these **sacred** chambers of the earth the **shaman** is permitted access to the presiding spirit or power. Shamans use this power to clarify or confirm **divinations** or to incubate **dreams**.

There is evidence that caves may also be selected by shamans for their resonance, which would enhance the chanting and **music** of the **ritual**. Chambers with higher concentrations of cave paintings, believed to record the **visions** of the shaman while in **trance**, also showed better resonance than chambers with little or no cave **art**.

The cave art, from 16,000 or 10,000 B.C.E. found in caves across the plains of Europe, is believed to have been produced by shamans to communicate their journeys in the spirit world. The cave walls are covered with people engaged in ritual, shamans in heightened energetic trance states, animals, **phosphenes**, and **therianthropes**. The size of handprints found in more than twenty caves throughout Italy, France, and Spain offers evidence that the shaman artists of the Paleolithic era were women.

Krupp, E. C. *Skywatchers, Shamans & Kings: Astronomy and the Archaeology of Power*. New York: Wiley, 1997.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Celtic

The general Greek and Roman name applied to most of the tribes of peoples inhabiting Ireland, Scotland, Wales, England, and the adjacent continental Europe at the time of the Roman

invasion of England in 55 B.C.E. The “Celts” were not British, but the Indo-European incomers who arrived in the sixth and seventh centuries B.C.E. They subjugated the previous peoples, namely the Picts in North Britain and the Fomorians in Ireland, and established themselves throughout the area by the fourth century B.C.E. These tribes were never united into one “Celtic Nation”; they had different **languages**, tribal names, and diverse lifestyles, which reflected the ways they drew their livings from the diverse lands they now spread across.

Nonetheless, these tribes are treated together as an ethnic group because they shared distinctive racial, cultural, and spiritual continuities. They shared similar customs and values: they were wild, fierce, enthusiastic warriors and boastful, colorful people, flaunting body ornamentation and jewelry. They shared similar institutions, some of which created recognizably Celtic products, like metalworks, **storytelling**, poetry, and **song**. They also shared similar beliefs in family, hospitality, feasting, drinking, loyalty to clan and tribe, the presence of spirit in all things, the inherent connectedness of all things, and the immortality of the human soul.

At least part of the Celtic shamanic tradition is the tradition of the R'nDraic—the knowledge bearers. Much of that knowledge was recorded on the **ogham** stones, which the R'nDraic read. For centuries people were not willing or able to hear the knowledge and the R'nDraic were considered evil; they were persecuted and killed for practicing their beliefs.

The destruction of the pre-Christian spiritual life of the Celtic peoples by missionaries and governments of subsequent invading forces was quite thorough. The spiritual and shamanic life of the Celts was wiped out or sent underground with the introduction of Christianity in C.E. 431. The spiritual roots of the Celtic peoples may be even more elusive than those of the native peoples of **North America**. Though the

task of uncovering them is similar, they have been lost for many more centuries.

Like the powerful spirituality of the **first peoples** of North America, Celtic spirituality was denigrated and labeled as superstition by classical writers from other cultures and villainized and outlawed by conquering governments and their **religions**. Yet, even with the variations between peoples in style and form, there was a vital Celtic spirituality that at its heart was shamanic.

The shamanic traditions never completely disappeared; Celtic people can still be found today practicing prophecy and **divination** (skrying), second sight, spiritual **healing**, poetic **invocation** and communication with the “Otherworld.” The blending of the natural and supernatural accounts for the strong strain of mysticism running through Celtic thought and **culture**.

Cosmology

From surviving Celtic literature we can piece together the Celtic **shaman's** view of the Universe. It is first and foremost centered around the Great Tree, or the **Tree of Life**, which for the Celts was the **Oak**. The Great Tree functioned as the connection between the **Upperworld**, the **Middeworld**, and the **Lowerworld** in the Celtic shaman's universe. As in many cultures the Great Tree is the means by which the shaman travels between the worlds. The Celtic shaman stands in the center of this Universe superimposed on the Great Tree.

The Middeworld (*Abred*-Welsh) stretches out from the center, from the trunk of the Great Tree, in all eight cardinal directions. It contains both the physical world that we inhabit and its Otherworldly dimension, symbolized in the stone **omphalos** at its center. These planes of existence overlap and interrelate in such a way that we can find portals and access one dimension from the other.

From the branches of the Great Tree the shaman accesses the Upperworld (*Gwynvyd*-Welsh for White Land), the place of the stars in a vast, spiritual

sense. The Upperworld contains the stars as beings, as well as the **sun**, the **moon**, and the other heavenly bodies, gods, goddesses, and many **helping spirits** in other forms. The shaman can view the entire cosmos from the Upperworld and move out into it for teaching and inspiration.

From the roots of the Great Tree the Celtic shaman moves into the Lowerworld (*Anwn*-Welsh), the realm of the **ancestors**, the primal beings who are the founders of the Celtic race. It is the **domain** of spirits of the **earth**, **fire**, and of the beasts. The **crystals** imbedded in the roof of the Lowerworld empower and light the realm, reflecting the stars in the night **sky** and the heavenly bodies of the Upperworld. In the Lowerworld the Celtic shaman encounters the Lord of the Lowerworld, the Goddess of the Earth, and the stag-headed god who guards the Well of Segais, the Source from which all knowledge comes.

The Seven Rivers of Life flow from the Well of Segais out into the Lowerworld and upwards into ribbons of rainbow **energy** which encircle all of the worlds in the Celtic Universe. Within the flow of the energies of the rivers of life are the **spirits** of the **air** and the water and the all of the totem beasts. Finally all of this: the three worlds, the Great Tree, and the energy of the Rivers of Life are all seen contained and living within the shell of a hazelnut that rests on the lip of the Well of Segais.

Above the Upperworld is *Ceugant* (Welsh), the ineffable realm of deity. All of these realms both ordinary and nonordinary exist in the **Kosmos**, or *manred* (Welsh), the underlying pattern of it all.

The Glyph

One single glyph appears on stones throughout all the Celtic countries. It is the basic pattern of two crossed lines, marking the four directions, enclosed in a **circle**. This circled cross is a “short-hand” symbol of the Celtic Universe. Like a cross-section taken from the

hazelnut resting on the Well of Segais, this simple circled cross, with its above and below dimensions imagined, becomes a map of all the worlds. This glyph is often represented with eight lines, and for those with an understanding of the shaman’s Universe, it is symbolic of the many layers of meaning that correspond with the eight spokes. In this way the glyph of the circle cross represents the foundation and order present in every dimension of **ordinary reality** and **non-ordinary reality**.

It is understood that the Tree of Life and the shaman stand in the center both literally and symbolically. The following list contains examples of the layers of meaning that correspond with the cardinal directions and other positions around the center of the circled cross. Each of the following elements of Celtic cosmology, whether natural or mythical, have symbolic meaning.

The sources of power important to Celtic spirituality include Hollow Hills, the Blessed Isles, the Sacred Grove, the Spirits of the Forests, and the Head of Wisdom. The most essential **power objects** are the Musical Branch, Cauldron, Blade, and Cup.

Spiral of Creation

The Spiral of Creation is woven of **sacred space** and sacred **time**. The Celts believed this **spiral** to wind simultaneously upwards and downwards, in such a way that any one point could touch any other point at any time. All eventualities become possibilities as the energy of the Spiral of Creation pulses between occurring and reoccurring.

Sacred Time

Time was sacred for the Celts. In Celtic stories there are few references to time; those that appear are references to seasons, time of day, phase in the moon cycle, or stage in the character’s **life cycle**. Time was not valued as the linear movement of cumulative events through space, as it is for modern man. The sacred time of the Celts moved in the spiral of the cosmos where each

event affects the whole. Thus timing was valued—timing a **ritual** with the phase of the moon or a festival with the sun solstice—time was not.

For example, a woman of the R'nDraoic shared this teaching from her grandmother. She and her grandmother had spent the full moon nights for three months healing an oak tree. The woman, then a child, expressed her frustration that the tree had not acknowledged all of their effort on its behalf. Her grandmother replied, "This is your first lesson in how irrelevant time is . . . Time is not relevant, it is not significant. We don't know time as it really exists. What we have in this world is an illusion." Two months later the Oak's expression of gratitude brought tears to her eyes.

Natural Events

- The four great festivals of the Celtic Year (seasonal),
- The Sun Festivals; two Solstices and two Equinoxes,
- The twelve divisions of the Moon cycles,
- The four directions.

Mythical Events

- Four stages in the cycle of human life,
- The spirits of the four elements: Earth, Air, Fire, and Water,
- The pantheon of gods and goddesses,
- The ogham alphabet and word-oghams,
- Helping Spirits of all kinds,
- Culturally valued qualities; e.g., compassion, inspiration, endurance, power,
- personally valued qualities that are added to the wheel based on the shaman's life experience, dreams, lessons, and achievements.

All of these layers of meaning and many more interrelate. For example the layers of the four directions, the elements, valued qualities, and word-oghams relate as follows and correspond accordingly on the wheel:

- **East**, Air, Inspiration, Renewal, and the Path of Opening the Way,

- **South**, Fire, Changing ways, Growth, and the Path of Coming into Being,
- **West, Water**, Creativity, Love, and the Path of Passing Within,
- **North**, Earth, Strength, Clarity, and the Path of Finding Wisdom.

As the shaman used the symbolism within the wheel and worked with the associations again and again, the patterns of nature and the relationships between the inner and outer worlds are revealed to him or her.

Sacred Space

The Celtic shamans and people celebrated and honored their relationship to Spirit out in Nature, open to the elements. To the Celt, space was also sacred for it provided access into the Otherworld and the Sacred Spiral. Ordinary three-dimensional space was valued most highly when it contained portals into the fourth dimension, into the spirit realms. Such sites are often called power spots because some manifestation of the Earth's power is felt more strongly there than elsewhere. Selecting powerful spaces allowed the shaman to work with "ley" lines, rivers of energy which form a natural grid across the land.

The Celts also saw the sacred in the "betwixt and between" places: places where water touches land, mist, moors, fog, bogs, twilight, dawn, and dew. These places and conditions were symbolic of transformation and one's ability to live between worlds, both highly valued by the Celts. All edges and borders between elemental realms or complementary terrains or simply places where opposites meet were places filled with magic.

Portals into the World of Sunlight

All of these sites, whether naturally occurring or power spots enhanced by human hands, served as portals into the Otherworld. Everywhere the Celt duplicated his or her sacred universe, the channels between the worlds were opened. The Otherworld was experienced as a place of tremendous healing

and light. It was a place of love, of the Source of all things, and of the Wholeness of existence. By moving through these portals and out of Space and Time, the Celts entered the Sacred Spiral and connected with the Source of all things where they received healing, inspiration, and an experience of Oneness.

Stones and Stone Circles

The Celts used the ancient stone circles and standing stones, like Stonehenge and Avebury, that were already put in place by the peoples living on the land before the Celts. The clearings encircled by stones functioned like the groves encircled by **trees**. The large stone monoliths functioned like the Oak tree for the Celtic shaman; they are the ***axis mundi***, the Tree of Life connecting all the worlds and allowing movement between them.

Many sacred sites of stone are simply dolmens, portals of two (or more) huge stones standing upright, topped with a lintel stone. Through them the shaman finds entry into the Otherworld.

Springs, Rivers, and Lakes

Springs, rivers, and lakes were believed to all ultimately come from the Well of Segais and to bring messages up from the Lowerworld. All water flowed from this Source and back again as it passed through its cycle of water to the sea to mist/vapor to clouds to rain that trickles finally back into the ground, returning to the Source. Thus the water was wise, carrying the information from infinite transformations of form and the reconciliation of opposites necessary to complete the cycle of life.

Wells

Wells were held sacred for many reasons. One because of their association with water (above), and two because they were important entries to the Otherworld. Through them the Celtic shaman could connect to all the other worlds through the various forms of water. Wells were places of healing,

transformation, and connection with the people of Faere. Wells were also held sacred for a third and practical reason; they played an essential role in the prosperity of the land. When the well, or the maiden of the well, was abused or treated with disrespect and ran dry, the land, the crops, and all the people suffered.

Groves

Natural groves of trees, *nemeton* (from *nemed* meaning **shrine** and *fidnemed* meaning a forest shrine), were used as sacred sites, as were the ones created intentionally by planting trees in a circle. Trees were seen as conductors of energy, like the Tree of Life. The grove, with the trees encircling, represented the universe of the Celtic shaman; like the circled cross, it was a cross-section of the hazelnut resting on the Well of Segais.

Mounds or Long Barrows

There is evidence that the Celts used ancient mounds, or "long barrows," for ritual and **ceremony**. Like the monumental stone structures, the mounds were built before the Celts arrived, as far back as 200 B.C.E. In the Irish literature the mounds are known as the palaces of the Dananns (see Dwellers of Faere below), however exactly how they were used is no longer clear. What we do know is that they were places where the humans met the people of the Hollow Hills, the people of Faere.

Within each barrow a microcosm of the Celtic universe was again reproduced. The dome within the mound symbolizes the Upperworld; in the River Boyne the mound is 30 feet high and 338 feet across. The ground below reflects the same shape in construction and is symbolic of the Lowerworld. Within the center of the mound, representing the Middleworld, was an entrance to a passageway with spiraling designs carved into the stone which leads into the center; at River Boyne that chamber is 20 feet high. Most mounds have four chambers at each of the four directions.

Some chambers contain stones carved with shallow oval basins.

In the smaller mounds, a tree or pole would have been set in the center, functioning as the Tree of Life. On the larger mounds, in the past, a stone monolith would preside, serving as the *axis mundi* for the ritual work performed within the mound. Smaller stones (usually thirty-five) encircle the outer edge of the mound, symbolic of successive rings of creation. On some mounds an inscribed ogham stone is positioned on top of the mound. There are hundreds of these mounds, large and small, found across England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland.

Ogham Stones

Many natural sacred sites are centered around ogham stones, stones bearing inscriptions in the ogham alphabet. There are over three hundred ogham-inscribed stones lying in the earth in Britain and Ireland, dating as far back as the fourteenth century C.E. These stones are portals into the Otherworld for those who are trained to travel there. The inscriptions locate the portals and leave messages there for those who can read the Ogham and understand the deeper meanings.

The Ogham stones were the giant rock tablets of the R'nDraoic. They carved what appear to be simple notches into the stone that actually tell a dimensional story for those who are able to read it.

The Otherworld

The Otherworld is the common Celtic term for the invisible realms within the shaman's Universe that we can not see with ordinary eyes. In the land of the Celts, it is filled with many beings in human form. The Otherworldly beings particular to Celtic traditions are "the good people" or the "people of *sidhe*" (pronounced *shee*), who are the ancient gods and goddesses who dwell in the Hollow Hills. They are the faeries of folktales.

"Faeries" are a race of beings who have mastered the **art** of living in both worlds. Celtic tales are filled with accounts of humans and faeries intermarrying and bearing faery children. Faeries are not necessarily small, unless they choose to be. In *Irish Fairy and Folk Tales*, W. B. Yeats said, "Everything is capricious about them, even their size." There are accounts of faeries who are smaller than human size, the same size, and larger size, even up to fourteen feet tall.

In Celtic faery lore there is a reoccurring theme that the beings of the Otherworld need human contact. For reasons that are not necessarily clear, the *sidhe* actively seek to share their wisdom, power, and secrets with humans. To this end, faeries enter ordinary reality to be with humans and cause humans to enter into the *sidhe*, into their realm. It is as if it is necessary for the survival of both species that we communicate and help each other. It is the shaman who recognizes the importance of the **interdependence** between spirit and human beings to the structure and fabric of the Universe.

For the Celtic people the Otherworld is real and alive. It is not an archetype or a product of the imagination. It is a world, a realm, experienced by all the senses in the journeying altered state. It is the source of reality and in that it feels in many ways even more real than the physical realm itself.

The Array of Celtic Helping Spirits

The *sidhe*, the people of the Otherworld, the people of Faere, are the Celtic equivalent to the Siberian shaman's helping spirits. The people of Faere, the Otherworldly kings, queens, gods, goddesses, and men and women, set out seemingly impossible tasks for training the **apprentice** shaman. They then help the initiate in person or through intermediate forms, much like the **animal spirits** that help the Siberian Shaman through his initiation and in his healing work.

Dwellers of Faere

The *sidhe*, the peoples of Faere, are also known as the Lordly Ones or the People of Peace. Scholars believe that the origins of the Lordly Ones are lost to us, however an ancestor of the R'nDraic—the *knowledge bearers*, who also seem to have been shamans—relates the following history of the Lordly Ones:

The R'nDraic were part of the Tuatha De Danann (also Dé Danaan and Dé Danann) tribe. Anann means women and sunlight and about thirty other things, yet they all also mean caring. They were the children of Danu (also Dana, D'Annu, D'Anna), the Goddess of Light, the Soul. In their day they were a great people. Their home was known as the Isle of Saints and Scholars. They were heroes.

When their knowledge appeared extraneous in the tide of Christianity, the Tuatha De Danann were defeated by Fir Bolg and driven out of Ireland to the Isle of Skye. However, they wouldn't leave Ireland. They returned to watch over Ireland and her people, by transmuting themselves, entering the spirit realms, and becoming the “other people,” or the “little people” (though they weren't necessarily little) of Ireland. Even today in Ireland the descendants of the R'nDraic in our world can pass through the doorways into the other realm. There they meet their ancestors, the spirit warriors led by Eochair-namban (aEochaidh) who stand ready to defend Ireland.

Gods and Goddesses

Celtic **shamanism** was an integral part of the Celtic culture and tradition. There was no centralized Celtic pantheon, but an array of gods and goddesses of many names and varying characteristics that arose in a localized way from the people and the geography. Many of the gods and goddesses of that tradition take their place in the shaman's Universe, around the circled cross, and are there to assist the shaman in his or her journeys and healing work.

Breeyid—Brighid

The Goddess of fosterage, learning, inspiration, and smithcraft. She is also seen as a strong protector, **teacher**, and healer, such that many healing wells are named for her.

Blod-eye'weth—Blodeuwedd

Blodeuwedd, a beautiful woman in a dress of flowers, came to the Celts from the plant world. Created from flowers by magicians, she is less sympathetic towards humans and their foibles. However she is a strong protectress of the natural world and in her Owl form she helps in cases of persecution.

Looch/Hleye—Lugh/Llew

Warrior gods of sun, light, warmth, and inspiration, Lugh (Irish) and Llew (British) are steadfast companions in trying times. Lugh, also known as *samil-danach*—“the many gifted,” and Llew—“skillful hand,” is the patron of poets, the talented, and the inspired.

Govann'on/Gub'noo—Gofannon/Goibnu

Gofannon (Irish) and Goibnu (British) are the smith gods who are historically in relationship with the shamans of their people. They are the gods who refine the **swords** of warriors and the **souls** of mankind. They are patrons of smiths, craftspeople, and all in fields of labor or design demanding great skill of the hand and eye.

Brahn—Bran

Bran, also known in the form of Raven, is the Lord of the Gods, the giver of primal and ancestral wisdom. He is a god of protection, boundaries, guardianship, and inspiration. He is the patron of storytellers and a protector of travelers.

Man-ann-awn/Man-ow-with'an—Manannan/Manawyddan

Manannan (Irish) and Manawyddan (Welsh) are gods of the sea, fertility, and procreation. They are restless and skillful and give the gifts of sight beyond sight and wise-skills.

Kerid'wen—Ceridwen

Ceridwen, the goddess of barley and pigs, brews the potion of wisdom and inspiration from which the shaman

must drink. Her powers are best invoked when making remedies or conceiving new projects.

Arown'—Arawn

King of the Underworld, Arawn is a powerful protector who provides access to ancestral wisdom. He crosses into the world of humankind and may be invoked to protect those who travel through places that appear unsafe.

Arriann'hrod—Arianrhod

Arianrhod is the goddess of destiny and the mistress of the Spiral Tower, the place of initiation within the Otherworld. She is often represented with moon-like symbolism, carrying a silver wheel. She is invoked for inspiration, divination, and to gain clarity of personal destiny.

Makk-a—Macha

Macha is the battle goddess; she is an ally of great power in times of true need. Yet, be warned, she has little patience for the small problems of humankind. She is the carrier of the mirrored maze, a symbol of her ability to take the soul beyond life.

Rig-an-ton-a/Hree-ann'on—Rigantona/Rhiannon

Rhiannon is the daughter of the Lord of the Underworld; her older name is Rigantona, meaning "great queen." She is the goddess of horses and the protector of sacred land, which she embodies. Wrongfully accused for the death of her child, she helps the wrongfully accused, those overburdened with responsibilities, and women who have suffered miscarriages.

Teeger-Nonos—Tigernonos

Tigernonos, great king and Rhiannon's consort, is the primal god of the Celts, possessing supernatural powers and deep wisdom. When invoked he offers empowerment, earthly wisdom, and the guidance of a strong, reliable companion along difficult paths through ordinary and non-ordinary reality.

The Green Man

The Green Man, with vines in his hair and beard and leaves growing from his

mouth, nose, and ears, is perhaps older than the gods and goddesses of the *sidhe*. He is both a fertility god and guardian of the earth whose charge it is to prevent her misuse. He is the Wild Man who has taken many guises over time. Whatever his form or name, the Green Man of the Forest teaches each generation of their Oneness with Nature—oneness with the earth herself and with all that share her as a home. The Green Man teaches that human lives cycle just as the rest of Nature from birth, through growth, realization of potential, death, and rebirth.

The Horned One

Lord of the Animals or the Animal Master is common to many shamanic cultures. The Animal Master may be male, female, or both. Where the humans live with herds of horned animals, the Animal Master is seen with horns or antlers. The shaman, wearing horns or antlers, dances into a **trance** enabling him or her to merge with the Animal Master and to talk to the Spirit of the Animals, divining the information necessary to assure a good hunt.

In Celtic times the Animal Master was an antlered guardian, possibly Cernunnos, though that name is based only on a partially transcribed inscription. It is unclear whether the figure portrayed on the Gunderstrup cauldron (a Celtic artifact from 200 B.C.E) in an antler headdress seated in the journeying position and staring into the Otherworld is the Animal Master or a shaman seeking communication with the Animal Master. The ambiguous **gender** of the figure, who is both beardless and breastless, is often a characteristic of the shaman who stands between worlds.

Ancestors

Ancestors also present themselves as helping spirits for the apprentice shaman, particularly if the ancestor was a shaman him- or herself. It is the responsibility of the ancestors to hold the memories of the people, the

teachings, and the wisdom gained from the past, all the way back to the dawn of humankind. Through the Ancient Ones, the Ancestors, the Old Ones, the Grandmothers and Grandfathers, the shaman draws of the collective wisdom of the Ancestors and translates it into information and visions appropriate for the time, the ritual, or the healing at hand. The Celts were known to fast in preparation for sleeping on the grave sites of ancestors for the purpose of seeking visions or special powers.

Totem animals

Celtic shamans and Celtic people have totem animals; spirit beings who attach to humans at birth. The totem animal is in a sense inherited, it is connected with the family and clan. Celtic shamans were trained to retain their relationship with their totem animal from childhood. Their totem animal is a representation of their shamanic identity to their ancestors in the spirit world and is symbolic of the qualities that individual expresses in the physical world.

The following is a list of twelve totem animals and the qualities traditionally attributed to them by Celtic peoples. These are the animals that appear most frequently in Celtic stories; this is not a complete list of Celtic totem animals:

Brionnfhionn—Salmon

Salmon swims in the pool at the foot of the Nine Hazels of Wisdom, who drop hazelnuts into the pool where they are eaten by Salmon. Salmon is able to transmit this wisdom to others, often those who eat him, and for this reason Salmon is associated with wisdom and gaining knowledge.

Abhach or Sailetheach—Deer or Stag

The Deer, both male and female, is a magical creature that leads people into the Otherworld. The deer often shapeshifts into a beautiful woman. For the Celts, Deer represents travel into Faere (the Otherworld), **shapeshifting**, and the qualities of swiftness, grace, and keen scent.

Cab-all—Horse

Horse, as with people of many other cultures, was seen by the Celts as a symbol of power, speed, and stamina. Horse is also seen as a faithful guide into the Otherworld and therein.

Aracos—Hawk

Hawk is a helper in journeys of spirit flight, especially those to the ancestors in search of **knowledge**. Hawk is also a symbol for far-reaching memory and for traveling far.

Iolair—Eagle

Eagle, as with people of many other cultures, was believed by the Celts to carry the qualities of swiftness and keen sight. In addition the Celts saw in the Eagle a depth of wisdom and knowledge of the Otherworld and because of this Eagle is also associated with magic.

Airc and Bacrie—Sow and Boar

The pig, in male or female form, is associated with the inspired visions of shamans, poets, bards, and prophets. Pig, an Otherworldly animal, is believed by the Celts to carry great totemic power and strength.

Druid-dhubh—Blackbird

Blackbird sings its mystical song at twilight, the time that is neither day nor night and is therefore a time of going between. The Celts believed that the song of Blackbird could transport the listener between worlds. For those who listen, Blackbird shares deep secrets about the Faere, the Otherworld, and magic.

Badb and Bran—Crow and Raven

For the Celts, Crow is the bringer of knowledge, though not always the kind the listener wants to receive. Thus, Crow is often seen as a bird of “ill-omen.” Crow is also symbolic of skill, cunning, and single-mindedness. Crow is an accomplished companion in the Otherworld, though tricky. Like Crow, Raven is seen as an oracular bird, who brings messages both welcome and unwelcome without bias. Because of this trait, both **birds** are associated with war and the battlefield.

Caoit—Cat

Cat is invoked as a guardian for protection. Cat also shares the ability to conceal one's inner strength and powers until needed, and then to defend them fiercely and fearlessly.

Balgair—Otter

The Celts honored Otter because it lives successfully between two worlds, water and earth, and is believed to possess great wisdom due to this trait. Otter is also believed to possess qualities of faithfulness, single-mindedness, and the ability to conceal one's essential abilities and inner treasures. Otter is symbolic of invulnerability and thus aids recovery in **healing** work.

Abach—Hound/Dog

Hound is known for the skills of the hunt, speed, perseverance, scenting, and tracking. Hound's "near-human instinct" makes it a frequent companion.

As-chu—Eel

Eel eats Salmon and thus carries similar traits of giving wisdom and inspiration. However Eel is also a great protector, particularly when actual defense is necessary, physical or energetic.

Power Animals

Celtic shamans developed working relationships with animal helping spirits in addition to their totem animals. The totem animals above are also potentially helping spirits. Like the **totem spirits**, **power animals** provide specific powers and skills that the shaman calls on in times of need. Unlike the totem spirits, the power animals do not represent the shaman's identity in the spirit world.

Animals that lived "betwixt and between" the worlds of air, water, and earth were particularly potent allies; their wisdom helped the Celtic shaman to live between the ordinary and Otherworldly realms. Waterbirds (associated with the Sun gods) like ducks, geese, and cormorants, and otters and beavers were honored for this reason. Frogs and others animals whose **life**

cycles involve transformation were also powerful allies supporting the shaman's own personal transformation into a third type of being, one able to live between the worlds in the harmony of the Kosmos.

The shaman invokes different animal spirits and asks to embody the animal or their special qualities. By establishing a relationship with the animal, the shaman may use the animal's great powers and particular strengths to accomplish the healing or other task before the shaman.

Gaining access to the special qualities of the helping spirits is just one facet of the extraordinary relationship between the shaman and their helping spirits. The shaman also learns from the helping spirits. The animals may teach the shaman **power songs** and/or give the shaman the **words** to invoke power (to call power in) or to cast intention (to send power out). Shamans may also learn the language of the animals and at times speak that language while in trance.

The Elements

The Celtic shaman worked with the four elements: the spirits of the earth, air, fire, and water. The shaman also worked with the **elements** in their combined forms, of which there are many in this land filled with windy moors, bogs, and sea islands rising from the mists and vanishing into the fog. Working with these elements the shaman was able to effect changes in **weather** and the environment around him or her.

The shaman also worked with the spirits of the earth and the sky as beings. This work is different than working with the earth and air as elemental spirits. The earth and the sky are complex beings; in that complexity lies their great powers. The elements are pure essential powers; their great power is that they are pure and not complex.

The Plants

All the plants of the Celtic shaman's world were potentially helping spirits,

e.g., vines, heather, ivy, ferns, honeysuckle, witchhazel, gorse, gooseberry, and other berries. Trees were particularly prominent helping spirits in the Celtic shamanic tradition. The following list of trees begins with the Oak—the Tree of Life, the center of the Celtic shaman's Universe:

Oak—The Tree of Life

An Irish woman trained in the shamanic practices of the R'nDraic explains that the Oak is the Tree of Life. It is part of the shamanic culture and it is like a road system that enables the shaman to journey into other worlds.

The trees were functional as energy channels to move between the worlds and as helping spirits themselves. The following trees were recognized by the Celts, who named the letters of their ogham alphabet after them in Gaelic. Some of the trees' symbolic characteristics are listed:

Birch—beginnings and cleansing

Hazel—wisdom and inspiration

Ash—clarification

Apple—youth, power, and the Otherworld

Other trees relating to the Ogham letters: Elm, Rowan, Alder, Willow, Whitethorn, Hawthorn, Holly, Elder, Aspen, Mulberry, Fir, Broom, Blackthorn, Pine, Furze, Yew, Elecanpane, and Beech.

Shapeshifting

In the following poem from the Welsh shaman/bard Taliesin we see reported one of the most powerful opportunities afforded the shaman through his or her relationship with his or her helping spirits, shapeshifting:

I have been in many shapes:

I have been a narrow blade of a sword

I have been a drop in the air:

I have been a shining star;

I have been a word in a book;

I have been an eagle;

I have been a boat on the sea;

I have been a string on a harp:

I have been enchanted for a year in the foam of water.

There is nothing in which I have not been.

To have been all things is the key component to the Celtic shaman's ability to access the power to help others to heal. Through this merging the shaman experiences the energetic truth that all things are made of the same energy, that they share the same power, and that that power and energy moves between them, sharing consciousness and the creative power of life. Therefore, healing is a shifting of energy between the need for healing and the ability to heal.

Whether or not the Celtic shamans were able to physically shift form, the act of identifying with the animal spirit in question gave the shaman that animal's perspective of the world. As the shaman continued to identify with and learn from animals, plants, elements, and the faere folk he or she became able to cast an ever broadening web of awareness out until he or she was ultimately aware, literally from the perspective of all things, of the interconnectedness of all things. The Celtic shaman embodied through shapeshifting the connectedness of all things, the central belief of the Celtic worldview. Given the abundance of Celtic poems like Taliesin's above, we can assume that the desire and ability to connect with all things was not limited to shamans, but embraced by poets, bards, and potentially even the common folk.

Orientation

The Celts as a people were deeply and daily aware of moving between the worlds. To do this well, and without getting lost, one needs to be able to orient oneself in space and time, regardless of the landscape. It takes six coordinates to locate a single point in space. This is why the Celts honored the four directions and the earth and the Sky. By orienting themselves between the North and South, the East and West, and the earth and sky, they located their own center, the seventh point, within.

Journeying

A Celtic shaman of the tradition of the R'nDraoic—the knowledge bearers—received his or her calling from the **Otherworld**. Training came from the spirits and other shamans often in the family, like a grandmother or grandfather. In contemporary times the training is carried out in secrecy and extreme fear of being committed to a mental asylum if discovered.

Celtic literature and art show us that the Celtic shaman's regular position for journeying was probably sitting, with a prone position used when embarking on long **journeys**. John Matthews, a scholar of Celtic shamanism, believes that the sitting position for journeying is portrayed on the Gunderstrup cauldron (a Celtic artifact from 200 B.C.E.) and that the figure on the cauldron is a Celtic shaman in an antler headdress and not Cernunnos as is often assumed. Similar to the yogic half-lotus position, the sitting **posture** for journeying involves pulling the legs up, knees relaxed and open, and tucking the left foot under the right thigh and leaving the right foot slightly in front of the left.

The shamans of the R'nDraoic also journeyed collectively in the sitting position. Each person would prepare and define where he or she was going and what they were to do once they got there.

For long journeys into the Otherworlds, Celtic shamans often prepared themselves for days with fasting and **cleansing**. These journeys were taken lying prone, covered by or lying on a blanket or shawl with the corners near the head folded in to cover the eyes. Often these journeys were accompanied by **drum, music**, or song to aid the shaman in leaving and returning.

Vehicles used to support the journey

Music

Several **vehicles**, or tools, were used to support the shaman in his or her journey. Mentioned most often in the literature are those of music, chanting,

singing, and darkness. These tools, coupled with the preparatory practices of prolonged fasting, cleansings, and sleep deprivation would be adequate to support a journeying practice. The use of music is also in keeping with the shaman's relationship with the people of *sidhe* and their use of "faere music" to induce trance in humans. The harp, the Musical Branch, and song appear most often in the literature.

The Drum

What does not appear in the literature is the use of the drum, though the Irish have a drum very like the Siberian shaman's drum called the *bodhran*. There are many viable reasons for the drum's absence in the literature. Two of the most practical are: the drum alerts others to the practice of shamanism, which Celtic practitioners were trying specifically not to do as Christianity forced their practices underground. The other could be that the drum was common, interwoven into daily life, festivals, and music of the people as was their connection with the Otherworld and not noted.

Whatever the reason, the use of the drum is widespread in shamanic practices. Given the presence of the *bodhran*, it is not unreasonable to speculate that Celtic shamans used the drum at times to support their journeys. The *bodhran* is a single-headed **frame drum** made from cowhide, deerskin, or goatskin. The *bodhran* is still used on the significant days of the ancient ceremonies, implying use during much earlier times when the practice of shamanism was still widespread.

Psychoactive Plants

The literature suggests that the Celts may also have used a mixture of psychoactive plants to facilitate particular journeys, though it does not appear to have been the norm. It is not clear in what situations the shaman would have employed this vehicle.

The Call

"Taken by the faeries" is a common phrase used to explain odd behavior

and debilitating **illness** with no obvious cause or cure. When the Celtic society was still shamanic, “taken by the faeries” meant one had been called into the initiation crisis of the shaman. It was common that the illness or madness lasted for seven years. To others it would appear that the individual was depressed, in the throes of some unknown physical illness, or simply behaving in odd, socially unacceptable ways. For the individual, the journey had begun. They had stumbled or been drawn into the Otherworld and were engaged in an adventure of some kind with the Faerie Folk. How the individual resolves the journey, and if he or she does, determines whether or not they become a shaman.

Training

Learning how to use one’s senses in the spirit realms is the primary purpose of the shaman’s **training**. Celtic shamans were trained to use seven inner senses: instinct, feeling, speaking, tasting, seeing, hearing, and smelling. The great depth and breadth of understanding of the shamanic traditions was gained through experience: it was lived. Experience is the essential element in learning from the multi-layered symbolism of the circled cross; it must be lived to be understood.

The apprentice also learns the nature of the shaman’s Universe by journeying into and working with the many layers of symbolism of the circled cross. Each of the eight directions opens from the center onto a unique pathway of learning. Together, in their completion, they constitute the basic understanding necessary to engage the powers of the Celtic shaman’s universe.

Learning to read and communicate through the ogham alphabet was another aspect of the Celtic shaman’s training. The stone inscriptions were generally read from the bottom to the top, though that is not necessarily true for ogham writings on other mediums. There are many lists of glosses, some riddling glosses, some not even recorded to be

understood and memorized. Lists particularly useful to Celtic shamanism are the *Alphabet of the Word-ogham of Mac ind Oic*, the *Word Oghams of Morann Mac Main*, and Fionn’s Window from *The Book of Ballymote*, which is assumed to refer to Fionn Mac Cumhail who also experience the “illumination of wisdom.”

Fionn’s Window depicts the relationship of the ogham letters around the circled cross, a shorthand symbol of the Celtic shaman’s universe. The other lists contain systems of meaning for the letters. Together they create an overlay of “five dimensional” information that is quite remarkable. It begins to explain how the shaman was able to record the complex understanding of the Otherworld in such a simple alphabet.

Like other sacred and symbolic written systems, the literal translation is much less than the experience of interpreting the meaning of the message for oneself. To translate the messages into ordinary words rendered them very small and very lacking. Literal interpretation limits interpretation. Just as the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao, the inscriptions on the Ogham stones defy translation and invite the reader to journey through the portals found in the stones themselves.

Using only two lists, the *Word Oghams of Morann Mac Main* and Fionn’s Window, we can illustrate how quickly the depth of meaning in the alphabet alone evolves. Standing in the center of the wheel, like the Celtic shaman, we see that the work in the east opens the path of Opening the Ways. This work is air and spirit related. The Ogham symbols tell us it is a journey involving Challenge, Seeking, *Trian* (undefined), Beauty, and Protection. The work of the southeast opens the path of Strength and the journey involves feeling. Work in the south opens the path of Coming into Being. This work is fire and mind related and the Ogham symbols convey that the journey involves Effort, Satisfaction, Healing, Anger, and Inspiration. The

work of the southwest opens the path of Insight and the journey involves hearing, listening to spirit. Work in the west opens the Path of Passing Within. This work is water and emotion related and the Ogham symbols convey that the journey involves Misery, Travel, Fear, Insight, and Wisdom. The work of the northwest opens the path of Cleansing and the journey involves sight. Work in the north opens the Path of Finding Wisdom. This work is earth and body related and the Ogham symbols convey that the journey involves Age, Love, Defense, Death, and Opposition. The work of the northeast opens the path of Inspiration and the journey involves taste and smell.

Correct interpretation of the Ogham letters and inscriptions depends on a full spectrum of knowledge of various systems of meaning, knowledge of the relationship of the letter, or letters, to each other, to the full inscription, and to the context in which they are found. The letters communicate information only to those similarly trained. For individuals, like those of the R'nDraoic, the Ogham letters allow relatively secret communication, filled with secret meanings and five-dimensional stories about the shamanic mysteries.

The Celtic shaman's instruction occurs primarily in the Otherworld. When the apprentice asks "Where are these worlds?" the teacher answers "Go there." As in the case of the woman of the R'nDraoic, her grandmother was her teacher in physical form, however much of her training occurred in her journeys. Entering the Otherworld through her journey, she would meet her grandmother there in various spirit forms and be instructed by her.

Instruction also comes from the spirits of nature. The form was not as important as the content and the learning the spirits of nature offered. The trees, stones, elements, and other spirits of Nature can teach the apprentice in ordinary reality and the apprentice can journey into the Otherworld to learn from them there.

Things were "taken into the journey" as a training form and, later, as a healing form. Questions or problems seeking solution would be written on a piece of paper, folded up, and, without being read first, "taken into the journey." The woman of the R'nDraoic explains that at some point in the journey she would connect with her teacher and with what was being asked on a different level. Then she would go to one, or more, of the elements for the answers. Used initially as a training process, this journeying technique was also used for divination, **diagnosis**, and determining remedies.

Learning different means of protection from malevolent energies was also a part of the shaman's training. In one protective practice, called *lorica* (Irish) or *breastplate*, the supplicant verbally invokes an energetic armor. The armor is created through the imagery of the request from the energies of the four elements: earth, air, fire, and water, and of the spirit world.

Initiation

It is suggested that surviving the seven-year illness of being "taken by faeries" is the Celtic shaman's initiation. However, as **the call** and initiation are defined in this book, we must consider surviving one's initial experience in the *sidhe* as surviving the call to the shaman's life, not the initiation into the practice. Initiation for the Celtic shaman marked the maturation of their ability to be a person living between the worlds and to see life from a third point of view that is neither ordinary or Otherworldly, but both.

There is a great deal of training necessary to get from the place of emergence from the call to being capable of fulfilling the role of the shaman in a community and of sustaining one's own energy while doing so. It is probably safe to assume that since the Celts had celebrations, festivals, ceremonies, or rituals to mark every other passing in their lives, they also had initiation rituals for those who survived both the call

and the training necessary to master the art of **shamanic healing**.

The following is an example of only one woman's initiation, however it gives us a good sense of the form and function of Celtic shamanic initiations. Initiation for the woman of the R'nDraoic occurred when she was fifteen. For her it functioned as a unique passage crossed between the worlds. From it she gained recognition and was accepted into the R'nDraoic. That group was then able to further facilitate the flow of knowledge and awareness in her continuing growth as a shaman.

The woman recalls that the preparation lasted for seven days. Each step was accompanied by a story, which was followed by other stories of how that step had been accomplished by others before her for generations. Seven other people took part in her initiation because each one had a unique "basket of knowledge." She possessed some of the knowledge from each of the other "baskets" and an overview of them all that none of the others possessed. That overview was the unique shamanic gift she had been given at birth. Like the journeying, it had been with her all her life waiting to be trained and put into context so that it could be put into use.

The initiation ritual began with **purification**, then dedication, and finally consecration with all the elements. The ritual itself consisted primarily of working with fire and secondarily with all the elements. The central focus of the ritual was to become one with the fire. "The fire is like the emergence of life into the physical. The goal was to unify with the spirit of the fire to the point where he wouldn't burn me. So there was a point where I stood closer and closer to the fire and called on the spirit of the fire. . . We called on Tinne, the spirit of the fire, and at a certain point he came out and he embraced me and took me through the fire. And we danced."

After the close of the ritual there was a feast to celebrate her passage and to

break the participant's fast, which may have been at least seven days. The woman reports that to this day she renews this ceremony of the union with the fire and the elements every year on Beltaine.

Naming

We can assume that the Celtic shamans' training continued after initiation, because there was also a **naming** ceremony years after the initiation. The training probably shifted after initiation from skills and general practice to the development of the individual's unique gifts. For example, once initiated into the R'nDraoic, a member waited seven years to be named a name that came from within them and summed up the individual's essence and the gifts or traits they brought to the group.

Daily Practice

Elements of the daily practice of Celtic shamans are for the most part lost to us. However the daily practices of the Irish woman initiated into the R'nDraoic illustrates how Celtic "shamanic beliefs" were woven completely into the fabric of everyday life.

Speaking of her grandmother she says that it was her practice to "pay tribute" to the fire gods in some way every day and whenever she stoked or banked the fire. The predominant element used was fire and care was taken to always balance it with other elements. For example, when the fire was lit each morning a representative of each of the four elements was present: a little ash from the previous day's fire would be mixed with salt to represent the earth, the bellows provided air, and there was water from the well. When then fire was lit and brought in, the elements would all balance each other.

"Sourcing" was another aspect of daily practice. Sourcing is to draw on the power of an element, or other power source, by coming into union with it. For example, when stoking the morning fire the power of the earth and air would be sourced into the hearth and merged

with the fire to balance the elemental powers. In another example of “sourcing,” her grandmother sourced the power of the earth each morning by going out of doors, bending down, and putting some dirt on the forehead with the intention of raising and gaining the earth’s energy.

It was also an important part of one’s daily practice to honor and stay in good relation with the helping spirits. The woman explains that for the Celtic shaman it was essential to stay in good relation with the Oak. “It’s an entry way and because it’s the mighty oak only the good energies can come through it. You have to be on really good terms with the oak. Pay tremendous tribute to the oak to be allowed to use it for visiting or going from this world to the others.”

Divination

The Celts had many methods of divination. **Seers** have the gift of *shealladh*, literally “having two sights.” The most significant shamanic methods are listed below.

Tenm Laida

Tenm Laida is translated to mean the burning song, or illumination of song. Through this form the shaman accesses the power of **chant** to access **altered states of consciousness** necessary to communicate with the spirits.

Dichetal do Chennaib

Dichetal do Chennaib or Extempore Incantation is translated in several ways; all can be interpreted as forms of divination. The first, “cracking open the nuts of wisdom,” refers to divination as opening the nuts that grow on the nine hazels around the Well of Segais, which contain all the wisdom of the Otherworld.

The second translation, “incantation on the bones of the fingers,” refers to working with the ogham letters and mysterious ogham inscriptions carved into stones and other power objects. A third translation from the Irish law tract, *Senchus Mor*, suggests a divination technique using physical contact to

access ancestral wisdom. *Didhetal* is described as when a “poet” (prophet or shaman) was divining information. He or she places his or her staff on the person’s body or head to divine information about the person.

Imbas Forosna

Translated as Wisdom that Illuminates, *imbas forosna* is a form of divination using extremes of dark and light to inspire vision. In practice, a trained seer is placed in a dark space for a prolonged period. In this womb of darkness the seer is able to journey back into the Kosmos, into the **Emptiness** of creation and inspiration, of Death and Rebirth. When seers are brought forth suddenly into the light, they return suddenly from their journey and share the insights and illumination gained on their journey into darkness. Traditionally the **skulls** of dogs were crafted into power objects and utilized in the *imbas forosna* divination practice.

Dream Incubation

Dreams were used as a vehicle for self-induced visions. These dreams could be induced a number of ways including the position and or place of the sleeper, bodily contact with other men or women, and contact with the skin of an animal on which the sleeper lies, as in the druidic practice of *tarbh feis* or the Scottish *taghairm*.

Neladoracht—Divination by Clouds

The Celts saw clouds as a medium through which the winds and the spirit of Air communicated the mysteries to them. The winds from each of the directions were given a name, a characteristic, and a color. How these wind beings shaped the cloud told the watchers what they needed to know.

Ogham

Ogham is known as “the secret language of poets” or “the tree alphabet,” because each of the letters is named after a tree in Gaelic. It is an alphabet of twenty letters plus five more, probably added at a later date, described as *eochra exsi*, the keys of knowledge. The

creation of the ogham is attributed to *Ogma Sun-Face*, the god of inspiration and poetry. The original order has also been changed over time and from use. There are many different lists of “glosses” to the letters that ascribe different meanings to the letters and in so doing imply different systems of knowledge that can be accessed through the letters. There are lists that equate the ogham letters with desirable human qualities, body parts, trees, riddles, and elements of the shamanic experience and many more lists that are lost or were never recorded.

The complexity of this simple alphabet of slash marks and shapes comes from the vast and multi-layered range of symbolic reference required to be able to not only read the letters and words, but to actually derive the intended meaning. The translations of ogham writings are full of magical nuances that tie the alphabet to the magic and practices of the shamans, wizards, and witches of the time.

The ogham was used in divination by inscribing the ogham letters on billets of wood, drawing or casting the billets, and interpreting the resulting symbols. There are specific records of it being used to determine the sex of an unborn child and guilt or innocence in crimes with no witnesses.

Divination Journey

As with other shamans, the Celtic shaman used the journey for divination, diagnosis, and to determine an appropriate remedy. To accomplish this an ordinary reality object, or written question, was held by the shaman and taken into the journey to act as a magnet to attract back whatever was being asked for. For example, if the shaman is journeying to help a person, they would hold on their person something of tremendous meaning or power to that person as they entered into the journey. The object is then displayed in the journey to the helping spirit, who projects it outward into the spirit realms to attract the answer. Similarly, if the question is about how to get something to grow,

earth is taken into the journey to attract the answer.

Once the shaman has received what he or she is looking for, he or she asks permission of the tree used to journey into the Otherworld and the helping spirit found there to bring whatever is recovered in the journey back into ordinary reality. There must be agreement that whatever is being brought back belongs in the ordinary world and that it is accepted by all concerned.

Healing

Not much remains in detail of the actual Celtic healing rituals. However, there are descriptions that tell of pieces of Celtic shamans’ healing practices. In one practice an opening to the energy of the creative life force is opened with the hand and the flow of energy in the patient is intuitively returned to harmony. Another teaching is that of a clean heart to clear the heart channel and direct the conscious thought to will that the patient be all right.

When a shaman needed more of the life force energy for healing he or she reached into the realms where more of it is available, gathered it, brought it back, and sent it to where healing was needed.

The following is an example of a healing ritual using fire. The shaman determined that the sickness in the family was caused by a darkness in the house and lit small fires that took away the darkness that was causing the sickness. Like cleaning a house, she “cleaned” the darkness with the fires. Once the space of the house was cleaned, the shaman could look into the spirits of the family members and diagnose their needs. The shaman then worked with them individually.

Healing Techniques

The healing techniques believed to be used by Celtic shamans include, and are not limited to, the following: The healing power of the Word, found in **spell**, poem, **prayer**, and song is a powerful part of Celtic ancestry.

Dream Incubation

In **dream incubation** the shaman's role is the preparation of the patient for the ritual, the opening of the **sacred space** (physically and spiritually) for the patient to dream in, closing that sacred space, and aiding the patient in interpreting his healing dream.

The patient and the **dreaming hut, cave**, or grave must be prepared. The patient is cleansed physically and then spiritually through purification rites. It is not clear how the site was prepared, only that **offerings** to the helping spirits were made at the site before sleeping. The patient then enters the space and sleeps, questing for a dream containing the necessary remedies for healing or a visitation from a god, goddess, or helping spirit who performs a healing in the dream. If a dream did not come, the patient was instructed how to prepare further and when to return to dream again. If sleep did not come the needed information or healing often came in a direct, waking vision.

Chalk pipe

The chalk pipe was used by Celtic shamans (female) to get into a place of peacefulness. Once the desired state is invoked, it is possible that the shaman used the pipe smoke to **smudge** and clear the patient's energy.

Sticks

Sticks and stones were used (with their permission) as receivers of illness. In the healing work, the shaman diagnoses the root of the illness, connects with the energy of the illness as it resides in the patient, and then uses his or her hands to transfer the energy of the illness to the stick or stone. The stick or stone is then cleansed and left out of doors so that the energy of the illness can exit the carrier.

Stones

Stones, painted with symbols, have been found at ancient sites from the Northern Isles to Caithness. Common symbols from these stones can be interpreted as the circle cross, the **spiral** of

life, energy, stars, the Otherworld, gateway, sun, moon, eye, mountain, rivers, drum, and Kosmos. They may have functioned for Celtic shamans as the **churingas** (painted stones) function for Australian shamans. The stones are used as containers to hold powers for the shaman or they act as direction finders and maps of the shaman's universe.

Silver box

Silver box was used for carrying **sacred** messages into the journey. For example, the name of the person needing healing was placed into the box with power objects, like plants, stones, or sticks, necessary for the healing.

Teach-an-alais (Sweat house)

The *teach-an-alais* was shaped like a beehive with a low entrance. A fire was lit inside and allowed to burn until the floor and walls were hot enough to rake out the coals and add turf sods to create the moist steamy atmosphere. The patient was placed inside alone to sweat and quest for healing. It is not clear whether or not the Celts also used their *teach-an-alais* for purification rituals like the First peoples of **North America**.

Psychopomp

Psychopomp, escorting the souls of the dead through their death transition, was most likely one of the healing roles the Celtic shaman performed. The Celts' relationship with death was not fearful like that of post-religious peoples. They believed that the human soul was immortal and that eventually it would pass on to another body. Death for the Celts was "the center of a long life."

Celtic oral tradition is full of *immrama* (Irish) tales of fantastic voyages and adventures charting the soul's journey through this life and onto the next. Like the classic Books of the Dead, these tales assure the living that the final passage from these earthly realms to the Otherworld has been charted and they show the living the stages, experiences, and transformations necessary to complete

the journey. The *immrama*, maps of the territory and terrain of death, most likely came from the journeys of Celtic shamans. And having been there many times before and returning safely to tell those tales, the shaman is able to go again as psychopomp, to accompany those making the transition for the first time and to assure a successful passage.

Ritual

One of the primary rituals was a ritual to celebrate the running water of life. Running water was symbolic of the life-force energy that is the Source of life and flows through the living. The ritual celebrates the human ability to be a part of the river of life, to rise above it and to perceive it. The ritual is to recognize that and respect it, to remember to experience it with the joy with which it was given and to also view it from above.

Planting a tree is another primary ritual. The Celts always planted a flat stone from a riverbed or other source of water under the tree to draw the water to the tree. The ritual was completed by sprinkling sand around the tree.

Paraphernalia

It is not uncommon for the Celtic shaman to have received their power objects from the *sidhe* to learn from the people of the *sidhe* how to turn an object like a stone or a stole into an object of power. What appears again and again in Celtic literature is the need to return power objects to *sidhe* after the death of the shaman. Specific instructions are often left for the heirs to throw objects into a lake, well, or other means of returning them to Nature.

The Severed Head

Author Tom Cowan in his book *Fire in the Head* explains that the Celts believed that the soul was immortal and that the physical seat of the soul was in the head. From this belief sprang many Celtic traditions involving severed heads since possessing the head was considered the same as possessing the

soul, power, or spirit of the deceased. Skulls were treated as power objects. They were fashioned into goblets and used as cups at sacred wells.

For the Celts, the head represents and contains the sacred. For the Celtic shaman, the skull must be “emptied” of the shaman’s soul and his or her **ordinary consciousness** and then opened to the presence of Spirit and the shaman’s helping spirits. The shaman must enter this state of emptiness to work. Then cleared of ordinary consciousness the shaman’s mind becomes the gateway through which he or she journeys into the Otherworld. “Fire in the head” found in many Celtic legends is symbolic of an altered state of consciousness, as in the shaman’s journey or the battle trance of the warrior.

The Crane Bag

The “Crane bag” was used by shamans to carry their power objects and their healing and divination tools. The crane bag (made from the skin of a crane) was revered as the sea god, Mananan’s, container for secrets of magic and power. Crane is recognized for grace, its trance-like stance, and its association with the supernatural. As the Christian era unfolded, the crane became known as unclean and evil, and “crane” became a euphemism for “witch” because of crane’s association with the supernatural.

The Silver Branch

The Musical branch, or Silver branch, laden with bells, blossoms, magical **birds**, apples (symbolizing Otherworld), hazelnuts (symbolizing Wisdom), or acorns (symbolizing the Sacred Oak), is central to Celtic Spirituality. The branch is the hallmark of the Poet, and also a passport into the Otherworld. The shaking of the branch is said to produce faery music that lulls the listener into a dream-filled sleep where they may enter the Otherworld or they may be healed if ill or wounded. The branch is also symbolic of the Tree of Life, and through this symbolism it reconnects

the shaman to the center of his or her Universe.

Cup

The cup is symbolic of the cup of knowledge and truth, the empty hazelnut and the empty head. It also symbolizes a human's ability to be a holder of knowledge. Recall the cup being passed in preparation for the collective journey mentioned above.

Stole, Shawl, or Blanket

Stoles, shawls, and blankets were handmade for their use in the shaman's practice and often handed down from shaman to apprentice. Stoles made of heavy linen and hand embroidered were considered very sacred. The stole was used in journeys "to higher places," its shape defining the sacred space the shaman left from and returned to. Shamans spread the stole out on the ground, and lying on it, placed the front ends across their faces and eyes to block out light and other distractions.

Robes

The robes worn for shamanic work were usually very old, handed down from shaman to apprentice. The robes themselves were considered sacred and their significance was far reaching. The robes were also found in the Otherworld, at times distinguishing a familiar teacher who appears in an unfamiliar form during the journey.

There are also numerous references to the feathered cloaks of shamans in the literature. The cloak like other pieces of the shaman's **paraphernalia** is a power object. Intention and power is sung and chanted into the cloak while it is created so that the shaman can slip into that power when he or she slips into the cloak. In this way the cloak embodies the power its creator intends. It is not symbolic of the power, it is the power.

Celtic Festivals

The Celts were agricultural people; the passing of the seasons was important to them. The change of season not only

marked changes in the weather, but also changes in the relationship between the physical world and the *sidhe*. The Celts honored the day each of the four seasons began with great festivals. They are:

Samhain (*Summer's Death*): Nov 1.

Imbolc (*Time of Lactation*): Feb 1.

Beltaine (*Bright Fire*): May 1.

Lughnasadh (*Lugh's Wedding*): Aug 1.

Each of the four great festivals actually begin in the evening of the previous day. The Celts valued the movement from darkness into light and back into darkness again, therefore they measured the "day" from evening to evening. The period from Samhain to Beltaine was known as *an ghrian beag*, the lesser sun, and the period from Beltaine to Samhain was *an ghrian mor*, the greater sun. Each festival celebrates and takes advantage of a particular relationship between the ordinary world and the Otherworld. Each festival had great symbolic meaning and functional application for the Celtic people.

Samhain (Sa' wen): Nov 1.

The woman of the R'nDraic describes Samhain as "the beginning of the new year . . . the biggest festival . . . All the other worlds converge at that time. It's a time of tremendous power where you can really call on the elements . . . It's believed by our people that the gods at that time dropped their barriers between each other, between other realms . . . but when you do drop those barriers there is a convergence of negative energies, too." She continues to explain that Samhain celebrates our unity with all that is including recognizing the other realms that are not friendly to us. In Samhain the humans unite with the unfriendly energies and celebrate and **dance** together. "We kill them with joy and pleasure and happiness."

The boundaries between all polarities are questioned during Samhain. The blending of genders and uniting of what appears to be opposites through **costumes** and crossdressing reminded the Celts of the beginning when man and woman emerged from the Original Unity.

Samhain marks the high or low point of the cycle, depending on your perspective, however it is considered the “New Year” (or the time of the year renewing) because it is when the barriers between the physical realm and the other realms are overflowing.

Imbolc (*Im’olk*): Feb 1.

Imbolc is the time for Divination concerning personal direction and destiny. It is the time that the mother’s milk flowed for baby lambs and for the many babies born of joinings during last year’s Beltaine festival. It is the time to celebrate new beginnings of all kinds.

Imbolc is a festival of the family, the extended family, and the coming of all new life. Brigid the Goddess of Midwifery and Fosterage is honored.

Beltaine (*Bel’ta-na*): May 1.

Beltaine is the other major gateway between the worlds. Young people seek gifts from the folk of the Otherworld, the *sidhe*. They sleep outdoors over the night of the festival and often make love. In the morning couples drink deeply together from the well before sunrise, honor each other’s beauty by weaving flowers and leaves into each other’s hair, and then return to the village with a young sapling for the day’s Maypole festivities.

The Maypole is used to embody the energy of the Tree of Life and the festival celebrates the spiraling of the Universe around that central tree. A circle of dancers, alternating boy and girl, rings the tree with each dancer holding the end of a ribbon tied to the top of the tree. The girls dance in one direction and the boys in the other; in this way the dancers embody the great polarities of life, particularly death and rebirth. As the dancers weave in and out of each other, the ribbons wrap the tree in a double spiral (double helix), reflecting the interwoven nature of all life in the Universe.

Beltaine celebrates the end of winter and the beginning of summer. It is a time to ignore restrictions and commitments and to open to greater strength and realizing desires. Any child con-

ceived in the spirit of this festival time is considered sacred, the offspring of the God of Fertility and The Goddess of Spring.

Lughnasadh (*Loo’nas’a*): Aug 1.

Lughnasadh is the time for divining the communal direction and destiny. It is a time of **sacrifice** as the crops are brought in and the condition of the harvest is determined. The abundance of the harvest reflected the power and commitment of the tribe’s *tanaiste*, or monarch, chieftain. If the crops were not good and a decision was made to choose a more able ruler, the ritual games, business deals, and arbitration of this festival time would be the opportunity to do so.

Lughnasadh is the festival of the tribe. It is a time to celebrate the harvest, the flocks, and the resulting wealth of communal efforts. It is also a time to assess responsibilities, align commitments, and forge new partnerships and trial-marriages. Lugh, the god of Sunlight and Inspiration, is honored here.

Dark and Light in Balance

Writing about the Celts, authors spent a lot of energy talking about how the Celtic traditions are *light focused*, as if still trying to validate the goodness of Celtic spirituality in a predominantly Christian world. From this research it seems that the Celts were actually *balance focused*. The Celts were respectful and aware of negative energies and the need to work with them or become lost in them. Each festival begins at sundown and flows until the next. The focus seems to be on moving from the dark into the light and back into the dark again, always moving along the circle of existence. For example, Samhain celebrates their unity with all that is. It also recognizes other realms and energies that are not friendly. However the point of Samhain is to unite with these energies, to bring them into the celebration and to “dance” with them. In this way the power of what the Celts feared in the darkness is restored to

balance with joy and pleasure and happiness.

Poetry and Storytelling

The shamans were the first storytellers, largely because storytelling is a form of teaching. It was a means by which the shaman could teach the true nature of the Kosmos and her people's place in it. To offer a story in the Celtic world was to offer a sacrament. Storytelling allows the sacred mysteries to break through into ordinary consciousness where they open the mind to the possibilities of non-ordinary worlds.

In the Celtic tradition the story was so highly valued that roles emerged in the communities for poets, bards, and seanachies. The Celtic shaman was still a storyteller and a poet, however not all poets were considered shamans. Nonetheless both shamans and poets journeyed and the stories of both tell of shapeshifting. They both utilized the journey as a tool for their art; the shaman to create healing rituals and the poet to create stories and poems.

Celtic poetry contains shamanic themes encoded in the poems. The poetry tells tales of the initiatory experience from which comes great wisdom. The poetry often includes themes of rebirth, usually into animal form. The poems also tell of transformation into the manifestations of the four elements, into trees and different aspects of Nature, and ultimately into the whole of creation. It is this experience of All-that-is, of Oneness, that is central to all shamanism and found in the poetry of the Celts.

Poetry was seen as a gift from the Otherworld. While in the throes of composing a poem, Celtic poets were considered mad or to have been taken by faeries. The poets themselves report having flown like birds or having passed the time with the beings of the Other realm.

For the Celts truth derives from spirit and both the shaman and the poet journeyed to discover Divine truth.

From Divine truth came the universal order of things, the endless cycles of creation and death that weave into the Web of Life. This was the "fitness of things" and the Celts found it in Nature, in their relationships with each other, in art, and in each individual's life. The "fitness of things" lives at the heart of shamanism and at the heart of the Celtic culture.

Cowan, E. *Shamanism: Quarterly for the Foundation for Shamanic Studies* 5, (1992): 14–19.

Cowan, Tom. *Fire in the Head: Shamanism and the Celtic Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Encyclopedia of Celtic Wisdom: A Celtic Shaman's Source Book*. England: Element Books, 1994.

Ceremony

Shamans use ceremony and **ritual** to create the quality of **sacred space** necessary for their work with **spirit** to succeed. Though the **words** are used interchangeably today, ritual and ceremony are not the same. They are two powerful shamanic tools for creating change through the intervention of spirit in human affairs.

When a shaman creates a successful ritual the energy spirals upwards, towards Spirit and the Unknown; it is unpredictable and uncontrollable. That is the magic of ritual. In contrast, the magic of ceremony is predictable and controlled.

In a successful ceremony the energy spirals downward, towards the **earth**, drawing Spirit into the community. That is the purpose of ceremony, to ground people and to strengthen the community bonds and the bonds with spirit and the **Ancestors**. Ceremonies, like a first planting, a stomp-dance, a harvest celebration, or even a Catholic Mass or

Jewish Passover, are essentially the same each time. It is the familiar form and experience of the Divine that empowers ceremony to build community, ease the heart, calm the mind, nourish the soul, and to bring people into the same time and **space** with one another.

The success of a shamanic ceremony depends in part on the focused intention of the participants and on the absence of doubt. It is not important that participants believe or have faith, only that they participate with an absence of doubt. Traditional shamans were known to stop ceremonies and clear the audience of doubters to assure the success of the ceremony.

Somé, M. P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Chamber Mounds

Large mounds of earth that look like hills, but contain stone chambers constructed in various sizes and arrangements of rooms with connecting passages. Chamber mounds function as gates to the spirit world and are used for **dream incubation** and **ritual**. It is not clear whether the power of these sites is due to the **spirits** of the land, **Ancestor** spirits who dwell within them, or both.

These ancient mounds, or *tumuli*, are called *sidhe* in Ireland and *raths* in Scotland. They are also found in **North America** and other parts of the world. Some chamber mounds show evidence of being used for burial. Others show evidence of construction which exactly aligns the chambers and windows with astrological occurrences, like the winter solstice. Internal chambers range in size from ten meters in diameter to 50–100 meters.

Though the practice is rare today, there are stories of chamber mounds being used for ritual and dream incubation. The chambers are used in particular when the purpose of the ritual is to connect with the Ancestors who came to the land at the beginning of time. For example, legends describe how Newgrange, in Ireland, was used to connect with ancestral spirits.

It is said that the *Tuatha De Danann*, the ancestral spirits who ruled Ireland, were a race of supernatural beings who were reborn as mortals. It is believed that the *Tuatha De Danann* dwell in the chamber mound of Newgrange, as well as other *sidhe* across the countryside. Individuals seeking counsel with these Ancestors stayed in the dark mound chambers for three days and three nights, fasting and asking for guidance. During this vigil, **sacrifices** and **prayers** were offered in hopes that the Ancestors would appear in sleeping or **waking dreams** to give counsel, guidance, and **blessings**.

Chanjan

Chanjan is the **Tungus** term for the **souls** of the living. The soul after the death of the body is called the *omi*.

Kalweit, H. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1984.

Chant

Chanting is a tool used by shamans to enter **altered states of consciousness**. The function of the chant is two-fold. The arrangement of tones of some chants invoke specific **helping spirits** when chanted properly. In addition, some chants may serve to balance the left and right hemispheres of the brain, aiding the shaman in entering **trance**.

Chants and **songs** are used in **healing** and shamanic rituals. The **singing** of the chant is one of many ways the **shaman** weaves the container of **energy**

and guides its transformation throughout the course of the **ritual**.

Chants are part of the collected power of the shaman and are owned by the shaman in many cultures. In some cultures chants are sung quietly, so that they can not be stolen by other shamans or sorcerers. The shaman acquires chants directly from the **spirits**, as a means to call on them in the future. Chants can also be inherited from a human **teacher**.

Similar to entrainment with the pulse of the **drum** during shamanic drumming, chanting brings the heart-beat and breath into resonance with the body and the body in tune with the resonance of the chant. As the chant invokes the intended spirits the chanter comes into resonance with these spirit energies as well.

Chaos

Chaos is a state of randomness; it is the confused, disorganized state of primordial matter before the creation of distinct and orderly forms, like the cosmos. Chaos is by definition non-linear, however, scientists are finding universal patterns in chaos, like the behavior of the **weather**, flowing fluids, and humanity.

Few but the **shaman** thought of non-linearity as a creative force; yet it is non-linearity that creates the mysteriously beautiful patterns of most real-world systems. Chaos is a new way of seeing, a new attitude toward complexity. It turns back a trend in science toward linear explanations and reductionism (breaking systems down into smaller and smaller parts). What people are finally realizing is that reductionism has a dead end to it. Scientists are much more interested in the idea that the whole can be greater than the sum of the parts.

Gleick, J. "New Images of Chaos That Are Stirring a Science Revolution." *Smithsonian* 18, no. 9 (December 1987): 122–134.

Charm

A charm is a **power object** whose innate properties allow the manipulator of the charm to direct supernatural forces to create a desired result or to aid the manipulator in some specific way. Charms come in many different forms and can be directed to aid in many different purposes. Charms can be objects, substances, herbal mixtures, **songs**, **incantations**, and prayer **offerings** made to increase the efficacy of the **prayer**.

Unlike a **fetish**, charms are not created to embody a **spirit**. The spirit **power** of the charm is inherent to the charm. For example, the power of an animal charm does not come from possessing the **animal spirit** within it. The charm's powers are native to it and similar in qualities to those of the animal spirit. See also **medicine** and **talisman**.

Lyon, W. S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism*. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Ch'i (Ji, Ki)

Ch'i is the primordial life force and the **power** an individual derives from that life force. *Ch'i* begins in human life when the sperm pierces the egg and physical life is conceived. *Ch'i* is the continuous flow of **energy** linking everything within a person, the various tissues, organs, brain functions, etc. *Ch'i* also links the individual to the environment, environments to each other, and so on until everything in the Universe is connected.

Also known as *prana* or *kundalini*.

Chia, Mantak. *Awaken Healing Energy Through the Tao*. New York: Aurora Press Inc., 1983.

Chicha

A slightly fermented drink made by women from *manioc* (cassava root) and occasionally from fruits throughout **Amazonia**. *Chicha* is a daily staple food for many peoples and is almost their sole source of carbohydrate. An active man may drink four to five gallons a day and a woman two to three.

To prepare *chicha* the root is harvested, rubbed down, the poisonous (cyanogenetic glycoside) juice extracted, the pulp boiled, chewed, and the mash is spit back into a container where it ferments overnight. *Chicha* is prepared in dugout canoes for rituals where it is consumed in great quantities. It may take as many as ten days to make enough *chicha* for a large **ritual**.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

China

In the earliest records of Chinese history the *wu* (**shamans**), predominantly female, are described as experts in **exorcisms**, **extractions**, prophecies, rainmaking, **healing**, and **soul retrievals**. Their role in tribal society was to gather information from the spirit world to aid individuals and the community. They entered **trance** states to **journey** into the Unknown and gather the needed information from the spirit world.

The ancient Chinese emperors believed that all the wisdom of human affairs lay in the **Upperworld** and that access to that wisdom was necessary for political authority. Therefore the *wu*

was a crucial part of every state court. The influence of the *wu* was pushed aside around 200 B.C.E. when Confucianism became the central organizing belief system of the Chinese Empire. The *wu*'s shamanic performances in the Chinese court were abolished in 32 B.C.E. The Chinese became even more removed from their shamanic roots by the arrival of Buddhism around 200 C.E. Today the Chinese are primarily Buddhist, Taoist, or Christian.

The **shamanism** practiced by the many tribal groups also disappeared, in part due to the oppression of the Confucian government and in part due to the emergence of Daoists as a dominant shamanic group. To a great degree **Daoism** (**Taoism**) replaced the ethnic spiritual traditions of shamanic tribes.

Today it is through China's "folk Daoism" that the Chinese people are returning to shamanism. The roots of Daoism lie in the ancient shamanic practices with which it has always shared beliefs. However, after centuries of suppression, there are relatively few shamans who remain connected to and able to interpret the Divine.

Paraphernalia

The **drum** remains one of the most important **power objects** for Chinese shamans. The drum, often accompanied by the **rattle** or chanting and dancing, is used to induce the shaman's trance state.

Contemporary Chinese shamans tend toward elaborate **paraphernalia**: thrones, flags of different **colors**, skewers to demonstrate the depth of their trance state, **swords** and whips for exorcising of malevolent spirits, **costumes** for each of the deities embodied in trance, holy water, divining blocks, red ink, brushes, and charm papers.

The **sacred space** created for **ritual** by these shamans can be quite involved and eclectic. For example their **altars** may be populated by statues of Taoist deities, Hindu gods, Buddhist saints,

and the Madonna, as well as flowers, fruits, burning **incense**, and freshly brewed tea of which the visiting spirits will partake.

Plant hallucinogens

Yün-Shih, *Caesalpinia sepiaria*, is a shrubby vine used as a hallucinogen in China. The roots, seeds, and flowers also have medicinal value. The earliest Chinese herbal manual, *Pen-ts'ao-ching*, states that the *yün-shih* flowers, taken in excess, induce the temporary ability to see **spirits**. Taken over a long period, *yün-shih* induces an ecstatic trance state, allowing **soul flight** and communication with the spirits. See also **ancient China**; **Hmong**; **Manchu**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Belyea, Charles. *Dragon's Play : A New Taoist Transmission of the Complete Experience of Human Life*. Berkeley, CA: Great Circle Lifeworks, 1991.

Chöd

A Tibetan tantric rite that follows the pattern of shamanic **initiation** by **dismemberment** found in shamanic cultures around the world. In the practice of *chöd* (gchod), one **sacrifices** one's own flesh to be eaten by demons as a means of surrendering all that was, is, and could be, and being reborn.

The **ritual** begins with the sounding of a **drum** made of human **skulls** and a trumpet made from a human thighbone trumpet. Dancing begins, the **spirits** are invoked, and with the **power** of meditation a **trance** state is invoked. A fierce goddess appears brandishing a **sword**. Without hesitation she takes the sacrifice, decapitating him or her and hacks him or her to pieces. The hungry spirits

rush in as demons and wild beasts pouncing on the still quivering fragments, eating the flesh, and drinking the blood. From this death the strong of heart are reborn.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Chukchee

A small group on the Chukchee Peninsula in the far northeastern area of **Siberia**. Chukchee **shamans** are traditionally and predominantly women. The majority of the male shamans were *koe'kcuc*, **transformed shamans** or **soft shamans**. "Soft man" or *yirka-la lu* referred to the transformation for a being of the hard **gender** to the softer gender.

This transformation was inspired by the presence of powerful **spirits** in a boy's life. It began gradually between the ages of eight and fifteen, when shamanic gifts and **the call** usually manifest. Though the Chukchee joked about the peculiar ways of the *koe'kcuc*, they also respected them highly for their **healing** abilities and feared their shamanic **power**.

Once initiated the *koe'kcuc* dressed as the shaman women and carried out the traditional responsibilities of females in the community. The *koe'kcuc* excelled in all branches of **shamanism**. The *koe'kcuc's* abilities as receptive sexual partners for non-gender variant men were considered as important to the culture as were their shamanic abilities.

Marriages between the *koe'kcuc* and their non-gender variant masculine husbands tended to be between men of similar ages and often lasted until the death of one of the partners. The longevity and uniqueness of these unions may be in part due to the benefits of power and good fortune brought to the relationship by the *ke'let* spirits (**helping spirits**). As shamans, the

koe'kcuc had spiritual rank over their partners and their relationship with the *ke'let* spirits gave them greater power. Therefore, they were regarded as the heads of their households and their partners took their names.

Early informants tell of a time when the transformation was complete, the sex organs of the *koe'kcuc* physically **shapeshifted** from male to female. A male companion of one *koe'kcuc*, confessed that he hoped that over time the *ke'let* would help to transform his partner's sex organs "like the real 'soft men' of old."

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Churingas

Painted stones carried by traditional Australian **shamans**. The stones are **power objects** used to contain the shaman's personal **power**. They are used as direction finders or cosmic maps for orientation while traveling in the multi-dimensional **dreamtime**.

Circle

The circle is a primary symbol found in almost every shamanic tribe. Symbolically the circle represents periodicity or something that comes back to itself in harmony over and over again. It is a reminder that in the true nature of life every ending is a beginning and that it is the nature of life to cycle through these transitions.

Clairaudient

Having the ability, gift, or **power** to hear **sounds** beyond the ordinary range of hearing. Clairaudience is referred to as

"hearing with **spirit** ears" or "hearing" with a part of the body other than the ears, like the heart or the gut.

Clairsentient

Having the ability, gift, or **power** of experiential perception by the senses beyond the ordinary range of the body's experience. Clairsentience manifests as a kinesthetic, physical experience of events, things, or **knowledge** removed in **space** and/or **time** from the present. The awareness gained through clairsentience does not pass through the usual mental channels of daily awareness.

Clairvoyant

Having the ability, gift, or **power** to see beyond the ordinary range of sight. Clairvoyance manifests in many unique ways, for example, seeing events or objects removed in **space** or **time** from the viewer or experiencing a waking **dream** in which the viewer receives visual information that has symbolic relevance to the present time. Clairvoyance is referred to as "seeing with spirit eyes" or "seeing" with a part of the body other than the eyes.

Classical Shamanism

The practices, **costumes**, and **paraphernalia** of Siberian **shamans** living between Lapland (the northeast region of Norway, Sweden, and Finland) in the east and the Chukchee Peninsula in the west. In *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, author Mircea Eliade presents the theory that Siberian shamans, classified as one large group, can be treated as the prototype for the practice of **shamanism** worldwide. This "classical shamanism" was the single geographic point of origin from which shamanism spread around the world through the natural diffusion that results from migration.

We really do not know whether Siberian shamans represent the oldest

form of shamanism, though the amount of data about the early Siberian forms is overwhelming. The reports on shamans in other parts of the world cannot always attribute the appearance of shamans there to diffusion from **Siberia**. The shamans themselves do not support this theory, explaining that their practices come from the animal, plant, Nature, and Ancestor **spirits** with whom they work.

If migration were the only explanation for shamanism worldwide, diffusion from a common **ancestor** would have had to begin at least 20,000 years ago. It is difficult to explain why shamanic practices would have remained so stable in so many different cultures for this long period of time while **language** and social practices changed much more drastically over this same period.

It is more likely that shamanism was discovered and rediscovered at different times by different peoples. As communities moved through a recurring threshold of social forces of need and survival, the innate human abilities to perform shamanically were triggered and cultivated. In fact we see that with different geographic, climatic, and cultural circumstances, different forms of shamanism emerge which correspond to different local needs.

Current research into the origins of shamanism forces us to consider simultaneous origins as an alternative to diffusion from classical shamanism. Shamanic people all over the globe explain that plant, animal, and Ancestor spirits taught them their shamanic practices, not a wandering foreign human. Furthermore, contemporary shamans continue to have spontaneous experiences of **initiation** and **training** from the spirit world today.

Classical shamanism is most likely not the single origin of shamanism. Shamans emerge, taught by the forces of Nature and the spirit world, when and where they are needed to serve the needs of their community.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Walsh, R. "What Is a Shaman? Definition, Origin, and Distribution." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 21, no. 1 (1989): 1–11.

Cleansing

A cleansing is an **extraction** of non-vocalized, or systemic, intrusions. An extraction is a **shamanic healing** technique for removing harmful **energy intrusions**. To perform a cleansing a **shaman** intentionally embodies his or her **helping spirit** and then uses some object, substance, or action to draw the energy intrusion out of the patient's **energy** body. Once removed it can be disposed of properly.

Cleansing techniques are similar cross-culturally, but do vary in specifics **culture** to culture. For example, brushing the body with leaves to collect and remove the energy or with **camaying** liquor to purify are common cleansing techniques. Cleansing techniques involve, but are not limited to, using branches, stones, **water**, smoke, **feathers**, alcohol, joint manipulation, massage, songs, **sounds** or tones, **spirit hands** (the helping spirit's hands, paws, etc., working through the shaman's), or some personal **paraphernalia** designed for this purpose.

Some **rituals** are designed for the purpose of cleansing, like the Native American **sweat lodge** ceremony or moon lodge ceremony. Cleansing rituals do not necessarily require a shaman.

Systemic energy may be picked up from the environment or it may be a portion of the patient's own energy, which has become stuck in a pattern that is no longer useful. Whether from an external or internal source, the presence of that energy and its lack of movement is not healthy. If not removed, this stuck energy can, over time, evolve into a systemic or chronic physical **disease**.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Clever Man

An initiated Australian **shaman**. Each tribe has a word for shaman in its own **language**. Many tribes have many **words** distinguishing between **gender**, different aspects of the profession, like rain-making, **healing** by sucking or **divination**, as well as words to distinguish between witchcraft, **sorcery**, and healing. Some examples are *wiringin*, *wireenuns*, *ngangkari*, **karadji**, and **Man of High Degree** from the literature.

A clever man is given **power** in his **initiation** through direct contact with the Beings of the **Dreamtime**, the **Rainbow Serpent**, the sky gods, the **spirits of the dead**. He learns to control these powers through a long and rigorous apprenticeship and an initiation of terrors and ordeals beyond those that ordinary man undergoes in initiation into adulthood.

The clever man's existential transformation is thrust upon him in his initiatory experiences: he is killed, impaled, eviscerated, and reborn; he is swallowed by the Rainbow Serpent and regurgitated; his organs are replaced with magic **crystals**, shells, and spirit snakes; and his animal familiar lives within his body.

Yet, these trials are all transformed into powers the clever man learns to control and direct. He can cure and kill. He can travel in the Dreamtime and ascend to the **sky** world on a magic cord that emanates from his testicles. He can fly or "fast travel" great distances at great speeds. He can disappear suddenly, emerge from a tree, or take the form of his **animal spirit**. He can make rain and walk on fire.

His life is one of self-discipline, training, social responsibility, and contact

with powerful spirit beings, both benevolent and malevolent. He seeks **knowledge** and power through his relationship with his **helping spirits** and **Ancestor** spirits. He works through quietness and meditation, receptivity and refined skills, observation and decision. See also **Australia** and **making**.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1994.

Coaxihuitl

Coaxihuitl, meaning green snake or snake plant, is the **Aztec** name for the **plant hallucinogen Ololiuqui**.

Coca

Coca, a plant known to the **Inka** as the Divine Leaf of Immortality, plays a deep and varied role in the lives, traditions, **healing**, and spiritual practices of the indigenous peoples of much of **South America**. *Coca* grows in two primary forms: the Andean shrub plant *Erythroxylum Coca* and a variation of that plant, *Erythroxylum Coca*, var. *Ipadu*. The presence of the *Ipadu* variant implies that *Coca* has been in western **Amazonia** for quite a long time since it takes a considerable amount of time for a new variety to develop in the natural process of plant variation.

Coca, native to western South America, is **sacred** in the lives of many of the region's indigenous peoples both in the lowlands and high in the **Andes**. Origin myths in Amazonia tell of the arrival of the **first people**, a man and woman who arrived in a dugout canoe pulled by a celestial anaconda with three plants: the manioc root, **ayahuasca** vine, and *Coca* plant. Traditionally, the *Coca* plants are cultivated in a plot separate from the plants cultivated for food, signifying *Coca's* separate and sacred role. The indigenous people explain that the **spirit** of the *Coca* plant told them how to prepare and use it.

Use

The *Coca* plant and its leaves are believed to have a highly refined vibrational **energy** and therefore a high spiritual energy. The *payé* (**shamans**) value *Coca* for its narcotic effects of mild excitation, which allows the *payé* to move more easily into **trance** where he or she communicates with the spirits of nature and asks for their help and guidance.

In common, day-to-day use, fresh *Coca* leaves are chewed, providing a mild stimulant and food supplement, which is believed to supply certain **elements** lacking in the local **diet**. The *Coca* leaf is a very effective medicinal plant and is used, for example, in the treatment of stomachaches, headaches, and altitude sickness.

A preparation of powdered *Coca* and **ash** is used ceremonially. The powder is ingested through the mouth from a tapir bone spoon or blown in with squirts from a bark-cloth bag fitted with a hollow bird-bone spout. Powdered *Coca* is also added to preparations of hallucinogenic snuffs, like **épena**.

High in the Andes, the **Q'ero** use *Coca* in almost every **ritual** or ceremony. The leaves are made into *k'intus*, **offerings** into which **prayers** are spoken and then blown. The *k'intu* is then chewed or returned to the *mesa*, both ways of moving the energy of the prayer in the ritual. With the Q'ero, sharing *Coca* is a sacred act of connecting energetically and spiritually.

Coca is also used in the daily life of the Q'ero who make a tea from the *Coca* leaves or chew then to alleviate hunger and increase stamina at high altitudes. Normally the leaves are chewed with a tiny piece of lime ash, which aids in releasing the bioactive compounds.

Cultivation

Traditionally, *Coca* is cultivated, like most plants in the Amazon, by the women in plots cleared near the family home. Plots can be quite large in areas where *Coca* consumption is traditionally high. In areas where consumption is

traditionally low, people like the Koreguajes grow only a few *Coca* shrubs near each house for personal consumption.

Preparation

The preparation of *Coca* is remarkably similar throughout the Amazon, even among tribes unrelated linguistically and separated by great distances. This fact supports the indigenous people's explanation that the *Coca* told the people how to prepare and use it. For many peoples in Amazonia *Coca* powder is prepared from fresh leaves each day.

Coca is prepared by men which is unique in South America where women traditionally gather and prepare plants for food and medicines. Men and boys gather *Coca* leaves daily into a woven basket for roasting as soon after harvest as possible. The leaves are roasted on a round ceramic stone supported by other stones over the fire for 30 minutes to two hours. Great care must be taken to avoid burning the leaves or toasting the leaves at too high a temperature. At times, women will do the toasting.

After the *Coca* leaves are toasted dry and brown, the men pulverize them in a large mortar and pestle. The resulting **powder** is sifted and mixed with an alkaline ash. Throughout the pounding, sifting, and mixing, the *payé*, or respected tribal elder, **chants** the tribe's mythology and creation stories, teaching the people's history while the *Coca* is prepared.

The alkaline ash is prepared in a simultaneous step from the leaves of the *guarumo* tree (*Cecropia sciadophylla*, a member of the fig family) that is usually left standing for this purpose when plots are cleared for cultivation. The leaves are burned and the ash is added to the *Coca* leaf powder to aid in releasing the *Coca's* bioactive compounds.

Active Principle

The active constituent, cocaine, is a highly addictive alkaloid when taken in

pure form. The powder prepared from *Coca* leaves and used by indigenous peoples should not be confused with powdered preparations of pure cocaine.

Use in Western Medicine

The abuse of cocaine should not be confused with the traditional ritual and medicinal use of *Coca* practiced by native peoples. The misuse of the chemically pure substance extracted from *Coca* began with the European arrival in South America and continues today.

Plotkin, M. J. *Tales of a Shaman's Apprentice: An Ethnologist Searches for New Medicines in the Amazon Rain Forest*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1993.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Cohoba

In 1496, the Spanish reported that the Taino people of the West Indies were sniffing *cohoba* to induce **trance** and communicate with the spirit world. These West Indian tribes are now thought to have come from the Orinoco region of northern **South America**, bringing their practice of sniffing *cohoba*, if not the *Anadenanthera* plant from which the snuff is made, with them. *Cohoba* use has since died out largely due to the disappearance of the **aboriginal** peoples of the West Indies. See also **plant hallucinogens** and *yopo*.

Colors

The four basic colors used in the shamanic work are white, black, red, and yellow. These colors reflect the colors of the races of humankind on **earth**. Each color has meaning and is associated with one of the four cardinal directions and one of the four **elements**—

earth, **air**, **fire**, and **water**. The relationship of these associations differs culture to culture.

Green and blue are also found in the essential palates of shamanic peoples. Green or blue may replace one of the four colors above or be added to them in five element systems, found regularly in Asia and **Africa**. In five element systems the colors are associated with the four cardinal directions plus the center and with the five elements—water, **metal**, earth, fire, and wood. The relationship of these associations differs culture to culture.

Color is a wavelength of light emanating from or reflected by an object. Different colors have different wavelengths of vibration, different characteristics, and different effects on human emotions and psychology.

Shamans use color as a means to manipulate energy vibrations in the service of **healing**. Colors attract, hold, and emanate **energy** and therefore can be used as "**medicine**" to help the shaman shift the patient's energy to a healthier vibration. We see the direct application of color in healing, for example, in the use of **art**, **mandalas**, or **sand paintings** in healing rituals.

Meadows, K. *Earth Medicine*. Rockport, MA: Element Inc., 1991.

Contemporary Shamanism

The practice of **shamanism** is a living **art**; its form changes and evolves as is necessary for the **shaman** to meet the needs of the community. People, their communities, the environment, and the spirit world all evolve over time. The shaman must continually adapt to these changes by accessing new information from the spirit world through **altered states of consciousness**, known as the shaman's **journey**. Precisely because of its adaptability, shamanism continues to be an effective **healing** practice in contemporary times.

Contemporary shamans are distinguished from other practitioners as ancient shamans were, by their (1) mastery of altered states of consciousness, their (2) direct contact with spirit in those altered states, and by their (3) service to the community. Contemporary shamans are called on to restore harmony between humans and the spirit world. They journey (allow their **soul** to travel free of their body) into the spirit realms and ask their **helping spirits** to show them the source of problems and how to restore harmony to the situation. Given that **diagnosis**, the shaman may need to alter traditional healing rituals or create entirely new rituals based on traditional **shamanic healing** principles. Although the form of shamanic practices and **rituals** often changes in response to changes in the environment, the function of the shamans' work does not.

Contemporary shamanism responds primarily to the needs of people to come into the presence of the **sacred** for information, healing, and guidance. People live in an infinite and inscrutable Universe as their **ancestors** did. This experience generates existential needs and an ever-present desire to transcend the physical illusion of being separate from others and from God. Current research in **transpersonal** psychology confirms that the experience of **ecstasy** (connections with All things) is as basic a human need as food, drink, and sleep. Studies have shown that when normal people are denied ecstatic experiences or their expression of ecstasy is not guided toward life-affirming functions, their behavior turns violent and pathological. Shamanism, which looks at the state of a person's soul to determine their health, is uniquely suited to meet people's existential and ecstatic needs.

In the practice of contemporary shamanism, shamans have adapted their rituals and techniques to deal effectively with an array of chronic

health problems, contemporary **soul loss**, anxiety and phobias, the human need for contact with the sacred, as well as other traditional needs for the shaman's mediation with the spirit world. Examples of some contemporary adaptations in traditional techniques follow.

In the past, soul loss was usually caused by a sorcerer, extreme fear, or a seriously life-threatening incident. A huge portion of the individual's soul was lost or taken, leaving an inadequate amount of life force in the body to sustain life. The individual often died within days or weeks if the soul was not returned. In contemporary life, smaller soul parts or fragments are lost so that each loss is not life-threatening in and of itself, however the accumulated loss over time can result in a joyless life of depression, chronic **illness**, anxiety, or exhaustion. Though soul loss rarely occurs today due to a sorcerer's intervention, soul fragmentation is a common means of coping with the traumas of contemporary life, the stress of living in spiritless cultures, and the repeated abuses of the body, mind, emotions, and spirit that people, organizations, and communities inflict on each other. Shamans retrieve lost soul parts by journeying into the spirit realms and bringing them back to the living just as shamans retrieved lost souls in past times.

Shamans are called on in increasing numbers to help people overcome crippling fears, anxiety, and phobias. Having perceived the true nature of their own fear in **training** and **initiation**, shamans are relatively free of fear and familiar with its psychological terrain. This understanding, coupled with their connection to helping spirits, enables shamans to be uniquely effective guides through the entanglement of the existential fears and chronic phobias of contemporary people.

Shamans are able to guide anyone who has a sincere desire to connect

with spirit into an experience of the Sacred by utilizing altered states of consciousness. Shamans create rituals for individuals and groups that allow people to come in contact with the Divine. The shaman creates opportunities for contemporary people to fulfill their basic need for ecstasy while assuring their safe return to the physical world.

Another task for contemporary shamans is **power retrieval**, which reconnects the client with their own spirit help. People easily lose their connection with spirit help in cultures where communication with spirits is discouraged or considered a mental illness. Without the protection offered by spirit, soul fragmentation increases along with the tendency to attract harmful energies. The former can result in chronic, systemic physical or mental illness and the latter in chronic, localized physical or mental health problems. Though the origin of people's problems has changed, traditional shamanic healing techniques have needed only small adaptations to remain effective. The traditional shamanic healing techniques practiced today are: **soul retrievals** (returning soul parts), **power retrievals** (reconnecting people to helping spirits), **divination** (retrieving information from spirit), and **extractions** and **cleansings** (both ways of returning **energy** stuck in the physical body to the spirit world).

In some parts of the world shamanism is woven into the religious and healing practices of different ethnic groups. For example, Taoist **priests** are invited to serve specific functions in the shamanic celebrations of Chinese Catholics. Buddhist monks and/or Taoist priests are invited to **chant blessings** in shamanic festivals all over Asia, and the **Mazatec** shaman, Maria Sabina, calls on Jesus Christ while working in a **trance** state induced by the sacred, psilocybine **mushrooms**, **Teonanacatl**. These practices are also mixed in the lives of the people who seek shamans.

In over twenty years of field work with shamans, anthropologist Ruth-Inge Heinze has shown that although people around the world hold their gods, goddesses, saints, priests, and monks with devotion and their **religions** sacred, the majority of people who can, will consult a shaman in spiritual emergencies.

There are two challenges resulting from contemporary life that were rarely, if ever, faced by shamans of the past. First, contemporary shamans must work with a random assortment of multiple ethnic groups in any given community and second, they must compensate for the proliferation of the world religions. Ancient shamans had the advantage of working in homogenous **cultures** of people who shared the same myths and world view. It is a great challenge for shamans today to create a ritual space that is large enough to encompass the many **myths** and world views of the variety of people they may see in one day or who may gather together for a ritual.

Ancient shamans worked with people who were pre-religious; they had no reason to believe that they were separate from God. Religion is based on a belief in our fundamental separation from God and the resulting need to reconnect. Shamanic rituals are based in the experience of our oneness with all things and the ever-present opportunity to remember that fundamental truth of our existence. Though religion and shamanism blend in many parts of the world, creating effective shamanic rituals for people carrying a deep, fundamental fear of separation from God is challenging and dangerous; people are easily lost in this deep-seated fear. The belief that one is separate from God is often healed first, allowing a return to the underlying **knowledge** that we are connected to all things and in all things is spirit. Rituals can proceed safely when they are grounded in the knowledge that separation is not possible where all things are connected.

To meet these two challenges contemporary shamanism must draw **power** from a personal world view large enough to contain the variety of cultural and religious views expressed in its community. This places an even greater responsibility for self-transcendence on contemporary shamans. To master a similar personal state as shamans of the past, contemporary shamans must complete a great deal of personal work in their training and initiation.

The healing practices of contemporary shamans should not be confused with the personal practice of **core shamanism**, a system taught worldwide by the faculty of the **Foundation for Shamanic Studies** and Michael Harner, its founder and director. Core shamanism is a powerful personal practice involving the application of shamanic techniques, primarily the shaman's journey into the spirit realms for one's personal growth and healing. Practitioners of core shamanism work with helping spirits, often journeying and practicing healing together in a **circle** of peers. Working on oneself and one's peers is distinctly different from practicing shamanic healing in a professional sense.

Unlike the shaman who is called by spirit to serve, it is not necessary for a practitioner of core shamanism to be called by spirit into that practice. Anyone may choose to learn and practice the techniques of core shamanism. More important, it is not necessary to be initiated to practice core shamanism. The **ego death**, characteristic of the shaman's initiation, is essential in establishing the shaman's relationship with spirit and the shaman's unique view of the universe. No matter how many years of experience an individual has journeying, without initiation the practitioner remains a novice. Training in core shamanism teaches technique exclusively. Shamanic training also involves practices to develop mastery of personal state and detachment while

moving through the spirit realms. Shamanic training also involves other practices to sustain and perpetually rejuvenate the shaman's energy as they work in altered states of consciousness for hours and sometimes days. These aspects of training are beyond the scope of the teachings of core shamanism and thus they should not be confused with the training of shamans.

Halifax, Joan, Ph.D. *Shamanic Voices: A Survey of Visionary Narratives*. New York: Penguin Books, 1991.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Contemporary Shamans

Contemporary shamans are found in three general categories. There are **shamans** who come from an unbroken shamanic tradition and continue to practice within that tradition today. There are those who come from a shamanic tradition and see themselves as a bridge between their world and the western world; they have added **ceremonies** and **rituals** to their traditional practice that enable them to fulfill their additional role as a bridge between cultures. Lastly, there are those who come from cultures that broke from their shamanic roots long ago, but they are called nonetheless to serve the needs of their communities as shamans today.

The ability to adapt and change is inherent in any shaman's practice. A shaman must continually respond to new information from the spirit world as the seen and unseen environments change over time. Although the form of specific practices may change in response to changes in the environment, the function of the shamans' work has not.

Shamans can rise up out of any society to fulfill peoples' needs for **healing** the wounds of their **souls** and to

connect with the Divine. Though the way these needs are expressed has changed over time, particularly due to the demands of contemporary life, the existential needs remain the same. People want to come into the presence of the **sacred**. We are still humans in an infinite and inscrutable Universe. People need to feel a connection with **spirit** and find their place in the universe. Without belief in their own ability to connect with spirit, people turn to shamans to facilitate them in connecting deeply with the Divine and returning safely to the physical world.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Core Shamanism

Core shamanism is a conservative approach to traditional and contemporary shamanism developed by Michael Harner, the founder and president of the **Foundation for Shamanic Studies**. Central to core shamanism is the practitioner's journey into the spirit world, called **non-ordinary reality**, using a monotonous drumbeat as the **vehicle** for entering the desired **altered state of consciousness**.

Core shamanism relies on only the elements common to all shamanic cultures: the **journey**, the vehicle that supports the journey, and the **helping spirits** encountered in the journey. It is solidly based on anthropological and experiential research of specific shamanic practices and cosmologies worldwide. The practice of core shamanism involves a strict shamanic discipline and adheres closely to the basics of traditional shamanic systems.

Theoretically, core shamanism is an abstraction, in that it does not derive from a singular cultural context. Therefore it does not possess the inherent richness and complexity of a traditional shamanic practice, with

well-established **ritual, costumes, paraphernalia**, and belief systems that draw meaning from the **culture's** cosmology and mythology.

Core shamanism focuses on the practical application of shamanic principles for individual and planetary healing and solving real world problems. The goal of core shamanism is to help Westerners recover their own lost shamanic heritage and capabilities.

The practice of core shamanism includes: the journey into non-ordinary reality to a monotonous drumbeat, relationships with **power animals** and other helping spirits, personal spirit songs, working with **rattles and drums, divination**, and **healing** techniques for spirit **extractions, power retrievals, and soul retrievals**.

Core shamanism provides a method for problem solving without creating additional theology or mythology. Core shamanism is not bound to any specific cultural group or perspective. Contemporary people using core shamanic methods enter altered states, via the drumbeat, that allow them to access the same revelatory spiritual sources that tribal **shamans** have traveled to for thousands of years. Their experiences are genuine and often profound.

Responsible practitioners of core shamanism consciously seek to avoid appropriation or mixing of specific rituals and practices from existent shamanic cultures. There are no rituals, **ceremonies**, cleanings, **blessings, invocations**, or **shrines** in core shamanism.

Core shamanism is a personal practice that enables the individual to use the **sacred technologies**, like journeying, that are available for all humans to experience direct connection with spirit. It is not the goal of core shamanism nor the intention of its **teachers** to create a substitute for the **training** of shamans. Core shamanism does not involve **the call** to become a shaman, the extensive training of the shaman, training in the shaman's mastery of his

or her personal state, or the **initiation** essential to becoming a shaman.

One of the great assets of core shamanism is that it returns spiritual authority to the individual. In the journey, each individual opens to another reality that, through direct shamanic experience, profoundly teaches the individual's heart and mind what is true and what is to be trusted. This focus on journeying emphasizes the actual sensed experience of the spirit world rather than a particular belief system or theology.

Practitioners work directly with the spiritual powers and helping spirits that present themselves in the journey. These original experiences of direct revelation can be deeply transformative for people who engage in long-term practice. The human-centered worldview of many beginning students changes through long-term practice to a worldview centered on balance, honoring the **earth**, and sustaining a connection to all things.

The Practitioner

The role of the core shamanic practitioner differs from that of the contemporary shaman, though they both use many of the same sacred technologies. The goal of the practitioner is to relearn the skills of journeying, drumming, rattling, and other systems of divination and to reestablish a direct personal communication with the invisible world. It is a personal practice that strengthens one's own relationship with the spirit world and potentially with a community of peers who are also practitioners of core shamanism.

It is not the practitioner's goal to interpret the spirit world for the community at large or to mediate between the community and the spirit world like the shaman. Practitioners of core shamanism journey for guidance in their own life, not to define the appropriate actions of others relative to the spirit world.

Practitioners of core shamanism develop relationships with their helping spirits for their own health and well being, while the relationship between the shaman and his or her helping spirits may become detrimental to the shaman's health and well-being while in the process of serving the healing needs of others. Shamans also speak of volatile, ever-changing relationships with their helping spirits and of gaining new helping spirits as they mature as shamans. Shamans and their helping spirits are engaged in a different process than practitioners of core shamanism and their allies.

Criticism of Core Shamanism

Many scholars question the validity of using **elements** of shamanic cultures without also adopting the entire practice and worldview. In this criticism core shamanism is usually lumped together inappropriately with **neo-shamanism** (generally believed to be the blending of beliefs, rituals, and practices drawn from a wide range of shamanistic and non-shamanic spiritual forms). While this criticism may apply to neo-shamanism, core shamanism does not support this random sampling of shamanic cultures.

The most common criticism of core shamanism questions whether or not it is appropriate to revive shamanism by combining elements from different cultures. These core elements may be part of shamanic rituals, but they do not necessarily constitute the essence of the ritual.

However, there are two elements that are universal and essential to the shamanic ritual. They are the practitioner entering an altered state of consciousness for the purpose of journeying into the invisible world to connect with spirit and the use of a tool, or vehicle like the drum, to facilitate the journey. The use of the drum appears throughout the history of humanity for just this purpose. It is a fact that there

are these two core elements in shamanism that led to the inspiration for and development of the contemporary practice called “core shamanism.”

Critics of core shamanism point out that shamanism is not the performance of rituals, but the ability to create and execute a ritual that will fulfill the needs of the community. Furthermore, core shamanism does not teach the skills that are essential for conducting effective and safe rituals. Finally, the orientation to service and the **humility** necessary to literally become a shaman and accept the role of mediator between the **sacred** and the secular does not come from learning core shamanism.

While each of these statements is true, it is questionable the degree to which they apply as criticisms of core shamanism where the goal is not to train or initiate shamans or conduct rituals. The purpose of core shamanism is to recover the skills and the worldview necessary for contemporary people to fill the spiritual void in their lives and to heal the illness caused by that void.

This may create a context within which contemporary shamans who are called by spirit and trained through additional processes can function more effectively. If and when this occurs, it is an aspect of contemporary shamanism in general, not core shamanism specifically.

Core shamanism can teach individuals respect for the rest of creation. It allows practitioners to access solutions to contemporary problems and approaches to living that normally exist beyond the linear **space-time** assumptions that tend to limit creative faculties. The practice of core shamanism is a way of working with the self that cuts across all self-imposed barriers of race, **religion**, and culture and reconnects the practitioner with the Source from which we all are made.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Corn Pollen

Corn pollen is a common **offering** in the **rituals** performed by peoples of the North American Southwest. Called **oneane** by the Zuñi, corn pollen is sprinkled universally as a blessing. *Oneane* is offered at highly **sacred** moments during **ceremonies** and rituals, during individual **prayers**, and as “food” for sacred **power objects**. Called **talasi** by the Hopi, corn pollen is used in the creation of **altars** and as the Zuñi described above.

Lyon, W. S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Cosmic Mountain

See **World Mountain**.

Cosmic Tree

The connection between the seen (physical) and the unseen (spiritual) worlds, the **axis mundi**, is most often visualized as a great cosmic tree connecting all of the **Kosmos**.

The Cosmic Tree, often represented as a pillar, is believed to hold up heaven and serve as the way to that world of the gods. Examples of Cosmic pillars are found in *Irmisul* of the pre-Christian Celts, the *skambha* of the Indian **Rig Veda** (one of the oldest books in the world), in Indonesia, and with the Kwakiutl people who believe the Cosmic pole is copper and connects straight through the three worlds, **Upperworld**, **Middleworld**, and **Lowerworld**, of the spirit world. See also **Tree of Life**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Costume

The **shaman's** costume is an extension of his or her person and **power**. In some **cultures** obtaining the costume is an essential test in **initiation** and part of the process of coming out as a shaman in the community. In other cultures there is no costume at all. The drama of the costumes is perhaps most developed among Korean shamans who may wear several costumes in one **ritual**. A multitude of robes, crowns, and scarves are worn and many more made ready should the **spirits** demand something extra mid-ritual.

In many cultures the shaman simply wears an element of a costume, like a head wrap, belt, or cap, when working shamanically. For example, Amazonian shamans wear magnificent crowns of **feathers**, each different type of feather symbolic of an aspect of the shaman's power. However, feathers and smaller crowns are also worn by other members of the tribe during rituals and celebrations.

The costumes of shamans across **Siberia** are varied, complex, and deeply symbolic. The images on the costume represent the mysteries the shaman experiences on journeys into the spirit world. **Metal** ornaments are attached to the costume in some cultures while animal and skeleton images cover many of them. These costumes are inherited, purchased from the clan of a **dead shaman**, or made for or by the shaman.

Birartchen (**Tungus**) initiates must "see" exactly where they will find their costume in a **dream**. He or she then goes to look for it. Often the costume resides with the relatives of a dead shaman and must be purchased. If the dead shaman is of another clan the costume will not be allowed to leave the clan. The costume belongs not just to the shaman but to the clan whom the shaman and the spirits who inhabit the costume have served together.

The costume of the **Yakut** shaman is covered with thirty to fifty pounds of

metal ornaments, connecting him or her to the powers of transformation, **transmutation**, and initiation. The metal jangles as the shaman **drums** and dances, aiding the shaman's entry into **trance**. These metal pieces are **power objects**. They possess a **soul** of their own and do not rust. The pieces represent bones, breasts, the liver, heart, and other internal organs, and the Spirit of Madness, who aids in **healing** mental illness.

The animals represented on costumes usually dwell within the costume, ready to aid the shaman as **helping spirits in non-ordinary reality**. The costume is treated with respect as a powerful, living being, as with any other power object in which spirits reside. When a costume becomes too worn, it is hung on a tree in the forest to allow the spirits to leave the worn costume and enter the new one.

A shaman's costume must not be worn by anyone who cannot control the power of the spirits to reside in the costume. If released in this way without the focused intent the shaman brings to the relationship, the spirits will wreak havoc in the community. For this reason costumes are not allowed to leave the clan. The spirits and the clan are in a sense responsible for each other's well-being.

Death

When a Siberian shaman dies, the costume remains for a time near the shaman's grave. Ultimately, the costume is kept in the shaman's house where the spirits that inhabit it periodically make it shake and move. The costume will remain there until it is inherited or purchased by another shaman.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Crystal

Crystals are widely used by **shamans** on most continents as **divination tools** and as pivotal **elements** in the **initiation** of new shamans. Crystals are conceived of as crystallized powder, tears, or semen of **sky** spirits. They are associated with gaining supernatural abilities and the movement of initiating **spirits** between the worlds.

In **Amazonia**, guardian spirits enter the shaman directly or through crystals that have magically fallen into the shaman's bag. The **Huichol** also receive guardian spirits in crystals. For the Huichol, quartz crystals are the crystallized **souls** of **dead shamans** who will protect the shaman who finds and cares for the crystal.

Crystals are widely regarded as **sacred**, living people or "live rock." As with other living **power objects**, a crystal has to be "fed" or it will create misfortune for the caretaker. Cherokee shamans, for example, periodically feed their crystals a few drops of animal or human blood.

Quartz crystals appear the same in ordinary and **non-ordinary reality**. This is one of their most unique properties, since most things in ordinary reality take on a different form in non-ordinary reality where the spiritual dimension is apparent. For the shaman, to acquire a crystal is to acquire a power object that, by its very nature, is in both worlds at all times. Crystals are a constant, transparent link between ordinary and non-ordinary reality.

Crystals as Divination Tools

Crystals are widely conceived of as solidified light and used in divination. Crystals enable the shaman to see beyond the natural limitations of distance, **time**, and solid matter. There are many different forms of divination with crystals. Melanesian shamans, for example, look into the crystal to "see" whether the patient's **illness** was brought on by a person or spirit. Keres

shamans use a *ma caiyoyo* (crystal) for divination, **diagnosis**, to locate intrusive objects in the body of a patient, and to locate witches.

Ulunsata (crystals) are used extensively by Cherokee shamans for divination and diagnosis. A simple technique is to stare for a few minutes into the crystal and interpret the images seen in the crystal. In a more complex technique, the shaman placed a drop of the individual's **blood** on the crystal. Within seconds images of the individual's life yet to come flow through the crystal, allowing the shaman to see the individual's future.

Crystals in Initiation

In many cultures around the world the introduction of crystals into the body of the novice by spirits or other initiatory figures is a critical transition in the initiatory process. The crystals are associated with gaining shamanic strength or powers, like the ability to fly through non-ordinary reality. The introduction of crystals plays a primary role in the initiation of, for example, the Semang of the Malay Peninsula, the **Arunta** of Central **Australia**, and the Cobeno of **South America**.

In Australia the *Iruntarinia* (spirits) take the candidate through a multifaceted, initiatory ordeal, during which *atnongara*, the quartz crystal fragments, are placed in the initiate's body. Among the Cobeno it is the shaman who places the crystals into the candidate's head. These crystals eat the brain and eyes away and take their place, turning the mind and eyes of the novice into those of the shaman. In this way the initiate gains the shamanic strength to think and see from the unique and expansive perspective of the shaman.

Sacred Qualities

There is some discussion among scholars that it is the crystal's geometry that endows it with shamanic power in certain cultures. Quartz, tourmaline, and emerald are the crystals most highly

valued by shamans because of their hexagonal crystalline structure.

The Desana, for example, envision the structure of the universe in the hexagon. The crystal's recurrent structural pattern serves as a model for the shape of the universe and a symbol for the patterns and processes of nature. Hexagons define existential space, which are spaces of potential transformation and access to the Source from which life, people, and sacred ritual objects emerge.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Ripinsky-Naxon, M. *The Nature of Shamanism: Substance and Function of a Religious Metaphor*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Culture

Culture is the set of explicit and implicit beliefs and **myths** about the nature of reality and society's place in it that makes the activities of the people in the society meaningful. It is the shared mythos of a society. Each person needs to feel that he or she belongs and that his or her life has meaning relative to the values and overall "big picture" perspective of that shared mythos.

Familiar examples of social mythos are the Judeo-Christian ethic, Depression Era ethic, dualism, reductionist beliefs, or materialism.

Culture functions as a filter, or lens, through which people view reality. The cultural story enables people to understand how and why the world around them works, albeit from the perspective of their culture. The members of a

society living together over generations continuously generate a shared conception of reality through their **language**, their institutions and arts, their experiences, and their common work and play.

Culture also functions as an integrative process through which people identify themselves in relation to the pattern of life histories, experiences, actions, and artifacts. The individual understands his personal mythos according to the 'social facts' rendered from the social mythos.

Every culture defines a version of reality and perceives of it as truth. That version of reality guides the actions of the members of that culture, even when the individual is unaware that they are experiencing the world through their cultural filter.

For example, contemporary western culture finds the Mayan act of communicating with the **ancestors** through bloodletting an act of violent self-mutilation by superstitious, crazy primitives who don't know any better. In turn, the **ancient Maya** would find the absence of bloodletting in contemporary culture not only irresponsible, but dangerous. Without a bloodletting **ritual** the gods are not nourished, the human debt to the cosmic order is not paid, and the humans are left vulnerable to the dangerous powers of **non-ordinary reality**.

One major function of culture is to provide a consensus reality that not only adequately explains the experience of the physical world but also produces a psychologically and psychospiritually satisfactory life for the majority of its members. Growing dissatisfaction among members of a culture can become a powerful internal force for cultural change. See also **monophasic culture** and **polyphasic cultures**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Schele, L., and D. Freidel. *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1990.

Tart, Charles T. *Waking Up: Overcoming the Obstacles to Human Potential*. Boston: New Science Library/Shambala, 1986.

Cupping Horn

A tool made from an animal horn or bone used for sucking **extraction** healings in **North America**. In some traditions the **shaman** makes an incision in the patient's skin covering the area of the **disease**-causing object, **energy** intrusion, or **pain** first. Then, with or without an incision, the large end of the horn is placed over the area of intrusion and the shaman sucks on the small end of the horn or bone. The shaman sucks through horn until the intrusions are extracted from the body.

Traditionally the horn of a buffalo is used for the cupping horn in the Plains and the Southeast. The cupping horn technique is also used by the Cherokee, Seminole, Choctaw, Creek, Natchez, Catawaba, who use a turkey wing bone, and the Chickasaw, who use a 4-inch cane tube. In some cultures, for a fee, a non-shaman can be trained by a shaman in the **knowledge** and techniques necessary for cupping horn extractions.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Curaca

Curaca refers to **shamans** in some parts of the Colombian Amazon while *medico* is the term used for doctor or **medicine man**. In other areas *medico* refers to shaman.

Curandero

Curandero is a colloquial Spanish name for all folk doctors or spiritual healers, which sometimes includes **ayahuasceros** and other **shamans**. *Curanderos* do not necessarily utilize **trance** states. Therefore, all shamans are *curanderos*, however not all *curanderos* are shamans.

Cuy

A cuy is a guinea pig used by healers in the highlands of the **Andes** as well as in coastal cities. The cuy is used in *jaca shoqpi* (rubbing with cuy) to diagnose **illness** and in *soba con cuy* and *cuypitchay* (to clean with cuy) to heal by **cleansing**.

When a person falls ill and household remedies prove to be insufficient, that patient is usually taken to a **shaman**. Whether or not the cuy is used and whether it is used for **diagnosis** alone or also for **healing** is determined by the patient's physical condition and the shaman's methods for healing.

Two practitioners in particular work with cuys: the *entendido* who uses them for diagnosis and the *curandero* who uses them for both diagnosis and curing **disease**. The *entendido* will travel to the patient's home while the patients of the *curandero* must travel to him or her. The *curandero* usually has a room reserved for his or her healing practices at his or her home. The patients must arrive with a cuy that matches their sex, flowers, eggs, and wax candles. In some cases the **color** of the cuy matters. Some *curanderos* work only with black cuy while others request cuy of light-color and younger than three months.

The *curandero* and the patient must meet traditional requirements and conditions to work safely and successfully with the cuy. Non-compliance may render the healing ineffective or transfer the illness or **spell** to the *curandero's* body. Patients must follow the *curandero's* restrictions on behavior and **diet** for three days to one week. For example,

they must not shower or shake hands with others for the three days following.

If the session is a *limpieza*, a cleansing healing requiring the use of alcohol, agua florida (perfumed water), and the cuy, the patient is confined at home for three days. The *limpieza* can also be performed with herbs and no cuy.

Care must be taken to avoid *takpa*, any interruption that destroys the concentration of the practitioner during the session. This interferes with the healing **power** of the *jaca shoqpi*. Anyone who participates or observes the session is expected to remain respectfully through its duration.

Depending on the methods of the practitioner, the session may begin with a general cleansing before diagnosing the patient's illness with the cuy. The *curandero* may *camay* the patient with agua florida or brush the body from head to toe with a bunch of flowers to *shoga* or *shogay* (calm the spirit) and fend off malevolent **spirits**. In preparation the curandero often chews *Coca* and drinks *chicha* or alcohol to prevent diagnostic mistakes.

The patient without clothes stands or lies before the *curandero's* small **altar** and is cleansed in preparation. The *entendido* unfolds a shawl on the floor of the healing **space** and spreads a handful of flowers there to create an altar for the healing session. Often an assistant sits and chews *Coca* to reinforce the healing power of the cuy. The practitioner gently rubs the patient's body with a live cuy, covering the patient from head to toe on the back and then on the front. Some practitioners rub until the cuy dies.

The *curandero* either takes the cuy by its head and holding it upright, cuts the cuy's throat or the cuy is rubbed until it dies. Some practitioners are able to skin the cuy from the neck down so that the entire skin peels in one piece that remains attached only to the hind legs. Other practitioners slit the skin to expose the abdomen.

The cuy and skin are submerged together in a bowl of fresh **water**. The watches for indications in the flesh and membranes and examines the internal organs. From the state of the cuy the *curandero* diagnoses the illness, pronounces what if any illnesses are cured by being drawn into the cuy's body, or recommends remedies, treatments, or number of additional sessions necessary to complete the cure.

The following is a partial list of typical diagnostic signs. A white, thin film covering the back indicates a cold. A similar film with fine lines of blood, like broken veins, indicates bronchitis. Clotted blood in the neck indicates a sore throat. Intestines with air bubbles and sparse feces indicates diarrhea, while diarrhea from irritation is indicated by dark red or purple intestines and intestinal fever by red bloody intestines. If the carcass trembles when put in freshwater and the bowels are shiny, whitish, and glassy, *susto*, or fright, is indicated. **Sorcery** is indicated by yellowish eruptions in the neck that look like pus when poked.

After the cuy has been thoroughly investigated for all diagnostic signs it must be disposed of following a strictly prescribed etiquette. It is the practitioner's responsibility to dispose of the sacrificed cuy properly. If not, the illnesses absorbed from the patient by the cuy could come back to the person who disposed of it incorrectly.

There are several variations of the healing ritual when the patient is a child, often depending on the child's age. When the sick child is rubbed with the cuy, which is not always the case for children, attention is paid to whether or not the cuy dies during the process. With children the death of the cuy predicts the death of the child.

Different cuy body parts are used to prepare healing remedies, however never the parts from cuy used in *jaca shoqpi* or *cuypitchay* as those parts are contaminated with illness. For example,

blood and some inner organs are used in various remedies to cure jaundice, rheumatism, arthritis, and chapped skin. Body parts like the gall bladder, blood, and fat that are to be used in remedies must be removed the moment the cuy is eviscerated. The cuy are also

used in a variety of other ways to cure diseases and epidemics.

Morales, Edmund. *The Guinea Pig: Healing, Food, and Ritual in the Andes*. Tuscon, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 1995.

D

Dagara

A tribal people of West Africa spread throughout the arid region of present-day northern Ghana, southern Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta), and the Ivory Coast. Known as the Tribe of Concealment and Magic, they live in an active relationship with the natural forces of the physical and spiritual worlds.

The Dagara do not assume that life in the physical world will simply flow harmoniously. They believe that harmony with the natural world is earned through constant vigilance, detecting imbalances and **illnesses**, and the willingness to engage in **ritual** to restore equilibrium. One primary goal of the **culture** is balance, particularly between the masculine and feminine energies and among the elemental energies: **earth, fire, water**, mineral, and Nature.

Cosmology

The spirit world is alive and real for the Dagara; they do not distinguish between reality and imagination. The spirit world is fundamental to the physical world; it gives the physical world meaning. The physical world is the spiritual world taking form. Daily life is spiritual life, only in a lower key. The physical life is a rest from the dynamic tension between the imbalance of an ever-changing world and the restoration of balance through ritual.

The Yielbongura—the thing that **knowledge** can't eat—is at the essence of all things. There is no Dagara word for the supernatural because it pervades normal, everyday life completely; there is no separation. Yielbongura suggests that the essence of life and power

resists the attempts of the mind to categorize it in the mind's effort to make the Unknown known.

Space

Though the Dagara do not perceive a separation between the natural and the supernatural, they are quite clear as they move between the worlds which world they are in. The Dagara are keenly aware of the dangers of getting lost between the worlds. They know that the risk of being unable to return to the physical world is death.

Time

The things that are important to the Dagara aren't going anywhere. The **spirits** of the invisible world live forever; they are everywhere in Nature. The **ancestors** are everywhere as well. Thus the Dagara have no word or use for clock-driven time. Instead they value timing. They cultivate an awareness of the state of being of each individual as they are in the present and in relationship to the timeless invisible world.

The Invisible World of the Dagara

The spirit world of the Dagara contains the realm of the Ancestors, the place where the dead go to rest, and the world of non-human entities who are in charge of the order of Nature. The non-human spirits also travel in a world between the human and the spirit worlds. **Medicine** and magic are forged there, in between, and then drawn into the physical world.

Cultural symbolism

The Dagara work with a system of five **elements**: earth, fire, Nature, water, and mineral. There is a sacred **shrine** for each of the five elements. Each shrine is kept by a male and a female **priest**. These shrine priests work in relationship with the spirit that manifests in the respective shrines. A shrine priest is seen as a collective person. Whatever he or she does, alone or in the presence of the village, is considered communal and has communal ramifications. The council of elders is made up of these ten

people, often divided into the male and female counsels.

The role of the shrine priests is distinct from that of the *boburo* (shaman). The priests are specialists with their shrine's particular element. The role of the *boburo* is **healing**. To this end the *boburo* works with more than one element as needed. The *boburo* is not necessarily part of the council of elders and is either male or female.

The Dagara also work with a system of five directions: **west, south, east, north**, and center. The four directions are alive within an individual only when there is a center. The center is found in **initiation**, required for all Dagara to be recognized as adults.

The Dagara believe that all individuals have a center that they grow away from progressively after birth, losing their ability to tell who they are, where they come from, or where they are going. The purpose of initiation is to find the center, remember that it exists, and be with it. The center is believed to be both within the individual and the spirit world.

In rituals the Dagara work with an awareness of five elements: Tigan, the earth spirit; Dawera, the **Nature spirit**; **San**, the mineral spirit; Mān, the water spirit, and Kyere, the fire spirit. In large rituals, like initiations, five elders conduct the ritual, each responsible for the energy of one direction and element.

Tigan, the earth spirit, is associated with the center. Tigan brings a sense of home, identity, groundedness, and the qualities of feeling supported and being careful.

Dawera, the Nature spirit, is associated with the east. Dawera brings major changes and magic. Dawera is associated with the **Trickster**, the Unknown, and the **Great Mystery**. The Nature spirit includes animals, plants, and elements of geography, like mountains and rivers.

San, the mineral spirit, is associated with the west. The power of San is that of communication, **storytelling**, and the connection with and between peoples. The mineral element within people is

associated with the ability to communicate and act. Mineral people learn the genealogies and carry the memories of everything that has happened in the village. San also supports the translation of symbols and information from **dreams** and **journeys** in the spirit realms.

Mān, the water spirit, is associated with the north. Mān brings the power of healing, peace, focus, and reconciliation. In people, Mān provides internal peace, bridging the gap between who people are on the inside and how they present themselves on the outside. Water spirit allows people to be many, to connect with family, village, and community.

Kyere (Chyere), the fire spirit, is associated with the south. Kyere is the **power** of dreams, **visions**, and the connection to the ancestors to move us. The fire element moves people to do, feel, see, love, and hate. It motivates external action and reaction, driving people toward one another, toward the execution of their respective duties, and toward the planning of their lives. Internally, the fire pulls spiritual forces to the individual, causing the family of kindred spirits—those who are always drawn together—to identify with each other.

The Dagara believe that the ancestors can see this fire from the spirit realms burning in each of us. The fire is the rope that links each Dagara with the real home they died away from when they were born into being human, the home of the Ancestors. Through the link of the fire the Dagara communicate with the spirit realms.

Helping spirits

Some of the primary **helping spirits** of the Dagara are Namwin, the Supreme spirit; Wedeme, the spirit of undomesticatable wildness; the Kontombili; and the Ancestors.

Power Animals

The **power animals** of the Dagara may be found in the forms of the animals indigenous to the environment and in mythical beasts. Each **animal spirit** is

believed to embody specific qualities. For example, the chameleon is a symbol of transformation and the **birds** are messengers for the spirit world.

In the Dagara tradition there are both positive and negative trickster animals. For example, Hyena is considered a negative trickster because he never fully uses the potential of Nature and it always backfires on him. Conversely, Spider and Rabbit are considered positive tricksters because they use the powers of Nature fully in a way that benefits all living beings.

Ancestors

The Dagara believe that the Ancestor spirits “stand behind” the individual, offering help from the spirit world. Ancestors are expected to spend a great deal of time as counselors to the living. Which Ancestor or helping spirit comes to give counsel depends on several things: **gender**, what the person is trying to achieve today, and what they need to accomplish in their lifetime.

After death an Ancestor initially appears in dreams in his or her earthly form because the familiar form is more comfortable for the living. As time passes the living become familiar with the ancestor’s energy and the ancestor returns to Nature, taking the form of an animal or tree or some earthly configuration like mountains, rocks, or rivers.

Power, Responsibility, and Initiation

Power and responsibility within the traditional Dagara community are shared by all initiated adults. Initiation is essential to be considered an adult. The uninitiated are believed to be in a suspended state of childhood, regardless of age, and cannot share adult responsibilities and power.

The Dagara consider the ability to see the spirit within all physical forms and to move between the physical and spiritual worlds essential and normal abilities for all traditional adults. Thus, initiation is designed to awaken these basic shamanic skills. Adults are expected to be able to perform the **divinations** and rituals necessary for daily life,

leaving the deeper mastery of these esoteric arts and healing to the *boburo*.

Initiation

The hearing

The first ritual, the “hearing,” is held a few months before birth. The pregnant mother, some of her relatives, and the *boburo* participate. The purpose of the ritual is to allow the child to inform the living where that soul is from, why it chose to come here, and what gender it has chosen. The *boburo*’s role is to ask questions, which the child’s soul answers through the mother’s body and voice. The *boburo* interprets the child’s answers if necessary and names the child based on the purpose the soul communicates for this lifetime.

During the *boburo*’s questioning some souls ask that specific **power objects** or **talismans** be prepared for their arrival. The *boburo* may suggest to the soul that another gender would be more appropriate for its life task. The name acquired in this ritual is reserved, to be given to the child at initiation into adulthood. It serves as a reminder of the purpose of that child’s life.

Initiation into adulthood

Initiation into adulthood is an opportunity for the adolescent child to remember his or her soul’s purpose and to transform into a person capable of fulfilling that purpose. Not all aspects of initiation are the same for young men and women. For example, rituals around the menstrual **blood** and its cycle are part of the initiation of young women only.

Adolescents are initiated with others of their same gender, usually once a year. The ritual may last four to six weeks or more. Girls join the first group to be initiated after the onset of their first menstrual cycle, the time at which they begin doing ritual for their menstrual cycle. Boys join their initiation ritual based on age and maturity of the individual.

The dangers of the initiation process are real and for some the result will be

death. The five *boburo* who conduct initiation rituals do not necessarily know how to return from the infinite number of places between the worlds that children will be drawn into as the spirits initiate them. The novices must be vigilant and find their own way back to their body and their purpose in this life. Every year one or more youths becomes lost in between ordinary reality and **non-ordinary reality** and does not return. These deaths are grieved deeply in the community.

During initiation each individual, boy or girl, is challenged to remember the secret of his or her own nature. The ritual provides many opportunities to remember and also to repair the damage already done by living his or her life disconnected from its purpose.

After initiation, the Ancestors begin to reveal the things people cannot be allowed to know until they have aligned their will with the will of their soul. The Dagara believe that a person submits to his own soul in the initiation ritual. Only then can the Ancestor spirits intervene in that person's life in the many good ways the spirits do.

The Dagara believe that a people cannot gain real knowledge of the world if they cannot see the spirit in all things. Developing this skill is not considered supernatural, but rather part of a natural process of realizing a wider understanding of reality. For Dagara this post-initiation awareness is a return to one's true self, the Divine essence within each human.

For the Dagara communication with the spirit world is necessary in the daily tasks of life. Initiated adults learn basic skills (normally associated with shamans) like divination, tending family shrines, and conducting family ritual, while the *boburo* serves the community as a specialist in these areas and in healing.

Power flows to all Dagara from their ancestors and the spirit world. Physical life and that of the spirit world are experienced as inextricably interwoven. All traditional Dagara function with at least

an awareness of the spirit world if not in direct personal communication with it.

For the Dagara, the health of the individual and community is a state of balance maintained between polarities, like the seen and unseen, masculine and feminine ancestors, water and fire, west and east, male and female roles, etc. This balance is continually reestablished through ritual.

In each family compound there is a shrine to the Ancestors which usually includes some aspect of the family's medicine. The male head of the household is charged with maintaining and nourishing the ancestral shrine, the family's connection with the Ancestors. The first male child is prepared to take on the responsibilities of maintaining the family shrine when his father dies.

Approximately half of the rooms in the family compound are spirit rooms; they are accessible only by the family heads and medicine people. These rooms house the sacred shrines and the family's medicine. The components of the shrine are not fixed. They represent what the family is aspiring towards. Separate shrines may be made or there may be elements of different things in one shrine. These shrines are essential for the maintenance of the family's home and health.

Each head of the household is expected to maintain a very close relationship with his ancestors and to follow their wisdom in counseling his large family. He consults diviners, *boburos*, or priests of the appropriate shrine for ritual and divination needs beyond the daily maintenance of the family. These specialists and individuals consult the village councils for issues between families or involving the community.

The male and female counsels are priests and priestesses of the sacred shrines, plus selected elders and *boburos*. These counsels serve together to make decisions that affect the entire village of family compounds.

The *boburo* works as a specialist within this cultural context of shared responsibility for maintaining balance

on all levels between the physical and spiritual worlds. If an imbalance exists with the energies of the dead, their unresolved energy will haunt the **souls** and **psyches** of the living bringing suffering and death. The Dagara believe that it is the responsibility of the living to heal the dead. Dagara rituals are performed to restore balance and to prevent problems in the future.

Ritual

Rituals are performed on three distinct and deeply interdependent levels: community, family, and individual. Together these rituals are an effective preventative medicine that sustains prosperity and mental and physical well-being.

At the communal level, the *boburo* or the priest/ess of the appropriate sacred shrine performs the rituals. Every adult initiated member of the village is obliged to attend. These rituals are an opportunity to restore balance with the elemental energies embodied in the shrine and to re-establish unity under one spirit, Namwin, the Supreme Spirit.

Successful community rituals liberate a quality of energy that makes it possible for family rituals to work effectively. Led by the head of the household, every responsible (initiated) family member's attendance is required. These rituals honor certain spirits in the name of the family for reasons of prosperity, protection, or health.

Successful family rituals liberate a quality of energy that makes it possible for individual rituals to work. The Dagara believe that all people owe the cosmic order and that they pay this debt through ritual and living their soul's purpose. Furthermore they believe that it is impossible for someone to pay this debt for another. Individual rituals are the responsibility of one person. However, the negligence of these rituals adversely affects the family and the community.

Ritual is the yardstick by which the Dagara measure their state of connection with the hidden ancestral realm. The entire community is genetically

connected through the Ancestors. The Dagara think of themselves as a physical projection of the ancestral realm. Ritual is the way they heal their relationship with this realm when necessary.

Dance, songs, chants, and the drum are essential components of most rituals. However, each ritual is unique. The basic structure stays the same, but any ritual repeated the same way twice loses its power. Even seasonal rituals repeated each year are adjusted to take full advantage of the present conditions.

Rituals invite the spirits to come and help change something that humans are not capable of changing themselves. The form of a ritual is determined by the *boburo* or priest/ess to address the particular change needed in the present situation. Rituals are always different and their outcome is unpredictable.

Dagara **ceremonies** invite the spirits to come and strengthen or energize that which already is. Ceremonies are always the same and their outcome is predictable. Though they may look like rituals, they serve a different healing purpose. They are used to strengthen relationships and community ties through repetition and familiarity.

Sacrifice

Sacrifice is usually a part of Dagara rituals. The necessary sacrifice for a ritual is determined through divination and it is relative to the purpose of the ritual. Examples of appropriate sacrifices include offering **libations** or throwing water or **ash** for rituals of verification, protection, strengthening, or reinforcement. To right a wrongdoing or atone for a prior transgression the appropriate **offering** is the blood of an animal (chicken, goat, sheep, or cow).

For a ritual to be successful, the sacrifice must be correct. The spirits do not recognize inappropriate sacrifices. They will not take what they do not need. For example, offering a libation for safe travels is appropriate prior to a journey. However, if a chicken is sacrificed instead, when there has been no prior

wrongdoing, a wrongdoing will be met along the journey to restore balance. To set things in order and avoid this wrongdoing, the unnecessary transgression against the chicken must be corrected. Another chicken must be sacrificed to right the wrong of killing the first. Then the correct sacrifice, the libation, must be offered for the safe journey.

The sacrificial animals are not discarded as waste. Some are cooked with medicines and eaten as part of the cure. When the purpose of the ritual prevents the animals from being eaten, as with rituals performed to prevent a death, the sacrificed animals are buried or abandoned in the wild. In other situations, how the sacrificed animal dies is meaningful and adds information to the divination and **diagnosis**.

Ritual for healing

Ritual is the primary course of healing **disease** and illness. The Dagara believe that the source of all disease, illness, and disharmony is found in the dimension between humans and the spirit world or in the magic that comes from that dimension. *Boburos* use rituals to work with the energy of this in-between dimension.

All the *boburo*'s methods of healing are considered rituals. Ritual can be used to respond to a present need or as preventative medicine. By restoring harmony between the human world and the world of the spirit beings, the Ancestors, or Nature, the *boburo* heals the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual illnesses of the individual and the community.

Rituals for prevention

Rituals for prevention are performed to avert dangers that would disrupt any healthy state of balance. For example, funerals are in part preventative rituals. They provide an opportunity to complete unfinished business with the dead. This prevents the turmoil and premature deaths caused when villages allow an imbalance with the deceased.

Rituals of celebration

Rituals of celebration are performed to offer gratitude for the help the spirits have given that brings health and abundance to the living. During the harvest ritual, for example, the whole village brings samples of the harvest, both physical and magical, and offers them to the spirit world along with sacrifices of goats and chickens. The ritual offering is followed by a feast to express the oneness of the humans with Namwin and to celebrate spirit's part in the good harvest.

Elements of Dagara healing rituals

There is a pattern and flow to community healing rituals. Within that pattern, there are three elements that are constantly interacting. The *boburo* (or other elder) who guides the pattern and flow of the ritual, the musicians who contain the ritual **space**, and the assembled villagers who participate, bringing the energies to be transformed through the ritual experience. The interaction of all three elements is necessary to maintain the power and energy that the ritual has been designed to transform.

Music and its role in ritual

Music is used to contain the energetic, or non-physical, aspect of the ritual space. Dance and song are used to move the ritual process forward by providing a **vehicle** for expression within the ritual space, which is defined physically by the people gathered.

The instruments and vocalists commonly used in community rituals are the drum, singers (chanters, improvisers), and large xylophones (often two, one "male" and one "female"). The xylophones set the primary melodic influence. The drummer creates a rhythmic space within which the chanted verbal dialogue is expressed between the singers and the participants. Together the musicians provide the necessary container that channels the outpouring of human emotion in ways that the *boburo* can guide toward the ritual's intended goal.

Rhythm and chanting are used together to crack open the part of the self that holds emotions under control. For example in a funeral ritual rhythm and chanting are used to open the participants to grief. Grief is then channeled in such a way that it will convey the soul of the dead successfully through its passage into the other world. Without the help of the drummers, musicians, and chanters, the powerful force of grief cannot be both unleashed and contained. If not contained the emotional energy is useless to the dead and dangerous to the living.

This musical container of the ritual space must be maintained continuously. The musicians do not rest as long as the ritual continues, though the ritual may last one to four full days.

Singers and their role in ritual

The singer, or lead chanter, is considered the engineer of emotion. The person who leads the chants creates poetry on the spot, improvising in ways that will move the ritual process forward. By working with the emotional energies released by the participants, the chanter creates channels for the energy flowing through the ritual.

Drums and their role in ritual

In large community rituals the drummer creates a rhythmic container with the other musicians. In smaller scale **shamanic healing** rituals the drum is used with chanting and **rattles** to create the container. Depending on the demands of the ritual, the *boburo* will drum or work in tandem with a drummer.

The drum is a transportation device that carries the *boburo* into other worlds. The Dagara work with different rhythms to enable travel to different places in the spirit realms. A master drummer can coax special rhythms from the drum that convey others into specific dimensions of the spirit world.

Healing Practices

Dagara healing practices involve divination, the use of plant medicines, and

an array of traditional esoteric arts involving mastery of **altered states of consciousness**. The specialists in the esoteric arts are diviners, medicine people, *boburos* (shamans), and the priests and priestesses of the five sacred communal shrines. All of these specialists are selected from both genders and each shrine has both a priest and priestess responsible for its care and vitality.

Divination, the art of communication with the spirit world, plays a large role in the Dagara practice of esoteric arts. Diviners are the practitioners who specialize in this particular aspect of the esoteric arts.

Divination is essential prior to all rituals and can be performed by a diviner, *boburo*, or priest/ess of a sacred shrine. Divination is used to diagnose the true source of disharmony or illness and to determine the appropriate course of action, which will involve ritual of some kind.

Divination is performed in an **embodiment** trance (the helping spirits are invoked within the practitioner's body). Prior to embodiment, the practitioner selects the appropriate objects from his or her vast collection of power objects (ordinary objects used to contain supernatural power). One object, usually a stick or rod, is designated as the pointer. The selected objects are arranged before the practitioner along with any necessary elements, like fire or water.

The practitioner begins to invoke the spirits, usually with a rattle, bell, chant, or **invocation** spoken in magical language. The full embodiment trance is reached when the practitioner begins to shake with muscular convulsions and sweats profusely, symptoms caused by the effort to control the embodiment **trance**.

The helping spirit is then invoked in the divination pointer as well as the practitioner. The pointer is moved by the helping spirit in answer to the practitioner's questions. In this way the practitioner engages the spirit world in a dialogue. The meaning of this

dialogue is derived both from the order the pointer selects the **power objects** and from the specific interrogation of each object selected. The diagnosis and prescriptions are determined from the practitioner's interpretation of this dialogue.

This type of divination is used to diagnose and prescribe medicines, their preparations, rituals, and necessary sacrifices. If animals are to be sacrificed, the type of animals, the number, and to which sacred shrine the sacrifice is to be given are also determined. Whether the animal is to be discarded, eaten, or cooked with medicines is prescribed. The divination also provides a warning of what will occur if the prescribed cure is not carried out. Negligence in these areas affects not only the individual, but often innocent family members and, at times, the whole community.

Divination tools

A traditional set of power objects is used for divination as described above, with a stick that serves as a pointer. The basic set grows as divinees return to the diviner after carrying out a prescription with a gift. The gift is an object that is symbolic of the successful transformation the divinee has undergone as a result of acting on the divination.

Cowry shells are cast for divination. The Dagara believe that the shells' function is two-fold: first, they scan the energy fields of the people in question, and second, they are a means to open a dialogue with the spirits. Cowry readings are used for guidance, diagnoses of personal and village problems, and to prescribe the necessary ritual actions to restore balance.

Skrying is a form of divination used to see beyond the reaches of physical sight. To skry, a clay pot is filled with virgin water (rainwater collected from the **sky** before it touches the earth). The appropriate magical invocations are spoken over it. The diviner looks into the water to see things, both physical and magical, far beyond the limits of

natural sight. The precision of skrying far surpasses the simplicity of the tool.

The ash thrower is a particular designation of diviner whose role is to help to prevent bad circumstances by negotiating conflicts that involve a living person and a spirit being. For example, the ash thrower listens to a person's bad dream and interprets the necessary sacrifice. They go together to the ancestral shrine to present the issue, throw ash, and ask that the danger or bad circumstances be averted.

Sand is used for divination as a medium for spontaneous writing. Spirit moves the writing hand in the sand, then the writings are interpreted for the diagnosis or prescription.

Healing Techniques

The *boburo* uses divination for diagnosis and to determine the appropriate ritual, sacrificial **offerings**, and/or necessary medicines prior to healing rituals. Two particular types of healing rituals for individuals are **extractions** and **soul retrievals** (described below). The *boburo* also uses medicines, both physical and non-physical.

Extraction

Extraction, the removal of harmful **energies** from the body, can be general or specific. Generalized energies are extracted by rubbing a live animal all over the patient's body. The harmful energies are drawn into the body of the animal. These animals may be sacrificed indirectly in the course of this healing process because the energies removed from the patient are often sufficient to kill the animal.

Boburos also extract specific energies like a *lobir*, an invisible projectile sent into the patient via black magic. After the *boburo* removes the *lobir* he or she can create a *lobir*-proof protective energy to deflect *lobie* (pl.) and send them back to their creators, since the only *lobir* an individual can't be protected against is one of their own making. The protective energy created by the *boburo* is merged with the patient's energy field for life.

Soul loss and soul retrieval

The Dagara consider **soul loss** a serious problem. The Siè is the part of a person's soul that gets lost as a result of trauma or black magic. The Siè is connected to the ancestral world and moves between the worlds. The vuur is also a person's soul. However, it remains in the body and is more comparable to life force energy.

When the Siè is lost in other realms or stolen, the person suffers from serious psychological problems or lives in a state of **chaos**, terror, or insecurity. As the problem progresses, the individual will lose the ability to distinguish physical reality from the spirit world.

A *boburo* of the earth clan retrieves lost soul parts. The *boburo* locates the Siè and uses rituals involving animal sacrifices to retrieve and reattach the Siè. If the Siè remains unattached over time, it forgets that it is connected to a body and abandons the body altogether. This is a dire situation, which the *boburo* cannot fix.

Medicine

Dagara medicines are physical (herbs, plants, and roots) and non-physical. The non-physical medicines are contained in various gourd vessels and power objects. Roots and plants are collected daily and prepared nightly. Some of the roots are used to treat physical illnesses while most are for illnesses of the soul. The secrets of the preparation of all medicines belong to the medicine person and are the spiritual, material, and magical property of his or her family.

Medicines, both physical and spiritual, are prepared and consumed in several ways. Medicines are cooked with the animals sacrificed in the corresponding ritual or with preparations of root vegetables for eating. Medicines can be added to water for drinking or for **cleansing**. Medicines are also made into potions or tinctures that are anointed on the skin or rubbed into small cuts.

Shapeshifting

Shapeshifting (taking the shape of a being other than oneself), though not a

common practice, can be used for healing. For example, a *boburo* developed the ability to shapeshift her patients into animals. To heal she chose an animal in whose body the patient's illness could not survive and transformed the person into that animal. When the illness died in the animal body, the *boburo* returned her patient to his or her human form. This *boburo's* unique skill was kept secret to maintain its power and died with her.

Paraphernalia

The *boburo's* tools involve power objects, which can be anything, and talismans, which are usually in the form of a ring, belt, necklace, or shoes. **Paraphernalia** also involves rattles, drums, a **medicine pouch**, and personal divination tools. What a *boburo* uses depends on who, in terms of helping spirits, "stands behind" the *boburo*.

Power objects, or medicine objects, are essential for diagnosis. For the most part they are trivial-looking things, like bones, stones, or odd **metal** objects. Their power and value come from the energies embodied within them. Gourd rattles, bells, and animal tails are common in the *boburo's* array of power objects.

Talismans are worn as sources of power and protection. The most common talisman is a small pouch filled with power objects and invocations, whose energies together are the talisman. Depending on the actions of its bearer, the power of the talisman may be used to help or to hurt. Talismans are treated with great respect, care, and, at times, fear.

Special elements of the *boburo's* clothing may be used in divination. This is usually a special hat or an article of clothing that has been decorated with powerful aspects of earth or Nature. The type of special clothing and its decoration depends again on who stands behind the *boburo*.

Yélé and Bomo

Yélé or Bomo are the general names used to refer to power objects which are

intentionally left unnamed to sustain their magical properties. Yélé (Bomo) are valued for what they do, not what they are. Yélé (Bomo) seeds, for example, are brought to the shrine to be blessed before each planting season with the crop seeds of millet, corn, and beans. The Yélé (Bomo) seeds are planted for magical purposes along with the seeds planted for crops.

Art

The Dagara believe **art** is the form in which spirits choose to exist in the physical world. When an artist or *boburo* carves a double-headed serpent or an amphibious mammal, the artist is not just creating an image out of his or her imagination, he or she is cooperating with the spirits of those beings. The Dagara believe that the spirits are able to help in healing, repairing the physical world, and maintaining the natural order through their manifestation in art. See also **singing**.

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Daime

See *ayahuasca* and **Santo Daime**.

Dalang

A master in the **art** of Indonesian shadow puppetry. The dalang's mastery is another example of adaptation of shamanic techniques of **trance** and **energy** management. The dalang manipulates over one hundred puppets with different voices and languages and he accompanies himself with his feet on the gamalong, a xylophone-like instrument.

The personalities and roles of the puppets are never confused because the dalang embodies the **spirit** of the puppet each time he takes the character's

part. The dalang is also a master of yoga and meditation, allowing the dalang to draw energy from the environment and channel it to sustain the excellence of the long and complicated performances.

The characters are gods, goddesses, demons, mythical creatures, and simple people. The performances are a mixture of traditional stories and current events, weaving and re-weaving tales of the ever-flowing dynamic between **chaos** and order. The shadow screen itself is a reminder of the illusory distinction between **ordinary reality** and **non-ordinary reality**.

The dalang and his shadow-puppet dramas express the shadow and the light, the chaos and the order without bias or judgment, playing out again and again in infinite variety the values and beliefs of the community. It is said that at times the future is predicted accurately in the dalang's performance.

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Dance

Dance is a tool used by **shamans** to embody spirit, either their own spirit (empowerment) or that of their **helping spirits (embodiment)**. Shamanic dances are choreographed and inherited in some **cultures** and improvised and spontaneous in others. In some situations the shaman is using the **dance** itself as **medicine**, while in other situations the dance is the means by which the shaman enters **trance**.

In cultures where the dances are inherited, like the Kwakiutl, the dances are usually highly choreographed, using formalized body, head, and hand movements that appear to imitate animals and helping spirits. They are handed down as part of the oral tradition, and as such must be remembered exactly. The right to perform each dance is earned after long, rigorous, and exacting **training**. The dance is medicine and

its power is proportional to the perfection of its performance. These dances are valued because they successfully created a connection with **healing** energies that heal specific **illnesses**.

In other cultures, like the **Aboriginals** of **Australia**, it is the relationship with spirit that is inherited. The dance, which connects the dancer to the inherited spirit, is improvisational. These dances often begin with familiar, formalized movements that imitate the behavior of the helping spirit. As the dance progresses, the dancer moves deeper into an **altered state of consciousness** and the embodiment of the helping spirit deepens. In the embodiment trance the initially improvised movement gives over to the spontaneous movements of the embodied helping spirit.

In cultures where dance is a primary tool of the shaman, as with the *mudang* of **Korea**, inheritance of choreographed dances and the embodiment trance achieved through the dance are both important. Dances are powerful healing tools of the *mudang* and so are of great value. They are protected from use by others and handed down directly from shaman to **apprentice**. However it is not enough to imitate the dances of past shamans. A shaman must be able to access the spirit powers through the dance to be able to use the dance as a healing tool.

The intention of the shamanic dance is to enter trance. Imitation is one way to begin the dance which will lead to trance and spontaneous movement. It is also possible to begin with spontaneous movement and allow that to lead into trance. The degree of choreography or imitation is unimportant as long as the dancer is able to reach ecstatic rapport with spirit.

It is essential for a shaman to be able to renew his or her own medicine. It is not enough for a new shaman to imitate the forms of the dances from the past. The dance must function as a means by which the shaman enters trance, connects with spirit, and potentially receives new dances from spirit. As people and

cultures change, so do **diseases** and illness. The authentic shaman must be able to establish a direct link to spirit to receive new dances as they are needed to heal the people.

There are many shamanic cultures where dance serves as a means to enter trance without the structure of family inheritance, ownership, choreography, or the responsibility of conveying tribal history. The **ceremony** sets the environment for dancing and the dancer gives over to the spontaneous movement of spirit **energy** within them. In some cultures, like the **!Kung**, the energy (*num*) is a life-force energy that boils up the spine, making itself available for healing from within the dancer. In other cultures the spirit is clearly that of an animal or deity who also makes its energy available for healing through the dancer.

Spontaneous, authentic movement is used to initiate trance in a great many cultures around the world. Often the shaman begins a healing ritual with drumming and dancing. The dance often becomes more erratic and energetic as the shaman enters trance and merges with his or her helping spirits. At that point the **drum** is often handed over to the assistants so that the shaman is free to dance and work and move in the trance state unencumbered. In actual healing sessions the shaman may return to this spontaneous dancing several times to deepen his or her trance and connection with spirit.

The spontaneity of receiving a dance from spirit is not prohibited in cultures with strong traditions of inherited and choreographed dance. A dance is considered a gift from spirit in any form. However, there is a distinction made between the dances used to embody a helping spirit to enter trance to do healing work and dances with proven track records for facilitating the healing of certain illnesses.

In both cases the dance is a **vehicle** to fill the dancer with healing power, making him/her more powerful through this merging with spirit. The

choreographed dance is medicine because it brings a known healing power while the spontaneous dance is an unknown healing power. If a new dance consistently brings in a particular healing power, that dance will be codified and its choreography added to the shaman's collection of healing dances.

To the observer, the onset of the trance state may not be apparent during the dance. However, dancers report **journeys** that their **souls** take in the spirit world while the helping spirits dance their bodies in the physical world. Mothers, wives, and sisters assist Pueblo deer dancers immediately after the dancing ends to assure that the dancer's soul returns to the dancer's body. If not their souls remain in deer form and escape to the mountains, leaving the dancer in a state of **soul loss** and unable to return to human form.

Dance gatherings, in which everyone dances, are used as preventative medicine in shamanic cultures. For example, traditional Savoonga **Eskimo** dancing, or **aghula**, is "a sacred gathering of power—a direct expression of the hidden spiritual and unfathomable being of life—invoked through drumming and chanting and made manifest by dancing." Some dancers use complex, ritualized patterns, some dance shamanic teaching stories, while other dancers move in improvisation allowing direct inspiration and spontaneous trance states.

Dance is one of four universal healing salves (**storytelling, singing, silence**), which are ways of maintaining health and well-being. The inability to enjoy dancing, or any of the healing salves, indicates a state of soul loss.

Dance is sacred in origin. The spirits continue to reveal dances to shamans in **dreams, visions**, and trances. Dancing these revealed dances exercises the shaman's bond with the spirit world and its powers. To dance is to pray. To dance is to enter a sacred state in which the dancer is in balance with the forces of life.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Halifax, Joan, Ph.D. *Shamanic Voices: A Survey of Visionary Narratives*. New York: Penguin Books, 1991.

Williams, J. E. "Dancing Dreams, Drumming Life." *Shaman's Drum* 46 (Fall 1997): 60–65.

Daoism (Taoism)

A matrifocal spiritual tradition in which the Dao, the **Great Mystery**, may divide itself into all things. Both religious and philosophical Daoism are based in a trust of Nature which is founded in the truth of the Dao (Oneness) that our individual nature and Nature itself are not distinct or separate. Religious Daoism is a compendium of alchemy, medicine, philosophy, yogic practices, **diet**, and complex cosmological **rituals** which are the result of thousands of years of investigation through **trance** of the human relationship to Nature in its physical and spiritual manifestations.

The **wu, shamans**, of **ancient China** may have been partly responsible for the emergence of Daoism from its shamanic roots in the 6th century B.C.E. The **wu** regularly utilized trance states in which the **wu's** soul traveled to the **domain** of a particular helping spirit to bring back information. The earliest records of these trance experiences indicate that though the **journeys** were ecstatic, the **wu** experienced dangerous physical, emotional, and energetic changes, which left their bodies injured, ill, or prematurely aged.

The **dao ren**, male relatives of the **wu**, observed and recorded the trance practices and their results in terms of information and physical effects. The **wu** and the **dao ren** developed theories and techniques for preparing the body for trance that, when practiced, allowed the **wu** to journey safely. As these theories and techniques developed they were observed to protect and improve health in general. They are the ancient roots of

Qi Gong, Tai Ji Quan, and the Daoist yogic methods practiced today.

The creation of Daoism was a joint venture. The *wu*, the yin factor, entered deep trance to scan the true face of humanity's relationship with the Dao and the *dao ren*, the yang factor, organized and systematized the experience into the physical practices, cosmology, and philosophy known as Daoism. See also **China**.

Belyea, Charles. *Dragon's Play: A New Taoist Transmission of the Complete Experience of Human Life*. Berkeley, CA: Great Circle Lifeworks, 1991.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Dass

Dass is the **gender-variant** shaman of the Cahsia Pomo of the **California region of North America**. The *dass* comprised a special order of **teachers** of the **sacred**. Their primary focus was instructing the children in the legends and moral tales that comprise the oral traditions of the people. After years of **training** they were able to **sing** the entire tribal history in sing-song monotone without error or repetition. See also **transformed shaman**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Datura

Datura, the "Holy Flower of the North Star," is also known as *dhatara*, *dutra*, *thornapple*, *toloache*, *toloatzin*, and *tornaloco*. It is one of the "plants of the gods" used by the **Aztecs**. *Datura* plays a major role in native **cultures**, particularly in the Americas, medicinally and as a sacred hallucinogen in shamanic **rituals** and ceremonies. It is related to *Brugmansia* and the **hexing herbs** of the Nightshade family. *Datura* is a

potent narcotic and is known by all who use it to be a dangerous medicine.

Datura is an angiosperm, the most highly evolved of the flowering plants. The conical, sweet-smelling flowers grow erect, five to nine inches long, and open to the **Sun** in a ten-pointed corolla. *Datura* is found in the tropical and warm-temperate zones of wide areas of Asia, **Africa**, the Middle East, **North America**, Central America, and **South America**.

Datura metel, the most common species in Europe and the Middle East, has solitary, trumpet-shaped flowers that range from purple to yellow to white. It is used as a **medicine** and a common hallucinogen. For example, in India it is used for treating a variety of physical problems like fevers and breast inflammations, skin **disease**, tumors, diarrhea, and mental disorders.

Datura ferox is the most common species in Asia and Africa where it is used both medicinally and as a sacred hallucinogen. In northeast Africa, *Datura* is believed to be one of many ingredients in a hallucinogenic drink used by Kunama women in **dance** rituals.

There are many species of *Datura* in the Americas where it is used intensively as a medicine and a sacred hallucinogen. *Datura inoxia*, with white flowers tinged in a range from pink to violet, is the most common species used in Mexico and southwestern North America. For example, the Zuñi consider it the exclusive property of the rain priests, who alone may collect the roots of the plant. The rain **priests** place the powdered root in their eyes to induce communication with the spirits of the Feathered Kingdom and chew the roots to induce communication with the **Ancestors** whom they ask to intercede with the spirits for rain. They also used *Datura* as an analgesic in medical procedures.

Datura ceratocaula, or *Torna Loca* "the maddening plant," is an extremely strong narcotic species that grows in the marshes and shallow waters of Mexico.

The Aztecs treated it with great reverence due to its **power** and potency. Little is known of the contemporary use of this species as a hallucinogen.

Use

Datura is used for both medicinal and ritual purposes with great care. *Datura* is a highly toxic hallucinogen. Improper use, overdose, and overuse have all caused insanity, in both the contemporary and indigenous sense. Experienced shamans who work in **trance** regularly use *Datura* infrequently and only when necessary.

In Mexico, **toloache** (*Datura*) is used by the Yaqui to relieve the pain of childbirth, and the **Huichol** use it for a wide variety of medicinal purposes. The Huichol allow **toloache** to be handled only by people of power who can respect this **plant spirit** and treat it properly.

The ancient Aztecs used *Toloatzin* (*Datura*) as a sacred hallucinogen and versatile medicinal plant, particularly to reduce swelling and relieve the **pains** of rheumatism. In the Nahuatl **language** of the Aztecs, *Datura* is known as *Tolohuaxihuitl* and *Tlapatl*.

The Navajo use *Datura* to induce **vision** and prophecy. The visions are considered especially sacred when they reveal an individual's **helping spirit** and the teaching that spirit brings to the individual at that time. Navajo shamans use *Datura* to induce a trance state that allows communication with spirit for **diagnosis** and a prescription of the **chant** necessary for **healing**.

Use in Initiation

Datura is used in the **initiation** rituals of many cultures. The inherent qualities of the trance state induced by *Datura* are particularly well suited to the needs of initiation. For example, the Yokut of the **California region** of North America used *Tanayin* (*Datura*) as part of the initiation rituals held in the spring. *Tanayin* was taken at this one time to ensure that the lives of the initiates would be "good and long."

The Tubatulabal, also of the California region, held initiation rituals after puberty for both boys and girls. The youths drink large amounts of a liquor prepared by soaking mashed *Datura* roots in water for ten hours. The ensuing trance state could last up to twenty-four hours, during which time the child seeks to "obtain life" by contacting an animal helping spirit or "life" spirit (the spirit of a deceased human). These helping spirits support the person through life and help to cure any serious illness they may contract. As adults the Tubatulabal continue to use *Datura* to obtain **visions**.

Datura stramonium is the primary hallucinogen in *Wysoccan*, the plant sacrament used in the male initiation ritual, *Huskanawing*, of the indigenous peoples of the North American southeast (what is now Virginia). The initiates were isolated for eighteen to twenty days and fed only *Wysoccan*, which induced a temporary, raving madness. If successful, the boy was led by spirit through the ordeal of "unliving" his former child life of needs and desires. The purpose of the initiation was to begin manhood by losing the memories of ever having been a boy.

Preparation

In Mexico, *Toloache* is prepared as a drink by adding it to mescal, a distilled liquor from *Agave*. *Toloache* ointment is prepared by adding *Datura* seeds and leaves to lard which is spread on the belly to induce visual hallucinations.

The modern Tarahumara of northern Mexico prepare *Toloache* by adding the roots, leaves, and seeds of *Datura innoxia* to *tesquino*, a ceremonial drink of fermented maize. They believe that the spirit of *Toloache* is malevolent, unlike the benevolent spirit of **peyote**, but necessary at times to induce a particular deep and intense trance state.

Active Principle

Tropane alkaloids have been isolated in all species of *Datura*. Their active principles are scopolamine, found in the

greatest concentration, hyoscyamine, and atropine. *Datura* is chemically related to the solanaceous plants of the Nightshade family: **henbane**, **belladonna**, and **mandrake**. Meteliodine is a secondary alkaloid in *Datura metel*.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

The effects of the different *Datura* species are very much alike because the active constituents are similar. The intoxication begins with a state of exhaustion or torpor which gives way to a deep trance state filled with intense visions. This state is followed by a deep sleep and loss of consciousness.

Songs and Dances

Datura has long been associated with dance and the worship of Shiva, who is traditionally represented in statues and painted images with *Datura* blossoms woven into his hair. Shiva is the Indian god whose cosmic Dance of Life weaves and reweaves the Life, Creation, **Time**, and Destruction of the Universe. See also **altered states of consciousness**; **Brugmansia aurea**; **Deadly Nightshade**; **entheogen**; **plant hallucinogens**.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Dead Shamans

Shamans spend their entire lives gathering, stalking, and cultivating **power** through their special relationship with the spirit world. These powers are meant to remain in the land of the living for the benefit and survival of the people. Where does that power go when a shaman dies his or her physical and final death?

In some cultures the shaman becomes a **helping spirit** and a protecting spirit for the people. For example, the Darkhat Mongols place the body of the shaman in his or her favorite place

out in Nature with his or her **paraphernalia** hung in a nearby tree. The site is off limits for forty-nine days because the shaman's spirit is considered dangerous.

After three years a living shaman will conduct a **ritual** at the dead shaman's site, leaving **offerings** and encouraging the dead shaman's spirit to become a protecting spirit. If the ritual is successful the spirit will embody an *ongon*, a doll that will be hung in a **shrine** where it serves as a protector of the people.

Some shamans simply turn permanently into the animal that has been their helping spirit for a lifetime. Amazonian shamans become jaguars, Indian shamans become monkeys, and Malay shamans become tigers, for example. These animals who were shamans may in turn become helping spirits for future shamans.

In many cultures that power will be handed down to a successor, if there is a successor who is prepared to receive them. In some cultures a ritual of transmission is performed before the **shaman's death**. More often the power is transferred after death through traditional rituals which are part of the funeral rites of a shaman. In some cultures the rituals are designed to pass the power on to the named successor. Other rituals are designed to allow the dead shaman's spirit to pick the successor from viable candidates.

Shamans who cannot find a successor before their death will continue to look for a successor from the spirit world. The shaman's spirit may have to prepare a successor through his or her **dreams**. Ultimately, the shaman's powers will also be passed on through dreams and spontaneous altered state experiences.

The process of looking for a suitable candidate from the spirit world, which may take years, is often trying and difficult for the living. It is disturbing for the community to have the shaman's spirit tearing around through everyone's dreams night after night looking, testing, and provoking a candidate to

emerge. It can be even more deeply disturbing for the one who is chosen. The individual may not understand that he or she has been chosen and the initial contact with the shaman's spirit may bring on temporary mental and/or physical **illness**.

A community may decide to bury a dangerous shaman in a way that specifically keeps the shaman's power away from the living. If a shaman has abused his or her power and is feared, the community can bury the shaman separately from his or her paraphernalia. These **power objects** are often destroyed, for example splitting the **drum** head, so that no one—living or dead—can utilize the shaman/ sorcerer's power.

See also **altered states of consciousness** and **Amazonia**.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Deadly Nightshade

Atropa belladonna L, one of the **hexing herbs** of *Solanaceae*, the Nightshade Family, was used as a psychoactive ingredient in the magical, inebriating brews of medieval witches. During the intoxication induced by these brews, witches engaged in both benevolent and malevolent aspects of hexing and making magic.

Atropa, named for the Greek fate, *Atropos*, who cuts the thread of life, is a multi-branching, perennial herb with ovate leaves. The solitary, drooping, bell-shaped, brown-purple flowers produce shiny black berries. All parts of the plant are toxic and contain psychoactive constituents. Deadly Nightshade grows in the thickets and woods in the lime soils of Europe and parts of North Africa and Asia.

Use

Deadly Nightshade is best known as a main ingredient in the potions of medieval, European witches, whose herbal brews were used for their hallucinogenic properties and other effects characteristic of their intoxication.

Potions were added to other liquids to drink or to ointments for absorption through the skin. Deadly Nightshade was used to induce **divination** trance states, to spike the wine of the Bacchanal feasts, and as an effective deadly poison.

Preparation

Hallucinogenic mixtures of the hexing herbs were prepared as potions to drink or ointments to be applied to parts of the body where the blood vessels are naturally close to the skin.

Active Principle

The main psychoactive constituent is *hyoscyamine*, with *scopolamine* found in lesser amounts. *Tropane alkaloids* are also present in trace amounts.

Use in Western Medicine

Atropa belladonna is an important source for medicinal drugs. See also **Africa; belladonna; plant hallucinogens; trance**.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Death and Dying

At death the **shaman** escorts the **soul** of the deceased on its **journey** into the Otherworld. Acting as the **psychopomp** is an important traditional role for the shaman. The shaman also functions as psychopomp with souls who, though dead for a long time, still have not completed their passage to the **Land of the Dead**.

Souls of the dead do not automatically complete their passage to the Otherworld at death. The shaman makes certain that the dying person knows the way to the Land of the Dead and that they can follow all the landmarks. The shaman also aids the dying person in releasing attachments and resolving his or her life so that leaving will be easier and the soul will be less

likely to hang around the living in an effort to complete its business.

When a shaman cannot help a patient and another form of **healing** can, the patient is referred to an appropriate healer. However, when nothing remains to be done but to face death, the shaman's role is to prepare the dying for the journey ahead and to escort the soul when its time on **earth** is done.

The ability of shamans to work with death and dying is unique because they have faced the fears of their own death in shamanic **initiation** and have found their way back to the land of the living. The pathways of death in the spirit world are familiar. By ritualizing the transition inherent in the dying process, the shaman can transform dying into a period of growth and healing.

Death is not failure from a shamanic perspective. It is a passage, a crossing over to the Land of the Dead, and a return to the **Ancestors** or the Source. Though it generates a time of grieving, death is part of the cycle of life. Serving the healing in the dying process is part of serving the healing in life.

Decline in Power

The **first shamans** who walked the **earth** in primordial times displayed truly superhuman powers, flying through the air like bullets or fireballs, burrowing literally into the earth to reach the **Lowerworld**, appearing and disappearing, seeing and hearing at great distances, and generally living beyond the bounds of **time** and **space**. It appears that the powers of all **shamans** have declined incrementally since that magical time.

In part this is because the magic in the lives of all people has declined since that time. The creation stories of most peoples tell of a wondrous, paradise-like time in the beginning when animals, humans, and gods all communicated easily and lived as one. In this time the Upper, Middle, and Lowerworlds were a great hole through which anyone could fly without obstruction. All beings lived

in a state of freedom, health, and trust in which death was unnecessary.

Then, through a mysterious misdeed that no one seems to remember the connection between the realms was broken. Communication between the physical and spiritual worlds became harder and harder and all sentient beings gradually lost their original wisdom. Humans, no longer living in balance with all things, began to experience suffering, **illness**, and death. Humans needed someone to risk the dangerous passage across the broken bridge between the worlds to learn what to do. From this need the first shamans were called into service, shown by the **spirits** how to recreate the bridge and help their people.

An **Eskimo** shaman explains that "In the days of our ancestors, the *angaqoqs* (shamans) dedicated their lives to the work of keeping the world in balance; they dedicated it (their lives) to great things, immeasurable enormous things." Yet, as humanity as a whole slipped further and further out of balance, each generation of shamans had a greater task and apparently lesser powers with which to meet that task.

The Buryats explain that the decline in the power of shamans is caused by a lack of **humility** and a reluctance to let the spirit world lead. In the beginning the spirits chose the shamans exclusively. Now, shamans are determined only by their ancestral line. Though receiving power and skills through a hereditary line is accepted in many cultures, even in those cultures the hereditary shamans are considered less powerful than those who obtain their powers spontaneously and directly from spirit.

Today, shaman's work in **trance** states in which their souls can still fly between the worlds. However, rarely do they accomplish that task literally. Shamans transform into animals in their **journeys**, but rarely do they succeed in **shapeshifting** their physical form as their predecessors did at will. And humanity as a whole continues to slip further and further out of balance with other living things.

The decline in the power of shamans is also due to the widespread persecution and subjugation of shamanic peoples on every continent. For example, the conquering Soviets restricted drumming and sound-making **costumes**, essential in the traditions of the shamanic peoples of the former USSR. Today many shamans are strong and trusted healers, but they are not able to produce the incredible variety of sounds that was formerly an integral part of shamanic rituals. The elders say the loss of this ability to create spontaneous **music** is one of the many ways that the new shamans are not as strong as those of the past.

Other peoples believe that the shamans, like the people they serve, are weakened and made soft by taking up European habits and foods. These new customs and beliefs have made the shamans unsure of themselves and the people amnesic, forgetting how they were taught to live in balance with other living things.

The **myths** of shamanic peoples foretold the present-day movement of humanity as a whole into increasing imbalance with the world in which they live. As predicted, humans are becoming greedy and heartless toward one another, unable to grasp the truly important mysteries of life, lacking inner firmness and resolve, losing the ability to find the **sacred** words to pray, to see the truth of the soul, and to act on their original wisdom.

Perhaps the powers of the shamans have not declined as much as they are squandered in the “work of keeping the world in balance.” When the adults of a **culture** take up the responsibility to live in balance, then the shaman’s powers are only needed for the exceptions and the miracles. However, when there are no initiated adults in the culture and everyone has forgotten how to live well in the world, then the shaman’s powers are spread so thin they can barely be seen. See also **Buryat (Buriat); Middle-world; persecution of shamans; Upperworld.**

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Van Deusen, K. “Shamanism and Music in Tuva and Khakassia.” *Shaman’s Drum* 47 (Winter 1997–98).

Depossession

See **exorcism** and **extraction**.

Dew Eagle

See *oshadageaa*.

Diagnosis

Shamans diagnose in uniquely personal ways. However, most of these techniques are versions of three primary **divination** techniques: journeying, spirit **embodiment**, or using divination tools.

In journeying the shaman enters the spirit world to access information directly from the source. In an embodiment **trance**, the shaman asks the **helping spirits** to come into **ordinary reality**, enter the body of the shaman, and impart information through the shaman. When using a divination tool the shaman enters a trance and allows the patterns in the tool to determine the message from spirit.

The shaman must view the patient in the context of all aspects of the individual’s life to diagnose a problem. The shaman looks for balance, in and between, the physical, psychological, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the individual and his or her community. Imbalance in any one aspect is considered a potential opening for illness or misfortune in any other aspect. For example, behavior of questionable integrity affects alignment with the soul which affects the health of the body, and if it breaks a **taboo** with the spirit world, the health of the community. Conversely, restoring balance in any one aspect of an individual’s life affects the balance in all other aspects.

In a divination trance, the shaman is looking for where the flow is disrupted in the patient’s life and why. This “flow”

simply is; it implies no judgment of good or bad. A shaman described experiencing this disruption in the flow like walking by a chair that is knocked over. The disruption is obvious. One automatically reaches down to pick it up. See also **shamanic healing** and **symbolic language**.

Cowan, E. *Shamanism: Quarterly for the Foundation for Shamanic Studies* 5, no. 1 (1992) 4–19.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Diet

Food affects the **energy** of the body and therefore affects the **shaman** in his or her work. There are many reasons a shaman will choose to restrict certain foods or to fast completely. Most reasons are temporary and relative to the particular work the shaman is engaged in. However, **taboos** around eating or not eating the meat of your **helping spirit** is the one dietary restriction that lasts for the shaman's lifetime, or for the life of the shaman's relationship with that **animal spirit**.

Work with Plant Hallucinogens

Working with **plant hallucinogens** is one of the most common reasons for dietary restrictions. Different foods can create very toxic substances when they react with the active ingredients in plant hallucinogens. Foods may also affect the potency of the hallucinogen. By observing a particular diet the shaman can make the experience of ingesting the plant hallucinogen as potent and easy on the body as possible.

Purification

Particularly hard **healings** or **divinations** may require **purification** to succeed, particularly if normal ministrations have already proven ineffective. The shaman may fast, sweat, take emetics, or ingest herbal preparations to prepare himself or herself for challenging work. Purification may also be required

prior to a divination, the results of which will profoundly affect the entire community.

Preparation for Vision Quest

The shaman may also fast in preparation for a **vision quest**. Shamans quest for particular **powers** for healing or for guidance in issues concerning the whole community. The helping spirits may guide the shaman to observe particular dietary restrictions in preparation for such a quest.

Training

Restrictions and taboos involving food are common during the **training** of an **apprentice** in many cultures. For example, among the **Zulu**, the apprenticeship of the *twasa* involves a strict regime of personal healing and purification, involving sweats, herbs, and diet. The discipline is very strict and total abstinence from sex is absolutely mandatory. Certain foods are also forbidden.

Restrictions and Taboos

Restrictions and taboos are often placed on patients during and after healings. For certain periods of time after the healing specific foods and activities may be restricted or forbidden because of their vibrational energy. These restrictions protect the shaman whose energy often remains with the patient for several days. They also give the healthy energetic state created by the healing time to establish itself as part of the new norm within the body of the patient.

Dineh

The name the Navajo people use to refer to themselves, meaning "the people"; also *Diné*. The Dineh came to the American Southwest a millennium after the various Pueblos were established there. The Dineh **language** is a variant of Athabascan, a major native language spoken in the **Alaskan** regions, which implies Dineh origins far to the north of their present homelands.

Dineh history describes the people as descendants and enemies of the Anazazi, the ancient Pueblo people whose villages remain today, mysteriously abandoned in the cliffs of Dineh country. Dineh **myths** are largely variants of Pueblo and **Maya** mythology and Dineh cosmology is similar to that of the Keres. The strength of these patterns' similarity and difference imply multiple or at least complex origins.

Beauty—Hozro

Fundamental to the Dineh worldview is Beauty, or *Hozro*, meaning beauty in its greatest sense, from the most mundane to the most mystical. It is found in all things, all relationships, and all experiences. *Hozro* is the innate beauty and harmony of the cosmic order, the pattern of perfection woven at the moment of creation into the fabric of the **Kosmos**. Truth is found in the way that unfolds from *Hozro*, the Beauty Way.

Dineh **priests** and **shamans** serve the Beauty Way. Among the Dineh the distinction between the two vocations is sharply drawn. The priest is a keeper of **ceremony**, whose position is secured through **knowledge**. The shaman is a creator of **ritual**, whose position is secured through the ability to enter **trance** states and bring the **powers** of the supernatural to the aid of the people.

Navajo shamans and **nadles, gender-variant males**, are distinguished in Dineh **culture** by their direct relationships with spirit. Shamans are not necessarily *nadles*, however some *nadles* became powerful shamans. More often *nadles* specialize in some aspect of curing. For example, the *nadle* healers were considered excellent chanters. They had special **chants** for curing **illness** and insanity and for aiding in childbirth.

A Dineh must first prove to be a reliable worker, dedicated parent, and capable community member before he or she will be accepted into training as a shaman. As an elder, he or she will be able to bring the wisdom of a lifetime to the practice of **shamanism**.

The Dineh recognized diviners who did not heal, but who used various techniques to divine the cause of illness and prescribe the "**sing**," or **healing** ceremony necessary for a cure. Two common Dineh diviners were "hand-tremblers" and "listeners." Witchcraft or **sorcery** was a common **diagnosis** as sorcery and witches, or "skin walkers," were common among the Dineh.

The plant entheogen **Datura** was used by diviners and shamans to induce prophetic visions, diagnose the cause of illness, and to prescribe the sing necessary for healing. These visions were considered especially **sacred** when they revealed an individual's helping spirits and the teachings of that spirit to the individual at that time.

Sand Painting—Iikhááh

The **iikhááh** is a ceremonial **sand painting** created, in part, as a way for the yeii (holy spirits) to enter and leave the ritual or ceremony. It is also a healing tool or type of **medicine** created by shamans to treat illness. Sand paintings are made from the colored sand of ground rock. They are impermanent **power objects** created and destroyed in the healing ritual. See also **divination; entheogen; gender variant**.

Cowan, Tom. *Fire in the Head: Shamanism and the Celtic Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

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Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Dingaka Bones

Dingaka bones are used for **divination** by the Zulu **sangomas** (shamans).

“Throwing the bones” is a process of divination similar to throwing the *I Ching* in **China**. *Dingaka* involve four two-sided indicators as the basic pieces with additional pieces of bones, stones, shells, seeds, etc., added at the practitioner’s discretion.

The four basic *dingaka* are named *lekhwami* or *lekgolo*, the old man; *kgadi*, the old woman; *silume* or *selume*, the young man; and *kgatsane* or *lengwe*, the young woman. They can fall in sixteen different combinations. When thrown, the meaning is interpreted from the spontaneous placement of the bones, their relation to and distance from each other, and their facing, upward (smiling) or downward (sleeping).

Dingaka are used to divine the answers to questions of all kinds. They are used to diagnose whether the **illness** or ailment is caused by witchcraft, **sorcery**, **spirits**, careless or thoughtless actions, a broken **taboo**, a natural weakening of **energy**, or the loss of a soul part.

Before throwing the bones both *sangoma* and patient blow on the *dingaka*, bringing the ancestral spirits of both people in to assist in the divination. The *sangoma* throws the bones and interprets their configuration. In the hands of a skillful practitioner, *dingaka* can detect not only the presence, but the type of spirits around a sick person. Whether these spirits are resentful ancestral spirits, offended **nature spirits**, or malevolent spirits sent by a sorcerer directly affects the type of treatment necessary.

Each *sangoma* creates his or her own *dingaka* set from the bones of the animals sacrificed for the feasts held to mark the completion of different areas of **training**. See also **ancestors**; **sacrifice**; **soul loss**; *twasa*; **Zulu**.

Credo Mutwa, V. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Direct Transmission of Spirit

An awakening of **spirit** is necessary for most individuals to enter into an altered

state for the first time. This awakening has been described as an infusion of **energy**, an opening of energy, usually at the top of the head, or a burning energy rising up the spine. The transmission of this awakening energy traditionally comes spontaneously and directly from spirit.

However, in some cultures initiated **shamans** also take part in provoking the first spiritual **journey**. In some traditions, as in **South America**, **plant hallucinogens** are widely used. In other traditions like the **Midewiwin Society of North America** or the **Aboriginals of Australia**, energy is directly transmitted from the initiated to the initiate. The energy or spirit that is transmitted is called by many different names, including but not limited to *chi* (*ji*, *ki*), kundalini, seiki, and *num*. See also **altered states of consciousness**.

Keeney, Bradford P. *Shaking Out the Spirits*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, 1994.

Disease

Disease is a condition of the body that impairs normal physiological functioning. This includes malfunctioning in the biological and/or the psychological processes.

Shamans focus on the reasons the normal physiological functioning has been altered or shut down. In most shamanic cultures, **soul loss** is considered the root cause of disease. However, chronic disharmony (when one forgets the feeling of belonging and connection and life loses meaning) or chronic fear (the loss of love, joy, and trust without which the force of life itself seems to begin withdrawing from the body) are also seen as potential causes of disease.

Bacteria, viruses, brain biochemistry, and other biological components of disease are considered opportunistic, taking advantage of the weakened state created by the soul loss, chronic fear, or disharmony. See also **healing** and **illness**.

Achterberg, J. "The Wounded Healer: Transformational Journeys in Modern Medicine." In Doore (Ed.). *Shaman's Path: Healing, Personal Growth and Empowerment*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Kleinman, A., and L. H. Sung. "Why Do Indigenous Practitioners Successfully Heal?" *Social Sciences and Medicine* 13B (1979): 7–26.

Disease Object

The object associated with an **energy** intrusion. In the **shaman's altered state of consciousness** the intrusion may appear to be a fierce bug, reptile, spider, centipede, or toad eating at the patient's insides or hissing malevolently at the shaman. The object itself, once extracted, commonly appears to be a stick, bone, tooth, stone, shell, or some amorphous form like clotted blood, black slime, or cobwebs in the blood. However, disease objects are also known to appear, once extracted, exactly as menacing and mobile as they did in the patient's body. Once removed, they are observed scurrying or flying away. See also **extraction; pains**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Dismemberment

Dismemberment is the experience of being pulled apart, eaten, or stripped layer by layer, down to the bare bones of the skeleton by **spirit** beings. The individual, unaware that the experience is occurring in an **altered state of consciousness**, dies.

This death is a "little death" or "**shaman's death**." It is the surrender of the ego that allows for a shift of awareness and transformation of consciousness. This leads to the realization that one is not experiencing a death, but a spiritual rebirth. With this awareness the **spirits** begin to put the individual back together, often adding new magical

parts, like special eyes, organs, and extra bones, or making other additions to the body, like **crystals, feathers**, or some sort of magic substance that will help the novice in the shamanic work to come.

Dismemberment is the traditional shamanic initiatory experience in many **cultures**, particularly in the northern regions of the globe. For example, in **Greenland** the **apprentice shamans** of the Ammassalik **Eskimos** engage in a series of **rituals** for ten or more years to call an emaciated bear up from the sea. The bear rises up and devours the initiate, who loses consciousness until the bear vomits him/her back up. Only after this experience can the initiate begin the next series of rituals to acquire his or her **helping spirits** and continue his or her **training**.

In traditions that expect it, the process of dismemberment, death, and rebirth is necessary to initiate and prepare the shaman. To travel safely in the **Land of the Dead** for others the shaman must have already faced the fear of his or her own death in a real way, thus the dismemberment is gruesome and real. To reach beyond the apparent reality of an **illness** and create **healing** miracles for others the shaman must believe in the **powers** that come through his or her relationship with spirit and so the initiate is reconstructed with magical parts that endow him/her with supernatural powers. To continuously reconnect themselves to the essence of death and rebirth Siberian shamans embroidered their skirts with a skeleton.

The experience of psychic dismemberment is a universal transcultural and **transpersonal** symbol. True transcendence, necessary for safe and effective shamanic rituals, calls for a willingness in the shaman to suffer a genuine death of ego and not merely an imaginary death. The shaman's initiatory **ego death** results in a clear mind, enhanced perception, greater capacity for compassion, and true gentleness toward others.

Initiation is necessary for all shamans, but not all shamans experience that initiatory ego death as a dismemberment experience. Looking cross-culturally, approximately 50 percent of the shamanic cultures expect dismemberment as the defining initiatory experience. In other cultures the form of the experience varies, while the function of the initiation remains constant.

Not every dismemberment experience is an initiation. A dismemberment is an initiation only if it functions as one, which means that the consciousness of the individual is fundamentally transformed through the experience. Without this transformation of consciousness the dismemberment experience is a healing and a gift from spirit to be honored, however it is not a shamanic initiation. See also **Siberia**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Divination

Divination is the act of consulting the beings, or wisdom, of the spirit world to gain information about the past, present, or future in order to facilitate problem-solving. The **shaman** divines in an altered state. **Divination** is used for **diagnosis** and to determine remedies.

Shamans tend to diagnose in uniquely personal ways. However, most of these techniques are versions of three primary divination techniques; journeying, Spirit **embodiment**, and using divination tools. When journeying the shaman enters the spirit world to access information directly from the Source. In an embodiment **trance**, the shaman asks the **helping spirits** to come into

ordinary reality, enter the body of the shaman, and impart information through the shaman. To use a divination tool the shaman enters a trance and allows the patterns in the tool to determine the message from **spirit**.

There are a variety of divination tools and ways of working with them: for example, casting cowry shells, reading guinea pig entrails, throwing bones, burning a reindeer scapula, rubbing a candle on the patient's body and watching it burn, and throwing the *I Ching*. In divination, regardless of the tool, the shaman is looking for patterns that give the elements of the tool meaning. These patterns are different for each diviner and with each tool.

Individual practitioners may specialize in divination with tools or without (**mediumship**). However, the ability to divine alone does not make a practitioner a shaman. Shamans not only divine information, but they are able to take action in **non-ordinary reality** that affects a specific, desired change here in ordinary reality. It is this fact, that the shaman takes intentional action in the invisible world, that distinguishes the shaman from mediums or channels.

Divination is actually used continuously throughout most **shamanic healing** rituals, since it is the nature of the shaman's working trance to remain in communication with his or her helping spirits. The first act of divination is the diagnosis. From there the shaman may move into another type of healing, such as a **soul retrieval** or **extraction**. If the shaman remains in the act of divination, he or she retrieves more information, for example, describing the true, spiritual nature of the patient's problem and the remedy necessary to restore harmony between all the energies involved.

Some examples of the variety of information that the shaman retrieves are: herbal or plant remedies, a personal **ritual** necessary to restore balance, bodywork or physical treatments, or a community healing ritual to restore harmony for or with the community.

Several scholars have presented the idea that the divination trance allows the shaman to perceive energetic frequencies in a unique way. The altered state may offer a shift of perception from which the shaman's "**spirit senses**" enable him/her to perceive things in non-ordinary reality similar to the way the five senses receive **energy** frequencies and enable us to perceive things in ordinary reality.

While the practice of divination may be the reading of energetic frequencies, the power of the shaman's divination is in his or her interpretation. The shaman experiences energies and then interprets them through his or her own **symbolic language**. This language allows the shaman to communicate the experience he or she is having in non-ordinary reality to others in a way that is meaningful to them. It is this ability, to communicate through a symbolic language that the client understands, that separates the shaman's divination from the ramblings of a madman. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **journey**.

Cowan, E. *Shamanism: Quarterly for the Foundation for Shamanic Studies* 5, no. 1 (1992) 4–19.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Djesikon

(Also *chesakkon*, *djesikiwin*). The cylindrical tent used in the **Spirit Lodge**, or **Shaking Tent Ceremony**, a widespread shamanic **ritual** for **divination** and to a lesser extent **healing** performed across much of **North America**. The construction of the tent varies slightly depending on the instructions given to the shaman by the **helping spirits** in preparatory **visions** for the ritual.

Generally the *djesikon* is constructed with five to ten freshly cut poles, ten to twelve feet in length. The poles are stuck upright in the ground, creating a **circle** approximately four feet in diameter, and

bound together laterally with ropes. This structure is then covered with skins or bark, leaving the top open approximately a foot for the entry and exit of the spirits. The floor is covered with boughs. See also **Ojibwa**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Djessakid

The *djessakid* is a type of **Ojibwa** shaman known for performing a **divination** ritual known as the **Shaking Tent Ceremony**; also known as *jesako*, *jessakkid*, *jossokeed*, *jizikiwinini*. The Ojibwa recognize three general types of shamans: **healing**, conjuring, and **seers**. The *djessakid* can be any of the three.

The *djessakid* acquires his or her **power** from *manitous*, or **helping spirits**, through personal **vision quests**. Every person in traditional Ojibwa **culture** also acquires a *manitou* for protection, identity within the clan, and success in hunting, beadwork, pottery, childbirth, etc. The *djessakid* is distinguished by the amount of **power** obtained and his or her ability to direct that power into healing, conjuring, or divination.

The Shaking Tent Ceremony is performed sparingly because the energy expenditure necessary depletes the *djessakid*. The ritual is used to diagnose the cause of **illness**, which in the Ojibwa belief system would be either **sorcery**, **spirit intrusion**, **energy intrusion (disease object)**, breach of **taboo**, or **soul loss**.

The ritual is also used for divining cures for illness, seeing the future or the movement of enemies, locating game and lost objects, and communicating with the deceased. In particular the ritual is used to capture the **free soul** of a sorcerer and to force that sorcerer to cease all malevolent acts causing illness, death, and injury to others.

The *djessakid* who are seers, individuals with “spirit sight,” gain their power from *Animiki*, the Thunder spirit. The power to foresee the future and other acts of clairvoyance is first received in childhood, after which a fast and appropriate rituals are undertaken to cultivate the gift for visions. *Animiki* grant these powers only to a chosen few.

In some groups the *djessakid* was feared, because he was believed to be capable of stealing an individual’s soul and other acts of sorcery. However, the *djessakid* was more likely to perform the Shaking Tent Ceremony to heal illness caused by sorcery, than to perform them. See also *djesikon*.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Dokos

Dokos is the **Wintun** word for **pains**, referring to the **energy intrusions** that a **shaman** removes from the body of a patient. Sorcerers are believed to be the source of *dokos*. With the aid of **spirit**, shamans are able to “see with spirit eyes” and see the *dokos* in the patient’s body as if the body were transparent. If the shaman’s spirit is stronger than the sorcerer’s spirit, then the shaman will be successful in drawing the *dokos* out, usually by sucking or cupping. However if the sorcerer’s spirit is stronger, the patient will need to be referred to an even stronger shaman. See also **disease object** and **sorcery**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Domain

A domain is a web of associations used to identify patterns in humanity in spite of differences in **cultures**, environments, and changes that occur naturally

over time. By defining a set of human features people can be classified by functions, like spiritual leaders, **shamans**, mediators, etc. When a sufficient number of features are found together, they allow identification. Recognizing domains allows us to identify similar social functionaries while allowing for the differences created by vast stretches of **space** and **time**.

For example diviners can be identified by focusing on the function of **divination** rather than focusing on how divination is performed in different cultures, e.g., throwing bones, casting **runes**, ingesting **psilocybe mushrooms**, drumming, etc. Furthermore diviners can be easily distinguished from shamans, because divination is only one feature in the domain of the shaman. Whether or not there is evidence of the remaining features of the shaman’s domain: the mastery of **altered states of consciousness**, the abilities to mediate between the worlds (beyond divination), and the ability to meet the **healing** needs of the community, determines whether or not the diviner is a shaman.

A domain or web of associations may express itself in fluid, diverse, or fragmentary ways. Some traits may be expressed in an obvious manner, while others might appear in a sublimated or somewhat imprecise form. No one feature gives definition to a domain; the definition comes through the association of features. No one thing need be present all the time or in exactly the same way. Rather, a sufficient number of features should be present to allow an identification to be made.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Dreams

Dreams are interpreted as gifts from **spirit**, either the spirit of the dreamer, the dreamer’s **helping spirits**, or from Spirit in the greatest sense. These gifts

or messages come in sleeping dreams, the dreams we have while we are asleep, or **waking dreams**, dream-like **altered state of consciousness** experiences we have while we are awake.

Sara Smith, a dreamer of the Mohawk Tribe, explains that dreams have limitless potential to guide the dreamer. Every dream is a unique and personal teaching tailored by Spirit for the dreamer. The dreamer must respond to the dream or the dream will go back to sleep and the teaching is lost. There are no bad dreams. All dreams are an opportunity to see the beauty of the teachings from Spirit and to learn from them.

There are many different types of waking and sleeping dreams. All shamanic **cultures** recognize at least two types of dreams: big dreams, those with a message for the community, and little dreams, those with a message for the individual who is **dreaming**. In addition, shamans cultivate the ability to dream dreams for other individuals or to enter the dreams of others and work with their dreaming body.

Shamans and Dreams

Anthropological case studies from cultures around the world show that shamans regularly use precognitive and extrasensory dreams for guidance in **diagnosis** and **healing**. For example, **Iroquois** shamans relied on their dreams to diagnosis the hidden cause of an **illness** and to suggest appropriate remedies and healing ceremonies. For particularly challenging or tricky issues a shaman might practice **dream incubation** over several nights or participated in a dreaming process with two or more shamans dreaming on the same subject in the same time of night.

Shamans cultivate the ability to enter a patient's dream for two main purposes. First, the shaman may have to enter the dream to assure an accurate interpretation. It is often the shaman's role to help others to understand the teachings in their dreams so that the resulting actions are aligned with the teachings. Second, the shaman may enter a

patient's dream to heal the patient directly or to help the patient to resolve a reoccurring dream in a new way, freeing the patient to heal.

Of note is a special class of dreamers, who may or may not also be shamans. In many shamanic cultures people learn about the path from death into the **Upperworld** directly from dreams. For example, the Beaver Indians, an Athabaskan people living in northwest Canada, recognize this special gift in dreamers who have died in their dreams, gone on to the Upperworld, and returned with **songs** that describe the soul's **journey**. These songs are a gift to the people and are performed publicly. In that way people learn the path to follow, so that when they die, they can follow the trail of these songs to the Upperworld.

Shamanic Peoples and Dreams

Sleeping dreams are believed to be the wishes of the soul by many cultures. Through dreams the soul can warn us of a future problem or danger. When the soul has a serious message the resulting dreams often have similar characteristics. These dreams are dreamed in brilliant color, come just before dawn breaks, reoccur night after night, or replay several times in one night in slightly different expressions of the same message.

When the dreamer acts on the dream message in their waking hours, the creative force of the soul that gave the dream recognizes that the dreamer is listening and creates more dreams. It is as if dreams notice that the dreamer notices them. Noticing dreams then encourages more messages and guidance to come in subsequent dreams.

The people of many shamanic cultures believe that dreams must be enacted in waking time. This shows the dream spirit that its message has been received and that the dreamer is prepared to act on it. Zulu **sangoma**, Vusamazulu Credo Mutwa, explains that "when we dream, we have to get out of bed and walk toward the dream."

For some, like the **Zulu**, dreams are enacted from a literal interpretation. A significant amount of time and money are spent doing all kinds of odd things, individually and communally, because dreams have counseled them to do so. In this way the dreamer faces his or her fears with intention and future problems are avoided.

In other cultures, like the Iroquois and Senoi, dreams are enacted from a metaphoric interpretation when a literal enactment would be destructive, excessive, or infringe on another's rights. A symbolic enactment fulfills the dreamer's need to express the dream while remaining in balance with the needs of others.

Sara Smith explains that "one of the most precious things that occurs during the night is the **dreamtime** when there is a personal connection to the upper spiritual realms." Today, people need to understand themselves through their connection to the spiritual realm, so that it can provide a proper perspective for their actions in the physical world. This is important because children need to be taught how to understand and to work with their dreams.

For example, there is one particular dream that is dreamt by children all over the world. It is the dream in which the dreamer is falling from a very great height. The Zulu call it the Star Dream because it comes from a time when the souls of all children flew among the stars. Though the dreamer usually wakes with a fright, children need to be taught that the dream is meant for them to learn to fly through the dream landscape and remember their **Ancestors** who flew among the stars.

The Dream of the Kosmos

The underlying belief of many ancient shamanic cultures is that reality as we know it is the result of the Dream of the **Kosmos**, or the dreamtime. Similarly, all people are the result of the dreams of their **Ancestors**. So, from this Great Cosmic Dream comes a thread of life that flows through your Ancestors into

you. That is the dream that the Kosmos is dreaming of your soul that is meant to unfold through the actions and decisions of your life. To live the dream the Kosmos is dreaming of you, you must heed the teachings of your dream.

Credo Mutwa, V. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Moss, R. "An Active Dreaming Approach to Death, Dying, and Healing Dreams." *Shaman's Drum* 34 (Spring 1994): 17-23.

Dream Incubation

Dream incubation is the practice of inducing dreams as a means of seeking **visions** and communication with the spirit world. There are a variety of techniques used to induce dreams including isolation, fasting, **prayer**, self-mutilation, internment in **caves** or chambers, and sleeping in the skins of sacrificed animals or the proximity of **power objects**.

Dream incubation practices are derived from techniques used to induce **altered states of consciousness**. However, since dream incubation does not demand the full **training** and skills of a **shaman**, the practice can be utilized by non-shamans and in non-shamanic cultures. For example, the Greeks and the Romans used dream incubation practices, learned in their contact with shamanic cultures, to seek *chrematismos*, or Divine Dreams through which the dreamer connected with his or her gods and goddesses.

Dream incubation is often practiced in natural caves and man-made **chamber mounds** built into the **earth**. The British, Welsh, and Irish, for example, used dream incubation in chamber mounds to connect with their most ancient **Ancestors**. The process began with a pilgrimage to the dwelling place of the Ancestral spirits in the mound. The dream seeker then stayed in the underground chambers (or caves) for three days and three nights observing an

unbroken fast while making ritual **sacrifices** and praying for dream visions and communications with the Ancestral spirits.

In another practice of dream incubation, utilized in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, the dreamer slept for three days and nights in the hide of a ritually sacrificed bull or ox. In some accounts the animal's flesh and blood are consumed in a **ritual** prior to beginning the three-day fast. In this way the dreamer is calling on the spirit of the dead animal to enrich and empower his or her dreams and act as guide into the spirit world.

Vision Questing is a related practice used to induce connection with the spirit world through **waking dreams**. See also **vision quest**.

Wright, J. M. "A Cauldron-Born Quest." *Shaman's Drum* 46 1997.

Dreaming

Shamans use dreams intentionally as a way to access and communicate with the spirit world. A shaman's dreaming is similar to intentionally entering **trance**. It is distinct from either ordinary dreams or lucid **dreams**. This technique is used, for example, by **Avá-Chiripá** shamans. See also **lucid dreaming**.

Dreamtime

Dreamtime is an Australian **aboriginal** concept of creation, shared by most shamanic peoples in some form. The Dreamtime is a vast epoch that occurred "before time began." The Dreamtime still exists parallel in time to present-day material reality. The true reality of the Dreamtime appears to us in **dreams** and to **shamans** in their **journeys**.

The Dreamtime began when infinite, limitless **space** was pervaded by great **powers** and mythical beings. These beings and powers lived without the limits and definitions of physical reality, which did not yet exist. With incomprehensible intensity and force these beings and powers lived out their dreams. They are the Great **Ancestors**.

The exploits of the Great Ancestors created **energy** and vibrational patterns in space. As the time without form drew to an end, the patterns congealed into the **earth**, landscapes, and interactions of things that we experience as the material aspect of existence. Everything from the forms and features of our dreams to our faces to the land to our **cultures** to the fabric of our Universe was laid down in this way in the Dreamtime. These patterns permeate relationships, ecosystems, and the subtle vibrational energy emanating from all earthly places and things.

During this great creative period of the Aboriginal Dreamtime, Two Men Dreaming moved over the country creating the landscape. The Dreaming women brought the Law and the rituals and ceremonies, creating cultural continuities that may reach back 150,000 years. Thus, the Law is rooted in the land since the Law and the land took form simultaneously.

Many shamanic peoples tell of their origins in a similar time before time. The **Zulu** call it Endelo-ntulo, the most ancient of times when the patterns of dreaming were laid down by the Ancestors. These original dreams from the Dreamtime affect the dreams of people today.

From a shamanic perspective, the Dreamtime is the origin of truth and reality. Material reality, as we experience it, is the result of the dream manifesting itself. It is simply the observable **shadows** or illusions of the original patterns of the Dreamtime. In other words, we and all of material reality are the result of the original Dream and its ever-unfolding manifestation. See also **Australia**.

Credo Mutwa, V. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Parker, K. L., et al. *Wise Women of the Dreamtime: Aboriginal Tales of the Ancestral Powers*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International Limited, 1993.

Druids

Druids, both male and female, acted as counselors, philosophers, shapeshifters, diviners, and magicians of rulers. The druids' skills required a deep and encyclopedic **knowledge** of many branches of wisdom, art, and science, and an ability to interrelate to the many dimensions of the Otherworld. Druid, in Irish *druí*, and Welsh *derwydd*, is derived from the Sanskrit root *veda*, to see or know, and is deeply associated with the **oak** tree, in Irish *daur*, Welsh *derw*, and Gaulish *dervo*.

There is a definite overlap of skills and knowledge between the druid and the **shaman**. Druids who worked in the Otherworld with a *coimimeadh*, or guardian spirit, possessed the ability to divine and retrieve lost souls through shamanic **trance**, and offered their skills in the service of the community could be considered shamans. However, this combination was not present in all druids.

It is not clear to what extent the druids of the Celts were influenced or drew upon the skills of indigenous shamanic traditions. The overlap of local indigenous shamanic traditions and the "official" druidic practice is difficult to judge in Britain and Ireland. See also **Celtic** and **shapeshifting**.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Encyclopedia of Celtic Wisdom: A Celtic Shaman's Source Book*. England: Element Books, 1994.

Drum

Shamans use rhythmic drumming, alone or in combination with **dance** and/or **song**, as a method of achieving an **altered state of consciousness** in which they travel into the spirit realms and interact with the **spirit** beings to meet the needs of their community. Oral traditions around the world acknowledge that percussion in general and rhythmic drumming in particular facilitate communication with the spirit world.

Drums and **rattles** were developed early in human history, possibly in Paleolithic times, though exact dates are uncertain since skin heads and wooden frames deteriorate over time. It is clear that the **rituals** of the earliest known **religions** evolved around the beat of the drum. The earliest **frame drum** may be represented in a shamanic ritual depicted in the wall paintings from the **shrine** room walls of Catal Hüyük (5600 B.C.E.), an ancient city in what is now Turkey.

The Shaman's Trance

The altered state of consciousness necessary for shamanic work requires that the shaman remain alert and aware and able to co-direct the **journey** with the **helping spirits**. The shaman uses the drum to induce this particular altered state. For example a Siberian **shaman** begins quietly to call in his **helping spirits** with his drum and **power songs**. He puts his head down inside the drum, **singing** slowly and dolefully, he strikes the drum in various places with quiet, random strokes. He continues as if to call someone who resides at a great distance. When one of his helping spirits has arrived the shaman hits the drum hard and utters a few **words**. Gradually his song becomes louder and the drumming more regular. As the spirits all arrive the shaman's final blows become very powerful, sounding as if they could split the drum. The shaman drums and sings at the top of his voice and enters his **trance**.

The shaman's drum comes in many forms. Often the shape of the drum is explained in the culture's mythology about their **First Shaman**. Some drums are simply dried skin or bark. However, most shaman's drums are single-headed frame drums, or double-headed as in **Nepal** and Tibet. African shamans use different drums for different purposes.

Generally speaking the single-head, frame drum, also called a tambourine, was used across much of the Plains of **North America**, **Siberia**, and the Arctic where drums were used. Single-head,

water-tuned drums were used in eastern North America, the West Indies, and parts of **South America**. The double-headed drum was used in southwestern North America, down into Mexico and parts of Central America, and Nepal and Tibet. The wooden signal drum is used in the Amazon and other rain forest regions.

Uses

The primary function of the drum is to induce the shaman's trance state for both journey and **embodiment** trances. From the shaman's perspective the drum is used to call on his or her helping spirits for entry into and support in the spirit world. The drumbeat also serves as an anchor, or lifeline, that the shaman follows to return to his or her body and/or exit the trance state when the trance work is complete.

The other specific uses of the drum are diverse and determined by **culture**. Each culture has its own pattern of **rhythms** that serve the different functions of ritual and **ceremony**.

The drum is used to summon the spirits into a ritual or ceremony. Used in this way the drum is a tool for creating **sacred space**. Conversely a forceful beat of the drum can be used to drive away malevolent spirits or intrusive energies that cause **disease**, confusion, and disharmony. Used in this way the drum facilitates the creation of a purified **space** where well-being and health can flourish.

Traditionally the frame drum is used to work with elemental powers. *Kah*, a slap that stops the vibration of the skin head, is the **sound of earth**. *Dum*, a low, open, resonant sound, is the sound of water. *Tak*, a sharp, high-pitched rim sound, is the sound of **fire**. *Cha*, a soft brushing sound or the sound of the tambourine's jingles, is the sound of **air**.

The drum is used for communication, both between villages and between people and the beings of the spirit world. In Lapland and Siberia the drum is used directly for **divination**. These drums are rigged with a pointer,

or frog, made of **metal** rings. These metal pieces are moved across the face of the drum by the harmonics of the vibrating drumskin when it is beaten. The random movements of the frog are interpreted as the message from spirit, often relative to the images the shaman has painted on the drumhead.

Making the Drum

In many cultures the shamans must journey or otherwise ask for a **vision** to discover the design of the drum, the materials to be used to make it, and any symbolic ornamentation or images to be added. This often means that the shaman is shown the specific tree to use for the frame and the specific animal whose hide will form the drumhead.

The drum is both functional and symbolic. The shape of the shaman's drum and the materials from which it is made are highly symbolic. The drum is connected to the **Tree of Life** through the wood of the frame and its association through all **trees** back to the First Tree. In some cultures the wood for the frame ideally comes from a lightning-struck tree, bringing the power of instantaneous transformation into the drum. Lightning here is also metaphor for the striking clarity of the shaman's reborn soul as it rises from the **ego death** of his or her **initiation**.

The drum is connected to the spirit world through the animal whose skin is used to make the drumhead. That animal is asked in ritual to release its earthly existence and to work with the shaman, allowing the shaman to ride it into the spirit world. Thus the **Yakut** call the drum the "shaman's horse." The **Altaics** call it "the whip" that drives the horse and the shaman into the spirit world. The drum is also referred to as a "rainbow-bridge" because it creates a connection the shaman can cross between the physical and spiritual worlds.

The drum has its own spirit and is considered a living thing. The drum may serve as a boat for the shaman or a container to scoop up spirits in the

midst of the shaman's journey. It is also used as a healer in and of itself in rituals like the "healing drum" ceremony of Native North Americans.

Why the Drum Works

Rhythmic drumming can act as an auditory driving mechanism, bringing the **brain waves** into a theta frequency of 4 to 7 cycles per second, by drumming at 4 to 7 beats per second. Researchers have established that theta brain wave frequency, which correlates with hypnagogic imagery, states of **ecstasy**, creativity, and sudden illuminations, can aid entry into altered states of consciousness.

Furthermore, research has shown that any rhythmic pattern of movement, light, or sound that incorporates 4 to 4.5 Hz can effectively induce theta activity. For example, research on the drumming used in the ritual dances of the Salish to induce altered states, found that the predominant frequency of the rhythmic drumming was 4 to 7 Hz. Further research has shown that even when extracted from cultural ritual, ceremony, or intent, rhythmic drumming serves as an effective tool for entering altered states of consciousness and often induces spontaneous imagery that is ceremonial or ritualistic in content.

This supports the theory that the drumming used by shamans in their rituals elicits specific neurophysiological effects. These temporary changes in brain wave activity facilitate imagery and entry into altered states of consciousness. The temporary changes in brain wave frequency occur in most people after 13 to 15 minutes of the sustained drumming pattern. This time frame corresponds with the oral traditions of indigenous peoples and contemporary findings from meditation research.

Rhythmic drumming, even when stripped of ritual, **training**, and suggestion, elicits subjective experiences that fall into the following categories or themes: loss of connection with linear

time, sensations of movement of or within the body, increased energy, temperature fluctuations, relaxed clarity that is free of emotions, emotional discomfort, sensation of leaving the body, visual imagery of spirit beings and spirit landscapes, entry into an altered state of consciousness, and the experience of a journey through the spirit realm involving traditional shamanic imagery.

The shaman's drum plays a central role in gathering and working with spiritual powers. The drum is a living **power object** and may be given its own burial when it is worn out. Part of the burial of a shaman/sorcerer is to break the drumskin, immobilizing the sorcerer and effectively keeping him in the Otherworld. When honored shamans are buried, their drum is either buried with them or handed down to the apprentice or family member whom the shaman has selected to receive his or her powers. See also **Siberia**; **sonic driving**; **theta waves**.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Eliade, Mircea, ed. *Ancient Religions*. New York: Citadel Press, 1950.

Maxfield, M. "The Journey of the Drum." *ReVision* 16, no. 4 (Spring 1994): 157-163.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Dual Nature

The **shaman** is often described as having a "dual nature," being simultaneously "healer and sorcerer, human and divine, human and animal, male and female." The personality of the shaman is complex and expanded by the demands of his or her role in the community at large.

Perhaps an innate tendency toward this dual nature is the reason certain

individuals are called by **spirit** to become shamans and others are not. Of course, why an individual is chosen will never be known. However, shamans tested with current systems for assessing mental health do prove to be both more wild and imaginative while simultaneously more stable and able to balance the strong dynamic forces of life than are their cultural counterparts.

Nowhere is the dual nature of the shaman more profound than in the **transformed shaman**, who was said long ago to have transformed physically from male to female. This “transformation” refers in particular to the metamorphosis in biological males who must transform their masculine **gender** to the feminine gender to become shamans in their culture. Transformed shamans are seen by their culture as belonging to a third or alternate gender. This transformation is sanctioned by their culture and expected of men who are called to be shamans.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.
Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Dwarf

Dwarves are beings who look like small humans, usually about two feet tall. Dwarves possess a blend of skill and **power** akin to that which transformed the **elements** of the universe into physical form. The transformative power of the dwarf is similar to that of the **blacksmith**, thus dwarves are often associated with blacksmiths, if not one and the same.

The dwarf is responsible for the shaman's **initiation** in **cultures** across Europe and Asia. The dwarf transforms the body and **soul** of the novice into that of the **shaman**. In their **journeys** shamans often encounter dwarves who make them unbreakable **swords** and knives, jewelry with magical properties, and other shamanic **paraphernalia** made of **metal**.

Allen-Coombe, J. “Weaving the Way of Wyrd: An Interview with Brian Bates.” *Shaman's Drum* 27 (Spring 1992): 20–29.

E

Earth

Earth is both a **spirit** being in its own right and one of the elemental powers. **Shamans** work with both aspects of earth **energy**. As an elemental **power**, earth can be used for **healing** in its physical form and called on by the shaman energetically to aid in healing in the invisible world during his or her **journeys**. As Earth, the being, shamans are working with the spirit of the planet Earth as a **helping spirit**.

The qualities of the earth **element** and Earth are similar and related, though not the same. Confusion arises because the same word is used (in English) to name the ground we walk on and the planet we live on. A similar relationship exists between the element **air** and the **sky**, however the use of different **words** to name them dispels the confusion.

The role of the element earth in **shamanic healing** rituals is to provide **cleansing**, grounding, centering, or beginning anew. The energy of the earth element may be used directly by applying earth or clay to the skin of patients or initiates or burying a person or **power objects** in the earth. The shamans of many **cultures** utilize the energy of the earth element directly from specific sites by conducting their healings or initiations in **caves** or other land formations where there are special earth energies to draw on. Shamans also retreat alone into caves or other **womb-like** spaces to rejuvenate and restore their own energy.

Shamans use the energy of the earth element in their journeys in similar ways. For example, the shaman may do the healing work in a cave in the invisible world, paint **sacred** symbols of power or protection directly on the spirit body of the patient, or fill the patient's spirit body with earth to help to ground, center, and bring the patient back into balance.

The role of Earth, the being, in shamanic healing **rituals** includes, but is not limited to, connecting humans with the teachings of Earth wisdom, inspiring and guiding the practical application of that wisdom (**knowledge**), and serving as a receptacle for people's gratitude for the physical and spiritual abundance in their lives. The spirit of the Earth is invoked to help people connect to the **heartbeat of the Earth**, to the heartbeat of their own body, and, through those **rhythms**, to the pulse of life in all things.

For the **Quechua** people of **South America**, the Earth is Pachamama. Pachamama is sacred. It is the place where silver and gold from the time before creation are drawn from that great Dream into the material universe and woven into the fabric of the earth.

Almost all cultures recognize the qualities of groundedness and a sense of home in the Earth energy. Beyond those qualities the role of Earth energy is defined specifically culture by culture. For example many cultures include the wisdom of Nature, the stones, and the minerals as aspects of Earth energy.

Somé, M. P. *Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman*. New York: Penguin Group USA, Inc., 1995.

East

The east is a directional **energy** utilized by **shamans** in their **ritual** work and the creation of **sacred space** within ordinary

space. The east is one of six directional energies (east, **south**, **west**, **north**, above, and below) who together define the location of the seventh point, the center. Shamans must remain aware of their center at all times to keep from becoming lost while traveling in the boundless and ever-changing realms of **non-ordinary reality**.

Each of the directions is associated with an element, a season, time of day, **colors**, animals, deities, etc. These associations show both consistency and variation across cultures. The energy of the east is swift, mercurial, and changeable. For many cultures, though not all, the element associated with the east is **air**, the season is spring, the time is day-break, the **life cycle** passage is the baby, souls coming, the power is **vision**, and the **journey** is one of perception and illumination.

Ecstasy

From the Greek *ekstasis*, meaning “a being put out of its place,” ecstasy refers to the experience of extreme emotional exaltation that overpowers the reason and senses and lifts one into a **trance-like** state of rapture. The rapture of ecstasy is often described as the profound experience of being connected to all things that results from a merging with **spirit**. For the **shaman**, a master of the **techniques of ecstasy**, merging with spirit occurs either in **non-ordinary reality** as a result of **soul flight** or in **ordinary reality** as a result of **spirit embodiment**.

Ecstasy is not just bliss or joy. It involves the sense of being pulled out of oneself, expanded beyond the limits of one’s little ego and body. For example, a Korean *mudang* describes ecstasy, or *Mu-A*, as “a sensation which is encountered in our hearts. It is seeing and hearing with the heart. It is the death of the ego.” Ecstasy is the full-being memory of the truth of the relationship of all things in our Universe.

This experience of being transported outside of oneself is to discover oneself

as part of the ceaseless flow of infinitely varying patterns of **energy**, or the **Kosmos**, as described by shamans, religious mystics, and quantum physicists.

In trance the shaman experiences the infinite wisdom of Universe; a Universe which is alive, ever-expanding, and creative. The Universe in its totality, an infinitely complete Oneness, is a challenge for humans to grasp. The ecstatic experience of the true nature of the universe is not easily comprehended or described. Spirits are one of the ways shamans “see,” or give form to their ecstatic experience. Spirits are e. g. hands of the Universe reaching out to the shaman in forms he or she finds easier to comprehend and to communicate to others.

Ecstasy is singled out as the inescapable ingredient of **shamanism**. But the meaning ascribed to it is often diffused and at times contradictory. While there are several definitions of ecstasy, e.g., religious and sexual, and a debate as to whether ecstasy through oneness with God is the same or different from ecstasy through oneness with the Kosmos. Functionally speaking, ecstasy is the state in which the shaman can perform shamanic acts.

Some authors have proposed that true shamanic ecstasy implies **possession** by spirits; others take an alternative view, believing that the true shaman experiences only soul flight. Others argue against interpreting shamanic ecstasy as being exclusive of either trance state. The shaman’s ecstatic experience is always controlled and includes both magical flight and spirit possession.

The practice of ecstasy alone does not define the shaman. The shaman has specific techniques of ecstasy which allow him/her to take action in that state of ecstasy. An ecstatic cannot be considered a shaman, unless he or she specializes in trances during which his or her **soul** leaves the body and goes somewhere to do something that affects change in ordinary reality. Commonly the shaman utilizes ecstatic states to

heal a patient by restoring vital energies or by extracting harmful energies.

Shamanic ecstasy is identified as a specific class of **altered states of consciousness** involving: (a) voluntary control of entrance and duration of trance, (b) post-trance memory, and (c) communicative interplay with participants and spectators while in trance.

The basic need to come into the presence of the **sacred**, to enter ecstasy, is a compelling force for humans. It is the driving force behind St. Ignatius of Loyola who developed a set of exercises whose practice lead to ecstatic experiences, Patanjali collecting the 196 yoga sutras whose practice leads one through the various stages of spiritual development, Taoist cultivation of a complex system of evocations to move spiritual energy, and the spinning dances of the Sufis. It remains the primary reason people seek out shamans and their techniques of ecstasy.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Peters, L. G., and D. Price-Williams. "Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism." *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 3 (1980): 397–413.

Walsh, R. *The Spirit of Shamanism*. New York: Llewellyn Publications, 1990.

Ego Death

The ego death is the critical stage in the shaman's **initiation** during which the initiate's ego sense of self dies or is killed. This death occurs in an altered state and is experienced as real death. The transformation from initiate to **shaman** demands a willingness to suffer this genuine death of ego, not merely an imaginary death experience or psychological metaphor.

The period of initiation prior to the actual ego death strips the initiate of all that is familiar, social and mental habits as well as religious and philosophical ideas. The initiates are stripped of everything they would call their own

until all that remains is their sense of self. As the ego death strips even this from the initiate all that remains is one **energy**, one force, one essence, the Oneness of all life—the individual's connection to the Source.

The divine forces emanating from the Source do not function through individuals who define themselves. The basic challenge of any shaman, and the primary hurdle to gaining **power**, is the human urge to create a self-image. The shaman must continually confront his or her own self-image and surrender it to the spirit world.

When the initiate first experiences ego death, any return to life is uncertain. The initiate, suddenly small, helpless, and humble, finally enters his or her right relationship with the tremendous forces of the spirit world. While in this state of profound **humility**, the interwoven mystical unity of all things can connect to the initiate's heart, mind, and body. The initiate is made one with the spirit world, the universe, nature, animals, and plants, and he or she finally experiences reality in its true nature. The initiate now "sees" as a shaman.

This experiential shift of awareness creates a fundamental change in the initiate's existential condition. The vitality of that awareness reanimates the initiate who comes back to life a shaman. The initiate returns to **ordinary reality** a shaman whose orientation in the world is totally different.

The ego death theme can be discerned in **dreams** and **visions** of ordinary people, though in extremely diluted forms. The death of the "I" is a classic, **transpersonal** experience that is experienced by different people at different levels of intensity. In contrast, the shaman's ego death may miss real physical death by no more than the width of a single thought or breath.

Holger Kalweit, an ethno-psychologist, with degrees in psychology and cultural anthropology and years of study of shamans, explains that when we discuss the shaman's ego death "we are not referring here to a mytho-poetic

imagination of death in the form of allegories and archetypes. The death experience of the shaman is a dangerous walk on a tightrope between this world and the Beyond. It is not a hallucinatory pseudovision of death." See also **altered states of consciousness; dismemberment; shaman's death; the call.**

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Matthews, John. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Dorset, England, Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

White, T. "The Talismanic Art of Jalil Ia Al-Malik." *Shaman's Drum* 15 (Midwinter 1989): 19–23.

Ehldilna

Ehldilna, the **shamanic healing** ritual of **soul retrieval**, is considered the most difficult **Wintun** healing form. It is performed only in dire situations of **soul loss**, when the patient's *lehs*, soul, has left the body because the **illness** has brought the patient so near death or because the *lehs* has been stolen by a malevolent spirit.

During the *ehldilna*, the shaman **dances** into a **trance** state, induced and supported by the **singing** of the audience, in which his or her **helping spirits** set out to locate and recapture the lost **soul**. The participants and **shaman** all gather at midnight. The audience sings and beats sticks in a continuous **rhythm**. The shaman dances into trance with a staff to which is attached a miniature basket for catching the lost soul. Once the shaman's journeying soul and spirits find the lost soul, he or she returns to the **ritual** space and places the basket containing the soul over the patient's heart, allowing it to return to its natural home. See also **journey** and **soul loss**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Elements

The elements **earth, air, fire, and water**, and wood and/or **metal** in some Asian or African **cultures**, are the elemental powers. The **elements** are pure essential powers; their great **power** is that they are pure and not complex, like spirit beings. Elemental powers can be used for **healing** in their physical forms and in their energetic forms, when the **shaman** has journeyed into the invisible world. The shaman derives a great deal of intrinsic power from an intimate relationship with the elements of the natural world.

For example initiates often pass through ritual **purification** by each of the four elements in preparation for their **initiation** ritual. Experienced shamans work with the spirits of the earth, air, fire, water, and the elements in their combined forms; fog, mist, steam, smoke, swamp, bog, wind, etc., to effect changes in **weather** and the environment around them. See also **journey** and **ritual**.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Matthews, John. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Dorset, England, Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Elxá

Elxá is the **gender variant** shaman, or *berdache*, of the Yuma, a people of southwestern regions of **North America**. The Yuma believe that a person with a particularly acute capability for **dreaming** has the potential to transform his or her mind.

In the case of the *elxá*, the change begins as dreams of transformation at the time of puberty. Over time the boy is believed to transform his mind from male to female through his dreaming. The transformation from boy to *elxá* is confirmed in a celebratory communal gathering in which the *elxá* prepares a

meal for friends and family. See also **berdache (berdach)**; **gender**; **gender-variant male**; **transformed shaman**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Embodiment

Embodiment is the **trance** state characterized by an intentional, controlled **possession** of the **shaman** by a **spirit** or **sacred healing energy**. The shaman experiences his or her consciousness and body being taken over, to varying degrees, by a separate entity, usually believed to be a spirit.

The shaman controls the entry into, duration of, and exit from this **altered state of consciousness**. Embodiment trances are induced to serve a particular purpose in the healing **ritual** and the shaman is able to direct the trance experience toward that purpose.

In general, people have a deeply rooted, human need to experience the presence of the "Divine." It is believed that the "Divine" has manifested when the shaman's ego detaches itself from the body and the merging spirit is allowed full possession. Through this intentional possession, or embodiment, the shaman serves as a **vehicle** or mouthpiece for the gods and allows the patient to witness a manifestation of the "Divine."

What makes embodiment an act of **shamanism** and distinguishes it from spontaneous possession is the shaman's mastery of the trance state. The shaman is able not only to surrender to spirit, but to do so with a purpose and to accomplish that purpose while in the trance. The purpose may be **extraction, divination**, or conducting a **healing** ritual for the individual or community.

Embodiment trance states are primary in the shamanism of much of **Africa, Southeast Asia**, the South Pacific, **North America**, east India, and

other regions where the ecstatic trance states employed by traditional shamanic healers rarely involve **soul flight**. In many of these cultures the shaman experiences the embodiment of a special, sacred healing energy that is not associated with a particular spirit.

Embodiment trances are invoked by the same variety of techniques as other shamanic trance states. In southern Thailand, for example, Malay shamans **chant** to invoke "white tigers," or spirit tigers. The shaman does not physically shapeshift into a tiger, but his facial expressions become tiger-like and he moves and jumps like a tiger in a way no human being would be able to do during a normal waking state.

Full embodiment trances are not only expected in some cultures, but they are necessary for the safe and successful practice of many methods of **shamanic healing**. By embodying a **helping spirit**, the shaman's body is protected from the ill effects of harmful energies being removed from the patient's body. The embodiment trance enables the helping spirit to convey information through divination and to conduct extraction healings through the shaman's body.

The word "shaman" comes from the **Tungus** word *saman*. The translation of *saman* as "one who is excited, moved, raised" refers to the shaking of the body that occurs when the shaman has embodied spirit while in trance. As the term *saman* spread to **China** and **Japan** it continued to be used to refer to practitioners who utilize spirit embodiment trances. Given this understanding of the original meaning of the word, it is curious that "shaman" has come to be applied primarily to practitioners of the technique of soul flight, or journeying, and to exclude techniques of embodiment. See also **journey** and **shapeshifting**.

Peters, L. G., and D. Price-Williams. "Shamanism: Phenomenology of a Spiritual Discipline." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 21:2 (1989): 115–137.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Emptiness

The **Great Mystery** is, as explained by Ken Wilber, philosopher and one of the foremost visionaries of our time, that which is unbound and unquantifiable. It is Creativity, the force that drives the constant **evolution** of our **Kosmos**. Creativity, in this sense and on this scale, is emptiness. **Shamans** refer to this emptiness as the Unknown, the Void, the Source, and the Great Mystery. It is that which created the Creator. For the shaman, this emptiness is accessed through **ritual** and in **altered states of consciousness**. Emptiness is the potent space from which the shaman draws his or her **power** and magic.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

Energy

Energy, the most fundamental of all physical concepts, is the capacity for doing work either associated with material bodies or independent of matter. Energy in humans is also vitality, inherent **power**, or the capacity to act, operate, or produce an effect.

Relative to **shamanism**, energy is the substance of which everything is made. It is both formless and many formed. Even when it takes form, it is often more of a flow than a form. Energy is often used as a synonym for **spirit** and other invisible things the **shaman** encounters in **non-ordinary reality**. The shaman understands that energies exist which we have yet to find a way to measure and that the fact that we do not yet know how to measure an energy, like spirit energy, does not disprove its existence.

Edith Turner, distinguished anthropologist and author, describes her

moment of awakening to the reality of spirit energy. While participating in a **healing** ritual in Zambia, Turner observed a traditional Ndembu doctor extract a harmful spirit from a sick woman's back. Turner reports that she saw with her own eyes a large gray blob of something like plasma emerge from the woman's back. In that moment she knew that there is spirit stuff and spirit affliction. It is not a matter of metaphor or symbol or even psychology.

Turner continues to explain that energy, which she thinks of as formless, was not the right word for the blob she saw coming out of the Ndembu woman's back. The blob appeared miserable, purely bad, and without any energy like a ghost. It had both form and definition.

Perhaps energy is the right word. Humans have form and definition and are made of energy. Humans are distinct from other things in their world while at the same time humans and all of those things are made up of the same energy, the atoms of the physical world. Thus humans and things can be considered energy, highly complex patterns of energy.

Shamans see and feel the distinction between different energies in the invisible world as well. They distinguish between their energy, that of their **helping spirit**, the energy of a lost **soul** part, or a harmful spirit that has invaded the patient's energy. It is possible that neither energy nor spirit is adequate to describe the experience of shamans and the realities of the invisible world. See also **extraction; ritual; spirits**.

Turner, E. "The Reality of Spirits." *ReVision* 15, no. 1 (1992): 28-32.

Energy Body

The energy body is that aspect of all living things that is made up of the **energy** of a spiritual nature. The spiritual energy, or spiritual essence, of the energy body is also called **mana, power, prana**, or **ch'i** in various languages. The **soul**,

which is also energy, is directly connected to the energy body.

The energy body normally inhabits the physical body. This second body, also called the subtle energy body, is invisible to most, though some have a natural ability to see it in others. This ability can be cultivated. The shaman enters an **altered state of consciousness**, in part, to see the energy body.

The shaman's **training** also involves cultivating certain skills to access his or her own energy body and refine its vibration. The energy body is the manifestation in the human form of Universal Energy that is intimately involved in human life. Thus, the energy body provides a portal for the shaman into the Universal Energy in its entirety. The ultimate mastery and cultivation of the energy body allows the shaman to access not only his or her own soul, but also the Source-of-all-things, a non-material, cosmic reservoir of energy from which all things come. See also **ch'i (ji, ki); Q'ero; spirit**.

Brennan, Barbara Ann. *Hands of Light: A Guide to Healing Through the Human Energy Field: A New Paradigm for the Human Being in Health, Relationship, and Disease*. New York: Bantam Books, 1988.

Johari, Harish. *Chakras: Energy Centers of Transformation*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 2000.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Energy Intrusions

Also called power intrusions, **object intrusions**. Energy intrusions are misplaced energies which have defined patterns, but are not **spirits of the dead** or other **spirit intrusions**. Energy intrusions include, but are not limited to, thought forms, hostility, suppressed emotions, strongly broadcasted emotions, addictions, cultural bias or suppression, and the creations of sorcerers,

like the *lobir* of the **Dagara** or *tupilak* of the **Eskimo**.

Traditionally energy intrusions are shot into the victim's body by a sorcerer or malevolent **spirit**. Today, some intrusions are created by the victim's own thoughts and maligned behavior within his or her own body. Energy intrusions can cause weakness, malaise, localized pain or discomfort, **illness**, or death depending on the type of energy intrusion and how long it has been in the patient's body. **Shamans** remove harmful energy intrusions by performing **extraction** rituals while merged with their **helping spirits**.

The shaman determines what needs to be removed while in a **divination** trance. In this **altered state of consciousness** energy intrusions look and feel harmful. They may appear as fierce bugs or reptiles, eating at the patient's insides or hissing malevolently at the shaman. They may also appear as sticks, bones, teeth, stones, shells, or the strange creations of a sorcerer. Some forms are amorphous, like clotted blood, black slime, or cobwebs in the blood. Regardless of their form, intrusions feel repulsive; their harmful nature is absolutely clear.

Energy intrusions range from systemic energy, which can be cleansed, to localized energy which can be extracted, to full spirit intrusions, which must be exorcised. The technique a shaman uses to remove energy intrusions is determined in the divination and influenced by **culture**, the type of energy being removed, the skill of the shaman, and his or her personal technique. See also **cleansing; ritual; sorcery; trance**.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1990.

Entheogen

An entheogen is a psychoactive sacrament that induces a spiritual or mystical experience when taken, from the Greek *entheos* meaning literally "god within" and *gen* which denotes the action of "becoming." The entheogen-

induced experience is described as a serene mystical state, ecstatic rapture, a feeling of the Divine Spirit within, or a profound experience of a Connection-with-all-things.

The psychotropic **plant medicines** used by **shamans** to induce altered states are entheogens. From a shamanic perspective all plants have spirits. However, the plants that are entheogens, or from which the entheogenic sacrament is made, have supernatural powers as well. They are **sacred** deities in and of themselves who must be treated with respect and propitiated with correct **offerings**. Some, like the **spirit** of *ayahuasca*, a South American plant medicine, are also doctors. The patient and the shaman drink *ayahuasca* during the healing **ritual**. The spirit of *ayahuasca* can be felt moving through the body like a large snake, healing whatever is unwell.

Entheogenism, the use of substances to explore the Divine, is not in and of itself **shamanism**. Shamanism is the pragmatic use of altered states for the purpose of establishing and maintaining personal and communal well-being, healing, and survival. **Ecstasy**, or Oneness with God, is often an aspect of the shaman's altered state experiences. However, the pursuit of ecstasy is not the purpose of the shaman's altered state, largely because traditional shamanic peoples believe that Oneness with, and not separation from, God is the underlying principle of all life.

The Council on Spiritual Practices has launched the Entheogen Project. The purpose of the project "is to systematically gather **knowledge** about the immediate and long-term effects of entheogen use and to explore how public policy might accommodate responsible spiritual practices incorporating entheogens."

Variations:

- entheogenic—god-generating
- entheodelic—god-revealing

See also **altered states of consciousness; religion; South America**.

Boire, R. G. *Sacred Mushrooms and the Law*. Davis, CA: Spectral Mindustries, 1997.

Council on Spiritual Practices, www.csp.org/practices/.

Epená

Epená is a hallucinogenic snuff used widely by the *payé* (shaman) and adult males of the Tukanoan and Witotan **language** families in western **Amazonia**. *Epená*, ingested in snuff or pellet form, enables the Tukanoan *payé* to communicate directly with *Viho-mahse*, the "snuff-person," who lives in the Milky Way. The *payé* is not allowed to communicate directly with the spirit world. He must communicate through *Viho-mahse* who attends to all human affairs. Thus, *epená* is one of the most important tools of the *payé* as it enables him to communicate with the spirit world.

The various names of *epená* depend on locality or tribe. For example, in Brazil it is *Paricá* and *Nyakwana*, in Venezuela, *epená* and *Nyakwana*, and in Colombia, *Yakee*, *Yato*, and *Viho*. The use of *Yakee* and *Paricá* is traditionally restricted to the *payé* and the others to the *payé* and adult males. The snuff is used in some locales without ceremonial connection, however it is a powerful tool for **diagnosis** and treatment of **illness** for the *payé* everywhere it is used.

Epená is made from the inner bark of several species of *Virola*, a genus of the nutmeg family. *Virola theiodora* is the most important of the *Virola* species used, followed by *V. calophylla*, *V. calophylloidea*, and *V. elongata*, and *V. rufula* and *V. cuspidata* where they are local. *Virola* is native to the tropical forests of Central and **South America**. The outer bark of this slender tree is smooth and brown, mottled with gray. The inner bark has copious amounts of red resin from which *epená* is made. The flowers, brown to golden colored, blossom singly on a stalk or in small, pungent clusters.

Use

Epená is used for medicinal and magical purposes. Different “kinds” of *Virola* plants are used for different purposes, however the distinction is not made along lines that are apparent to Western botanists. Nor does the distinction appear to have any relationship to the hallucinogenic properties of the plant. The *payé* distinguishes between plants based on many hidden characteristics, more akin to the spirit of the individual plant than to chemical makeup. Nonetheless the “kind” does affect the use and potency of the resulting snuff.

The primary *shamanic* purpose of *epená* is to induce a **trance** state that puts the *payé* into contact with the spirit world or with the traditional spirit being(s) who mediate between the *payé* and the spirit world. In this state the *payé* can perform **divinations** for successful hunts and other life sustaining issues, diagnose and treat illness, foretell the future, combat **sorcery**, cleanse **energy intrusions**, and extract malevolent spirits.

Virola resin has a wide range of medicinal purposes and a corresponding range of preparations. For example, the bark can be smoked at ritual **dances** to cure fevers or boiled into liquor the patient drinks to expel malevolent spirits. The unprocessed resin is used as a poison for blowgun darts and medicinally as a topical anti-fungal medicine to cure skin problems like ringworm.

Preparation

The preparation is guided by the *payé* because the *Virola* plant is **sacred** and the spirit must be treated correctly, particularly given its potent hallucinogenic effects. This is the case whether the resin is to be used for medicinal or magical purposes. The preparation methods and plant species used vary with peoples, regions, purpose, and the form preferred for ingesting the hallucinogen.

Generally, the *Virola* resin is collected and prepared either as snuff or rolled into a pellet form. The psychoactivity of

the oral preparation is less intense. For example, the nomadic Makú ingest the bark resin of *V. elongata* directly, without preparation. The Boro and Witoto ingest pellets made from a paste of the resin of *V. peruvianana*, *V. surinamensis*, *V. theiodora*, and *V. lorentensis*.

Traditionally, the preparation of *epená* snuff begins in the cool mornings before the **sun** penetrates the forest and its warmth reduces the flow of the resin. Bark from the lower section of the tree is stripped and, when the resin that exudes flows blood-red, it is scraped from the soft inner bark. The resin scrapings are kneaded in cold **water** for twenty minutes. The resulting liquid is strained, boiled to a thick syrup, sun-dried, pulverized, sifted, and mixed with the **ash** that functions as a preserving salt.

The Waiká of Venezuela use enormous amounts of snuff, sometimes daily. They have several methods for preparation that are all variations on the same process. The cambial layer is rasped from the bark and the trunk of *Virola*. The shavings are gently dried over a **fire** so that they may be stored for future use. When needed, the shavings are wetted, boiled for at least a half hour, and reduced to a syrup. The syrup is dried, ground to a powder, and finely sifted for snuff.

Virola pellets are prepared in variations of the following process. Slivers of the *Virola* bark are carefully boiled down, stirring constantly for at least an hour until a thick paste remains. The paste is rolled into pellets for immediate use. These pellets will keep for approximately two months. If not for immediate use, the pellets are coated with an alkaline ash, or “salt,” and set out to dry.

Alkaline ash is prepared by burning the wood of several different, but specific **trees**. The resulting ash is mixed with water and the ash filtered out. The filtrate is then boiled down or allowed to dry, yielding an alkaline residue or “salt.”

Active Principle

Tryptamine alkaloids are found in high concentration in the resin secreted from the inner bark. Small amounts of monoamine oxidase inhibitors, which enhance the psychoactive properties of the tryptamines, are also found in the resin.

Ritual of Receiving the Plant Spirit, or Plant Medicine

Implements for snuffing *epená* vary, depending on tradition and the size of the dose. Generally, the snuff is placed in one end of a tube and a person blows on the other end, delivering the snuff into the nostrils of the recipient. Long tubes, some an arm's length, are used to ingest large doses of snuff, from six to eight tablespoons. Short tubes made from hollow bird bones are used for smaller doses. Forked, bird-bone tubes may be used for self-administering the snuff.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

Immediately after the snuff is administered into each nostril, the sinuses discharge excessive mucus. The first stage of trance is characterized by hyperactivity and stimulation. During this stage the *payé* calls on the spirits to guide and participate in the **journey** into the spirit world. In many **cultures** the *payé* is summoning his *hekura*, the little men of the jungle, who enter the *payé's* breast and give him the powers to cure, combat sorcery, and see into the future.

In the next stage a period of drowsiness sets in that is disturbed by intense **visions** that correspond with the *payé's* experiences in the spirit world. While in this stage individuals have a faraway, dream-like expression that is associated with the temporary absence of the soul as it travels in the spirit world.

Songs and Dances

Chanting and dancing is at times continuous and through it the *payé* often enacts his conversations with spirits and other invisible energies. It is this transportation of the **soul** into the

spirit realms that is one of the most significant values of *epená*.

Use in Western Medicine

None are known at this time. See also **altered states of consciousness; chant; cleansing; entheogens; extractions; plant hallucinogens; plant medicines; plant spirits.**

Plotkin, M. J. *Tales of a Shaman's Apprentice: An Ethnologist Searches for New Medicines in the Amazon Rain Forest*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1993.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

———, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Eskimo

The Eskimo peoples live in the Arctic region of **North America, Greenland**, and in a few villages on the northeastern tip of **Siberia**. The Kalaalit, **Inuit**, Inupiat, and **Yup'ik** are the main linguistic and political groups included in the term "Eskimo," which is now considered insulting by some groups who prefer their own names for themselves in their own language. "Inuit" has been used interchangeably for "Eskimo," however that is only a satisfactory solution for the Inuit. "Eskimo" will be used here (with sensitivity to the right of any people to name themselves) to discuss the general patterns observed in the coastal **shamanism** of this Arctic region.

There is a large degree of uniformity of **language** and **culture** in spite of the isolation of some groups in the Arctic region caused by geographic diffusion. Among the Eskimo the *angakok* (shaman) functions as both **priest**, keeper of **ceremony**, and **shaman**, creator of **ritual**.

The traditional *angakok* session begins with a great deal of drumming, **singing**, and dancing. When the *angakok* has sufficiently connected with his *torngraq* (**helping spirits**) he is bound securely and left lying behind hanging animal skins or in the dark. The *angakok* enters a deep **trance** and his **soul** enters the spirit realm in a **journey of soul flight**.

While the *angakok's* soul journeys, the people gathered sit with closed eyes and **sing** spirit **songs** in chorus. Sometimes the *angakok's* discarded clothes come alive and fly about the room indicating the presence of spirit in the ritual. Eventually, the *angakok* is heard shouting from the depths, a long way off, as his soul begins its return home. When his soul returns, the *angakok* awakes from his trance, magically unbound, and tells the audience of his journey in the spirit world.

The *angakok* often returns from the spirit world with new songs, **masks**, or other carvings to be created. That which is given by the spirits, whether it is information, **diagnosis**, or art forms, is accepted as truth. Therefore, when the *angakok* returns with instructions for a community **healing** ritual or specific **taboos** they are strictly observed.

The Taboo System

From the Eskimo perspective starvation and **illness** are created when humans break taboos. The taboo system does not reinforce a system of good and evil, which is a foreign idea to the Eskimo. The taboo system attempts to keep the souls of the humans in harmony and balance with the souls of the other living things in their environment on whose graces the survival of the Eskimo depends.

The taboo system is designed to support hard work, awareness, tactfulness, generosity, skill (hunting/sewing), and physical courage in the face of suffering or violence while diminishing murder, theft, stinginess, quarrelsome behavior, and taboo-breaking. Sex, other than

incest, is not part of the taboo system of the Eskimo.

Taboos are physical in nature, like not eating sea and caribou meat together. Punishment is also physical, ranging from the assignment of temporary food taboos to banishment for chronic offenders. The *angakok's* role is to accurately diagnose, with the help of the spirits, what transgressions need to be confessed and how to repair the damage done.

Eskimos are more concerned with the negative effects of the spirits of the recently dead on their daily life than they are concerned with their own deaths. There are far more taboos regulating humankind's personal contacts with the spirit world than there are taboos regulating the interpersonal relationships in the community.

Functions of the Angakok

The *angakok's* first priority is helping to provide food for the community and the next is to cure illness. Both of these functions often involve the taboo system and the need to make amends for violations. The *angakok* is also called upon to change the **weather**, prevent or repair injuries, battle the harmful effects of **sorcery**, divine the source of issues in the present or future, and to enhance personal success in a variety of areas.

Sorcerers

There was an uneasy relationship between the shamans, sorcerers, and the community at large. The practice of sorcery is elaborate and fairly widespread, involving soul theft and the creation of forms of malevolent **energy intrusions**. For example, the *tupilak* is an animal figure created by an *angakok* or sorcerer from bones, other parts of corpses, animal parts, and miscellaneous material. When used in sorcery, the *tupilak* is animated with a malevolent spirit and sent forth to kill the victim.

The Spirit World

Eskimo spirituality and **religion** is physically oriented. There are three realms—

human, natural, and spiritual—that are interconnected to create one world. In the spirit aspect of this world there is an **Upperworld**, a **Lowerworld**, and an Underwater world. Differences arise culture to culture relative to which spirit beings live where and which realm human souls go to given to the nature of their death.

Generally speaking, the Eskimo cosmos is not polarized into male and female deities or animal and human beings. Therefore there is a great deal of **shapeshifting** between human and animal forms, human and spirit forms, and in the transformation or merging of **gender**. There is a concern with how the spirits of dead humans and animals can affect the lives of the living, however this does not translate into a belief in the **Ancestors** as a body of spirit beings to draw on for help.

Spirit

Everything in the Eskimo world has a soul-spirit, or *inua*. Though the translation between “soul” and “*inua*” is not exact, functionally speaking, geographical features, all animals (except dogs in some areas), lamps, entranceways, parts of structures, furnishings, tools, and clothing, all have *inuat*. In Greenland, for example, an animal’s *inua* resembles the animal and is its vitality. *Inua*, means “its man” or “its individual,” which is functionally the soul of an animate or inanimate object.

Soul

The *inua*, *inuat* (pl), concept is basic and universal, but varies slightly from group to group. In the northern regions, soul is *inua* and in the southern regions it is *yua*. A spirit person is *inuk* and *yuk* respectively. In eastern regions the *inua* is a spirit in human form or can take human form, but is not a soul of a deceased human. In the western region the *inua* can be a soul of a deceased human, among other things.

The Human Soul

Generally the Eskimo believe that the soul when freed from the human form

can become a spirit being like other supernatural beings. This spirit being can take other forms like a ball of **fire**, light, steam, or a skeleton. While in the body the human soul is part of a living gestalt with personal qualities carried in the person’s name and a life essence, warmth or breath that animates the human. Furthermore all the parts of the body have small souls, the well-being of which must be addressed in healing practices.

The human soul can take other forms and change from human to animal or object. These transformations can be aided by the **power of amulets**, songs, family totem animals, and helping spirits. Because this shapeshifting is widespread and all animals have *inua* of their own, the hunter must take care of the *inuat* of all that he kills. There are many practices and taboos that are always a part of hunting and fishing that exist specifically for the care of the *inuat* of the game.

Helping Spirits

The *angakok*’s helping spirit is the *torngraq*, and he or she may acquire more than one. *Torngraq* can be supernatural beings, elemental beings, or **animal spirits**. The Inuit believe that there are benevolent and malevolent *torngraq*. Some are simply very strange beings that are harmful if not treated correctly, for example, half-people split lengthwise, thirsty little, dried-up wanderers, or mountain **giants**.

For common people animal protectors, often **birds**, are inherited from the father’s family. Masks embodying the spirit of these animals are worn in rituals. Certain taboos on killing or eating one’s own totem animal are observed. Songs and *arnuaq* (amulets) also offer protection. For every person there is always the possibility of an original, personal encounter with a spirit through which the individual gains a song, an amulet, or a personal protecting spirit.

The important spirits of Eskimo cosmology are **Sedna**, the Mistress of the

Sea Beasts, the Moon-man, and Sila, the Spirit of the Air.

Sedna, Mistress of the Sea Beasts

Sedna, the Sea Goddess, controls the availability of the sea animals to hunters. Therefore, this being literally holds the power of life or death for the people. Broken taboos and the evil deeds of people irritate and anger Sedna who withdraws the animals from those who don't deserve them. The *angakok* must journey to the bottom of the sea, get past Sedna's guards, and calm her anger to win her audience and her favor.

The Moon-man

Depending on the area, either Sedna or the Moon-man controls the availability of the sea animals. Throughout southwest Alaska the *angakok* journeys to the Moon-man to beg for animals. The Moon-man is present in the stories of eastern Eskimos, however Sedna, not the Moon-man, controls the sea animals.

Sila, the Spirit of the Air

Sila, or *silap inua*, is the Spirit of Heaven or the Universe who is never seen, only heard occasionally in the wind. Sila is the most remote, pervasive, impersonal, and abstract of all *inuut*. Sila has none of the human-like vagaries of other Eskimo deities. In some cultures Sila is spiritual power or understanding. Sila supports of the system of taboos, punishing transgressions with illness, bad weather, and scarcity of game animals.

Becoming an Angakok

The process of becoming an *angakok* is similar in the **east** and the **west**. Both expect an **initiation** crisis during which the candidate is being chosen by spirit. In the east candidates can deliberately seek power by fasting and staying alone in the wilderness for long periods of time. In the west candidates are spontaneously chosen by spirit.

The *angakok* gains his or her main body of **knowledge in training** directly from the spirit world. In both the east

and the west this training is augmented by training with elder *angakoks*, often with several since each one is a specialist in a particular technique. There is also a tendency for the profession to continue within families. For example, the spirit who provokes the initiation crisis may be the spirit of an ancestor who was an *angakok*.

Initiation

Death is the central theme in Eskimo initiation. Death by drowning is common as are rituals in which the candidate is shot dead and later revives. In one recorded example, Aggiartooq, the initiate, was lashed to a pole and lowered through the ice into the lake where he was left for five days and nights. When he was pulled up he was not only alive, but his clothing was dry. He reported that his dead mother and a human skeleton were now his *torngraq*.

The preliminary *quamanEq* or *anakua* initiation may happen spontaneously or the novice can ask an older *angakok* to perform the transmission. In this initiation the novice receives *anakua*, a lighting or enlightenment of the mind and body. Beyond this experience and instructions on their **sacred** language very little training is received from the older *angakok*. Any power derived with the assistance of older *angakok* can only be maintained through the novice's acquisition and relationship with his or her own *torngraq* (helping spirits).

The novice can obtain *anakua* from his or her own helping spirits after long hours of waiting, sitting on a bench in his hut or in the wilderness, and invoking the spirits. When *anakua* manifests, the novice can see at a distance, into the future, into all the different spirit realms, and into the spirit substance of what is going on locally, for example locating lost souls.

Training

Training continues for years with the *torngraq*, often in secret. One technique is to grind a small stone against a large

rock for hours at a time all through the summer. Over several consecutive summers, the novice *angakok* obtains *torngraq* and through them power. Each spirit **teacher** and new *angakok* teacher broadens his experience and knowledge of techniques. While training and rubbing stones the trainee is subject to more stringent taboos.

The new *angakok* must also master the ability to use drumming and dancing to intentionally enter the journeying trance. In most shamanic rituals there is an intense, prolonged periods of dancing, drumming, and chanting to the point of frenzy, before the *angakok* enters trance. During the dancing the *angakok* often contorts and cries out in the way of his animal *torngraq* or speaks in the unintelligible **shamanic language**.

Drum

The *angakok* is shown the tree that is to be carved into the frame of the **drum**. Where there are no **trees** the frames of drums are made of seasoned hickory or spruce either imported from the mainland or traded through cousins in Siberia. A hardwood strip, about two inches wide and one eighth-inch thick, is soaked in **water**, steamed over night, and then bent into a circular hoop about 18 to 24 inches in diameter.

A wooden *taflu*, handle, is attached to the frame. Traditionally the skin is made from a specially prepared walrus stomach, stretched as thin as parchment paper over the frame. The skin is dried until it becomes taut and resonant. On some drums an inner circle of wood is used to hold the skin in place and add strength to the frame.

Power Objects

The *angakok* creates a **kikituk**, a wooden or ivory figure that is animated by his or her helping spirit and used in healing. The *angakok* can also create a *tupilak* for use in healing, made from bones and animal parts and empowered with a spirit. Amulets, made of teeth, claws, shells, **feathers**, or other animal parts,

serve a protective function and have power as part of the animal species from which they are taken rather than possessing the power of an individual spirit.

Masks

In Eskimo life there is no separation between secular and spiritual life or between the humans and spirit world. Eskimo masks are part of an integrated complex of **storytelling**, song, and **dance** that maintains the physical and spiritual health of daily life. These stories are also a part of an oral tradition that keeps the history alive.

The masks are created of spirit and for spirit. They depict the spirit beings of plants, animals, wind, helping spirits, **totem spirits**, and the characters of the *angakok's* past journeys into the spirit realm. These masks are believed to contain the spirit and wearing them provides access to the spirit's specific powers. The use of these masks is mediated by the *angakok* because of their power.

The severity of the Eskimo way of life exists in contrast to the buoyant nature, optimism, volatile laughter of the Eskimo people. They share a practical, fatalistic acceptance of the **Great Mystery** and its unpredictable effect on their lives. The Eskimo relationship with spirit explains and makes acceptable the uncertainties of life in a harsh and difficult environment. See also **Alaskan; Arctic shamanism; chant; power objects; qilanEq; soul thief**.

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Espantu

Espantu is a sudden fear or trauma believed to cause **soul loss** in various cultures across **South America**. See also *susto*.

Ethics

The ethics of **shamanism** vary **culture** to culture; ethics being the system of moral principles or values that allow individuals to live together and populations to co-exist. The complexity in the ethics of shamanism is primarily relative to the extent to which a shaman's culture accepts **sorcery**, harming others by shamanic means, as an ethical practice.

A cross-cultural determination of ethics in shamanism cannot be drawn clearly in black and white. For example, if the shaman's role is to maintain the health and well-being of his people and a sorcerer in the next village is sending **energies** that are harming the shaman's people, is it ethical for the shaman to return the sorcerer's malevolent energies to him, knowing full well that it will harm the sorcerer? Is it ethical for the shaman to act directly to protect his people by creating and sending malevolent energies to harm the sorcerer? There are ethical lines, but they are not always simple and clear.

Ethical concerns do affect the shaman and the health of the community in which the shaman practices. In general, the ethics of a shaman's practice will affect the shaman's assets, which are reputation, strength of character, personal charisma, and a mastery of ecstatic techniques.

The decision to refer a patient is in part an ethical decision and in part an effort to maintain one's reputation. Shamans all over the world are careful

not to accept cases they cannot solve. Patients are referred to practitioners of other **healing** forms based on the shaman's **diagnosis**. The shaman's reputation grows by word of mouth. It is important that the stories spread by patients tell of the shaman's diagnostic accuracy, healing **power**, and primarily of the positive results of the shaman's healing **rituals**.

The strength of a shaman's character is expressed through the ethics of his or her practice, which can be observed in the health of the shaman or those close to the shaman. The result of misused shamanic powers is often **illness** or death. These may strike the shaman, but more often they strike those close to the shaman who are not as powerful and able to protect themselves.

Ethical issues in the community can create an environment that encourages illness. Each individual's ability to act morally and ethically affects their own internal balance and harmony on mental, emotional, physical, social, psychological, and spiritual levels. Situations that offend an individual's ethics erode that individual's well-being, particularly when the individual does not feel he or she has the freedom to leave the situation.

Similarly the collective action of individuals creates an ethical environment. When the environment does not support the ethics of the individual, the individual's well-being is eroded. This occurs, for example, in situations where an individual is cast out of their social support structure for making an ethical decision. These situations of ethical conflict leave the individual or the community open to physical, mental, and emotional illness, especially when sustained over time. Traditionally the shaman is called upon to diagnose the true nature of the conflict and to define and mediate the necessary healing process.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Evolution

Evolution, seen from a shamanic perspective, is best thought of as Spirit-in-action, where **Spirit** unfolds itself at every stage of development, manifesting more of itself and realizing more of itself at every unfolding. There is a common tread of patterns, laws, or habits that runs through the **Kosmos**, through the **domains** of matter, life, mind, **soul**, and spirit. This common tread of patterns is evolution.

Evolution has direction which can be described as a drive toward greater depth. This direction of evolution does not mean that dissolution and regression do not occur, but that over time a broad direction is apparent, particularly when we look at the increasing differentiation of things in our world. This broad direction emerges as the drive to increase depth, to go beyond what went before, while including what went before.

From evolution a spectrum of depth unfolds, which is synonymous with a spectrum of consciousness. Consciousness is what depth looks like from within the Kosmos. As consciousness realizes itself more and more, it comes into manifestation more and more. The whole/parts (**holons**) do the same. This spectrum of consciousness is also synonymous with a spectrum of Spirit. "As depth increases, consciousness increasingly awakens, Spirit increasingly unfolds."

Evolution produces greater depth and less span, meaning that as the level of differentiation increases, the population at that level decreases. For example in a room with five people, there are many more cells than bodies, and many more molecules than cells. The reason for this is that the holon at the higher level, in this example, the body, transcends the differentiation of the cell, the holon of the lower level. And the body's differentiation transcends that of the cell by including and organizing populations of cells, thus the higher level holon includes the holon of the lower level.

It is the nature of evolution to transcend and include. Therefore, because the evolution of the Kosmos has direction, our universe (a holon in that Kosmos) has direction, and we ourselves (another holon in that Kosmos) have direction. This theme is inscribed on the original face of the Kosmos. It is the pattern written on the wall of Nothingness.

Each level includes the preceding level and adds its own qualities that are not found in the preceding level, causing the intrinsic value of the Kosmos to increase with each unfolding. In our own world matter (physics) unfolds and transcends itself to become life (biology), which transcends itself to become mind (psychology), which transcends itself to become soul (theology), which transcends itself to become spirit (mysticism). While each individual holon's identity expands and transforms to include increasingly more of the Kosmos, the number of individual, transformed holons decreases.

As whole/parts of this evolving Kosmos, our human depth of Spirit increases from subconscious, to self-conscious, to superconscious as we awaken to our Oneness with All Things. Our Kosmic consciousness is Spirit awakened to its own true nature. It is within this Kosmic consciousness, this Oneness with All Things, that the shaman works.

Our evolution is a holon of the evolution of the Kosmos. As a holon of the Kosmos we transcend all and embrace all. There is no final Whole. There is only an endless process, pulsing between Becoming and Being the pure **emptiness** in which the entire process unfolds. Within this process there is the "sudden shock of the utterly obvious" as we recognize our own Original Face, the face we had prior to the **big bang**, "the face of utter Emptiness that smiles as all creation and sings as the entire Kosmos." See also *unio mystica*.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

Exorcism

Exorcism is the **extraction** of a **spirit intrusion** from a person, place, or thing. Extraction is a **shamanic healing** technique for removing harmful **energy intrusions**. The intrusion of a spirit into a living being is considered a **spirit possession**. In this state the intruding spirit will compete with the host for the host's own life force and control of the host's body.

Exorcisms, or depossessions, follow a basic form that is consistent cross-culturally. How the steps are carried out varies. Exorcisms generally follow these seven steps:

1. The possessing spirit is called forth, while the patient's body is fortified with a **sacred** substance, like blessed **water** or **tobacco** smoke.
2. The spirit is asked to identify itself or state its name.
3. The spirit is asked what it wants and why it has possessed the patient at this time.
4. The spirit is promised that its wishes will be fulfilled. (In the Catholic Church, where the possessing spirit is considered a "demon," promises are not made to fulfill the wishes of demons. Otherwise the exorcism process is virtually the same in the Catholic Church as it is for indigenous peoples.)
5. The spirit is asked to leave.
6. If reluctant, the spirit is commanded to leave.
7. When the spirit has been satisfied and has left, the patient is reintegrated into the community.

The shaman adds greater detail to the general structure of the exorcism ritual as it unfolds. How each step of the **healing** is accomplished, the actual actions taken, and the relative importance of each step varies depending on the guidance of the **helping spirits**, the nature of the energy being exorcised, the reason that energy is possessing the patient, and cultural expectations.

Once the possessing spirit is removed, the **shaman** must return the

spirit to its proper place in **non-ordinary reality** and assure that the promises made during the exorcism will be fulfilled. When the possessing spirit is revealed to be a **soul** who did not successfully complete its transition after death, it is the shaman's task to escort that misplaced soul to the **Land of the Dead** or the Source of all souls to complete its **journey**. In this capacity the shaman functions as a **psychopomp**, entering an **altered state of consciousness** and journeying with the soul into non-ordinary reality.

Codifying healing **rituals** can be advantageous for rituals like exorcisms, which are dangerous for the practitioner. By codifying the basic process it is no longer necessary for each shaman to learn the process by trial and error, particularly since error in this case can cost the shaman his or her health. As long as the shaman can enter an altered state and remain open to new information as the ritual unfolds, the exorcism process will remain vital and powerful.

Codifying ritual also runs the risk of turning the ritual into a **ceremony**. Ceremonies and rituals perform different functions. As a ceremony the exorcism process is not flexible. In that case an exorcism can no longer serve its intended purpose. Without the ability to call on the helping spirits and change the ritual to serve the specific needs of the patient and the intruding spirit, the creativity and **power** of the exorcism is lost. See also **embodiment**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Extraction

Extraction is a **shamanic healing** technique for removing harmful **energy intrusions** from the patient's body. These energy intrusions cause weakness, malaise, localized **pain** or discomfort, **illness**, or death depending on the type of energy intrusion and how long it has been in the patient's body.

From the shaman's perspective many physical **diseases** have their roots in localized energy intrusions. These intrusions cause energy that would be flowing in a healthy state to become stuck in the body. Over time this stuck energy evolves into specific physical diseases.

Shamans remove a variety of different intrusions that range from systemic energy, to localized energy, to full **spirit intrusions**. The technique a shaman uses to remove these intrusions is defined in the shaman's **divination** and is influenced by **culture**, the type of **energy** being removed, the skill of the shaman, and his or her personal technique.

Systemic energy intrusions are removed through general extraction techniques called **cleansings**. These energy intrusions may be picked up from the environment or they are part of the patient's own energy, stuck in a pattern that is no longer useful. In this case the shaman intentionally embodies his or her **helping spirit** and cleanses the energy from the client's **energy body** using a variety of techniques, for example, brushing the body with leaves or rubbing the body with fresh eggs, to collect and remove the unwanted energy.

Extractions are performed on localized energy intrusions. These misplaced energies have defined patterns, but are not **spirits of the dead** (which must be exorcised). Energy intrusions include, but are not limited to, thought forms, hostility, suppressed emotions, strongly broadcasted emotions, addictions, cultural bias or suppression, and the creations of sorcerers, like a *lobir* from the **Dagara** culture.

Unintentional spirit **possession** by malevolent or misplaced spirits is perhaps the most severe state of energy intrusion. Possessing spirits are usually spirits of the dead or malevolent spirit beings. These spirit intrusions are removed through a very specific extraction **ritual** called **exorcism**, or deposition.

The following are the basic steps for extraction:

1. The shaman opens the ritual **space**, connects with the helping spirit, and enters his or her working **trance** state.
2. The shaman divines the cause of the illness and nature of the energy intrusion.
3. The shaman removes the intrusion or "drives out the spirit of the illness" from the patient's body.
4. The shaman fills the hole created.
5. The shaman thanks the helping spirits for their assistance, exits the trance state, reenters **ordinary reality**, and closes the ritual space.

There is a high degree of cultural variation in how shamans perform the actual removal of energy (step 3 above). Most shamans perform extractions in an **embodiment** trance, in which the shaman intentionally embodies his or her helping spirit. This protects the shaman and allows the helping spirit to use the shaman's body to extract the intrusion.

Removal can be accomplished through sucking out the intrusion or by using **spirit hands** (the helping spirit's hands, paws, etc., working through the shaman's) to pull the intrusion out. Shamans of **Amazonia** blow *tsentsak* (invisible darts) into the patient to illuminate the intrusion and skewer it. The shaman then sucks out the dart and intrusion and releases them into the rain forest where they will be absorbed. These are a few examples of the variety of removal techniques.

The shaman recognizes what needs to be removed while in a divination trance (step 2). In this **altered state of consciousness** energy intrusions look and feel harmful. They may appear as bugs or reptiles, eating at the patient's insides or hissing fiercely at the shaman. They may also appear as sticks, bones, teeth, or the strange creations of sorcerers. Regardless of their form, intrusions feel repulsive; their harmful nature is absolutely clear.

It is important to dispose of the extracted energies appropriately and

completely. Shamans usually place, or dry-vomit if using a sucking technique, the extracted energies in a container. Some fill the container with sand or **water**. The container is emptied in a location where the energies can be absorbed into nature or eaten by other spirit beings. Some shamans simply release the energies into nature directly after removal.

It is sometimes necessary for the shaman to fill the hole created in the patient's energy body by the extraction process (step 4). Extraction is often a secondary consideration after a **soul retrieval**. From a shamanic perspective, a spirit or energy intrusion can only

enter a body when a person is already vulnerable. **Soul loss** creates a hole in a person's energy, leaving them vulnerable to intrusions. After the extraction the shaman is guided by the helping spirit in how to fill the hole. Shamans may use, for example, a lost soul part of the patient, a helping spirit, breath, light, or **colors** to fill the hole. See also **sorcery**.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1990.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

F

False Face Society

The False Face Society is a **healing** society of the **Iroquois** Nation in the north-eastern United States. “False Face” refers to wooden **masks** that represent forest beings who possess the **power** to heal sickness. The healing powers of these **spirit** beings become available during the healing **rituals** to the society member wearing the mask who then employs the powers in healing the patient.

These masks have a characteristic bent, or twisted, asymmetrical quality. The facial characteristics are large and exaggerated, like deep-set eyes, bent noses, arched brows, and deep, expressive wrinkles. Traditionally the hair was made of corn-husk braids, shredded basswood bast, or buffalo mane, and now of black horsetail hair. If painted, the face is usually red or black.

The likenesses in the mask comes from the particular forest spirit who visits the individual in a **dream**. The dreamer is instructed to make the mask and how to conduct the ritual with the proper feast, **tobacco** offerings, and curing **songs**. Traditionally the dreamer carves the mask on a living basswood tree himself. Today they are often carved by craftsman from a block of basswood or other soft wood.

Members enter the False-Face Society in two ways: either they are visited by the forest spirits in a dream, as described above, or they are cured in a False Face Society healing ritual.

False face masks are used to heal **pain**, swelling, and inflammation of the head, mouth, eyes, ears, shoulders, and joints. They are used for other purposes, however it is the actions of the wearer, not the mask itself, that determines

what the mask is used for. Society members often have more than one mask and the masks are interchangeable among society members. To access the powers of a mask the society member must fully embody the awkward, often humpback-like movement quality and unintelligible **sounds** associated with the spirit of that mask.

False Face Healing Rituals

The False Face Society has two main classes. Each class has a different healing ritual, although both types involve the handling of hot stones, coals, and ashes and blowing the **illness** from the patient. The masks of the first class, the False-Face Company, represent the greatest doctor spirit, who is a hunchback, and the common forest beings who serve under the doctor. The Common Faces make up the second class of masks. These forest beings are all hunchbacked, deformed, or crippled below the waist.

Prior to calling on the False Face Society, the patient is seen by a **shaman** who specialized in diagnosing illness through **divination**. If the illness is within the powers of the society members to heal, a False Face healing ritual is called. The patient, or patient’s family, prepares the mush feast that is a **sacred** offering for the False Face spirits.

The society members enter the ritual **space** naked to the waist and wearing their masks. The singer keeps an energetic **rhythm** for the dancing and curing songs. The masked members **dance**, embodying the awkward body **postures** and movements of their associated forest spirits. They scatter ashes everywhere while the patient stands before the **fire**.

The seat of pain is identified in the patient. Parts of the patient’s body are rubbed vigorously, then hot ashes are blown into the pain. Members also rub hot ashes between their hands and then vigorously massage and manipulate the afflicted body parts. The members continue to work with the coals and the turtle **rattle** until the spirit of illness has

been sent away. The spirit powers in the masks protect the members from being burned by the hot coals.

The False Face Society also performs community healing rituals each spring and fall to expel sickness from the settlement. Wearing their masks the members work noisily through the whole village, rattling loudly, sweeping with pine boughs, and entering every room in every house to drive the spirits of sickness away. The members blow ashes on people who fall ill at this time to drive the sickness out of their bodies.

Masks as Power Objects

False Face masks are sacred **power objects**. They are cared for with respect and treated as living things. These masks are kept, wrapped, in a special location when not in use and amends are made if the mask is accidentally dropped or harmed. If hung on a wall, the face will point inward or will be covered if pointing outward. See also **ash; diagnosis; embodiment; medicine societies; offering**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Family Shaman

This term was used by scholars to distinguish the individual **shaman** who traveled with an extended family from the professional shaman. The family shaman serves the family's needs, particularly divining the correct path forward in situations that concern the family and, in some **cultures**, maintaining communication with the familial **Ancestors**.

The professional shaman serves the community at large. In situations that demand skills, **knowledge**, or **powers** greater than those possessed by the family shaman, the professional shaman is called upon. Some scholars believe that the professional shaman evolved from the family shaman tradition. See also **shamanism**.

Feathers

Feathers are **power objects** that connect the bearer to the **spirit** of the bird that they came from and by association to the mythical beings the bird is associated with. In **South America** for example, feathers and feather crowns are a connection to the **birds** who are sacred beings. These sacred bird spirits are allies, connecting the *payé* to the transformative **powers** of the Divine **Sun** and other **sacred** phenomena of nature.

Feathers are fashioned into crowns and other power objects that are worn or used by **shamans** in their **healing** rituals. The feathers embody the power of the bird's spirit. Wearing them facilitates the shaman's shift from human to spirit form in **trance**. This is the same process as with animal **masks** or skins that facilitate the shaman's ability to embody spirit and to shapeshift into a more powerful spirit form.

Ordinary tribesman also dress in ornate and magnificent feathered head-dresses when they participate in ritual. Male participants are often seen adorned with feathers to dance the bird spirit in the reenactment of a **myth**, for example. In this way the dancer embodies the bird spirit for the duration of the ritual.

The shaman's feathers, on the other hand, define his relationship at all times with the spirit powers and with bird spirits who are his allies. In many regions of the Amazon Basin it is common to see the *payé* wearing exquisite, intricate feather crowns while dancing in shamanic ceremonies and performing healing rituals. See also **embodiment** and **shapeshifting**.

Furst, P. T. "Feathered Crowns of Power." *Shaman's Drum* 29 (Fall 1992): 40–47.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Fetish

A fetish is a **power object** created to provide a dwelling place for **spirit**. Once inhabited by spirit the fetish is regarded as a living being that possesses all of the powers, consciousness, and volition of the spirit it embodies. The fetish must be cared for to keep the spirit alive and well within the object. Most fetishes are the property of an individual, who “feeds” it **prayers** and sacred **offerings**.

There are many different forms of fetishes. The nature of the relationship between owner and fetish differs culture to culture. For example, **Inuit** peoples often have antagonistic relationships with their fetishes. A fetish may be reluctant to share its **powers**, causing the owner to resort to harsh **words** and physical force to compel the fetish to comply with the owner’s request. The Inuit believe that an aspect of the vitality of the fetish is derived from the body of the owner. An obstinate fetish may be given away, causing the fetish to lose some of its vitality while it is disconnected from the body of the owner.

In contrast, **Zuñi** owners have reverent relationships with their fetishes. **Zuñi** fetishes are “fed” prayers and offerings regularly. They are sheltered from vulgar **language**, **smudged** to keep evil spirits away, and wrapped when not in use to guard them from contamination in any form. See also **charm; embodiment; medicine; talisman**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Fire

Fire, one of the elemental **powers**, can be used for **healing** in its physical form and called on by the **shaman** energetically (as a **helping spirit**) in the invisible world during his or her **journeys**. In many cultures the shaman must also cultivate their own “**inner fire**” as part of their **training**. For these shamans

their ability to work with fire in its physical form is a reflection of their mastery of fire in its internal form.

The role of the fire in **shamanic healing** rituals is to provide the **energy** of transformation, **purification**, or release. The energy of the fire may be used directly in healing, as when **Quechua** shamans light the mist as they **camay** (blow the breath of life into a patient in a fine mist of cane alcohol) a patient, engulfing them in healing flames. In other healing techniques the shaman draws the energy from a fire, burning physically in the healing space, and directs it into the patient with his or her hands.

The spirit of fire is used by shamans in many different ways in their journeys to facilitate the healing of the patient. For example, fire can be used by the shamans in **soul retrieval** journeys to cleanse or purify the soul before returning it to the patient. In another healing process the shaman may journey into the invisible world to find the patient’s inner fire (life force) when it has been lost or stolen. Fire, an essential element for human life, arises in many different ways for shamans to work with in the healing of humans.

The role of the fire is defined specifically culture by culture. For example, the **Dagara** of West **Africa** utilize the energy of the fire to connect with the **ancestors** and to fuel **visions** and **dreams**. In contrast, the **Shuar** of the Amazon River basin believe the fire attracts helpful spirits and serves as a sign for souls of the living to find their way home from journeys in the invisible world. For this reason a Shuar lodge is never without its fire. See also **cleansing; elements; fire, mastery of; ritual**.

Fire, Mastery of

Mastery of **fire** is demonstrated by touching or consuming fire, hot coals, or boiling liquids without physical harm. In some cultures mastery of fire is an essential step in a shaman’s **training**. In other cultures it validates the depth of

the shaman's **trance** state. However, neither statement is true in all cultures.

Long ago, **shamans** with mastery of fire could embody the spirit of fire. During **rituals**, these shamans released flames from their mouths, noses, or whole bodies. Other stories tell of shamans displaying their **powers** in competition by flying across the night skies as balls of fire.

Many shamanic peoples speak of the powers the shaman receives from spirit as a "burning," "heat," or as getting "very hot." Often the shamanic trance state is not attained until after the shaman is "heated." The power to generate this mystical inner heat is attributed to both sorcerers and shamans, and to practitioners of magic in general.

Paradoxically, mystical inner heat is often developed through repeated exposure to extreme cold. **Inuit** or Japanese shamans, for example, develop mystical inner heat from prolonged and repeated exposure to cold as an essential step in the training. Initiatory rituals in such cultures involve a display of real "mastery over fire." For example, a Manchurian or **Eskimo** shaman must show his or her ability to generate mystical heat by resisting the effects of prolonged exposure to severe cold or by drying wet sheets with the heat of the bare body. The cultivation of mystical heat can be demonstrated through a resistance to cold or a tolerance of fire.

Cultivating mastery of fire does not necessarily create a shaman. There are belief systems, like those of Tibetan monks and Indian ascetics, which value developing mystical heat as part of their initiatory processes. There are traditional cultures in **China**, Sri Lanka, and India, where lay people walk on fire in an act of faith or to demonstrate their personal integrity. There are even contemporary seminars where hundreds of people walk on fire for personal empowerment. None of these people become shamans through these practices or their mastery of fire. See also **sorcery**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

First People

First People are any nation or tribe of people whose **ancestors** were the first people to inhabit a particular region. This region of land connects them with their past as the home of their Ancestors, the present as the provider of life, and the future as the legacy they hold in trust for their children and grandchildren.

"First People" is used when referring to **aboriginal** peoples because, in general, they prefer it and because it is the rough translation of the name many aboriginal peoples call themselves in their own languages. For example, North American aboriginals are not Indians, a name resulting from Christopher Columbus's mistaken belief that he had "discovered" another route to India. Each aboriginal North American people has a name for themselves in their own language.

First Peoples vary widely in their customs, culture, and impact on the land. However, they all consider the land the source of life—a gift from the Creator that nourishes, supports, and teaches. At the heart of this deep bond between First Peoples and their ancestral land is their experiential awareness that all life—mountains, animals, plants, the **sky, weather**, rocks, insects, people—is inseparably interconnected. The material and spiritual worlds are One and all things have **sacred** meaning. See also **First Shaman; Fourth World; North America**.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

First Shaman

The First Shaman is said to have come from the **sky**, or the **Upperworld**, responding to the needs of the people on **earth**. The First Shaman had great **powers** and god-like supernatural gifts, like the ability to fly, to shapeshift, and to live outside the limitations of **space** and **time**. In many cultures, the story of the **First People** and that of the First Shaman are inextricably interwoven.

The creation stories of most peoples tell of a wondrous, paradise-like time in the beginning when animals, humans, and gods all communicated easily and lived as one. Anyone could move between the realms without obstruction. All beings lived in a state of freedom, health, and trust in which death was unnecessary.

Then, through a mysterious misdeed that no one seems to remember, the connection between the realms was broken. Communication between the physical and spiritual worlds became harder and harder and all sentient beings gradually lost their original wisdom. Humans, no longer living in balance with all things, began to experience suffering, **illness**, and death. Humans needed someone to risk the dangerous passage across the broken bridge between the worlds to teach them how to survive in their new world.

The First Shaman was a hero-god, who brought **knowledge** and the skills necessary for survival in all aspects of daily life on the changed earth. The First Shaman taught the people to hunt, gather, plant, heal, and conduct **rituals**. The cultures, traditions, civilizations, and societies were all built on the knowledge brought by the First Shaman.

In some cultures the First Shaman was a Divine being, male, female, or often both, who came from the Upperworld and took human form to help on earth. In other cultures the First Shaman is selected by the spirit world in response to the great suffering of the humans. The First Shaman is taught by

the spirits the god-like skill of journeying between the worlds as well as the skills and knowledge necessary to survive.

Scholar Geoffrey Ashe believes evidence from the Paleolithic period shows that the teachings of the First Shaman were put into practice predominantly by women. Ashe describes an ancient **shamanism** practiced by groups of women, who connected to the primordial power of the **Great Mystery** through their **wombs** in ritual. The Great Mystery is the essential source of the power drawn on by shamans, regardless of **gender**. The power of women is biologically rooted in the **blood** mysteries of birth and menstruation. Later, when the Paleolithic community broke into different tribes, the familiar individual shamanic practice evolved.

Ashe explains that the most ancient form of the word shaman means “female shaman” because the shamans were originally women. Only later, with the movement of the tribes and the development of different dialects did the word “shaman” take on a male connotation in the **Tungus** dialect. In many languages the word for male shaman is of later development and different origin. See also **shapeshifting**.

Ashe, Geoffrey. *The Ancient Wisdom*. London: Macmillan, 1977.

Eliade, Mircea, ed. *Ancient Religions*. New York: Citadel Press, 1950.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Floriopondio

See *Brugmansia aurea*.

Fly Agaric Mushroom

Fly Agaric mushroom, or *amanita muscaria*, is possibly the oldest hallucinogen. Its use was particularly important to Siberian shamans, who refer to it as the “mainstay of the Heavens.” It is the

most prominent **plant hallucinogen** used in the Asiatic region of the world and has been identified as the possible plant source of the god-narcotic, **Soma**, of ancient India. Fly Agaric refers to its use to stun flies, making them easier to kill. See also *Rig Veda* and **Siberia**.

Forest Shaman

The Forest Shaman is a general term referring to the **spirit** being or deity in various **cultures** who is responsible for the **initiation** of shamans. The Forest Shaman is both a descendant of the **First Shaman** and a manifestation of the essential Wildness of Nature.

In many cultures the initiate is possessed or “taken by spirits” and ends up in the wilderness. Terrified and confused the initiate is tested and taught by the beings of the spirit world. At the essence of this ordeal is the deep, chaotic wilderness and the very human fear of death it inspires. The initiate must face the fear of his or her own death and embrace the power of the wilderness to successfully pass through the initiation to become a **shaman**. See also *Banjhakri*.

Foundation for Shamanic Studies

The Foundation for Shamanic Studies is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization dedicated to the preservation, study, and teaching of **shamanism** worldwide. The Foundation for Shamanic Studies was founded in the early 1970s by anthropologist and author Michael Harner, Ph.D., who continues as its director.

The organization is made up of an extensive international network of field associates and teaching faculty. The foundation has several programs designed to meet its many goals.

The Living Treasures in Shamanism Program enables the foundation to help preserve shamanism worldwide where it is currently being threatened. Shamans in less-developed countries who are recognized as extraordinary by their **cul-**

ture are given resources and financial support by the foundation.

Shamans in the Living Treasures Program clearly recognize the political value of bringing international attention to their situation, not only to end repression and insure survival of their special **knowledge** and traditions, but also to stimulate the younger generation to value and take interest in the shamanism of their own culture.

These shamans are honored and excited to share their knowledge and traditions, even to the point of offering to initiate Westerners into their practices. They do not perceive that their shamanic traditions are vulnerable to dilution or distortion through sharing. For them the threat of the probable extinction of their shamanic tradition if their practices were to die with them is far more real.

The Urgent Tribal Assistance Program enables the foundation to support indigenous peoples worldwide in maintaining, preserving, and reviving (in some cases) their own shamanic practices. The Tuvans, Buryats, several North American **First Peoples**, Tibetans, Nepalese, Canadian **Inuit**, **Saami**, and the Amazonian Kogi are examples of traditionally shamanic peoples who have sought assistance in the revival of their culture's shamanism. In this program, **core shamanism** is taught as a means by which these peoples can restore their shamanism and **shamanic healing** in a ways consistent with their traditions and needs.

The foundation's Shamanism and Health Program was initiated to study the effectiveness of shamanic methods in dealing with **illness** and other problems of daily life. The research is used to educate the mainstream medical community about shamanic healing and its relevance as a complementary approach to healing and health.

The Mapping of Non-ordinary Reality Project was designed to develop the world's foremost archive of cross-cultural narrative of shamanic **journeys**, near-death, and other **mystical experiences**.

The foundation is utilizing this archival data to construct a cross-cultural map of the invisible world.

The foundation offers worldwide **training** in core shamanism. In addition, the foundation sponsors and financially supports grassroots shamanic training in new geographic areas throughout the world. See also **Buryat (Buriat); Nepal; shamanic counseling; Tuva.**

Conton, L. *Neo-shamanism, Core Shamanism, or Shamanism?* The Foundation for Shamanic Studies, <http://www.shamanism.org> (accessed January 2005).

Fourth World

Fourth World is a term used by the World Council of Indigenous Peoples to distinguish the way of life of indigenous people from the way of life of peoples of the First World (highly industrialized), Second World (Socialist bloc), and Third World (developing). In general, the people of the Fourth World believe that the people belong to the land, while the people of the First, Second, and Third Worlds believe that the land belongs to the people.

At issue is the fact that Fourth World peoples share nation states with the people of the First, Second, and Third Worlds. As a result, the people of the Fourth World, who are descendants of the country's **aboriginal** population, are completely or partly deprived of the right to sovereignty over their own land and way of life, which is tied to the land. The peoples of the Fourth World have only limited influence or none at all in the national state to which they belong. See also **First People.**

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary.* San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Frame Drum

The frame drum is a round, wheel-shaped **drum** whose diameter is much wider than the depth of its shell. It may have one head or two heads with a handle attached at one side, like a lollipop. The frame drum is associated symbolically with the feminine, fertility, grain, the **moon**, the **sun**, and the primordial first body of **water**. The use of the frame drum and its symbolism reach back into prehistory.

The difference between the shaman's drum and the frame drum is in how they are played. The frame drum is played with bare hands. The shaman's drum is struck with a bone, **rattle**, horn, or stick to create a single deep resonant **sound**.

In some cultures bells or **metal** implements are attached to the inside rim to add to the drum's **power** to purify, disburse unwanted energies, and to summon the **helping spirits** when beaten. In some cultures the movement of these implements across the picture painted on the drumhead was interpreted as a means of **divination**.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm.* New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Free Soul

An anthropological term for the part of the human **soul** that travels in shamanic **journeys**, in **entheogen**-induced **trance** states, and in deep **dream** journeys; also referred to as dream soul. Many **cultures** conceive of the human soul as composed of different types of souls that have different functions and different names. In general the *body soul* is the soul type that keeps the body alive and the *free soul* is the soul type that is meant to journey in other realms, outside of the limitations of **space** and **time**.

Though the *free soul* is meant to journey about, it is also meant to return. The *body soul* cannot sustain life alone indefinitely. The loss or theft of the free soul, referred to as **soul loss**, is a primary cause of **illness** and death in shamanic cultures around the world.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Fucquay

Ecuadorian **Quechua** word for *camay*, to blow the **spirit** of the Connection-of-all-things to another.

G

Gagohsa

The **Seneca** term for the basswood **masks** of their **False Face Society**. The *gagohsa* are portrayals of powerful **spirits**, carved as directed by those spirits, who have come to assist the members of the society in overcoming malignant forces that cause **illness**, death, and misfortune in the lives of the people.

The **power** and **vision** to carve a *gagohsa* is given directly to the individual by a **spirit** known as *Shagodjiowengowa*, the Helper, who is addressed as “Our Grandfather.” When the mask is complete, the power of the spirit represented is embodied in the mask. Dancing the mask in ritual allows the powers embodied in the mask to enter and be directed by the individual who wears it.

Gagohsa are living **power objects**. They are **sacred** and there are **taboos** and **rituals** involved in their care and handling so that they do not become contaminated or impotent. When a mask changes owners or is returned to use after **cleansing**, a small bag of sacred **tobacco**, *unjengwa onweh*, is attached to the mask to appease the spirit of the mask, insure future goodwill, and preserve the *gagohsa*’s power. When a mask grows hungry, the owner rubs the lips of the mask with corn mush and anoints onto the face sunflower oil, giving the masks their characteristic luster.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Gahnohwahsehna

This sacred **medicine** is made from powdered herbs and sung by members of the **Seneca Niganiigaah** society to empower it. During the **healing** ceremonies of this society, *gahnohwahsehna* is given to the patient to drink in water. The *gahnohwahsehna* determines whether or not the patient will heal. If it floats, the patient will not heal. If it sinks, the patient will recover.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Gaia Hypothesis

The Gaia hypothesis states that “Gaia, the superorganismic system of all life on earth, hypothetically maintains the composition of the air and the temperature of the planet’s surface, regulating conditions for the continuance of life. . . . On earth the environment has been made and monitored by life as much as life has been made and influenced by the environment.” The Gaia hypothesis explains in technical and biochemical terms what the **shamans** have said since the beginning of **time**, that all things are connected and that this interconnectedness has wisdom.

English biochemist James Lovelock and American microbiologist Lynn Margulis developed the Gaia hypothesis in the late 1970s to explain the long-term stability of the planetary atmosphere.

Roszak, Theodore. *The Voice of the Earth*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992.

Gaindowane

The Seneca **Tree of Life**, *Gaindowane*, the Great Tree, is fundamental to the **Seneca** beliefs of their spiritual and physical **Kosmos**. *Gaindowane*’s deep roots and branches that reach to the **sky**

connect the **powers** of the **Lowerworld** to those of the **Upperworld** respectively. The roots of the Great Tree, which are supported on the shell of Turtle, establish the Seneca foundation, its trunk brings strength and unity, and its branches shelter the people in peace and security.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Ganohwa

The **Seneca** term for the **rattle** made from the shell of a snapping turtle used by the **False Face Society** in its **healing** rituals. Use of the *ganohwa* brings into the healing **ritual** the powers of **Gaindowane**, the Great Tree that grows from the shell of Turtle. The *ganohwa* is rubbed against the bark of a tree or other wood surface to access the mystic powers of the **Upperworld** and **Lowerworld** accessed through *gaindowane*, and to invoke the spirit of the rattle.

The *osnoh ganohwa*, another rattle used by the False Face Society, is designed from the bark of a hickory tree and filled with cherry pits.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Geenumu Gesallagee

The *geenumu gesallagee* is a **gender-variant male** who serves a respected **healing** role in the Micmac culture. The *geenumu gesallagee*, which means "he loves men," is traditionally a leader and a "go-between." The go-between's role is to create a bridge between groups, between sexes, or to act as a mediator.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Gender

Gender, our maleness and femaleness, is determined by biological, social, experiential, and sexual factors. In shamanic cultures it is believed to also be determined by spiritual factors. Gender, particularly **gender variance**, is an aspect of **shamanism**. Traditionally **shamans** are of female, male, or a transformed gender.

Gender is apparently fluid and flexible. Gender is not an inborn trait. Biological sex, social roles, and sexual orientation are not linked biologically, but are influenced by each other. Gender identity is part of a range of options for human expression. Shamanic cultures look at the nature of these possible options as the unique expressions of the human spirit.

For example, some shamanic cultures recognize eight genders. There is man with a man's **soul** and woman with a woman's soul. There is man with a woman's soul and woman with a man's soul. There is a man and woman soul in a man and a woman and man soul in a woman. There is also an Everything person and person whose gender is non-translatable. Individuals would only be taught by an elder of their gender or enter the **sweat lodge** with people of their own gender.

Biologically, human sex is determined by the genetic inheritance of the individual, specifically by two chromosomes called the sex chromosomes. Sex differentiation is the process by which the fetus develops the male or female reproductive characteristics directed by its genetic makeup. This is a complex developmental process with many biological variations on the basic male or female theme.

Gender identity in humans is believed to arise from the confluence of powerful factors playing upon a range of potentials which is, in some way, influenced by the presence of our biological sexual characteristics. These powerful factors are experiential and

social, and shamanic cultures believe, primarily spiritual.

In traditional, shamanic cultures gender is an acquired trait with a corresponding social role to fulfill. In these tribal belief systems there are more than two genders and all of these genders have well-defined, traditional roles. For example, in the tribal belief systems of over 130 North American native peoples, biological sex does not dictate the social role or gender an individual assumes.

In some shamanic cultures the shaman's gender does not matter. The shaman's relationship with powerful **helping spirits** and the success of his or her **healing** work is all that is important. In other cultures, like the **Chukchee** or Asiatic **Eskimos**, the shamans are traditionally female and males of transformed gender. In a few cultures the shamans are traditionally male.

The gender identity of **contemporary shamans** is complicated by the influences of dominant governments and religious systems. These systems impose their own biases relative to gender and shamans. For example in ancient Chinese society (1100 B.C.E.) the *wu*, female shamans, were prominent and powerful. Today only approximately one-quarter of ethnic Chinese shamans are women. The Confucian influence has pushed women from prominent positions throughout Chinese society, including shamanism.

The influence of contemporary factors on the gender of shamans is not a single pattern, but must be looked at by individual region or culture. For example, unlike the Chinese, the Korean *mudang* (shaman) is still predominantly female as they were in the past. However they are female now for different reasons. Like the Siberian **Tungus** who influenced their shamanism, the majority of ancient *mudang* were women who were respected and valued in that role. In contemporary Korean culture neither women nor the *mudang* are respected or valued. Only those of an outcast status become a *mudang*,

therefore women are more likely than men to do so.

Contemporary factors, gender biases, and tradition all influence the ability of an individual of any gender to respond to **the call** of the spirits and to become a shaman. See also **Ancient China; gender variant; gender-variant male; Korea; Siberia; and transformed shaman.**

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Vander, Arthur J., James H. Sherman, and Dorothy S. Luciano. *Human Physiology: The Mechanisms of Body Function*. 3d ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Gender Variant

A gender-variant individual is one whose expression of **gender** is a variation of the duality of male and female, heterosexually oriented genders. The idea that there are two fixed genders is not necessarily the case in other cultures or at other times in history.

The cultures that recognized more than two genders and held respected roles for gender-variant individuals often held a pantheistic view of the spirit world. These people worshipped an array of archetypes, including Great Mother Goddess, Amazonian female warriors, male consorts of goddesses, and deities of both sexes who embodied metamorphosis, gender variance, or same-sex eroticism. With these images imbedded in the spiritual awareness of the people, the gender-variant individuals were perceived as **sacred** people, reflecting the unknown, the **Great Mystery**, and the chaotic variety of the spirit realms.

Any individual may or may not express the gender identity implied by their biological sex, or morphology. They may vary in gender identification,

style of dress, economic role in community, or sexual orientation. Traditional shamanic cultures believed that the traits expressing gender and gender variance were bestowed by divine **powers**. Therefore, these qualities were essential to the individual, not a culturally constructed behavior. Furthermore they believed that the unique perspective and wisdom that gender-variant individuals brought were essential to the health of the community.

Gender variance related to cross-cultural **shamanism** is characterized by three traits. These individuals behaved in ways regarded as gender variant, or androgynous, by their respective cultures; fulfilled a sacred role for the community; and assumed the receptive role in sexual relations with traditionally masculine males. Together these three traits characterize a “**domain**” or “web of associations” connecting the sacred role of gender variance in many different cultures.

Many cultures that value gender variance believe that masculine qualities are only half of ordinary humanness. They see feminine qualities as automatically encompassing the masculine, in the feminine, as well as many other characteristics that go beyond the limits of both. Consequently, these cultures recognize the special status of men who have the ability to transcend the limits of masculinity.

Because of the all-inclusive nature of the feminine, women in these cultures are able to participate in activities normally associated with men, without leaving their female gender role. However, for a man, it is not as easy. If a man is moved by **spirit** to incorporate feminine aspects, he has to move beyond his masculinity.

Gender variance of the male **shaman** is not just accepted in some cultures, but it is expected. The transformation of male shamans into women is traditional among the Araucanians, **Chukchee**, Kamchadal, the Asiatic **Eskimo**, occasionally by the **Koryak**, Indonesians (Sea Dyak), Burmese Patagonians, Arapaho,

Cheyenne, Ute, Zuñi, and other tribes of **North America**. These men are **transformed shamans**.

Indigenous cultures tend to share a belief that the divine, expressed in spiritual practices and the **arts**, is inseparable from the body and nature. They believe that gender-variant behavior and heterosexuality are both natural and sacred. They often look upon gender-variant persons as especially capable of performing spiritual functions, as they are believed to hold the **knowledge** of both genders and the mystical wisdom of transformation and metamorphosis. See also **berdache (berdach); gender-variant male; Mapuche; soft shaman; Two Spirit**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Gender-Variant Male

Gender-variant males are found in the **transformed shaman, soft shaman, the berdache** and the two spirit. In many **cultures**, the Araucanians, **Chukchee**, Kamchadal, the Asiatic **Eskimo**, occasionally by the **Koryak**, Indonesians (Sea Dyak), Burmese Patagonians, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Ute, and Zuñi for example, men are required to become women to become shamans, either through learned behavior or complete physical transformation. The reverse transformation, female to male, is found in hunting and killing, but does apply as a pattern in **shamanism**.

A number of the world's indigenous peoples believe gender variance to be a trait bestowed prior to birth by a divine power or **powers**, a deity, or the stars. These cultures believe gender variance is an essential quality of the individual, part of their **original medicine**, or the unique gifts they have to bring to the world.

Men of various cultures separated over vast stretches of **space** and **time**, have been touched in this way by **spirit**. In general they shared these three character traits. They behaved in ways regarded as gender variant by their respective cultures. They expressed same-sex sexuality, sensuality, or eroticism. They fulfilled a sacred role or carried out a spiritual task, often assisting the shaman, or transforming gender to become the shaman.

Examples of specific multi-cultural and multi-historical traits include: blending feminine, masculine, and sacred garments; engaging in sacred and mundane tasks traditionally assigned to women; distinctive linguistic traits and gestures; creating or producing **art** (literature, **music**, **dance**, drama, visual arts, etc.); the practices of **healing**, **divination**, and magic; the use of **altered states of consciousness** while engaged in those practices; participating in radical activities; and forming special relationships with women. See also *berdache (berdach)*; **gender variant**; **Mapuche**; **Two Spirit**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

General Shamanism

General shamanism and **Arctic shamanism** are the two prominent forms of North American shamanism as defined by scholar and authority on shamanism Åke Hultkrantz. In the general form of shamanism the dominant form of **trance** is not the ecstatic **journey**. The **embodiment** trance is used more frequently to cover a variety of purposes.

For these **shamans** the ecstatic journey trance is part of **the call** to his or her profession. It is the means by which the novice shaman is initially contacted by his or her **helping spirits** and through which the spirits give **power** to the novice. After years of **training**, these

shaman use an embodiment trance state to call on the helping spirits for **divination** and to dispatch the spirits on tasks, such as locating lost items, curing the sick, answering questions, and discovering information about the future.

In this form of **shamanism** the journey trance is used by mature shamans in the recovery of lost souls. This is considered a very serious healing that endangers both the shaman and the patient. It is often performed in a group healing with multiple shamans, as with the **Spirit Boat** ceremony in the Pacific Northwest region.

Whether classified as general or Arctic, North American shamans use the depth and type of trance state necessary to accomplish a variety of tasks. How a shaman determines the trance state necessary depends on many variables including cultural expectations, type of helping spirit used, the **diagnosis**, and personal preference or specialty. See also **ceremony**; **North America**; and **soul loss**.

Hultkrantz, A. "Spirit Lodge, a North American Shamanistic Séance." In *Studies in Shamanism*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962.

Geomancy

Geomancy is **divination** by signs from the **earth**, pronounced geographic contours or features, or by lines and figures jotted at random. Geomancy is derived from the Late Greek *geomanteia*, *geo* meaning earth and *manteia* meaning divination. Geomancy is used to balance the presence and actions of humans with their environment. It is a means by which humans can recognize the most appropriate place nature offers for what they want to do or build, like plant, place a grave site, or build a home.

Shamans may use geomancy to restore the health of a community that has slipped out of balance with its natural and/or supernatural environments.

Imbalance may be caused by breaking specific **taboos** or other human action or by changes in the physical environment, like an earthquake or flood that causes a shift in environmental energies.

Geomancy has been practiced for several thousand years. It is an **art** in many cultures, for example the Chinese practice geomancy as part of Feng Shui, the practice of utilizing the **energy** channels or “dragon lines” that flow through the earth. Not all geomancers are shamans, however shamans may practice the art of geomancy.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Ghesar Gyalpo

The source of everything, Ghesar Gyalpo is the initiating deity in the final stage of the **Tamang bompo's** (shaman's) highest **initiation**. During the last day of the initiation, the *bompo* climbs the nine rungs of the **ladder** to the highest heaven in an ecstatic state and meets Ghesar Gyalpo, a luminous being who sits on a throne covered with *blha mendo*, soul flowers. In the radiant white light of the deity, the *bompo* is reborn.

Ghesar Gyalpo's soul flowers embody the origin and essence of the human **soul** and the pure potential of the **Kosmos**. Ghesar Gyalpo is both the Buddhist concept of nothingness, the undifferentiated void into which the consciousness merges at death, and the source of all things of the Kosmos.

Ghost Dance

This ceremonial religious **dance** was performed to restore the way of life of the indigenous peoples to what it was before the European immigrants came and destroyed it. The Ghost Dance originated in 1888 among the Paiute and spread rapidly to other tribes in **North America**. The creator of this ceremonial dance was Wovoka, a young man who

journeyed into the spirit world and received a revelation concerning a messiah who would restore their way of life. See also **ceremony** and **journey**.

Densmore, F. *The American Indians and Their Music*. New York: The Woman's Press, 1936.

Giants

Giants are the **embodiment** of the elemental forces that created the universe in pre-Christian Europe. Giants held both **knowledge** and wisdom. However due to their wild elemental nature, that knowledge could be gained only at great personal risk to the **shaman**. The giant's tremendous power was unbridled, undomesticatable so brute force was never a successful path to gain the giant's wisdom. Success demanded fearlessness, strength of character, perseverance, and cleverness of the shaman. See also **elements**.

Allen-Coombe, J. “Weaving the Way of Wyrd: An Interview with Brian Bates.” *Shaman's Drum* 27 (Spring 1992): 20–29.

Gichimanido

A variant of **Kitchi Manitou**; also *mide-manido*, *gichimanidoo*, and *Kitche Manitou*. See also **manitou** and **Ojibwa**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Glossolalia

Glossolalia is the technical term for “speaking in tongues,” a neurological phenomenon that occurs in certain spontaneous **trance** states. Some individuals fall into an uncontrolled trance state in which they speak spontaneously in a **language** no longer understood, which sounds like gibberish to the contemporary ear. In ancient times the practice of glossolalia was widespread,

found in the *theomania* of the Pagan Greeks, the Oriental cults of the Roman Empire, the Chinese religious sect of Shang-ti-hui, and the spirit mediums of Tonga, for example.

This phenomenon is similar to some **shamanic languages** spoken in trance. Most **shamans** recognize the language of Nature or of their **helping spirits** speaking through them and can translate and interpret those messages. However, in some cultures the shamanic language is interpreted by the shaman's assistant, while the shaman who is deep in trance is unaware of the meaning.

In religious practices, like Pentecostal Christianity, speaking in tongues is considered a gift from God and encouraged. The trance state is uncontrolled and the speaker usually does not understand the message. The ability to interpret these messages is also considered a gift and is encouraged and cultivated.

Neurologically, glossolalia is linked to structures common to all humans found deep in the brain within the brainstem. It is possible that these structures still carry the "programming" for humanity's earliest languages, like Sumerian, which reflect a consciousness so fundamentally different than ours that we no longer understand the language.

Goomah

A stone that embodies a **spirit** who is one of the *wirreenun's* (**aboriginal** shaman of **Australia**) helping spirit. The *goomah* is a refuge for the *wirreenun* in times of danger. Entering the *goomah* is the *wirreenun's* most powerful sanctuary. See also **helping spirits**.

Parker, K. L., et. al. *Wise Women of the Dreamtime: Aboriginal Tales of the Ancestral Powers*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International Limited, 1993.

Great Mystery

The Great Mystery cannot be understood with the logical mind; however, the energies that flow from it can be directed. **Shamans** use the **energy** that flows from the Great Mystery without needing to fully understand or explain it. This not superstitious, but experiential, similar to a contemporary person using electricity though we really don't understand what it is.

Attempts have been made to define the Great Mystery throughout the ages and they basically amount to *that which is inscrutable or unknowable*. Trying to explain the unexplainable is limited by language. The desire to leap over this paradox and engage the Great Mystery is one of the primary reasons that humans enter **altered states of consciousness**. The experience of the energies that flow from the Great Mystery is possible in an altered state in which the conscious mind is freed from the grip of the logical mind. In this way shamans can know the Great Mystery without needing to explain it.

The Great Mystery is all the answers to the questions that are unanswerable. For example, there was a **big bang**, but why did the first spark appear in that great **emptiness**? Yes, the egg and the sperm come together to create biological life, but why and how does it have a **soul** that exists before and after the body? Yes you are here, but why?

From a shamanic perspective a bit of the Great Mystery is innate in all things, animate and inanimate. **Orenda**, an Anglicized term for the **Iroquois** concept of the Great Mystery, is defined by William S. Lyon, professor of anthropology and author as "the mystical force for potential inherent in **power**; that is the magic of power. This force is inherent in all matter and spirits; it is with this force that the shaman heals. Because this force is mystical, it cannot be understood by the rational mind, although it can be manipulated to cause things to change or to happen."

For the **Dagara**, the Great Mystery is *Yielbongura*—the thing that **knowledge** can't eat. It is at the essence of all things. *Yielbongura* suggests that the essence of life and power resists the attempts of the mind to categorize it in the mind's effort to make the Unknown known.

It is not appropriate to equate the Great Mystery with anyone's god to make the concept easier to understand. Any such explanation is limited by its nature and not really appropriate in a discussion about **shamanism** which predates **religion** and religious thought. To understand shamans and the Great Mystery we must view them from a non-religious, yet spiritual point of view.

Most indigenous cultures have a name for the Great Mystery in their own language, for example, *Kitchi Manitou* (**Ojibwa**), *tamanoas* (Chinook), and *wakan tanka* (**Lakota**), which originally referred to the Thunderbeings, but has come to mean Great Mystery.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Somé, M. P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

Greenland

The Greenland region is comprised of the various **Eskimo** peoples, primarily of the Kalaallit linguistic and political group. The traditional life in this region revolved around hunting whales, seals, and walrus. Within the communities people strive to live according to a system of **taboos** that keep them in good relationship with the spirit beings in their environment. The **angakok** (shaman) was called on for crises, famine, and **illness**.

Initiation and Training

Initiation and **training** proceed together primarily in secret and in solitude

over many years. The **torngraq**, or **helping spirits**, are the **teachers**, the initiators, and the source of the *angakok's* **power**. For example, a young Ammassalik man went to a solitary spot on a rocky hillside to make a connection with a helping spirit. He sat for three days rubbing a small stone around and around on a large rock, focusing his mind in a **prayer** than called out to the **spirits** to come to him and make him a powerful *angakok*.

Finally, a great bear rose out of the lake and swallowed him whole. He believed that he had died. Then, after three days, the bear spit out his bones and the body reassembled itself until even his garments rushed back one by one. Having recovered from his **dismemberment**, the young man awoke from his terrifying **trance**.

He had experienced the initiatory event expected by his people. Called in this way by spirit, the young man spent every summer for three or four years fasting in solitude and performing the **rituals** necessary to cultivate working relationships with each of the strong helping spirits who came to him in his **visions**. Over time he learned to call them at will and they agreed to help. All of his training was kept secret until he was sufficiently sure of his power to demonstrate it publicly.

Among the Ammassalik it is traditional for a child to be selected in early childhood by an elder *angakok* for training. The child is taught about the local spirits and deities, the taboo system, **songs** and **chants** for calling powerful spirits, and the shaman/spirit secret **language**. Over a lifetime an *angakok* may have several paid teachers.

Helping Spirits

Tornguang is a general term for the *angakok's* *torngraq* or helping spirits, of which there are many types. They are also called *tornaxssung*, *tornait*, *tornat*, *tartat*, *tungat*, etc., referring to different types and different dialectical variants. The **tornarsuk** is a powerful and particularly dangerous helping spirit who is

called on to answer questions during **divination** sessions. The *angakok* summons the *aperketek*, another spirit who acts as a mediator between the *angakok* and the *tornarsuk*.

Ritual

Torniwoq refers to the shamanic rituals of the East Greenland *angakok* (shaman), during which the *angakok* performs *ilimarneq*, or spirit flight. There are four traditional reasons the *angakok* was called upon to perform a *torniwoq*: a scarcity of sea animals in the sea for hunting; snow masses blocking the ways by land or fjord ice to the hunting places; **soul loss**; and infertility in a married woman.

The binding of the *angakok* is characteristic of the *torniwoq*, as is the *angakok's* *ilimarneq*. The *angakok's* hands and elbows are bound tightly behind his back with a long thong and a heavy stone placed about his neck to keep his **soul** from leaving the **earth** forever. When the *angakok's* soul returns from its **journey** the *angakok's* body will be magically freed of its bonds.

The *angakok's* soul is assisted in *ilimarneq* by his or her helping spirits, often merging with, riding on the back of, or being taken by the hand and led to the desired location in the spirit world. *Ilimarneq* is used for divination; to observe events at remote locations in the physical world; to find game, lost objects, or people; to locate an enemy, identify **sorcery**, or to locate and retrieve a **lost soul**.

During the *torniwoq* the *angakok* is hidden from view behind skins or in the dark. As the *angakok* enters the depths of his trance, he can be heard groaning, shrieking, and whispering. Soon the spirit voices can be heard in the room speaking and laughing in all different tones from different points about the room. The helping spirits may animate his **drum**, beating it and sending it dancing around the room or floating over the *angakok's* head. The beating of the drum is at times accompanied by **singing**.

The reality of the *angakok's* journey is not questioned. There is discussion among Eskimo groups as to whether the *angakok* journeys bodily or whether only the soul travels. It may be that the more powerful *angakut* are able to take their bodies with them while other *angakut* journey only in spirit.

Drum

The *qilaain*, or drum, is the only instrument used by the *angakok* and is fundamental in the process of inducing trance. The *qilaain* is made from a wooden hoop, approximately 18 inches in diameter over which is stretched a piece of skin, preferably the skin of the stomach of a polar bear. A handle, or *kattiilua*, is lashed to the wooden rim of the drum. The *angakok* may choose to add an **amulet** to the *qilaain* to improve the power of his or her singing, e.g., the stiff **feathers** from the root of the beak of the raven are inserted under the lashings, or *kilikirpia*, for this purpose.

The *qilaain* is played by striking the lower border of the wooden hoop, not the drumhead, with the *kättiwa*, or drumstick. During the *torniwoq*, the shamanic rituals, the *qilaain* is usually played by the assistant, freeing the *angakok* to **dance** about, call on his or her spirit help, and enter trance.

The *angakok* uses the *anaalutaa* or the *makkortaa* to invoke his or her helping spirits. The *anaalutaa* is a simple wooden stick that is tapped on the floor to call in spirits and to send others away. The *makkortaa* is a small, round, flat piece of black skin. It is held in the hollow of one hand and rapped soundly and rhythmically with a stick with the other hand.

Illness

Illness is believed to be caused by soul loss or sorcery. Soul loss is considered the cause of most illnesses, particularly when the illness manifests as general debility or malaise. The soul has been either stolen, frightened, or wandered and become lost in the spirit world. The *angakok* drums and chants to enter a

trance and **diagnose** the cause of the soul loss and then proceeds into the spirit world to recover the lost soul for the patient. When the soul has been restored to the body the patient will recover.

Sorcery is suspected when the illness manifests primarily as a localized **pain**. In such a case the sorcerer has created an **energy intrusion** and succeeded in sending it into the body of the patient. The *angakok* drums and chants to enter an **embodiment** trance and proceeds to drive out the **energy**, possibly sucking and/or pulling the energy out.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Lantis, Margaret. *Alaskan Eskimo Ceremonialism*. New York: AMS Press, 1974.

Guinea Pigs

See **cuy**.

H

Hadigonsashoon

This is the original **False Face Society**, from which other Seneca **medicine societies** emerged over time. The original function of this society was to perform the **rituals** necessary to appease **illness-inducing** forces and heal the individuals or tribe afflicted by these forces. See also **Seneca**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Hadihiduus

This is the Men's Medicine Society of the Onondaga (**Iroquois**), who heal with medicine **songs** handed down through the generations within society. These songs are the source of this society's **healing** power. They are secret and never sung outside of the private healing **rituals** in the medicine lodge. The rituals of this society are colloquially called "pumpkin shakes" in reference to the gourd **rattles** used in these rituals. See also **medicine; medicine singing; medicine societies**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Hadui

These are the False Face **masks** of the Onondaga **False Face Society**. Hadui, meaning hunchback, refers to the **spirits** embodied in the carved wooden masks. Each mask embodies the specific powers of a different spirit which are bestowed on the dancer/**shaman** who

wears the mask in the society's **healing** rituals. See also **gagohsa**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Hänäsish

The *hänäsish* is a **medicine** arrow used by the *ki'uks*, **shamans** of the Klamath people of northern California in **North America**; also known as *hänäs*. The *hänäsish* is an approximately 3 to 4 foot "arrow" without arrow heads on either end. They are used in **healing** rituals when the **spirit** of the *hänäsish*, *múluasham sko'ks*, calls out to the shaman to be used.

The *hänäsish* is used to keep the patient's soul in the patient's body, to scare the **illness** away, or to pin down the illness causing intrusion and kill it. The shaman works with the *hänäsish* in pairs, sticking them into the ground on either side of the patient. When the *hänäsish* are used properly they are left in the ground until the patient has recovered fully. To remove them prematurely allows the illness to return or, in severe cases, will kill the patient.

While the *hänäsish* remain in the ground the patient is sung by the shaman. The medicine **songs** may be, for example the song of the spider, lightning, cloud, or wind.

Each pair of *hänäsish* is used with a *tchúpash*, the function of which is to bring the powers of additional **animal spirits** to strengthen the shaman's medicine power. The *tchúpash* is a cigar-shaped, medicine arrow, approximately 3 feet long, with **feathers** attached to each of the tapering ends. The *tchúpash*, also being a weapon, catches the illness in the patient and skewers it into a deep pit in the **earth** called the *shlokúpash*, where it is destroyed. For the *hänäsish-tchúpash* healing to be successful the shaman conducts a five-day, five-night healing **dance** ritual. See also **energy intrusions; extraction; ritual**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Hanblecheya

Hanblecheya means “crying for a **vision**” in the **language** of the **Lakota** of **North America** and refers to going on a **vision quest**. *Hanblecheya* is experienced alone on the hilltop or lying buried in a **vision pit**. The quester fasts for four days and nights, while praying for a vision of wisdom and guidance from spirit.

Hanblecheya is a hard thing to do. To have a vision is almost like dying; you must give yourself up completely. It demands fearlessness and complete self-surrender to the **spirits**.

Erdoes, Richard, and Archie Fire Lame Deer. *Gift of Power: The Life and Teachings of a Lakota Medicine Man*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co., 1992.

Hanblecheyapi

This is the **Lakota** vision quest. The term is derived from *hanblecheya*, which means “crying for a **vision**,” the purpose of all **vision quests**; also known as *hamdéciya* and *hamdéjapi*. Both men and women embark on the *hanblecheya* to obtain *wochangi*, spirit **powers**, and establish a relationship with a **helping spirit**. The *hanblecheyapi* is the primary means of gaining power for Lakota **shamans**. It is a **sacred** practice they repeat over the years to gain new powers, **songs**, and **medicines**.

The *hanblecheyapi* is performed at a power spot usually in a high elevation and always in isolation. The quest lasts for several days, four is traditional, during which time the one questing abstains from both food and **water**. All Lakota *hanblecheya* and those who are visited by a powerful spirit or a spirit who instructs them to do so usually go on to become shamans, healers, or leaders.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Hanhepi

The performance of a **healing** ritual by a **Lakota** shaman, *hanhepi* means “night” and refers to the *wochangi* of night, or the **power**, spirit, and mystery of the night. When the *hanhepi* needed to cure the patient involves wrapping the **shaman** in a blanket and binding him with rope before entering **trance**, the *hanhepi* is called a *yuwipi* ritual. See also **ritual**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Harner Method® Shamanic Counseling

Harner Method® Shamanic Counseling is a system for shamanic **divination** (problem-solving) developed in the 1980s by Michael Harner, founder and president of the **Foundation for Shamanic Studies**. The method involves classic shamanic journeying and studying with **helping spirits** in **non-ordinary reality**, however, the method in its total form has never existed before.

Harner Method® Shamanic Counseling is not typical or traditional **shamanism**, which involves an initiated **shaman**. Nor should it be confused with **core shamanism**, which is a personal practice of shamanic techniques for personal development. The method involves important new systemic and technological changes. These allow the practitioner to guide the client in the technique of journeying while the client uses the **journey** to contact his or her helping spirits who serve as “counselors,” providing a resource of wisdom, guidance, and psychospiritual healing. See also **shamanic counseling**.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Hatáál

The lengthy and intricate ceremonies of the **Dineh** performed for **healing** or some other application of spirit **power**, the *hatáál* are among the most complicated ceremonials performed by healers or **medicine societies** by the indigenous peoples of **North America**. It is common to perform a *hatáál* after the physical aspect of an **illness** has been cured. A diviner is always called on to determine the *hatáál* necessary for the patient.

Each *hatáál*, or chantway, is a grouping of **chants**, in which each chant is a group of **songs** and **ritual** practices. Some take as many as nine days to perform correctly. Many *hatáál* have hundreds of songs, all of which must be performed correctly without repetition, for the **ceremony** to be successful. It takes many years to learn a single chantway and become a *hatááli* capable of performing a *hatáál* and it may take many more years to become qualified and respected by the community.

The name of each chantway becomes the name of the ceremony in which it is performed. Examples are the Blessing Way, Ghost Way, Beauty Way, etc. There are over sixty chantways for healing alone, including chantways for **blessings**, curing, and **purification**. Chantways for blessings are performed for preventative medicine. Chantways for curing, or Holyway rituals, are performed to treat illness and bodily injury. Chantways for purification are performed to cleanse beings, places, and objects that have come into contact with dangerous beings or things. See also **cleansing**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Hatááli

This is a qualified singer of a **Dineh** chantway, or *hatáál*.

Hatetsens

The **Seneca** use this term for **shaman**. Iroquoian **shamanic healing** takes place in the traditional **rituals** of **medicine societies** involving a number of hatetsens and in the practices of individual hatetsens. See also **Iroquois**.

Haudinashone

The Haudinashone live in the area of New York State that adjoins Ontario, Canada. The Haudinashone Confederacy was comprised of a number of **Iroquois**-speaking tribes, the **Seneca**, the Mohawk, the Onondaga, the Cayuga, and the Oneida, and populated by numerous **Algonquian** people from surrounding tribes who were taken as captives and adopted during the long-standing wars between the tribes. The Confederacy became The Six Fires in the eighteenth century with the addition of the Tuscarora. The Haudinashone Confederacy is famous for its constitutional government.

Gunn, Allen P. *Grandmothers of the Light*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.

Hawaii

The islands of the northern corner of the triangular geographical area called Polynesia. New Zealand forms the southwest corner and Easter Island the southeast corner. The people of this area share physical, historical, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. The societies of Polynesia developed complex and highly conscious **art** and literature, philosophies, science, and moral, legal, and ethical codes of behavior.

Cosmology

The ancient Hawaiians believed that all **time** is now. They believed that there

was one body of life to which they, the land, sea, **sky**, and all the things living in the sea, the sky, and on the land belonged. This sense of being part of all things was applied through actions, **words**, and thoughts to all aspects of life. For example, when a need was clearly understood—to move a stone, catch a fish, gather food, build a heiau, **healing**—the resource to meet that need became available. There was no want. There was no waste.

Everything is connected through the **aka** threads. These connections can be created with thoughts or intention. *Aka* threads are receptacles and/or conductors for **mana**. They can be activated with attention and sustained concentration.

Hawaiians conceive of three levels of being that are manifest within the human being. The spiritual or the super-conscious mind is the *aumakua*. The mental realm or conscious mind is *uhane*. The nonmaterial or the subconscious mind is *unihipili*. This is the first level of reality or the physical world. The second level of existence beyond physical reality includes the subjective level of thoughts, emotions, and psychic phenomena. At this level of action everything is connected through *aka* threads.

The third level of reality is *Po*, or the spirit world. *Po* is divided into *Milu*, the **Lowerworld**, *Kahiki*, the **Middeworld**, and *Lanikeha*, the **Upperworld**. When the **kahuna** (shaman) **journeys** into the *Po*, he or she has entered *ike papakolu*, or third-level awareness. The fourth level of awareness is *ike papakauna*. It is the purely subjective mystical awareness of the oneness of the Universe and one's connection with all things.

The Kahuna

The Hawaiian **shamans** are *kahunas* of several different types. *Kahuna* means master or the “keeper of the secret,” from the Hawaiian words *Kahu* meaning “keeper” and *Huna* meaning “secret.” When broken into its root meanings, *kahuna* is very similar to the root of shaman in its original **Tungus**.

Ka means “the,” *hu* means “something surging, boiling over, or rising to the surface,” and *na* means “calm, centered, or settled.”

Kahuna, when placed in front of a title denotes the highest expert in that field in a given family (*ohana*) or island. Thus the title was not often used by the Hawaiians, since it simply denoted any person with great **knowledge** in one or more fields. There were over 40 different kinds of craft *kahuna*, 14 of the healing arts, as well as *kahuna* counselors, chiefs, spiritual leaders, and politicians. The group of Tahitians who came to Hawaii in approximately 1250 C.E. brought with them *kahuna* of new professions like military strategy and temple (*heiau*) **sacrifices**.

The *Kahunas* are adept at using mental techniques to create objective events in **ordinary reality**. They engage and manipulate three factors to do so; *laulele*—an aspect of the imagination, *mana*—a the mystical power or life-force, and psychic connections made through the *aka* field, a vast web of energetic threads connecting all things.

Laulele is more than imagination. It is the power of the imagination when used consciously to establish a mental pattern and combined with the will to manifest that pattern. *Mana* is the **energy** used. Its abundance or scarcity determines the effectiveness of all psychic endeavors. *Aka* is the web of connection through which all things are possible.

Healing

Aumakua is the most important **element** for the *kahuna*, especially those of the healing arts. *Aumakua* is translated as the energy of the **helping spirit** and the relationship with the spirit. For example, each family's *aumakua* is a spirit felt as a living presence of the family, like the spirits of the ancestors. The *aumakua* is ready at all times to act as a guide. It is present in anything and everything.

At its essence *kahuna* healing is the result of allowing the *aumakua* to flow

through the physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual body in its original pattern of perfection without distortion or restriction. For example, loving union and the experience of joy invite the *aumakua* to flow freely. Therefore, the Hawaiian practice of *aloha* (being a part of all and all being a part of me, love) was literally seen as preventative **medicine**.

Language used by the *kahuna* is a powerful tool to direct energies. The Hawaiian language is composed completely of sacred **sounds**, all arranged in different orders to form words. These words used with intention in **chants** or **prayer** invoke the power of these **sacred sounds**. The Hawaiians had chants for everything. **Apprentices** had to memorize and repeat the chants with absolute accuracy so that no **power** would be lost.

There was much written by the missionaries about **sorcery** and the healing *kahuna* was labeled as sorcerer. This is due in part to the missionaries' misunderstanding of the Hawaiian way of life and spiritual practices. However, it was also due to the ability of *kahuna* to do harm. The difference between healing and harming is intention alone, the methods are the same. The *kahuna* simply directed the *aumakua* energies into a life-draining pattern.

Ancient Origins

The origin of the Hawaiian people remains a matter of scholarly dispute. Many Hawaiian clans (*'ohana laha*, all the families on the islands of one family line) trace their **ancestors** back through genealogical chant records to at least 800 B.C.E. These people carry in their oral traditions chants of exploring and populating other lands to the east and the west of the islands. The ancient Hawaiian society had no kings, war lords, or armies. The Hawaiians had no need for these authorities because they practiced their belief in the connectedness of all things in their daily life. They established a clear code of ethical and ecological practices, the *Ka 'Ohana*

Kahua, "the system by which the family ruled." The *Ka 'Ohana Kahua* invoked one punishment, *kauwa* ("to cease to be"), banishment, for planned and deliberate acts of harm against another.

The Polynesian peoples were expert sailors and many Tahitian families settled in Hawaii over the centuries. They usually adapted quickly to the Hawaiian way of life. However the Tahitians who came in approximately 1250 C.E., led by a spiritual leader named Pa'ao, brought great change to the ancient Hawaiian way of life. Pa'ao brought an army and slaughtered and enslaved the Hawaiian people. These Tahitians took over the land and installed themselves as rulers, *na ali'i*. They referred to the Hawaiians as *mana hune* (small power).

Many Hawaiians escaped the slaughter and rule of the invaders by retreating to the **caves** in the hills or sailing to other islands. The people of Moloka'i suffered least. When the Pa'aos warriors arrived at their shores, the Pa'aos were met by the people of the island standing on the beaches, waiting, united in prayer. When the boats beached, the chanting began. The invasion failed, Moloka'i was given the name *Pule-o-o*, powerful prayer, and the people of that island were feared for their great personal power.

Captain Cook came upon the Hawaiian islands in 1778 and the Christian missionaries started arriving in 1813. Blinded by their own beliefs, these peoples remained ignorant of the Hawaiian's highly developed mastery of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual life.

The ancient *kahuna* were deeply involved in the discovery of the nature of their relationship to the universe and had developed the "science" of medicine, psychology, astronomy, agriculture, and spirituality that was at least as advanced as that of Europe and **North America**. Their awareness of the conscious and unconscious mind and its connection to spirit, energy, and the **Kosmos** was more advanced than the concepts of the Euro-Americans who

did not rediscover these ideas until the 1960s.

Types of Kahuna

The *kahuna* related to shamanic techniques and methods were:

Kahuna la'au lapa'au — one who cures and heals broken bones and other traumas through prayer, herbs, and esoteric practices, often instantly or within a few days.

Kahuna la'au kahea — one who heals psychological traumas and **illness** through prayer and esoteric practices.

Kahuna wehe wehe — **dream** interpreter.

Kahuna kilo kilo — reader of skies and omens.

Kahuna nana-uli — one who prophecies the **weather**.

Kahuna nani i na 'ouli — character reader.

Kahuna a'o — teacher of sorcery.

Kahuna na'au ao — teacher of esoteric wisdom and the practices of spiritual illumination.

Kahuna ha'i'olelo — a traveling practitioner of sorcery.

Kahuna keuho — one who drove off harmful **spirits**.

Kahuna kaula — prophet, pure energy, carrier of light.

Kahuna 'ana'ana — one who practices sorcery to do harm, expert in the art of life-draining prayer.

Kahuna ho'o-pio-pio — one who uses sorcery to bring about death and/or magical events.

Kahuna ho'o-una-una — one who sends harmful spirits to cause death.

Kahuna ho'o-komo-komo — one who practices the art of creating illness.

Kahuna pule kuni — a division of *ana'ana* who burn objects of power as **offerings** with their prayers.

Kahuna ninau 'uhane — one who speaks with spirits.

Kahuna haha — one who **diagnoses** illness by feeling the body.

Kahuna pa'ao'ao — one who diagnoses childhood illness by feeling the body.

Kahuna hoo-pio — one who causes illness by touching his body with intent to thereby cause injury to the victim in the same place, expert at inflicting illness by gesture.

Kahuna haku mele ula — makers of chants and **music**.

Kahuna 'ea — one who could raise the dead.

Kahuna hui — one who leads functions and **ceremonies**.

Kahuna one-one-ihonua — of a special prayer **ritual**.

Kahuna pule — expert in prayer or the calling in of spirit and power (*mana*).

Kahuna pale — one who says the life-affirming counter-prayer to neutralize the life-draining, harmful prayer.

Kahuna po'i Uhane — expert in spirit catching.

Kahuna kuhi-kuhi puu-one — locators and designers of the *heiau* (sacred sites).

Kahuna makani — one who works with the wind and with the power of mystic spirits.

Kahuna ho'o-noho-noho — a division of the *makani* who conveyed the spirits of the deceased through the process of death.

King, Seide K. *Kahuna Healing: Holistic Health and Healing Practices of Polynesia*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1983.

Lee, Pali Jae, and Koko Willis. *Tales from the Night Rainbow*. Honolulu, HI: Night Rainbow Publishing Co., 1990.

Yardley, L. K. *The Heart of Huna*. Honolulu, HI: Advanced Neuro Dynamics, Inc., 1991.

Haxu'xan

The *haxu'xan* is a **gender variant** Arapaho man whose **spirit** desires to be a woman. This desire is believed to be a supernatural gift from the **birds** or animals. Boys given such a gift give up the desires of men and gradually grow to be women. They often marry men.

The *haxu'xan* were believed to have miraculous powers and were able to do supernatural things. The *haxu'xan* also apparently experienced the physical transformation of a **transformed shaman**, however it is not clear that they were initiated, trained, and considered **shamans**. What is clear is that the Arapaho believed that the powers of the *haxu'xan* were natural, a part of their uniqueness and their **original medicine**.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*.
Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

He man eh

This is the *berdache* of the Cheyenne. Among the Cheyenne, the shamanic and the *he man eh* societies were secret societies. The **initiation** and **training** practices of these societies were not discussed openly so that the **power** of their magic would be preserved through secrecy. Thus, very little is known about the *he man eh*.

One responsibility of the *he man eh* was to accompany Cheyenne war parties. War parties almost always had a *he man eh* along for **healing** and tending to the range of the warriors' needs. The *he man eh* did not fight, but they did use their powers and **medicines** to bring the warriors good luck. The *he man eh* was treated well as his spiritual powers and unique skills were valued and desired by the war parties for a variety of reasons. See also *berdache (berdach)*.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*.
Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Healing

The specific parameters that represent healing are highly variant and culture specific. In traditional shamanic **cultures**, healing bears little relationship to the remission of physical symptoms. Healing means becoming whole or in harmony with the community, the planet, and one's personal circumstances. In a successful healing it is possible that

physical healing may or may not be observed or the patient may die.

Health, from the perspective of **shamans** and practitioners of complementary **medicine**, involves the physiological, psychological, and spiritual well-being of an individual. Health is a process; it is the continual experience of re-establishing and maintaining balance in and between all human systems. Healing, then, is the process of restoring and maintaining balance in the body, mind, and **soul** of the individual and the community .

Healing is more than controlling sickness; it provides meaning for the individual's experience of **illness**. Carl Hammerschlag, psychiatrist and MD, explains that when one cures a patient and helps him or her to become less vulnerable to the **disease** again, then the practitioner is doctoring well. However, if he or she succeeds in the above *and* helps the patient to understand his or her place in the universe, then the practitioner is a healer.

Some scholars present the idea that indigenous practitioners tend to treat illness and not focus on disease, while allopathic health care practitioners tend to treat disease and systematically ignore illness. Furthermore, they suggest that indigenous practitioners succeed in healing because they primarily treat acute diseases that are naturally remitting, chronic diseases that are non-life threatening, and disorders that arise from the somatization of minor psychological disorders and interpersonal problems.

This point of view, while accurate, does not account for the apparent removal of cancerous tumors and cysts by shamans. Nor does it explain their healing of a broad array of mental illness or the birthing of healthy babies to medically infertile couples. The physical and mental health problems of most of the world's populace were handled by traditional healers, the World Health Organization reported in 1977.

In traditional shamanic cultures **healing symbols**, **prayer**, and healing

rituals and participation sacraments are all used in healing. For the shaman, the act of creation brings the **spirit** into physical form. Therefore, an image or symbol is not merely a representation of the spirit but actually *is* the spirit. The healing **power** of that symbol is the same as the spirit because the symbol *is* the spirit.

Shamans use the fact that an individual's intrinsic spirituality and passive prayers are conducive to health to aid their healing. The research of psychiatrist Dave Larson, president of the National Institute for Healthcare Research, supports these ancient beliefs. Larson continues to say that faith is a crucial element of the **psyche** that should be taken into consideration in health care from the first visit to the physician.

Similarly, sacraments like the Catholic communion and the Native American **sweat lodge** offer healing. In ritual **dances**, like the Native American **Sun Dance**, the **dance** helps the dancers and their communities to heal. The dancers are presented with the opportunity to see the patterns of their lives in their dance and their dance-induced **visions**. While dancing, dancers can create new patterns and consciously choose to live by them. Participants in ritual dances and sweat lodge ceremonies report that they heal old wounds and learn how to live their lives in new ways.

By Western cultural parameters some **shamanic healing** seems improbable or medically worthless. The placebo effect is a term used to dismiss much of what is outside of one's own cultural parameters for healing. However, placebo treatment (an inert medicine or treatment given in place of the real thing) has been successful on 30 to 70 percent of all drug and surgical interventions. This means that the placebo treatment causes more than just an attitude change; it can cause biochemical changes, like decreases in tumor cell numbers, pain, nausea, and anxiety, as well as tissue repair.

Although the biochemistry of the body is not fully explored, it appears that placebos, imagery, hypnosis, and biofeedback all affect the immune system. Imagery, depending on the image, can depress or stimulate the immune system and the body's own inherent wisdom of how to heal. Therefore, the placebo effect cannot be dismissed or used to be dismissive.

The following is one of many possible ways to look at the inter-relationships between different healing disciplines, therapies, and fields. This spectrum of Holistic Healing Modalities was created by the editors of *Common Boundary Magazine* and presented as one way to organize modalities by the area of healing in which they are most effective. Just as there is a range of modalities, there is also a range of individual practitioners within a modality who, despite their specialized **training**, integrate other concepts of mind, body, and spirit into their practice.

Mind

Academic Study of Religion
Conventional Psychotherapy
Psychoanalysis and Counseling

Mind/Body

Holistic Bodywork
Somatic Therapies
Integrated Chiropractic
Process-oriented Psychology
Expressive and Creative Arts
Body-Centered Psychotherapy

Body

Massage Therapies
Physical Therapies
Western (Allopathic) Medicine

Body/Spirit

Holistic Nursing
Network Chiropractic
Subtle Energy Therapies

Spirit

Spiritual Disciplines
Sacraments

Spirit/Mind

Jungian Analysis
Pastoral Counseling
Theology
Transpersonal Disciplines
Body/Mind/Spirit

Oriental Medicine
Shamanic Counseling
Shamanic Healing

- Achterberg, J. "Healing Images and Symbols in Nonordinary States of Consciousness." *Revision* 16, no.4 (1994): 148–156.
- . "The Wounded Healer: Transformational Journeys in Modern Medicine." In G. Doore (ed.). *Shaman's Path: Healing, Personal Growth and Empowerment*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.
- . *Imagery in Healing: Shamanism and Modern Medicine*. Boston: New Science Library/Shambhala, 1985.
- Hammerschlag, Carl A. *The Dancing Healers: A Doctor's Journey of Healing with Native Americans*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1989.
- Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.
- Mahler, H. "The Staff of Aesculapius." *World Health* (November 1977): 2–3.

Healing Symbol

In traditional shamanic cultures an image or symbol is not merely a representation of the **spirit**; it *is* the spirit. The healing **power** of the symbol *is* the **healing** power of the spirit. Symbols and images serve as bridges to **knowledge**, wisdom, and healing.

Contemporary research has shown that images and symbols do have a direct physiological effect on the body. Images communicate with and effect change on tissues, organs, and cells, both deliberately and unintentionally. Images or symbols can be used to effect healing in humans biologically, psychologically, and transpersonally.

On a biological level the image, or imagery function, appears to have an intimate association to the neurological and biochemical systems in the body. Direct neural connections have been identified that link areas of the brain that process images to other areas of the

brain involved in emotion and to areas of the body involved in immunity. These pathways allow the image to affect the emotions which affect the body or the image to affect the body which affects the emotions.

On a psychological level the symbol serves as a link between the known world, the primary process with which one is identified, and the unknown, that which is just outside of the reach of one's awareness. Symbols offer a **language** that bridges the gap between the mysterious, inner worlds of experience and the conscious expression of those experiences. This **symbolic language** allows an unfolding of ones' inner awareness which stabilizes sound mental health.

The use of symbols in healing is most often associated with the **transpersonal** or spiritual dimensions. The iconography, relics, **mandalas**, and sacraments of spiritual traditions all symbolize or represent what cannot be seen or known through the ordinary senses. The individual is allowed access to the **Great Mystery** through these **sacred** symbols. This reconnection to Source, perhaps the most profound state of well-being, is in and of itself healing.

- Achterberg, J. "Healing Images and Symbols in Nonordinary States of Consciousness." *Revision* 16, no.4 (1994): 148–156.
- . "The Wounded Healer: Transformational Journeys in Modern Medicine." In G. Doore (ed.). *Shaman's Path: Healing, Personal Growth and Empowerment*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.
- . *Imagery in Healing: Shamanism and Modern Medicine*. Boston: New Science Library/Shambhala, 1985.

Heartbeat of the Earth

Drumming is referred to as the heartbeat of the earth by many Native Americans. The electromagnetic resonance

frequency of the **earth** has been measured at 7.5 Hz. It appears that drumming allows **shamans** to align their **brain waves** with the pulse of the earth as they enter **trance** states.

Ingerman, Sondra. *Soul Retrieval: Mending the Fragmented Self Through Shamanic Practice*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991.

Helping Spirits

Helping spirits is a general term used to distinguish the spirits (energies of the invisible world) that the **shaman** works with from the spirits that are causing the problems the shaman has been called on to fix. All helping spirits provide protection and specific **powers** or skills that the shaman uses in his or her work. Helping spirits may serve different functions with different shamans.

The shaman enters an **altered state of consciousness** to engage the help of the spirits. Shamans utilize the **journey** state to go into the invisible world and work with the helping spirits there or the **embodiment** state wherein the shaman invites the helping spirits into his or her body to help with the shaman's work here in the physical world. The determination of which trance state is used depends on what the shaman intends to do, the **spirit** help they need doing it, and, to some extent, cultural expectations.

The shaman experiences the helping spirits in a variety of forms. **Ancestor** spirits, **animal spirits**, and cultural deities are common helping spirits. **Nature spirits** are also common; they include spirits of the land itself, spirits of particular land formations, like mountains or valleys, bodies of **water**, rocks, **weather**, and any other manifestation of nature imaginable. **Plant spirits** are helping spirits who serve the additional function of teaching the shaman to work with the medicinal properties found in the plant kingdom.

Shamans also work with the spirits of the **sky** and the **earth** as beings, as

well as the spirits of the **elements**, including earth, **air**, **fire**, and water, and **metal** and wood in some Asian cultures. The four directions, **east**, **south**, **west**, and **north**, are also called on as helping spirits in many cultures.

Animal spirits are the spirit of the whole species. For example, many shamans work with Bear spirit, there are not many bear spirits working with different shamans. Animal spirits are also called **power animals** and can be further categorized by the function they play in the shaman's work. There are power animals who help the shaman generally in the **healing** work, **totem spirits** who are inherited through the family line by all members of the family, and **tutelary spirits** who represent the shaman's identity in the spirit world and serve as the main coordinating helping spirit for shamans who have many helping spirits.

The helping spirits actively seek to share their wisdom, power, and secrets with shamans. For reasons that are not necessarily clear, the relationship is interdependent. It is as if it is necessary for the survival of both humans and spirits that both parties communicate and help each other. The shaman recognizes the importance of this **interdependence** between spirits and humans and mediates the communication and the movement of **energy** between these two worlds.

Gaining access to the special qualities of the helping spirits is just one facet of the extraordinary relationship between the shaman and their helping spirits. Helping spirits are also **teachers**; they train the shaman personally, provoking the growth and development of the shaman, and technically, teaching the shaman ways to work with the energies of the invisible world and the way they impact humans.

As the shaman continues to identify with and learn from the helping spirits, he or she develops an ever increasing awareness of the physical world and its relationship to the invisible world. Ultimately the breadth and depth of this

vision allows the shaman to experience the interconnectedness of all things through their relationship with the helping spirits.

The shaman is in a working relationship with the helping spirits. Helping spirits do not belong to the shaman nor are they controlled by the shaman in any contemporary sense of the word “control.” The shaman has learned to surrender to the wisdom of the helping spirits and they in turn allow the shaman to focus their help to create desired human results.

A shaman or initiate may lose connection with their helping spirits and thus lose the power to help others. The link with a helping spirit may be broken for a variety of reasons: the shaman refuses to do what the helping spirit asks, the shaman dishonors his or her relationship with the helping spirits, the shaman directs the power of the helping spirits to malevolent ends, he or she has a crisis of faith, he or she has a conflict of faith as often occurs when missionaries convert native peoples, or an unexplained or accidental event may sever the link. Sometimes helping spirits simply leave when their teachings are complete.

How the relationship with a helping spirit is re-established and whether or not it can be, depends on why it was broken originally. The reconnection may be accomplished through a personal **ritual** or it may demand the focus of a full, community ritual. The willingness of the shaman to change or **sacrifice** is often the determining factor in whether or not the relationship can be reestablished.

Traditionally, helping spirits come to a person spontaneously in dreams or waking visions. This spontaneous event is referred to as “**the call**”; it marks the awakening of the individual’s awareness that the life of the shaman is their calling. Helping spirits are also sought out by novices in solitary practices, such as **vision quests**, or long journeys assisted by initiated shamans. Experienced shamans may stalk a help-

ing spirit whose particular powers or skills are desired by that shaman. Whether the helping spirit appears spontaneously, responds to the prayers of a vision quest, or is successfully stalked, it is still up to the shaman to cultivate a working relationship with the helping spirit to be able to access the spirit’s power.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Matthews, John. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Dorset, England, Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Henbane

Henbane, *Hyoscyamus niger*, is one of the **hexing herbs** used in witches’ brews and ointments in Europe in the Middle Ages. Henbane is an annual or biennial, strong-smelling herb growing in parts of Europe, North Africa, and southwest and central Asia. The leafy plant has yellow to green-yellow flowers veined in purple that grow to be about one-and-a-half-inches. There are several kinds of henbane and psychoactive properties are found in all parts of the plant. The black variety is the most potent and is believed to cause insanity.

Use

Henbane can induce an altered state of complete oblivion, which made it a particularly effective painkiller in medieval Europe. The hallucinogenic properties of henbane are mentioned in the ancient Egyptian Ebers Papyrus in 1500 B.C.E. In Greece it was used to mimic insanity and induce prophetic visions. It has also been suggested that the priestesses of Delphi spoke their prophetic **divinations** while intoxicated by the smoke of burning henbane seeds. Henbane is best known as a main ingredient in the potions of medieval European witches, whose herbal brews were used for their hallucinogenic properties and other effects characteristic of their intoxication. Initiates into

the practice of witchcraft were given a drink of henbane to enable them to engage more easily in the sabbat rituals. Henbane potions were added to other liquids to drink or to ointments for absorption through the skin.

Preparation

Hallucinogenic mixtures of the hexing herbs were prepared as potions to drink or ointments to be applied to parts of the body where the blood vessels are naturally close to the skin.

Active Principle

The active principles of henbane are tropane alkaloids, particularly atropine, hyoscyamine, and scopolamine. Scopolamine is the primary hallucinogenic agent.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

Henbane intoxication begins with a feeling of pressure in the head and the sensation of someone closing the eyelids by force. Vision becomes unclear, unusual visual hallucinations occur, and objects appear distorted in shape. Hallucinations of taste and smell frequently occur. The intoxication ends in sleep that is filled with **dreams** and hallucinations. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **plant hallucinogens**.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Hesi

A widespread **medicine society** among the Maidu and **Wintun** of the **California region of North America**; also known as Spirit Impersonation society. Members of the hesi embodied **spirits** in their **ceremonies** for **healing** and other functions. See also **medicine**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Hexing Herbs

“Hexing herbs” refers to **mandrake**, **Deadly Nightshade**, and **henbane**, all of *Solanaceae*, the Nightshade family. They are the primary psychoactive plants used in the hallucinogenic brews created by European practitioners of witchcraft during the Middle Ages. These plants were cultivated in the gardens of practitioners with other plants which, either for their psychoactive properties or their bizarre shapes, were used in the preparation of potions and remedies.

Use

Practitioners of witchcraft believe that they have supernatural powers of sufficient strength to influence, benevolently or malevolently, the course of human affairs. Psychoactive and poisonous plants were used to induce **trance** states in which the “witch” could exercise his or her supernatural powers. Hallucinogenic potions enabled witches to divine information, to hex others through communication with the supernatural world, and to transport themselves to distant places where they practiced their craft.

Preparation

Hallucinogenic mixtures of the hexing herbs were prepared as potions to drink or ointments to be applied to parts of the body where the blood vessels are naturally close to the skin.

Active Principle

Mandrake, Deadly Nightshade, and Henbane all contain high concentrations of tropane alkaloids, primarily atropine, hyoscyamine and scopolamine, which is believed to produce the hallucinogenic effects. The differences in the psychoactivity of these plants results from the relative concentrations of the active constituents. Mandrake is highest in scopolamine, Henbane the next, while Deadly Nightshade contains very little.

Application

Potions were drunk or treated as ointments and rubbed into areas of the skin

where the blood vessels are naturally close to the surface, like the pit of the underarm, the high back of the thigh, the labia, and the walls of the vagina. This gives rise, in part, to the association of the witches and broomsticks. Reports from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries describe witches applying the hallucinogenic ointment to the staff of the broom, placing the broomstick between the labia, and applying the ointment by “riding” the broomstick.

This association with the broomstick is also symbolic. A sensation of **levitation** is a characteristic of the **alternate state of consciousness** induced by the hexing herbs. The broomstick is symbolically the means by which the witch enters the alternate state, allowing her **soul** to fly in the supernatural realms.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

Similarities in the hallucinogenic effects of the hexing herbs are the result of their similar chemical constituents. Scopolamine induces an altered state that looks like sleep, but is actually a twilight state between waking consciousness and sleeping in which the hallucinations occur. The sensation of levitation, visual hallucinations, and **journeys** of the soul over great distances are all characteristic of this altered state.

Use in Western Medicine

Chemists have used atropine as a model for the synthesis of several hallucinogens. The effects of these synthetic substances differ from those induced by preparations of the plants. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **plant hallucinogens**.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Heyóka

The sacred clowns, or contraries, found in the Assiniboin, Dakota, **Lakota**, Plains-Cree, Plains-**Ojibwa**, and Ponca

tribes whose outrageous behavior during **ceremonies** brings laughter, lightens the serious mood, and a shift of perspective where needed. The *heyóka* do everything different or reversed, often acting and speaking backwards, for example washing in public with dirt, saying the opposite of what they mean, or building their **sweat lodge** with the opening to the **east**.

Heyóka are called to their role by *wakinyan*, the powerful Thunderbeings who appear in their **dreams** or **visions**. The *wakinyan* also take the forms of **water** symbols or lightning in the *heyóka's* dreams. Anyone who has these dreams is required to participate in ceremonies as a *heyóka*, doing everything contrary. The *heyóka* **dance** in ceremonies and in a special clown dance. When they dance they are costumed in a variety of ludicrous ways, clown-like, with a long-nosed **mask** made of hide or cloth.

The *heyóka* do not gain special **healing** powers from the Thunderbeings like the **shaman**, however they themselves may be healed by the *wakinyan* and their work as a sacred clown. Many prominent and powerful healers in these tribes were also *heyóka*. See also **costume**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Wissler, C. *The American Indian*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938.

Hikwsi

The Hopi concept of a spark of life found in every living thing. Hikwsi come from “the very heart of the Cosmos itself,” which is conceived of as a powerful but unknown thing. Thus, the Hopi Creator is a mystery or an *ane himu*, a powerful but unknown thing that is “very something.”

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Hmong

An ethnic minority living in southern and western **China**, particularly the Yunnan and Kweichow provinces. The Hmong are a mountain people who farm and are well known for a strong work ethic, independent spirit, and love of freedom. The Hmong, which means “free people,” have historically resisted outside authority, both religious and governmental, and have maintained their distinctive dress, oral traditions, and spiritual and shamanic practices. Culturally the Hmong value self-reliance, intimacy with nature, and integrity.

Hmong cosmology has a time-tested coherence and internal logic that is derived from the deeply held understanding that all reality is first derived from the spiritual reality. The Hmong share a highly developed spiritual system that has an intricate beauty and great depth of spirit.

Soul

The Hmong conceive of the human **soul** as a multiple soul having seven, nine, twelve, or thirty-two souls. Health is maintained when all of the soul aspects are in the body, living harmoniously, and cooperating interdependently. **Illness**, depression, and/or death result when one or more soul aspect isolates itself, becomes separated from the others (leaves the body), or the group disperses. A soul aspect may leave the body when it is frightened, stolen by a malevolent spirit or an act of **sorcery**, or it may leave of its own volition.

The multiple souls within the individual and the multiple individuals within the community must all maintain harmonious and interdependent relations with the community of **spirits** in Nature and the spirit world. The Hmong look to **Ancestor** spirits and the spirits of Nature, including **trees**, mountains, rivers, rocks, lightning, and the **animal spirits**.

Soul Calling

Hu Plig, or **soul calling**, is the major form of healing **ritual** practiced by

Hmong shamans. In the soul calling ritual the shaman summons the soul aspects that have left the body and directs them to return to the body, re-integrate with each other, and restore integrity to the life force of the body.

The health of the Hmong society is maintained similarly. For the community to be healthy the individuals that make up the community must live together in a way that is harmonious, cooperative, and interdependent. A society is sick when the people disperse and become alienated, highly individualistic, and competitive rather than cooperative in their interactions with each other.

The Hmong shaman is the *Txiv Neeb*, translated as “**master of the spirits**,” and the shaman’s **trance** is *ua neeb*. Some Hmong believe that their **shamanism** is derived from the shamanism of the Chinese, a belief supported by the fact that older *Txiv Neeb* call out to the spirits by Chinese names when they are in trance. The shamanism of the Hmong is dynamic, simultaneously an agent of cultural change and an expression of the core beliefs of the **culture**.

The Call and Initiation

The *Txiv Neeb* is summoned from a regular life by the spirits, usually the **helping spirits** of a deceased shaman that wish to work through the new candidate. **The call** is spontaneous and the initial result is usually a serious or chronic illness of mysterious origin that does not respond normally to treatment.

An initiated *Txiv Neeb* is called to diagnose the source of the illness which confirms that it is **soul loss**, but that it is the particular type of soul loss created when the spirits take the soul of a candidate into the spirit world to test it and teach it to be a **shaman**. The *Txiv Neeb* strikes a gong, used in ritual to strengthen the shaman while in trance. If the candidate’s body trembles, then he or she has been chosen by the spirits to become a shaman.

The candidate receives teaching in the spirit world, often experienced as

progressing level by level up a twelve-rung **ladder** in the **Upperworld**. The primary test is the candidate's death in the spirit world and rebirth from which the candidate's soul returns to his or her body and the illness passes. The candidate can now enter trance spontaneously, body trembling, however the trance state itself has not been mastered. For this the candidate must learn the sacred **chants** and **mantras** of **power** that will allow him/her to control the entry into and exit from trance.

The candidate will now select a master *Txiv Neeb* as a **teacher**. The period of instruction is two to three years during which the student is in residency or apprenticeship with the master *Txiv Neeb*. The candidate pays a fee for the **training** that is traditionally oral and participatory, much being taught through example and experience.

Foremost the candidate "learns to shake," meaning that she learns to master the trance states and the incorporation of his or her helping spirits. He or she learns the names and nature of the spirits, benevolent and malevolent, in the highly intricate cosmology of the Hmong, the sacred chants, and the basic procedures of **shamanic healing** rituals, which are quite complex and elaborate.

Healing Rituals

Every **healing** ritual begins with an **invocation** to Shee Yee, the **First Shaman** to heal the sick and protect the people from malevolent spirits. The origins of all illness and death arose from the failings of the first man and woman. The first man was self-centered and selfish; he forgot his interdependent relationship with all the beings around him and chose only for himself. As a result of this behavior his egg hatched the spirits of **disease** and evil into the realm of humankind. Humanity suffered greatly until Shee Yee arose to heal the sick and offer protection from the attacks of evil spirits.

All pain and illness are believed to be manifestations of some disharmony in

the natural order of the cosmos. Physical pain and body ailments are the result of a disharmony that has manifested locally. Illness, mental illness, and social imbalance are the result of a more diffuse manifestation of disharmony. The *Txiv Neeb* begins by performing the *au neeb saib*, a **divination** ritual that determines the true source of the problem in the spirit world and an initial remedy. If the remedy works and the patient feels some relief a second ritual is performed, the *au neeb khu*, for curing. If the patient does not feel better a second *Txiv Neeb* is called to perform a second *au neeb saib*.

The ritual procedure is consistent performance to performance, while the specifics of the cause of the illness and the cure vary in each performance. The procedure begins with the *Txiv Neeb* inducing trance and traveling up level by level through the twelve levels of the Upperworld. The *Txiv Neeb* discovers the cause of the illness embodied in the imagery discovered in the spirit world. The helping spirits are called on to affect a change there at the source of the problem in the spirit world. The lost souls are called back to the realm of the living and caught and brought back if necessary. The *Txiv Neeb* returns with the lost souls and the helping spirits are offered gratitude and sacrificial **offerings** for their help.

Rituals begin with a divination or **diagnosis** before the shaman enters trance. A lamp, lantern, candle, or torch is used in the beginning and again at the end of the ritual to divine the success of the healing.

Rhythmic chanting accompanied by bells similar to sleigh bells begins and the *Txiv Neeb* enters trance. The shaman wears a black veil covering the eyes to better "see" with spirit eyes while communicating with spirits. While in trance the shaman rings bells with both hands and chants continuously. The shaman also narrates the adventure, beginning with the arrival of the helping spirits and the climb into the Upperworld.

At different stages of the ritual and of the *Txiv Neeb's* trance, different helping spirits are called in to assist. The first stage of trance is used to locate the source of the disharmony in the spirit world. While in trance the shaman is either sitting on the bench before her **altar** or leaping up on the bench while her soul is in flight in the spirit world. Assistants make certain that the shaman doesn't fall from the bench while in trance.

Behind the shaman's bench the animal to be sacrificed is placed in a box, usually a chicken or a pig. Assistants cut the throat of the animal and collect its **blood** as an offering to the spirits. Traditionally pigs are used more often than chickens because they are considered a better **sacrifice**. However, Hmong, particularly those no longer living in Asia, will adapt to what can be obtained at reasonable effort and expense.

After the sacrifice(s) the shaman's chanting becomes louder and her bell ringing more energetic. She enters a deeper trance, often assisted by gong playing and chanting of an assistant. At this point in the ritual the shaman works with the spirits to facilitate the healing. For example, in the case of soul loss, the shaman secures the lost soul at this climactic point in the ritual and negotiates a deal to bring the soul back to the patient.

In a typical healing ritual the shaman remains in trance for two or more hours. The shaman exits trance when the work in the spirit world is complete and continues with the healing in the physical world. The sacrificed animals, now cooked and prepared by assistants, are set in the entryway as an offering to the spirits. Then the shaman casts the buffalo horns on the floor three times and interprets the resulting patterns to divine the success of the negotiations. This divination technique is repeated until the shaman is clear that her negotiations have been successful.

There are some ailments that have obvious natural causes and are treated

using non-spiritual methods. Massage and herbal remedies are prescribed traditionally. Today a *Txiv Neeb* may also suggest a western drug, therapy, or a visit to a western physician.

Paraphernalia

The **costume** of the Hmong does not embody power for the *Txiv Neeb* as it does for Siberian shaman. The single essential element of the costume is the veil to cover the face while the shaman is in trance.

Bells are used to summon the spirits. Some sound like sleigh bells and others are made of many **metal** cymbals on a metal hoop. Gongs are played to give the shaman strength while journeying in the spirit world and deepen the trance state. Buffalo horns are used for divination. Spirit paper is used for protection on the altar and is burned as an offering during the rituals. The house spirits are feed regularly with eggs, cups of water, and roasted rice placed on the altar. See also **apprentice; multiple soul belief; nature spirits; Siberia; soul retrieval**.

Conquergood, D., and P. Thao. *I Am a Shaman*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1989.

Zbiral, J. "Buffalo Horns and Shaking Bells: My Friendship with a Hmong Shaman." *Shaman's Drum* 22 (Winter 1990-91): 16-23.

Hmuga

This is a sorcerer from the Plains region; also *kingydnngpi*, *hmunnga* (Lakota). *Hmuga* is derived from *hmu* or *hmun*, meaning the humming sound made by wings of a large **bird** as it flies near one's head. These sorcerers were believed to be able to shapeshift into owls and other bird forms. In these forms they could fly to graves and steal parts of the dead for making malignant magics or enter places a human couldn't to work their magic on others. **Shamans** or **witch doctors** were needed to cure the **illness** caused by a *hmuga*. See also **Lakota; shapeshifting; sorcery**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Holon

A holon is an entity that is itself a whole and simultaneously a part of some other whole. The term, created by Arthur Koestler, is necessary to discuss the nature of reality. The things and processes that make up the reality we actually experience in this universe are not simply wholes (the wholist view) or parts (the atomist view). All the parts are actually parts of something else, parts of another whole. All wholes are made up of parts. Our reality is made up of whole/parts, or holons.

Everything in our experience is derived of and made up from the same thing. The chair you are sitting in, your body that is sitting, the ideas you are having as you read this, and the emotions you are feeling now are all made up of the same thing. Classical science calls that “thing” subatomic particles. However, this is misleading because contemporary science tells us that those particles are really only the probability that **energy** will be in one place more than in another.

The “thing” of which our experience is made is a whole/part, a holon. Subatomic particles are holons, cells are holons, ideas, symbols, concepts, and images are holons. Our experience and the world we have it in are not so much composed of atoms or ideas as they are composed of holons.

Looking at smaller and smaller holons we find the infinity of probability waves. Looking at larger and larger holons we also arrive at infinity in the way that this moment’s whole becomes a part of the next moment’s whole. In this way the **Kosmos** unendingly expresses itself through **evolution**.

This order of increasing wholeness is a natural outflowing of the evolving nature of the Kosmos. All of the essentials of lower level holons are in higher

level holons, but all that are in higher level holons are not in the lower. For example, the body contains cells, but cells do not contain bodies. This principle establishes holarchy.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

Hopi Prophecy

The Hopi Prophecy was given to the Hopi for the world by Maasau, God of the earth, thousands of years before Christ. So strong is the Hopi belief that the teachings of the Prophecy can lead people out of the **chaos** and confusion of contemporary life and into a state of balance and harmony that Hopi elders have shared the Prophecy with the members of the United Nations. The Hopi Prophecy parallels that of the **Q’ero**, handed down from the **Inka**, and the prophecies of the **Maya**. Portions of the Hopi Prophecy, as interpreted by Grandfather David Monongye of the Hopi Nation, follow:

The Hopi Prophecy consists of descriptions of over 150 specific future events and corresponding teachings and instructions. This Prophecy, or Hopi Life Plan, is an instruction manual for living peacefully in the **Fourth World**, which we are in today. The Hopi Sinom, People of the Peaceful Path, are the keepers of this plan.

As the Hopi see time on **earth**, humanity has already experienced three worlds, or evolutionary cycles. We are now living through the last days of the Fourth World. The Hopi hope to use the Prophecy to guide the One-Hearted people of all nations into the promised Fifth World.

The Hopi Prophecy is based on profound life principles represented by important symbols etched on rocks located in Hopiland. Also etched there on Prophecy Rock is the path of humanity in symbolic form. The two parallel lines depict the two life paths being walked today: One line represents the

path of the One-Hearted people, those who live daily in a True State of Love for all things, resulting in *Koyaanistasi*. The other line is the path of the Two-Hearted people, those who live in ways that willfully deviate from natural laws, resulting in *Koyaanisquatsi*, a chaotic, severely imbalanced way of life.

There are three **circles** etched along the One-Hearted Path, representing three Great Shakings, or world events that establish moral cornerstones for humanity. The first two Great Shakings have come to pass, the rise of Adolf Hitler and the massive postwar cultural exchange between the Eastern and Western hemispheres. The Two-Hearted Path is not marked by these moral cornerstones, instead it simply ends at the Time of Purification.

Just before the end, a line links the path of the Two-Hearted people with the path of the One-Hearted, the True Path. This vertical line is interpreted as a crucial time in the Fourth World. The Prophecy associated with this line predicts that the Two-Hearteds will devise a horrible weapon of great power and will use it in an attempt to force every nation into submission under the will of One. This event is the beginning of the Time of Purification.

The Prophecy states that “a gourd of **ashes**, when cast upon the earth, would boil the very ground, and burn everything for a great distance. Nothing would grow there for a long time. The ash would be poisonous, and when breathed or ingested, would bring sickness, suffering, and death.”

The Hopi interpret this crucial time as the creation and use of the atomic bomb. The Prophecy indicates that the shock and threat created by the aftermath of the use of this weapon of destruction would cause people to realize that the Two-Hearted Path inevitably leads to self-annihilation and inspire them to seek the True Path. This is why the vertical line that connects the two paths is also called “the Return Path.”

As humanity continues along the True Path there comes a third Great

Shaking, which has two parts playing out at the end of the twentieth century. The symbol of this Third Great Shaking is a red hat and cloak. Many Hopi elders believe that the first part of this world event culminated in the prophetic meeting between the Tibetans, the Red Hat People, and the Hopi in 1980. The second part of this Great Shaking, which will be a Final Purification, is not yet complete.

As the Prophecy is interpreted there will be only a short time for humanity to adopt the teachings of the True Path. In that short time humanity must act to correct the many ways of life that are out of balance, resulting in the unnecessary destruction of other people, nature, and the earth. If humanity changes in time and learns to live in a way that honors all things, the resolution of the great polarity will be accomplished. The second half of the Great Shaking, which would result in a Final Purification, might not be necessary.

The Hopi Prophecy explains that if humanity remains too far out of balance, this evolutionary cycle will end. The earth will begin anew in a Fifth World with those things that are able to honor all things, like nature and its ecosystems. However, humans who cannot live in the True State of Love will not proceed into the Fifth World. The purpose of the Prophecy is to alert us to our need to change and to instruct us in how to return to the True State of Love before time runs out on the Fourth World. See also **Hopi symbols; Maya prophecy; purification.**

Kimmey, J. *Light on the Return Path*. Eugene, OR: Sacred Media, 1999.

Hopi Symbols

These Hopi symbols are found in shamanic **cultures** around the world. They are the part of the **Hopi Prophecy** that provides instruction for humanity’s way back to living in *Koyaanistasi*, perfect balance and harmony with all things. These symbols represent the

principles by which humanity can live in peace and harmony with itself and the earth.

Navoti—The Thundercloud

Navoti, depicted as a thundercloud, lightning, and rain, is one of the most profound Hopi symbols. Navoti literally translated means “the entire Universe in perfect harmony and balance.” This describes humanity’s original condition at the time of Creation and the Hopi way of life. Navoti counsels one that harmony must be found both within and without. In practice, Navoti is realized in one’s life by engaging in appropriate **ceremony** and **ritual**.

Tuanasavi—The Cycle

Tuanasavi, depicted as an equilateral cross dividing a **circle** into four equal parts, represents the cycles of change inherent in nature. Like the Medicine Wheel of many indigenous peoples, Tuanasavi teaches that there are four distinct phases in every cycle. It also teaches ways of harmonizing with the change in one’s life.

In practice, Tuanasavi counsels that to follow the True Path of Love one must commune personally with Spirit through **prayer** and ceremony. The purpose of communing with Spirit is twofold: to solicit guidance and to join with Spirit in celebration. The more purposeful the ceremony, the deeper and more instructive the guidance becomes. Prayer and ceremony is a personal responsibility that one cannot put off on another. The realization of all spiritual leadership is in the willingness of the individual to act on the guidance received.

The Spiral

For the Hopi the **spiral** has meaning on many, many levels. The spiral is the **trance** of life on one level and on another it is the eternal path from one dimension, or reality, to another. The spiral connects all things: **time**, **space**, matter, **spirit**, and all states of consciousness. In practice the spiral counsels one to start at the beginning, asking spirit for

permission and guidance, and then go, never giving up. Each human must walk the path they are guided to walk by spirit, never looking for shortcuts, and all effort and patience will bear fruit.

Nakwach—Loving Unity

Nakwach is depicted as two concave lines, standing together, curves nested. Nakwach describes our behavior as members of a great whole. In practice Nakwach counsels cooperation, friendship, caring, compassion, and love.

The Warrior

The Warrior is depicted as two straight lines standing together, without aggression. The Warrior describes the aspects of our behavior as members of a great whole that balance those counseled by Nakwach. In practice the Warrior is prepared to give 100 percent of himself to the protection of that community. The warrior is one who excels for the benefit of his or her people and who exceeds his or her own expectations. See also **shamanic symbols**.

Kimmey, J. *Light on the Return Path*. Eugene, OR: Sacred Media, 1999.

Houngan

The *houngan* (male) and the *mambo* (female) function as the “**shamans**” and **priest**/priestess within the **Vodoun** tradition. The *houngan’s* role is to intercede in the realm of the *loa*, or **spirits**, on the behalf of the living. The contemporary techniques, **rituals**, and **ceremonies** of Vodoun are the accumulated **knowledge** of the Haitian and West African people cultivated through trial and error in their application over centuries.

The *houngan* works with the *loa*, who are the major forces of the Universe expressed in anthropomorphic characteristics as they are seen by the Vodoun culture. In the Vodoun **religion** to “be mounted” and become “the horse” for the *loa* is an honor. This type of **embodiment** trance, or intentional **possession** by the *loa*, allows the *houngan* and

initiates to connect with the spirit realm and experience that state in which everyone and everything are connected.

A full, transcendent possession by the *loa* in which the person allows the most intimate surrender of himself or herself to the *loa* can leave “the mount” with new capabilities, like increased conscious awareness. The *houngan* must cultivate **trance** state abilities well beyond this full, transcendent possession. The *houngan* must learn to enter and exit the trance as needed and without ritual, and to hold a clear and strong intention for the merging. Without the intent, the trances state cannot be used for **divination**, **diagnosis**, or **healing** of the patient.

The “ultimate stage of possession” is achieved only after years of practice at an advanced level of mastery. In this state there is a access to spirit information in a trance state so subtle that only a person who knows the *houngan* personally can detect the minute voice and behavior changes and increased sweating. In this possessed state the *houngan* is lifted to a place where the knowledge of the *loa* is accessible and the *houngan* can move between this state and **ordinary reality** to answer his patient’s questions.

Patients come to the *houngan* for both the source of and the cure for a wide variety of physical ailments, existential anxiety, conflicts with people of different cultures, predictions of the future, and a desire to change the power loss that generates bad luck.

In a private session with the *houngan*, the **altar** is a focal point of **energy** in the **sacred space** for all kinds of healing work. The altar is populated with an eclectic mix of images, including the Christian cross, and bottles of alcohol, placed there as **offerings** to the *loa*.

The **drum** plays an important role in inducing the possession trance in Vodoun rituals, however it is not always used by the *houngan* in private sessions. The *houngan* can work in direct contact or at a distance with the patient.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Huaca

Huaca is a **sacred space** or object in the **Quechua** language. *Huaca* is used to refer to the stones, plants, and other **power objects** used by the **shamans** in their **ceremonies** and healing **rituals**. *Huacas* often come from sacred places, like a mountain or a lake. Many *huacas* are found by the shaman first in a **dream**. Then in acting out the dream, the shaman finds the *huaca* in **ordinary reality** just as he or she saw it in the **dreamtime**. See also **healing** and **language**.

Huichol

The Huichol are an indigenous people of Central America who have settled in the mountains of the Sierra Madre Occidental of north-central Mexico. Today there are approximately 9,000 Huichol. Their traditional way of life remains remarkably unchanged given the history of such forceful outside influences as the **Aztecs**, Spanish conquistadors, Catholic missionaries, and the western industrial complex.

Cosmology

Long, long ago a serpent, the Spirit of Rain, gave life to the Huichol gods and goddesses in the **Lowerworld**. One of these gods, *Kauyumari*, Our Elder Brother Deer, found the **neirika**, the portal that connects all worlds. The gods and goddesses traveled through the **neirika** and came to Our Mother Earth in the **Middleworld**. Thus, it is through the **neirika** that all life came into being on earth. The **neirika** is that which connects and unifies the spirit of all things and all worlds.

Kauyumari sang sacred **words** and **chants** as he wandered. They traveled along threads of **energy**, filling **prayer** bowls and sacred gourds and transforming into life energy. This life energy could be seen on the **earth** in little, white

blossoms. *Kauyumari* continued to **sing** his **sacred** words and chants. Up in the **sky** Our Mother Eagle and *Tatewarí*, the spirit of fire, heard *Kauyumari's* sacred song. Inspired by the song they allowed their sacred powers to weave themselves together into the **medicine** basket, binding Mother Eagle and *Tatewarí* as shamanic allies.

Eventually *Tayaupá*, Our Father **sun** and the Spirit of Dawn, were found and their sacred energies were connected to that of the others in *Wirikuta*, the home of these **Ancestors** and the Sacred Land of Peyote. The *neirika* is in *Wirikuta* as is *Kauyumari*, his temple, and his human manifestation. First Man, who invented cultivation, is also here with the Ancestors in *Wirikuta*.

Our Mother the sea is also in *Wirikuta* where she receives the sacred **songs** of *Kauyumari* into her prayer gourd. Our Mother the sea feeds all life on earth from her prayer gourd. She gives **water** to the Huichol, the animals, and plants, especially the corn, the Huichol staff of life. Blue Deer who enlivens all sacred **offering** gives a drop of **blood** to the corn to give it life.

It is to this magical place, *Wirikuta*, that *Tatewarí*, the **First Shaman**, led the original expedition to collect **peyote**. This same **journey** is repeated annually by the Huichol in the **peyote hunt**. It is an arduous, sacred pilgrimage to the home of the Ancestors and a return to the beginning before Creation when all was Oneness.

The Mara'akame

The *mara'akame* leads the peyote hunt. He or she is the only significant spiritual specialist in the Huichol culture. The *mara'akame* is the shaman, **priest**, and leader, whose central role is to maintain the integrity of the Huichol society. The *mara'akame* performs **healing** rituals and leads community ceremonies. Like the other Huichol, the *mara'akame* is also a maize farmer.

The Tracks of the Little Deer

The sacred relationship of the deer, maize, peyote, and the Huichol is

ancient. It dates back to the time when the plants, animals, and people were one and did not live the separate existences they live today. The deer is the totem animal of the people and peyote is considered "The Tracks of the Little Deer." Peyote is also related in Huichol ideology to maize, the sacred staff of life.

Peyote is the link that allows the Huichol to be again in that time of Oneness and reconnect with the plants, animals, Ancestors, and gods and goddesses of the Beginning. When they eat peyote and **dance** in **ritual** together, they are united with each other and they experience their Oneness with all things. This is the "One Heart" that the *mara'akame* speak of. This experience is the reason the Huichol did not stop their peyote practices or lose their culture, even in the face of great persecution.

Peyote

The Huichol do not believe in the **myths**, rituals, and religious system of their culture. They experience them. They interact with all that these things contain, experiencing them as reality and truth through the entheogenic power of the sacred peyote cactus.

Peyote is a gift from the gods that enables the Huichol to tap into other dimensions, other ways of seeing, feeling, hearing, and sensing the world around them. Peyote is a **teacher** and it is eaten to learn. The Huichol believe that those with strong hearts will receive messages from the gods through peyote.

Huichol children are introduced to peyote while in the **womb** and then through their mother's milk. Eventually they eat the sacred cactus as their elders do. To experience the presence of god in one life from the time of the womb definitely affects how Huichol children see the world and how they learn to interpret supernatural phenomena.

Children are active participants in the peyote hunt, sacred rituals, and community dance ceremonies. The *Tatéi Neixa* **ceremony**, which celebrates

the first maize and green squash, is held especially for children five and under. During *Tatéi Neixa* the *mara'akame* takes the children to *Wirikuta* through song. As the children listen they are transformed into hummingbirds, eagles, and **birds** that fly to *Wirikuta*.

Community Ritual

In the Huichol maize planting ceremony, the dancing is central to the ceremony and continues over several days and nights. Under the influence of peyote, celebrants dance, chant, and offer prayers to the gods and goddesses who will ensure the health of the new crop. When the Huichol dance and pray with peyote they do so for the good of all peoples, not just the Huichol.

The *Hikuri Neixa*, or Peyote Dance, lasts two days and nights. Five, the sacred number of the four directions and the center, is fundamental to the structure of this ceremony. Participants dance five times around the temple compound. Five spots are demarcated with pine **trees** to indicate the cardinal directions and the sacred center. At each location, the participants drink cupfuls of the liquefied peyote and offer the same to their companions. In all they will drink the sacred peyote five sacred times.

Interpreting Visions

The Huichol consider the phosphene patterns characteristic of **visions** induced by plant **entheogens** to be a form of communication from the gods. Though anyone who ingests peyote may receive such visions, the *mara'akame* is more experienced in interpreting these visions than others. On the peyote hunt pilgrims share their visions with the *mara'akame* both to be certain that they fully understand the messages they have received and to share their part of the collective vision with the Whole.

Peyote-induced phosphene images are constant, they appear for anyone who ingests peyote. They are geometric, repeating patterns of color and many

take the form of pulsating **mandalas**. Huichols have given these images meaning and they have integrated the designs into their art, clothing, and **power objects**. For example, the *neirika* is seen in the first moving, brightly colored geometric image that appears.

Art and Preventative Medicine

The Huichol women understand the power as a form of healing that comes from recording the images of their peyote visions in their weaving and embroidery designs. Failure to do so would be a failure to share divine communications. The personal interpretation and content are traditionally kept private, however the images and patterns are to be seen by all. Serious hardships or **illness** are sent by the gods when individuals fail to share their visions with their family and community.

The Huichol *berdache* are also recognized for their weaving and embroidery. They perform a traditional role in the springtime rituals. The Huichol do not share **Mestizo** values and therefore consider gender variance one of the many expressions of an individual's true nature.

Plant Hallucinogens

The peyote cactus, *Lophophora*, is found in two distinct species, *williamsii* and *diffusa*. The Huichol use both species, calling them *Hikuri*. Peyote is found in scattered locations of dry, calcareous soil in the stony desert regions of Mexico.

The Huichol value peyote above the other plant entheogens available to them, such as **psilocybe mushrooms**, **Morning Glory**, *Datura*, and others. The Huichol say that eating peyote "will give one heart" and greatly increase one's *kupuri*, or life-force energy.

The Huichol do not conceive of the peyote as a god in and of itself. *Tatewari*, the first *mara'akame*, is also known as *Hikuri*, the Peyote-god. *Tatei Hikuri*, or Our Great-Grandmother Peyote, is the delicate, feminine, and mystical aspect of peyote represented in Huichol art.

Tagetes lucida, a perennial herb with small yellow flowers and rich in essential oils, is also used by the Huichol to induce visions. *Tagetes* is smoked for its hallucinatory effects, usually in a mixture with **tobacco** (*Nicotiana rustica*) and occasionally alone. The Huichol frequently drink *Tesguino*, fermented maize, or *Cai* as they smoke *Tagetes* “to produce clearer visions.” See also **berdache (berdach)**; **gender variant**; **plant hallucinogens**.

Myerhoff, B. G. *Peyote Hunt: The Sacred Journey of the Huichol Indians*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974.

Schaefer, S. B., and P. T. Furst, eds. *People of the Peyote: Huichol Indian History, Religion and Survival*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

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Humility

Shamanic ritual is a spirit-based activity performed by humans. Shamanic **ritual** cannot occur without the intervention of **spirit**. Therefore everyone participating in the ritual and its preparation must do so with humility. In humility humans invoke pity and help without becoming pitiful. This lays the foundation for the **interdependence** and interaction between humans and spirits that is characteristic of shamanic ritual.

Somé, M. P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Hunting Magic

Hunting magic was one of the traditional roles of the **shaman**. In hunting societies it may have been a primary role,

since the shaman's role is defined by the needs of the community and the success of the hunt was essential for survival. In areas like the Arctic where little else grows, hunting is the major source of food and all means, both physical and magical, were employed to assure its success.

Hunting magic is a general term for the shaman's **journeys** into the spirit world for the purpose of locating game and the permission to hunt it. In many cultures the focus of this type of journey is a negotiation with the **spirits** of the animals or a being who serves as the Keeper of the Beasts. This Keeper, or Spirit, of the Beasts determines the appropriate exchange in human **sacrifice** for the sacrifice of the animals. Traditional sacrifices were, for example, leaving **offerings**, living by a strict moral code, performing ceremonies to honor the departing **animal spirits**, or, in some **South American** cultures, literally sacrificing human life.

Since all things have spirit, killing was considered sacrilege. However, killing was necessary for survival. This left the hunter vulnerable to the vengeance of the spirits of the animals he killed. It was the shaman's job to determine what was necessary for the hunter and the people to do to protect themselves from vengeance and/or famine. Performing the prescribed ritual offerings prior to the hunt allowed the hunter to find and kill the game successfully and hunt without injury.

The shaman's mediation in the spirit world clarifies what the humans must do to maintain the dynamic balance of mutual sacrifice with their physical environment, (e.g., not overhunting a species) and spiritual environment (e.g., not offending one whose help is needed). The oral traditions tell us that, without the ongoing negotiations of the shaman's hunting magic, the game grew scarce or the avenging spirits of the animals wreaked havoc on the humans, creating **illness** and accidents.

In these particular journeys into the spirit world the shaman presents the

human's needs to the Keeper of the Beasts or, depending on cultural beliefs, to the spirits of the animals themselves. The shaman asks what must be sacrificed in return for the sacrifice made by the animals. If the shaman was able to appease the Keeper of the Beasts and negotiate successfully, he or she was told what sacrifice was necessary, when, where, and how many animals to hunt, and how to honor their deaths.

The original Keeper of the Beasts was the Mistress, or Mother, of the Beasts. The Mother of the Beasts was found in the **Lowerworld** or at the bottom of the sea. For example, the Iglulik **Eskimo** shaman journeyed to the bottom of the sea to speak with Takánakapasáluk, the Great Mother of the Seals. The Mistress was later transformed into the **Master of the Beasts** now referred to in many cultures.

In many **North American** indigenous cultures **hunting medicine** could be obtained by hunters in general, as well as shamans. To gain hunting medicine the hunter undertook a **vision quest** for the purpose of acquiring **medicine**. If spirit responded to the quester he was given medicine and instructions in how to use and renew it. The medicine varied. For some it manifested as the ability to **shapeshift** into the animal to attract it close enough to strike. For others it was a mixture of things that made the hunter's aim true or the game visible. When used or worn by the individual as instructed by **spirit** the hunter was always successful. The continued potency of the medicine usually required the hunter to follow strict **taboos** as defined by spirit.

The simplest form of hunting magic is the shaman's ability to divine the location of game and the amount of game to be taken at this location. Consistent with the variation in **divination** techniques, each shaman has his or her own ritual for performing this hunting magic.

Shamanic peoples all over the globe know that Nature lives with a will of her

own and that she would continue to do so, cycle after cycle, with or without humans. These people understood that if they wanted Nature to conform to their needs—to sacrifice for them—that they must be prepared to sacrifice in return to keep the interrelationship of all things in balance. See also **renewal of life**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

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Hunting Medicine

Hunting medicine is the use of supernatural powers by the **shaman** or hunter to increase the success (quantity) or quality (fattest, largest, best pelt, etc.) of the hunt. Hunters obtained hunting medicine from the shaman or directly from the **spirits**. Hunting medicines created by the shaman or the spirits were considered more powerful than those found by the hunter.

Some **medicines** work directly on the game, making the animals, for example, stop within shooting range, unable to run, or more visible. Other medicines worked on the hunter or his weapons giving him special abilities like the ability to call the game to him, turn invisible to the animals, or simply shoot straight.

Hunting medicines had many different forms: objects, supernatural herbal blends, **prayers**, **songs**, specific acts and **incantations**, or supernatural skills, like **shapeshifting**. The simplest form of hunting medicine was a **charm** or **fetish**. The most complex forms of hunting medicine involved **training**, usually with a shaman, in supernatural skills, like controlling the movement of game or becoming an animal long enough to attract a real animal close enough to kill.

Hunting medicines were effective in large part due to the entire **ritual** process around hunting. Hunters began in the **sweat lodge** to purify spiritually,

empower their hunting medicines, and cleanse their bodies of human scent. There were rituals for approaching, killing, and butchering game, as well as **taboos** to follow for what parts to offer to the spirits, what parts to offer to which people, and what parts to use to make charms for future hunting medicine. Feasts were often held after successful hunts to honor the hunting medicine, the animals, and/or to feed the departing spirits of the animals for their long journeys home.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Huuku

These **shamans** of the Northern Maidu are the leaders of a secret **medicine society**. *Huuku* have numerous **helping spirits** from whom they receive their power and **charms**, *yo'mepa*, believed powerful enough to cause death. In the past the *huuku* gathered annually in a night-long **ceremony** to compete against each other in displays of **power**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.



Iban Dyak

A people of the northwestern region of Borneo. The Iban were first called Sea Dyaks in the literature; however, this term is misleading, as the Iban live miles from the coast. They are hill people, headhunters, and creators of textiles whose economy is based on the cultivation of dry rice.

Iban spiritual traditions and beliefs are passed on in a rich oral tradition. The primary spiritual functionaries are the *tuai burong* (diviner, especially relative to rice cultivation), the *tuai rumah* (headman of the longhouse), *lemambang* (the bard, important in saut rituals), and the *manang* (shaman). The *manang* is not a sorcerer in Iban society. *Empa ubat* (**sorcery**) and *tau tepang* (evil eye) are performed by others.

The beings of the Iban spirit world encountered by the *manang* are the *petara* (deities) who are believed to be benevolent and well disposed to humankind. The *orang Panggau* (mythical heroes) are believed to use their powers to help humankind selectively. The *antu* (spirits) are believed to be capable of benevolence or malevolence toward humankind.

The Soul

The *semengat* (**soul**) works together with the *tuboh* (body), creating a living person's vital totality. The *semengat* can move from the body in **dreams** and for the *manang*, during **trance** states. After death the *semengat* is believed to spend an indefinite amount of time in *Sebayan*, the **Land of the Dead**, and then be dispersed into a mist that is ultimately absorbed into the rice plants. Only the *initiated manang* is able to see

individual *semengat* and to control the movement of his or her own *semengat* to and from the body at will.

Ordinary Iban cannot control their *semengat* or the actions of their *semengat* in dreams. Dreams are controlled by the deities and are then considered messages and revelations. The Iban interpret dreams and look to dreams for guidance in life's pursuits. At daybreak, the Iban gather to share their dreams, interpret them, and determine what actions to take based on their **dreaming** guidance. In this way dreams bring innovation and change to the Iban life, offering new **rituals** and reinterpretation of the spirit world.

The Manang

The *manang* can be either a man or a woman or a **gender-variant male transformed shaman**, called *manang bali*. None of these types of *manang* possess a particular rank or special powers above the others, though an individual *manang* of any type can become quite powerful and renowned. All *manang* must be initiated by accepted *manang mansau* to be recognized as healers.

Each type of *manang* approaches the task of **healing** with a different perspective. They have many options in techniques and types of pelian (rituals) to choose from. The male *manang* have a greater tendency to provoke malevolent spirits into battle, while female *manang* tend to convince (or prevent) the same malevolent spirits from doing harm in the first place. The *manang bali* tend to see beyond gender-biased options and provide another innovative solution.

There are celestial *manang*, essentially the **spirits** of deceased *manang*, and terrestrial *manang*, or living shamans. The celestial *manang* are called upon to assist in the healing of the living in Iban rituals. They are also called upon to neutralize or erase inauspicious dreams or omens as a form of preventative **medicine**.

Inauspicious omens can also be neutralized through sacrificial **offerings**, the ritual use of *batu penabar*

burong (a stone **charm** with the specific **power** to neutralize omens), or through the ritual actions of the *orang tau makai burong* (a person who can eat omens) who is either a herbalist or *manang*. The *manang* is not the sole recourse in neutralizing or erasing inauspicious dreams or omens. When the *manang* is called on, he or she performs a *bedinding*, or shielding ritual, in which the *manang* rubs the dreamer's body with a charm that will render the dreamer invisible to the spirit who wishes to do him/her harm, thus protecting the dreamer.

The *manang* is often called upon to interpret dreams, particularly if they are suspected to be bad omens. A challenging dream could be a spirit trying to give the dreamer a warning or a wish, which would not be considered a bad omen. However, the spirit in the dream could have evil intentions. If so, the *manang* can then prescribe an appropriate course of action to neutralize the omen.

Healing

Illness is interpreted as the result of interference by harmful spirits or **soul loss**. When an Iban becomes ill, a series of progressively more powerful rituals are performed until the patient is healed or dies. In general the ritual progression begins with the *bedara* performed by the family, then the *pelian*, *saut*, and *nampok* performed by the *manang*.

In a *bedara* the family makes offerings to the deities and celestial *manangs* so that they will be reciprocated by making the family's medicinal charms potent for miraculously healing the sick. Offerings are usually a request for reciprocal assistance from helpful spirits. **Sacrifices** are the offering of a substitute life to satisfy malevolent spirits who will then leave the patient alone and allow the patient to heal.

If the *bedara* is unsuccessful, the *manang* is called on to perform a *pelian ceremony*. There are at least fourteen types of *pelian* rituals which vary in difficulty. They are always performed at night when the spirit world is active and in its daytime. To begin, the *manang*

performs a **divination** to diagnose the true cause of the illness, nature of the spirits involved, the condition of the patient's *semengat*, and its current location. Given this information the *manang* determines the appropriate remedy or type of *pelian* to be performed.

In each *pelian* the *manang* begins by invoking *Menjaya Raja Manang*, the highest celestial *manang*, and all the other celestial *manang* to assist in the healing, to make the charms potent and the healings miraculous. The *manang* proceeds with appropriate healing activities: retrieving lost souls, exorcising spirits, shielding the patient, etc. At the close of the *pelian* the *manang* may perform a divination to determine if the healing efforts have been successful. To this end the flower bud of the *areca* palm is read or the *pentik* (carved wooden figure) is stuck into the ground and its position is read in the morning.

If the *pelian* ritual proves insufficient to cure the patient, the family may hold a *gawai sakit*. In this ritual festival for the sick the *lemambang* call on the appropriate deities through their recitation of the *pengap* (**invocation** chant) while the *manang* perform the *saut* healing ritual.

In the *saut*, the *manang* tends to the health of the patient's **soul** by planting and fencing the *ayu* (a soul counterpart) and dispersing any of the harmful spirits. The *manang* initiates the death of the sick person and calls on *Selempandai*, the **blacksmith** forger of souls, to initiate the rebirth of a healthy new soul. The patient is reborn through the performance of the *saut* and given a new name.

If the *gawai sakit* fails to cure the patient, the patient is prepared for a practice called *nampok*. The patient is taken to a solitary place known to be inhabited by spirits and left there with offerings for these spirits. Through the offerings the *manang* surrenders to the will of the spirits, acknowledging that the illness is beyond human abilities to cure, and asks the spirits of the place to heal the patient. The patient waits

alone, preparing to receive either healing or death.

Paraphernalia

The most important piece of the *manang's* **paraphernalia** is the *lupong*, a basket or box in which the *manang* keeps **power objects**, charms with medicinal powers, and occasionally medicinal herbs. (The prescription of medicinal herbs being the **domain** of the medicine men and women, not the *manang*.) The *lupong* contains stones, glass, pieces of tusk, wood, root, and quartz crystals, used for divination and **diagnosis**.

Medicinal charms are not the sole domain of the *manang*. The location of charms is revealed by benevolent spirits to the Iban in dreams and is the possession of the dreamer who then goes out to find them. Ordinary Iban and *manang* keep and use charms regularly.

The one type of power object in the *lupong* that is specific to the practices of the *manang* is the quartz crystal, or *batu ilau*, "the stone of light." By looking into the "light stone" the *manang* is able to see into the spirit world and watch what the *semengat* and the *antu* (spirits) are doing. Using the **crystal**, the *manang* can see the location and state of health of the patient's *semengat*, the *ayu* and *bungai*, plant-like forms tended by celestial *manang* that are symbolic of the patient's soul, or the place and the reason *antu* may have harmed the patient by placing an **energy intrusion** into the patient's body.

The *engkerabun*, or "blinder," is a protective **talisman** kept in the *lupong*. The *engkerabun* is used to render the *manang* invisible to malevolent spirits. It functions in the reverse of the *batu ilau*, which renders the invisible world visible to the *manang*. Much of the *manang's* healing involves various applications of these two abilities together. On the one hand the *manang* makes the visible invisible to the spirit world that protects or shields humankind. On the other hand, the *manang* makes the invisible visible,

tracking, tending, and restoring health to the human spirit.

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Iboga

Iboga is a plant hallucinogen used by **Bwiti** followers in Gabon and parts of the Congo as a "guide to the **Ancestors**." *Iboga* is also the Ancestor **Spirit** to whom the people of all tribes are ultimately related. *Iboga* has the **power** to carry an individual to the **Land of the Dead**, which can be considered an honor or a curse. The spirit of *Iboga* and the hallucinogen are associated with death and movement between the worlds of the living and of the dead.

Tabernanthe Iboga, of the Dogbane family, is found in the wet, tropical zones of west-central **Africa**, primarily the Congo and Gabon. The shrub is both cultivated and harvested wild in the undergrowth of tropical forests. It has a vile-smelling latex, ovate leaves, and tiny, quarter-inch flowers that bloom in groups of five to twelve. The yellowish root contains the psychoactive alkaloid ibogaine.

Iboga is the most prominent **plant hallucinogen** on the African continent. *Tabernanthe Iboga* is itself considered **sacred**. Sites where **offerings** are made to the ancestors are often created between two *Iboga* plants.

Use

Shamans and sorcerers use *Iboga* to enter **trance** and gain information from the spirit world. Tribal leaders use *Iboga*, often consuming it for a full day, to seek advice from the Ancestors. Bwiti followers use it in a sacred **ritual** context to communicate with their Ancestors.

Iboga is central and essential to the Bwiti spiritual practice. It is used for **initiation** to “break open” the heads of initiates allowing communication from their Ancestors and as a visionary sacrament for initiated members. In the initiation ritual, initiates are given one or two massive doses. The intent is to induce physical collapse followed by a deep trance state during which the initiate has visions of contact with the Ancestors in the spirit world. Initiates cannot enter the Bwiti **religion** until they have seen Bwiti, the Ancestors, and the only way to see Bwiti is through *Iboga*.

Initiated members typically take small doses to connect and further consult with the Ancestors, gods, and goddesses. In common usage *Iboga* is a powerful central nervous system stimulant and has a reputation as an aphrodisiac. *Iboga* greatly increases muscular strength and endurance when taken in doses too small to induce trance. Warriors and hunters use *Iboga* on long hunts, grueling canoe trips, and difficult night watches to accomplish feats of extraordinary physical exertion without fatigue.

Preparation

The roots are harvested on the day of the **ceremony**. The root bark is rasped and eaten directly or dried and pulverized into a powder to be ingested. In an alternate preparation, the raspings are soaked in **water** to prepare a hallucinogenic drink through infusion.

Active Principle

The active principles in *Tabernanthe Iboga* are indole alkaloids similar to those found in **Teonanácatl** and **Ololiuqui**, plant hallucinogens found in Central America. *Iboga* contains at least a dozen indole alkaloids, the most active being ibogaine.

Ritual of Receiving the Plant Spirit, or Plant Medicine

The bodies of Bwiti initiates are prepared with white paint from head to toe with dark lines marking the feet, ankles,

wrists, and neck. Dark spots are applied to the arms and chest, while the torso is wrapped in a white cloth in a sarong fashion. The initiates consume large amounts of the pulverized *Iboga* root and then wait, sitting in the center of the ritual **space**.

As the Ancestor **spirits** are invoked, they may be seen in a **mirror** placed at the entrance to the space. As the initiates collapse they are carried to a special house or place in the forest. When they have entered their full visionary trance state they are *banzie*, roughly translated as “angel.” In this state the **soul** of the initiate **journeys** in the spirit world where it visits or is visited by the Ancestors.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

Iboga induces a trance state that is characterized by convulsions, visions, and temporary paralysis. At the excessive doses used in initiation, motor activity is usually impaired to such a degree that the initiate can only sit and gaze into space until he or she collapses. These large doses induce auditory, olfactory, and gustatory synesthesia (the stimulation of one sense provokes a sensation in another sense).

The onset of the deep trance is characterized by a floating feeling as the soul begins to leave the body. As the soul nears the realm of the ancestors and the gods, rainbow-colored spectrums of light surround all objects. Perception of **time** is altered so that the few hours spent in trance feel like many hours or even days.

Ibogaine in excessive doses may eventually arrest respiration. Deaths do occasionally occur during initiations.

Other Plants Related Through Use

Alchornea floribunda, known as *Alan*, is often consumed in large amounts during initiation to help to free the soul from the body, producing the outward sign of the soul’s **journey**, physical collapse. In southern Gabon *Alan* is mixed with *Iboga*.

Elaeophorbia drupifera, known as *Ayan-beyem*, may also be used in the initiation ceremony when *Alan* is slow to take effect. The latex of the plant is applied with a parrot feather directly to the eyes of the initiates. The active principles affect the optic nerve directly and induce **visions**.

Songs and Dances

There are complex ceremonies with **dances** and **songs** that are essential to the Bwiti spiritual practice. These vary greatly by locale because the Bwiti practice unites peoples of many different tribes, who all bring their traditional dances and songs.

Use in Contemporary Time

Through *Iboga*, members of the Bwiti religion can connect with their Ancestors and maintain a direct, personal relationship to their common origins as Africans. This experience changes the once hostile individualism of warring tribes into the unifying individualism of a common origin. Bwiti practitioners are more able to maintain a sense of identity apart from the Western world and stop the destructive influx of foreign ideologies, societies, and religions like Christianity and Islam. See also **sorcery**.

Schultes, R. E. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Icaros

Icaros are **power songs** sung by the **shaman** during **healing** rituals to attract the **spirits** who will do the healing and guide **journeys**. *Icaros* are often associated with *ayahuasca* rituals, because it is the **spirit** of *ayahuasca* and of the other plants in the rain forest who teach the shaman the **songs**. Animals, rocks, **metals**, **weather**, and other aspects of nature also teach *icaros* for summoning their **power** and wisdom. A shaman may know as many as three thousand *icaros*, and each shaman has

a personal *icaros* that invokes his or her essential power.

Icaros are used in any situation in which a shaman wants to invoke power. *Icaros* can be used to diagnose and cure **illnesses**, combat malevolent spirits, extract infections or energetic intrusions, empower plant remedies, find fish and game, and to influence the content of *ayahuasca* visions.

The melody of an *icaros* invokes the specific shamanic powers or spirits; therefore they can be chanted, whistled, or sung to be effective. The **words**, or *mariris*, are secondary to the power of the melody. (*Mariris* has also been defined as magical **phlegm**.)

To learn an *icaros* a shaman drinks *ayahuasca* and allows the spirit of *ayahuasca* to teach the song through the night. If a shaman desires the *icaros* of other plants, they are ingested, usually with the *ayahuasca*, which makes the shaman more sensitive to the songs of the plant.

A shaman must “sing to” the remedy during the **ritual** or there will be no real power to heal. A shaman must know the *icaros* of many spirits to attract the spirits into the rituals and remedies. If one spirit is not enough or is not able to do a healing, the shaman must invoke another.

There are also different *icaros* for different preparations and applications of a single plant. Apprentices must learn all of these variations. In many cultures the **apprentice** must undergo a strict **plant diet**, while remaining celibate and ingesting *ayahuasca* regularly to attune to the plants. In areas where there is a tradition of shamans passing *icaros* on to apprentices, even the apprentices must also receive their own *icaros* directly from the spirits.

Icaros is derived from the **Quechua** verb *ikaray*, which means “to blow smoke in order to heal.” Plant healers, or **vegetalistas**, sometimes use the verb *icrarar* in describing part of their healing process. *Icarar* refers to **singing** or whistling an *icaros* on a person, object, or remedy to give it power.

- Bear, J., and White, T. ed. *Shaman's Drum*, Vol. 44, 1997.
- Langdon, E., Jean Matteson, and Gerhard Baer. *Portals of Power: Shamanism in South America*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1992.
- Luna, Luis E. *The Songs the Plants Taught Us*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True Recordings, 1991.

likhááh

The **iikhááh** is a ceremonial **sand painting** created, in part, as a way for the *yeii* (holy spirits) to enter and leave the **ritual** or **ceremony**. It is also a healing tool or type of **medicine**. *Iikhááh* means “they enter and leave” in the Navajo **language**. It is created on the ground in alignment with the entryway of the ceremonial hogan to facilitate this movement of the *yeii*.

Iikhááh are spontaneous creations received from **spirit** in a design specific for a particular healing of an individual at a particular time. The paintings are made from colored sand and powders made from ground rocks and precious **metals**. Each grain of sand is charged with intention and **blessings** through the ritual process, then carefully put into place in the picture. The **power** of the *iikhááh* comes from the spirit **energy** that is called into the painting through the shaman's intention and focus.

The goal of a traditional Navajo **healing** ceremony is to bring the patient back into balance with all things or *hózhó*, which for the Navajo is an ideal of inner peace, harmony, and well-being. The sand painting is constructed of the images and symbols necessary to bring the patient, who focuses on the images, back into *hózhó*.

During a Navajo healing ritual utilizing an *iikhááh*, the patient is first instructed to focus or meditate on images. The patient is then walked around the sand painting in a ritual manner so that he can embody the

energies. The ritual process enables the patient to transcend his own life and **illness** and to identify with the *yeii*, the holy spirits, and world they inhabit, which are embodied in the *iikhááh*. The patient is reminded through this experience of his deeper relationship with the *yeii* and other **sacred** forces that pervade his everyday life. Through this realization and the application of medicines, the patient is brought back into *hózhó* and made whole again.

Traditionally the sand painting is created on the ground in front of the *ätchin*, the slat **altar** that stands as an integral part of all altars created for ritual and ceremony. No two paintings are the same. After the ceremony the sand painting is destroyed, releasing the *yeii* called in to aid in the patient's healing.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Ilimarneq

Ilimarneq refers to the **journey** of the *angakok's soul*, or spirit flight, that occurs during the *torniwoq* or shamanic **ritual** in East **Greenland**. In some regions before entering the deep **trance**, the *angakok* has his hands tied behind his back, ankles bound, and a heavy stone placed about his neck to keep his soul from leaving the **earth** forever.

The *angakok's soul* is assisted in *ilimarneq* by his or her **helping spirits**, often merging with, riding on the back of, or being taken by the hand and led to the desired location in the spirit world. *Ilimarneq* is used for **divination**, to observe events at remote locations in the physical world, to find game, lost objects, or people, to locate an enemy, identify **sorcery**, or to locate and retrieve a lost soul.

Though spirit flight is commonly believed to be the relocation of consciousness to any point in **space**, the *angakok's* consciousness is often relocated to places outside of space and

time. Furthermore, in the stories of the more powerful early *angakok*, spirit flight involved the relocation of the body as well as the soul.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Ilisineq

This is a general term for all forms of **sorcery** or witchcraft in the Arctic regions. Practitioners or *ilisitsoq* are male or female. Witchcraft usually involves secretly connecting the victim to the dead or menstrual **blood**. Hexing can backfire and return to harm the witch if the intended victim's protection is strong enough.

Sorcery involves even more powerful manipulations, including **soul** theft. The creation of a *tupilak* is one of the more powerful forms of sorcery. The *tupilak* is created from parts of dead animals and usually something stolen from the victim. It is empowered with a **spirit** so that it can seek out and kill its intended victim. A *tupilak* is not easily killed; however, like any hex, if not made correctly, it can turn on its originator.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Ilisitsoq

A male or female practitioner of **sorcery** in the Arctic region. They are known to create and empower a *tupilak* or steal souls to cause **illness** or death. *Ilisitsut* (pl) or various dialectical variants. See also *ilisineq*.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Illness

A breakdown in the physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual health of an individual or community. It is a psychosocial and cultural response to **disease** (any primary malfunctioning in biological and psychological processes). Illness includes how the person reacts to his or her disease, as well as how the family and social network react.

Specific concepts of illness differ **culture** to culture, as do the correlating concepts for treatment. For example, the conventional Eastern Asian concept of illness is that a loss of personal **power** allows illness in. Personal power, or **energy**, is seen as the net result of the individual's physical, emotional, social, mental, and spiritual health. The maintenance of personal power is dependent upon the individual's every action, word, and thought.

The shamanic concept of illness is, in general, very much like that of the Eastern doctor. Illness points toward pre-existing problems resulting from months, years, even decades of disease, imbalance, chronic fear, or disharmony. These areas of weakness occur as a result of the bad habits accumulated by holding false attitudes about life and one's place in the Universe.

The illness itself is not the shaman's primary problem. He or she is looking for the weakness or imbalance that allowed the **soul loss** or **spirit intrusion** that caused the original disease. The **shaman** asks the **helping spirits** to diagnose the true nature of the illness and the source of the original imbalance. Then, given that information, the shaman continues to diagnose the remedies and/or **healing** rituals needed to restore balance within the individual and between the individual, his community, and the spirit realms so that neither the illness nor the disease will occur again. See also **diagnosis** and **rituals**.

Eichelberger, B. *Doctor of Oriental Medicine, personal communication*, 1996.

Kleinman, A., and L. H. Sung. "Why Do Indigenous Practitioners Successfully Heal?" *Social Sciences and Medicine* 13B (1979): 7–26.

Illness in North America

Illnesses caused by obvious external or non-spiritual origins were treated directly and effectively with plant remedies, bone setting, massage, dietary adjustments, and **cleansing**. Examples of this type of illness include fractures, dislocations, wounds, some snake and insect bites, skin irritations, bruises, and indigestion.

Illness that persists, does not respond normally to treatment, or has no apparent cause is believed to be caused by one of many in a range of supernatural causes. Common supernatural causes of illness are **sorcery**, **taboo violation**, **energy intrusion**, **spirit intrusion**, **dreams**, omens, sudden fright, and **soul loss**. In certain tribes and areas, other causes become more important. For example, among the **Iroquois**, unfulfilled dreams cause illness, and in the greater **California region**, "**pains**" intrude into the body and cause illness.

Taboo violations are often the result of showing disrespect to some type of spirit. For example **animal spirits** will gain revenge on hunters or fishermen who kill without asking permission or offering **tobacco** to their **spirits**; **fire** will cause **disease** in a person who spits, urinates, or defecates on the ashes; and **plant spirits** may cause illness or misfortune if they are gathered without **singing** the necessary **songs**, praying, or offering tobacco.

Ghosts of the deceased who remain in the earthly realms can cause illness or soul loss. A lonesome ghost drawing friends or relatives in for company causes a disease. Some ghosts may steal the soul of the living for comfort, or the sudden fright of encountering a ghost may cause soul loss.

The intrusion of an energy or spirit into the body of the patient is a major

cause of disease among indigenous North Americans. The task of the **shaman** is to locate this intrusion and remove it. The **disease object** in the intrusion often appears to the shaman as a worm, snake, insect, stick, thorn, stone, or "pain." The intrusion is most often removed by sucking. In some treatments the body is made uninhabitable and the intrusion is forced out by the consumption of bitter **medicines** or incessant forceful singing of spirit songs.

Most often the **sucking shaman** applies his mouth directly to the patient's body, but in some cases a tube or **cupping horn** is used. The object is sometimes inanimate, like a stone or stick, and sometimes animate, in that once removed it moves away or returns to the sorcerer who sent it.

When illness is caused by a spirit it is important that the shaman correctly **diagnoses** the nature of the spirit, because the treatments vary according to type. Common disease-causing spirits are animal, human, malevolent spirits, and the spirits of poisonous roots and plants.

Soul loss is a serious cause of illness that will lead to death if not treated. The soul may get lost during a dream or leave the body so suddenly in a fright or accident it will lose its way back. Soul loss is also caused by **soul theft** performed by sorcerers (malignant shamans), witches, malevolent spirits, or an earth **dwarf**. Some tribes believed that the Jesuit priests stole souls.

Shaman, Medicine Man, Seer, and Priest

In many tribes several types or classes of medicinal practitioners are recognized. Among the **Ojibwa**, for example, there are four classes. The highest ranking were shamans of the **Midewiwin Society** who performed ceremonies and healing rituals. The **wabenos**, practitioners of medical magic, **hunting magic**, love medicine, and the like, received their **power** from the Morning Star and practiced mastery of fire. The **djessakid** were the **seers** and prophets

who received their power from the Thunder and practiced the **Shaking Tent Ceremony**. The *mashki-kike-wini-ni* were herbalists or medicine people.

Other cultures recognized individual shamans and shamans or priests of **medicine societies**. The **Seneca** have thirteen medicine societies still functioning in the twentieth century as do the Zuni. Each society is charged with the treatment of a different disease or complex of diseases and a function, like creating rain.

Medicine

Medicine in the sense of the indigenous North American is not only the remedy, but the treatment, the spirit powers involved, and the **ritual** process by which harmony and well-being are reestablished. Medicine power extends well beyond the biochemistry of a remedy, even when the biochemistry of the remedy is valid by Western medical standards. Medicine power is found in **fetishes**, **charms**, lucky numbers, and omens as well as **medicine bundles**, songs, and **dances**.

Treatment

Treatment varies between shamans, tribes, and **culture** areas. However, the use of **rattles**, **drums**, sucking, singing, dancing, and praying is nearly universal as is the shamans' acquisition of powers to heal from supernatural sources.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Vogel, Virgil J. *American Indian Medicine*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990.

Incantations

An incantation is a magical arrangement of **words** that has the **power** to manipulate actions. The voice is a manifestation of an individual's power. Words charged with that power can turn into **sacred** forces or objects. Speaking an incantation is a way to make one's

intention an active force in the world, for better or worse.

Long **prayers**, like those of the Navajo or Hawaiians for example, are a form of incantation. These are traditional prayers that must be said without error, omission, or repetition of a single syllable from beginning to end. One distinctive characteristic of magic and magical religious acts, like turning wine into **blood**, is the need for exact repetition of words and actions.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Incense

Incense is a material, like cedarwood or copal resin, used to produce a fragrant odor when burned. It can be spices, dried plants, wood, or gums that give off perfume or fragrant smoke when burned. It is used in **ceremony** and **ritual** for **purification** of the **space** and the participants, burned as an **offering**, and used to support the inner state necessary for effective **prayer** or meditation.

Fragrances can instantaneously change the state of consciousness of the individual who smells them. The human sense of smell connects to the oldest part of the human brain. Its neurological pathway is the most direct route to the brain and nervous system. When the olfactory nerves are activated by a fragrance, like incense, the brain and the pituitary gland, which controls the human hormonal system, are directly stimulated and the individual's inner state is shifted. Therefore incense is a useful tool in shamanic rituals. Similarly scented oils, unguents, and perfumes (flower essences) are also useful tools.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Incorporacion

Incorporacion (incorporation) is the Umbandista (Argentinean) word for the **altered state of consciousness** of full spirit **embodiment**. Embodiment is the state of intentional, controlled spirit **possession**. *Incorporacion* is used by authors to distinguish the shaman's possession, an altered state the **shaman** has mastery of, from any state of spontaneous, uncontrolled, or unintentional possession.

The shaman performs **divinations**, **extractions**, **cleansings**, and some **healing** rituals for individuals and the community from a state of *incorporacion*. In *incorporacion* the spirit **energy** is in full possession of the body. The spirit of the medium has moved out of the way to allow the possessing spirit to fully enter and control the medium's **words** and actions. The Umbandista healers are expected to work from this state of *incorporacion*, because their clients are there to speak to the gods, not the mediums.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Indianismo

A Spanish term referring to the common psychological, cultural, and spiritual attitudes of tribal people. Also sometimes referred to as Indianism.

Induction

Bringing one into an **altered state of consciousness** by exposure to a range of intense sensory stimulation. Induction techniques include prolonged, monotonous drumming, rattling, **music**, chanting, dancing, or psychological disruption from sleep deprivation, hunger, **sweat lodge** experiences, or psychotropic substances.

The process of induction can be broken down into three stages. In the first stage, the everyday state of consciousness is destabilized by a disrupting force of intense sensory stimulation. In the second transitional stage the specific

altered state of consciousness is patterned by several factors: intentions, expectations, psychological and physiological condition, and the environmental setting.

In the third stage of induction the consciousness stabilizes in the altered state and the **shaman** is aware of being "there," in the spirit world. As the shaman exits the altered state the brain returns to normal patterns of activity and the shaman is fully aware of being "here," in the physical world. See also **trance** and **vehicle**.

Tart, Charles T. "The Basic Nature of Altered States of Consciousness: A Systems Approach." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 8, no. 1 (1976): 45-64.

Ingukh

A West Alaska **Eskimo** term for a **fetish**, or **power object**. Often the **power** is inherent in the object, like a bear claw or a lightning-struck stone. For other *ingukh*, the **angakok** (shaman) must be called on to conduct a **ritual** to embody power in the object.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Inipi

The **Lakota** practice of *inikagapi wójeya*, or *inipi* for short, is the most widespread **sweat lodge** tradition in **North America**. The Stone People Lodge, as it is also known, was brought to the Lakota by the **spirit teacher**, White Buffalo Calf Woman, with directions for building the lodge and instructions for using it. If done properly, all the powers of the Universe are brought into play in the **ceremony** to the aid of the participants.

Each piece of the lodge and part of the ceremony are connected with a greater power. Where the lodge is

placed, the source of the **water**, the number of sticks, the rocks, the placement of the **fire** and the wood that is burned, etc., all have meaning and power. The lodge is built on the **earth** and with materials that grow from the earth. Water is a connection to the Thunder beings who bring goodness to the people. The rocks bring in the Fire and the **Air** is made apparent in the purifying steam.

Traditionally, every stage of building the lodge is **sacred** work during which **prayers** are said and pieces are purified. For the Lakota lodge, twelve to sixteen willow sticks are placed in a **circle**, bent to create the dome frame, and covered with buffalo skins. The floor of the lodge is covered with sage before entry.

Outside the fire is built and the rocks heated. The hot rocks are passed into the lodge with a forked stick or deer antler and placed in the center. An **altar** is created near the rocks on which the **sacred pipe** rests. The altar is often in the shape of a buffalo **skull** with sage placed in the eye sockets.

The leader of the sweat is responsible for sprinkling the rocks with sweetgrass, which fills the lodge with a smoky fragrance, or water, which fills the lodge with steam. Cold water from a spring is set in a bucket by the rocks with either a ladle or a bundle of sage for the leader to use to douse the rocks with water. The leader is also responsible for calling the **spirits** into the lodge to hear the prayers of the participants.

The number of rocks used determines how hot the sweat will be and the number of rounds determines how long. The sacred pipe is passed around clockwise, usually within each round. Traditionally there are four rounds, though not always. When the ceremony is complete participants may plunge into a river if nearby or rub themselves dry with sage.

Erdoes, R. *Crying for a Dream: The World Through Native American Eyes*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Company Publishing, 1990.

Initiation

Initiation means beginning; its function is to open the novice **shaman** to the other world. Initiation begins a life of direct connection to **spirit** for the shaman. Initiation also means transformation; it causes a radical change in the initiate forever. Initiation creates shamans from those who have been called, and not all who are called will complete the transformation.

Initiations may be spontaneous, begun suddenly by spirit's intervention into the initiate's life, or formalized, set in motion by the initiate's human **teachers** as part of an ordered **training** process. Regardless of the form, initiations have three phases: a beginning, middle, and end. These phases correspond to the following characteristics which are necessary for initiation to occur.

At the onset, (1) the initiate is separated physically and/or psychically from the community and his or her normal life. The initiate is thrust into an unknown situation; (2) he does not know where he is. After using all of his familiar resources, the initiate realizes that he must surrender to the situation and (3) accept an unknown outcome. The initiate will stay in this phase until his **knowledge**, assumptions, and control are overwhelmed by the uncertainty and unpredictability of the situation. The initiate realizes that his life is at risk. He becomes aware that (4) he is alone and unprotected in an unknowable situation.

The middle of the initiatory experience is marked by the realization that there is no turning back and a sequence of revelations (not necessarily in this order) follows this realization:

1. The realization that going forward, further into the unknown, is the only way to avoid death
2. The realization that the parameters have been set by the spirit world
3. The realization that the only option is to give up control (either the ego dies or the whole person dies)
4. The initiate's emotions become huge and overwhelming

5. The initiate's imagination is fully activated, making everything feel extreme
6. The initiate fully realizes his own weakness, wounds, and limitations, and surrenders to the need for help from the spirit world.

From this place of revelation and surrender the initiate is guided to something within himself that was hidden. If initiates can merge with that hidden aspect, they become greater than they were before. They are then able to take action in ways that they were unable to conceive of moments before. With that action, the initiate has sacrificed everything he is for the possibility of becoming something greater and moves from the middle of the initiation to the end.

The completion of initiation begins with death, the death of the initiate's ego self. This death allows a new bonding to the spirit world and the initiate experiences the birth of identification with his soul self. The shaman's **soul**, through its connection to all things, aligns with the will of the **Kosmos**. Something within the shaman (1) is changed forever. The shaman is (2) more alive and sensually aware of life than before. In many cultures (3) outward and palpable evidence of change, like a scar or tattoo, is made on the body, symbolic of the shaman's permanent inner transformation. The shaman (4) will return to this inner bonding between self and spirit during every aspect of his shamanic work and in daily life. The initiation is complete when the shaman emerges from his initiatory death to take his new place in the community and is recognized in his new role by the others.

The initiatory experience is a transformation from which there is no return to what was. It is a bridge to possible selves and not everyone makes it across that bridge every time. The crucial point is the middle of the initiation, during which a fundamental shift in consciousness must occur for the initiate to get to the other side and end the initiatory process. If that transformation does not

occur—due to fear, drugs that numb out the experience, intervention by the well-meaning, or lack of internal integrity and strength—the initiate never reaches the end. Those who don't make it stay in the middle, unable to go back or unwilling to move forward and complete the transformation. As a result, their spirit self will remain in the middle phase, experiencing the ego's **chaos** and fear of the unknown, while physically they will die or go insane.

The importance of the initiation for the shaman is the death of the ego self, which is bound to four-dimensional **space** and **time**. Mircea Eliade, author of *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, the classic study of shamanism, explains in philosophical terms that initiation is a basic change in the individual's existential condition. The initiate becomes another person who is a totally different being. Shamans call the ego the little self because these aspects of their ego and their belief structure limited their "super" human potential. With the death of the little self the shaman gains the freedom to align consciously with the will of his soul and the soul of the Kosmos. The individual is transformed at this fundamental stage, and the shaman becomes "the person he or she came here to be." This necessary loss of the little self is why shamanic initiation is often called the "little death" or "**shaman's death**."

The form of shamanic initiations varies relative to **culture**, geography, and the shaman's form of training. Consistent in all forms of initiation is the moment of surrender to the Unknown and the acceptance of help from a higher source, leading to the initiate's transformation. The following are the four general forms of initiation:

1. Traditional/Cultural

Initiation occurs in graded, incremental steps within the context of a highly ordered shamanic training process. Examples are: the **Tamang** of **Nepal** who must undergo seven stages of initiation; the Warajiri of **Australia**, or the Yamana

of Tierra del Fuego. Within such systems there are tests that demonstrate mastery of each stage before the individual moves on to the next. In some systems each test is an initiation; in other systems only the final test is the initiation. Then there are systems where a spontaneous, life-changing event, like a culturally symbolic **dream** or experience with spirit animals, is the prerequisite for entry into the training.

2. *Instantaneous/Spontaneous*

Initiation occurs in a sudden life-changing event. This is often confused with **the call** to shamanic work, after which the individual begins his or her training with spirit. Examples of spontaneous initiation are being struck by lightning, a near-death experience, or psychospiritual crisis (psychic breakdown). There are further initiations along the way marking the mastery of particular skills or levels of **power** and a final initiation, during which the novice is faced with **ego death** and transformation, as discussed above.

These initiations are the spontaneous creation of the shaman and his or her teaching spirits. Because they may not occur in the conscious context of shamanic training, or even a shamanic culture, initiates may take years to understand the symbolic meaning of these events. It may take even more time to act on that understanding, due to the presence of prejudice against folk **medicine** and magic and the absence of cultural preparation and guidance.

3. *Wounded healer*

Initiation occurs in the midst of an unexplained **illness** when the ailing individual allows information, insight, awareness, or power into their consciousness in a moment of surrender. This shift of consciousness enables them to see their illness differently and heal themselves. The **healing** itself becomes the process by which they leave their “little self” behind and emerge anew. The wound may be physical, mental, or emotional and the illness often lasts for three days to seven years.

The latter is typical when the body appears comatose and the former when the body appears ill.

Shamans who have experienced this type of initiation describe their internal experience as a **journey** of their soul. While their body is sick or comatose, they experience their soul traveling in the spirit world where they are trained and initiated into shamanic work by their spirit teachers. After the initiation in the spirit world, they return to their bodies and begin their lives as shamans.

4. *Dismemberment*

Initiation is conducted by **helping spirits** and occurs in a **vision** or **trance** state, or as part of the **initiatory illness** described above. The spirits dismember individuals, pulling them apart, eating them, or stripping them layer by layer to the bone. Individuals, unaware that the experience is occurring in an **altered state of consciousness**, die. This ego death allows for a shift of awareness and the realization that they are not dead, but experiencing a spiritual rebirth. As the helping spirits put the individual back together, he or she often receives new parts, like eyes or other organs, extra bones, or additions to the body, like **crystals**, **feathers**, or some sort of magic substance that will help in shamanic work.

In some shamanic cultures, particularly in the Arctic region, **dismemberment** is expected and necessary for the initiation of shamans. Dismemberment is not necessary in all shamanic cultures, nor is every dismemberment necessarily an initiation. For example, dismemberment is a common healing experience for contemporary lay people who use the technique of shamanic journeying for their own personal healing. These experiences rarely produce an initiatory transformation in the journeyer, though they often have a healing or empowering effect.

There is no one official initiation for shamans. As long as the form of the initiation allows the function—the irreversible transformation of the initiate—

to occur, then it is a valid initiation. Traditional initiation **rituals** and **ceremonies** are not effective simply because they are traditional, the irreversible transformation must occur. If it does not, then the form has not served the function of initiation and, regardless of tradition, that specific ritual did not serve as an initiation that time.

Initiation should not be understood as a reconnection to spirit, because anything that can be reconnected is by definition separate (and can be disconnected later). This would mean that the initiate remains in the same thought paradigm they began in, believing that separation from spirit is reality. Initiation shifts the shamans from the thought paradigm of separation to the experience of the truth that all things are endlessly and timelessly connected. The shaman re-experiences that which was always true; the reality that there is no separation.

The shaman's task is to restore harmony in the people, land, and spirits that are the flow of energies that make up the connection of all things. For the uninitiated shaman, their view of what is necessary to restore harmony will always be colored by their own needs and desires. In contrast, the initiated shaman's view is clear. The will has been freed in initiation to align with the will of spirit, which enlightens one's self-interest. He acts to restore harmony in the connection of all things through service to the community, both human and spirit.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Hillman, J. *Images of Initiation*. Pacific Grove, CA: Oral Traditions Archives, 1992.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Villoldo, A. "The Inca Medicine Wheel." The Omega Institute, Rhinebeck, NY, Sept 1994. Direct communication.

Initiatory Illness

Initiatory illness refers to the physically overwhelming spiritual crisis that occurs when **spirits** choose a human to become a **shaman**. This illness is characterized by its strange, unexplained nature and the fact that it does not respond to conventional treatment. The duration of the **illness** may be three days, typical when the body appears comatose, to seven years, typical when the body or mind is plagued by lingering illnesses that grow progressively worse over time.

The term is common in discussions of shamanism, though somewhat misleading. The initiatory illness is characteristic of **the call**, which begins the process of becoming a shaman. This process varies **culture** to culture. Initiatory illness is not necessarily the same experience as the individual's **initiation** into being a shaman. This also varies culture to culture.

Initiation marks the irreversible transformation from novice to shaman. This may happen through the individual's recovery from this illness, but it often occurs after years of formal **training**. For example, among the **Zulu** the final initiation marks years of rigorous training and the new shaman's recognition by the community. In other cultures, as with peoples of the Pacific Northwest of North America, the novice trains for years in secret after recovering from his or her initiatory illness before coming out publicly as a shaman.

The initiatory illness usually serves as the first connection between the novice and his or her spirit **teachers** during which the novice is forced to chose to receive training with these spirit teachers to heal. For example a **Mapuche** woman explains that while gathering shells from the reefs she felt a blow to her chest and heard a clear voice declare, "Become a **machi** (shaman)! It is my will!" Simultaneously she experienced internal **pains** so violent that she lost consciousness. She woke from this state certain that Ngenechen (Great

Spirit) had spoken to her and knowing she was to become a shaman.

The unexplained illness may be physical, mental, or emotional. It comes on spontaneously, is often frightening, and is usually undesired by the one stricken. In some cultures the spontaneous experience is provoked through **ritual** practice. Likely candidates are prepared by initiated shamans, as in **Australia**, or they engage repeatedly in traditional activities known to provoke the experience, like **vision quests**, fasting, or sleeping in **caves**.

The initiatory illness is often experienced as a kidnapping or **possession** by spirit, while the body lies as if dead. In some cultures, training occurs during the expanded **non-ordinary reality** time often experienced during **trance** states. In other cultures, the initiatory illness creates the essential internal transformation that both signifies the need for and allows the training to start.

For example, the initiatory illness among the **Yakut** traditionally lasts from three to seven days. During this time the novice's body lies in an isolated place as if dead. The novice experiences his or her **soul** being carried off by the Bird-of-Prey-Mother, a great bird with an iron beak, hooked claws, and a long tail who appears only twice, at initiation, the shaman's spiritual birth, and at his or her death. The novice is aware only of his or her experience with the Bird-of-Prey-Mother. All that occurs in this **journey** is experienced as living reality.

The Bird-of-Prey-Mother takes the soul to the **Lowerworld** and leaves it to mature on a branch of a pitch pine. The soul reaches maturity over the expanded time that can occur in non-ordinary reality. The Bird-of-Prey-Mother returns to bring the matured soul to **earth**, cuts the soul body into bits, and feeds the pieces to the different spirits of **disease** and death. In this way the future shaman gains the **power** to cure the disease that corresponds to each eaten part of his or her body. After the devouring is complete, the Bird-of-Prey-Mother makes the soul whole, reconnecting all

the bones and body parts. The novice wakes from the coma-like state transformed at the existential core of his or her being.

Cross-culturally, similar themes appear in the adventures experienced by the novice while in the trance state induced by the initiatory illness. These themes include: **dismemberment** of the body, renewal of the internal organs and viscera, insertion of magical objects into the internal organs, travel to the **Upperworld** or Lowerworld to communicate with **helping spirits**, descent to the Lowerworld to communicate with the souls of **dead shamans**, and revelations of cures and other secrets of the profession.

Not everyone who experiences an "initiatory illness" is able to transform this spiritual crisis and the temporary mental illness involved into an initiation. The process from illness to initiation is not a given. For example, the **Tungus** novice experiences his or her shaman **ancestors** tearing out and counting all his bones during his initiatory illness. If one is found missing, he will emerge from the trance state uninitiated and unable to become a shaman.

The individual's ability to function in spite of their fear, to make sense of what occurs in the trance state, and to receive training separates the "chosen" from those who need to be healed. There is a transformation of consciousness that occurs when the ailing individual surrenders to the insight, awareness, or spiritual power present in their experience. This shift of consciousness enables the individual to see his or her illness differently and to heal themselves. Surviving this expansion of consciousness without going mad allows the individual to relate to spirit and receive training over their entire lifetime.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Peters, L. "Mystical Experience in Tamang Shamanism." *ReVision* 13, no. 2 (1990): 71–85.

Inka

A highly regimented society that spread northward and southward from Cuzco, Peru, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Inka brought with them a state-imposed code of behavior and a national **religion** meant to insure that all beings lived in good relationship with the empire and the greater **Kosmos**.

Inkan structures, which are now archeological sites, were built as energetic centers of the empire with specific purposes. For example, Cuzco, the heart of the Inka Empire, is built on the **earth's** solar plexus and Machu Picchu is the city of light.

The common people of the Inka Empire participated in the national religion and continued to make **sacrifices** to their local **shrines**, consult oracles, practice **divination**, and seek services of **shamans** and sorcerers. Inkan **priests** were also patronized when the cure of a **disease** required the confession of violations of the codes of behavior and the prescription of appropriate penance.

Sorcerers were practitioners of black magic and manipulative **medicine**, like the creation of love **charms**. They were known to send **energy intrusions** into their victims to cause **illness** and death.

Shamans, utilizing the assistance of their **helping spirits**, healed illness and performed **soul retrievals**. The Inka believed that disease was caused by the intrusion into the body of an energetic object sent by a sorcerer or malevolent **spirit** or **soul loss** caused by winds, malevolent forces, or **soul thieves**.

The shaman first diagnosed the cause of a disease by divination or reading **Coca** leaves or the entrails of a **cuy** (guinea pig). The shaman then extracted the **disease object** by sucking or set out on a journey into the spirit world to recover the lost soul. After the shaman's **healing offerings**, **prayers** and sacrifices were made.

Common **ritual** sacrifices were **Coca**, seashells, and **chicha**. Human **blood** sacrifice is believed to have been of greater importance in the early period of

the Inka Empire. Human beings were sacrificed primarily on important occasions. Otherwise llamas were used as sacrifice for major rituals and **ceremonies** and guinea pigs for minor ones.

Inka **shamanism** continues in an unbroken tradition in the practices of the **Q'ero**, the "Caretakers of the Earth." The Q'ero have remained in monastic isolation, in the mist-shrouded Andes Mountains of southern Peru for five hundred years.

The Q'ero teach the ancient Inkan belief that humans perceive on three levels: the rational logic of the mind, the feelings and senses of the body, and the ability to perceive the "real" world beyond that of perceptions of the body and the mind. When this third perception is activated the individual awakens from the collective **dream** of the reality perceived through small personal thoughts and feelings.

When this state of awakening is attained the individual experiences a reconnection with the essence of everything through the **energy body**. As the individual develops an awareness of energies and the energy circuits within to direct energies, it can be applied for purposes such as healing, re-establishing balance, experiencing non-linear **time**, and perceiving the vibration of the universal harmony in order to see the real world

Villoldo, A. *The Four Winds: A Shaman's Odyssey Into the Amazon*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1991.

Inner Fire

Inner fire is an idea shared cross-culturally. It is that all kinds of people or actions that involve some unexplained magical or spiritual **power** are regarded as burning with inner fire. That inner fire can be cultivated through **diet**, spiritual practices, **ritual** transmission, and cultivating an active relationship with spirit.

Many shamanic peoples speak of the powers the **shaman** receives from **spirit**

as “burning,” “heat,” or getting “very hot.” Often the shamanic **trance** state is not attained until after the shaman is “heated.” The power to generate this mystical inner heat is attributed to both sorcerers and shamans, and to practitioners of magic in general.

The **energy** of this inner fire is referred to by many names: *mana*, *kundalini*, and *num* being just a few. Throughout **Australia**, the Malay Archipelago, and Sumatra, **words** for magic also mean “heat.” Particularly powerful divinities in the Hindu tradition are referred to as “very hot,” “burning,” and “possessing fire.” In Islam a man who performs miracles is “boiling” and a man who communicates with God is “burning.” The idea of mystical inner heat is found in many religious and **mystical experiences**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Inorrortut

Inorrortut is the West **Greenland Eskimo** word for an **animal spirit** that appears in human form.

Institutional Support

Traditional **shamanic healing** practices slowly began to receive support from institutionalized **medicine** in the late twentieth century. The World Health Organization reported in 1977 that the physical and mental health problems of most of the world’s populace were being handled by traditional healers. Examples of institutional support follow.

There are clinics scattered across the western United States that use a variety of alternative healing methods. Two examples are a mental health center in Denver, Colorado, that employs a *curandera* on the staff and a hospital in Stanford, California, that employs a Brazilian healer.

The Malaysian and Thai governments have taken similar steps in responding to

a shortage of physicians. The government is licensing *bomohs* (**shamans**) to work with all but the “serious” cases, which are referred to hospitals.

The National Institute of Mental Health in **North America** finances the **training** of Navajo **medicine** people in Rough Rock, Arizona. The training is twofold, blending traditional Navajo **healing** taught by experienced medicine people and Western psychiatry. The program was devised when leaders in the field on the Western side of the relationship recognized that traditional practices could greatly alleviate the physical and psychological suffering of native peoples. Tribal leaders supported the program because the older medicine people were dying before they could pass on their lifetime of wisdom, **power**, and **knowledge** to younger people who could not afford the cost of the traditional training. See also **transcultural medicine**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Interdependence

The nature of the **shaman’s** relationship with the **helping spirits** is one of interdependence rather than control. The shaman is powerless to heal shamanically without the intervention of spirit. The shaman must approach spirit in **humility**, which is one of the reasons an authentic **ego death** is an essential function of the shaman’s **initiation**. Though the shaman may show off—basically advertise—in competitions or displays of **power** in some cultures, his or her relationship with spirit is grounded in humility.

The shaman must develop mastery over his or her **trance** states. However, this should not be interpreted as control of the **spirits** themselves. In practice mastery is the ability to enter and

exit the trance state at will and to remain conscious, lucid, and functional while merged energetically with spirit while in trance. This ability is based on a mastery of self, ego, and fear, in short on a mastery of personal state.

The notion of mastery over the spirits contradicts most of what we know about how shamanic powers function. The majority of shamans attribute their power directly to the spirits or to a special, non-ordinary **energy**. Many shamans tell of suddenly losing their powers completely as a result of breaking a **taboo** or transgressing in some way such that the spirit withdraws permanently and terminates the relationship. Finally, the helping spirits cause **illness**, madness, and death beyond the initial **initiatory illness** when shamans do not do as their helping spirits require.

Clearly the shaman is not in control of the relationship, but of himself in the relationship. It is also clear that the shaman is in relationship with spirit in a way that is not ordinary. Through initiation and **training** the shaman gains expanded awareness and the skills to enter into this working relationship with spirit. As in any healthy relationship neither party dominates the other. As long as both parties are respectful, strong, and clear, they can fulfill their roles and accomplish the mutual goal.

What spirit gains through this relationship is less clear. The spirits have continued to make contact with humans since the beginning, and the spirits seem to do so of their own accord. **Celtic** faery lore, for example, is filled with the reoccurring theme of the *sidhe*, beings of the Otherworld, needing human contact. For reasons that are not necessarily clear, the *sidhe* actively seek to share their wisdom, power, and secrets with humans, by entering **ordinary reality** themselves and by drawing humans into the Otherworld. It is as if it is necessary for the survival of both species that we communicate and help each other.

Humans and their environment are interrelated on physical, mental,

emotional, and spiritual (energetic) levels. They are interconnected in such a way that the health or balance of one affects the health or balance of the other. This is perhaps why the spirits help the shaman, though we really don't know why. We only know that they do, to the great benefit of humankind.

Achterberg, J. "The Wounded Healer: Transformational Journeys in Modern Medicine." *In Shaman's Path*. Gary Doore, ed. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Cowan, Tom. *Fire in the Head: Shamanism and the Celtic Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Intuition

The ability to recognize patterns in a field of infinite complexity without knowing how the pattern was recognized. Intuition draws on experience to recognize the key patterns that indicate the dynamics of a situation, allowing an individual to size up the situation quickly.

Klein, Gary A. Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998.

Inua

Inua, or **spirit**, is an **Inuit** word meaning "the breath of life" or spirit of life. The Inuit conceive of each spirit as separate and distinct from other spirits. Spirit is the essence and the history of the being it resides in and nothing can exist without it. The Inuit believe that some *inua* are the combined spirits of two or more animals, and that those beings can change form at will as they change environments.

Inuit

An indigenous people of the Arctic regions of **North America** extending from northern Alaska to **Greenland**. Inuit, meaning "genuine people," is the

main Canadian branch of the peoples of the Arctic region collectively known as **Eskimo**. The Inuit had thrived on hunting and fishing in the Arctic for over 7,000 years, but now only 800 of the 42,000 Inuit make a living hunting and still fewer hunt in traditional ways.

Traditional Inuit culture was a highly mobile hunting culture, dependent on the land, the **weather**, the animals, and the migratory cycles of the animals' lives. In the spring seals and **birds** are hunted, in the summer other sea mammals, in the autumn caribou, and fishing takes place year round.

The Inuit world is made up of three inseparable parts: the human, the natural, and the spiritual. Everything in these realms is invested with meaning and existence by its *inuua*, or **spirit**. Even **songs** have substance that can be crafted. These realms are interconnected through names, which are also things. A name is part of one's **soul**, social relationship to others, relationship with an animal species and the environment, as well as a connection to the souls of the deceased in the spirit world. The Inuit explain that a person is born with animals and must eat animals and therefore they are like animals.

The appearance of being a human in this web of interrelationship is generated by the *inu'sia*, an **energy** bubble of **air** that is located in the groin region. The *inu'sia* generates strength and life from the core of the being. Each species has its own *inu'sia* that makes it what it is, a seal, a seal, or a woman, a woman. These *inue* or animal people reach out to one another in harmony when all is right in the world.

First Shaman

In the beginning the Iglulik people were nomadic, gathering their food as they traveled the dark **earth**. They had no need to protect themselves from the problems that arise from slaying other souls to survive because they did not hunt. They did however experience sickness and suffering and it is from this need that the **First Shaman** arose.

A time of famine set in and killed many. The remaining people gathered to determine what to do. One man had been out on the tundra alone asking for help when he entered into a contract with the **spirits** and was given the idea. He was determined to dive down through the earth to ask for help from the Mother of the Sea Beasts.

No one understood him at the time so he demanded to go behind the skin hangings at the back of the sleeping place so that no one could see him. The people heard a great deal of strange noises and when they could no longer wait, they pulled back the hanging skins and saw only the soles of his feet as he descended into the earth. The First Shaman succeeded in his **journey** to the Mother of the Sea Beasts. He brought back game to his people, the famine gave way, and the Iglulik became hunters.

In this way the First Shaman appeared among the Iglulik to secure game for them and to teach the new hunters the rituals and practices necessary to honor the souls of the animals who gave their lives for the Iglulik to live. Iglulik shamans continued to journey and gather **knowledge** of the spirit world, to learn to heal the sick, and to learn the **sacred language** used only for communicating with the **helping spirits**.

The Call

The spirits visit the candidate in a **dream**, from which he or she wakes and becomes quite ill. The candidate withdraws from others and is compelled out onto the tundra alone, unconsciously following the path of the First Shaman. In that solitude, the candidate is visited again by a *tunerak* (helping spirit) who possesses the candidate. Until the candidate can develop a relationship with the *tunerak* and regain control over his or her own soul, he or she is compelled to do mad, unusual things, like wandering naked on the tundra.

When the relationship with the *tunerak* is secure, the *tunerak* begins to

teach the candidate to create the tools and learn the skills he or she will need to be a **shaman**. The novice shaman begins by making his or her **drum**.

Any young man or women who feels called to become an **angakok** can travel to a master **angakok** and offer an appropriate gift saying, "Takujumaqama (I come to you because I desire to see)." The entire family must be involved, observing **taboos** in preparation for and during this period of five or more days. The **angakok** journeys to the spirit world to clear obstacles there and hears the confessions (taboos violations) of the candidate and family to clear obstacles in **ordinary reality**.

Initiation

Angakok refers to both the shaman and the **spirit vision** the shaman uses to see into other realms and times. The purpose of the **initiation** is to transfer **angakok**, also called **qaumanEq**, to the candidate giving him/her light or enlightenment. After this transfer the candidate will be able to journey into the spirit realms without aid. It is understood that the candidate will continue to develop a relationship with his or her **tunerak** and to train in solitude.

The master **angakok** extracts the candidates **inua** (soul) from his eyes, brain, and intestines, so that the spirits can determine what the candidate needs. The spirits transfer the necessary **angakok** to the candidate through the master as a mysterious light or luminous fires that the candidate feels in his body and his head. This enables him to "see in the dark." His or her **inua** returns to the body, from which it can now travel at will.

Transformed Shamans

The **transformed shamans** of the Inuit were either dedicated by their parents as boys or called to the vocation by the **ke'let** spirits as young men. These boys were highly prized and their aptitude was noticed early in life so that their **gender** transformation could progress easily with their **training**.

White Whale Woman was an **angakok** who transformed herself into a woman/man to marry a woman of the **Fly Agaric mushroom** clan. This traditional Inuit story reminds us that earlier Inuit **angakok** were associated with **shapeshifting** and use of the plant **enthogen** known as **amanita muscaria**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Inverted Tree

A tree represented with its roots in the air and branches in the ground is an archaic symbol of the **Tree of Life**.

Invisible World

See **non-ordinary reality**.

Invocation

An invocation is a call sent by a human to the spirit world. To invoke spirit is to call upon the invisible forces that influence human life. An invocation is a humble request. In **humility** humans invoke pity and help without becoming pitiful.

Invocation is a request that spirit intervene so that the **ritual** or activity will be both successful and in harmony with the flow of the Universe. True invocation involves surrender and a release of the human need for assurance that this will be so. When one invokes spirit there must be absolute trust that the request will bring the desired intervention without expectation of how that is accomplished.

Somé, M. P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

iNyanga

The **iNyanga** is one of three classes of traditional **Zulu** practitioners of the

esoteric arts. The *sanusi*, *sangoma*, and *iNyanga* are all responsible for different aspects of maintaining a healthy relationship between the natural and supernatural realms for their communities.

The *iNyanga*, which means “man of the trees,” is similar to a herbalist or pharmacist. The role is inherited, usually passing from father to son. The **knowledge** passed on through the role is considered part of the wealth of the family. The *iNyanga* is also particularly skilled in finding lost or stolen objects. The role is considered the least powerful of the three classes of practitioners because practitioners do not experience *Ukutwasa*, the call from the ancestral **spirits**.

The *iNyanga* is a healer and **moon** person (one who draws **power** from a relationship with the spirit of the moon) who works primarily with physical **illness** and **disease**. *iNyanga* are often referred to as “**witch doctors**” because they are skilled in the techniques of counteracting *tagati*, the hexes placed on tribal members by witches or sorcerers that make people sick. The *iNyanga* can become a sorcerer himself, an *umtagatin zulu allmaloy insone*, a doer of evil deeds, when he uses his skills to harm another. See also **sorcery**.

Credo Mutwa, V. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Ipadú

See *Coca*.

Iroquois

The Iroquois, or Five Nations Confederacy of New York, includes the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and **Seneca** of the original five nations and the Huron. These are the indigenous peoples of the Northeastern woodlands of **North America**. These

people share closely related languages and many cultural patterns.

The Iroquois believe that everything belongs to the spirit and that **knowledge** of life beyond the physical plane is available to anyone who truly knows how to **dream**. Through the dream, the dreamer has access to sources of wisdom that transcend **space** and **time**. The Iroquois were concerned with shamanic realms of dream precognition, dream telepathy, and encounters with the supernatural.

The Dream

Sleeping dreams were held to be the **language** of the **soul**. To ignore the messages sent by the soul left the dreamer in peril. It was important to remember and interpret the dream accurately and, depending on the meaning of the dream, to enact it. It was not unusual for whole communities to base life-or-death decisions on the prophetic dreams of individuals who were held to be gifted dreamers.

Basic to Iroquois understanding is the belief that the human soul makes its natural desires known through dreams. When the desires are expressed and enacted, the soul is satisfied. Conversely, when the desires are ignored, the soul becomes angry and withdraws well-being and happiness that it wishes for the body. When dreams are repeatedly ignored, the soul may revolt against the body causing **disease** or death.

While the dreamer sleeps, his or her soul journeys outside of the body and brings back information from other places and times. Therefore, what was dreamed would occur. By enacting the dream, the dreamer could control its inevitable occurrence rendering the experience tolerable. If ignored, the dream would occur on its own, with disregard for space and time and the physical well-being of the humans involved. When a dream warned of future trouble or disaster the dreamer could change the outcome of the dream through proper enactment and avert danger.

Some Iroquois nations were more orthodox about dream enactment than others. The Seneca, for example, followed the direction of every dream and enacted them exactly and immediately. Other nations observed and/or enacted only the dreams judged important enough to guide the lives of the people.

Dreams were used by hunters to guide them in their hunt. All animal species have an “elder brother” spirit who is the spiritual source and origin of all the individual animals of that species. If a hunter were to see an elder brother spirit in his dreams, his hunt of that animal would be successful.

The dreams of powerful dreamers could also bring about the reversal of long-standing beliefs or behaviors of whole tribes. This type of radical change is the natural result of the belief that dreams provide access to higher sources of wisdom. These dreams had to be acted upon and made real, regardless of the changes the dream demanded of the people.

The Shaman

The **shamans** of the Iroquois nations were powerful dreamers and gifted in unfolding the meaning in the dreams of others. The terms used for shamans reveal their connection to dreams, like *ratetshents*, meaning “one who dreams,” *arendiwanen*, meaning “one who possesses **Orenda** (spirit power),” and *agotsinanken*, meaning “one who sees true.”

Shamans were called to their profession through their dreams. Novices are summoned by the spirits in dreams and then instructed in their **training** through a series of dreams. For example, a dream of a large white bird with its head splattered with **blood** called the dreamer to serve in the Seneca Eagle Medicine Society. A dream of a *kakonsa*, a false face **mask**, called the dreamer to observe the practices and serve in the **False Face Society**.

Iroquois shamans worked to heal the body and the soul, which they believed was multidimensional, having at least

three aspects. They worked with **helping spirits**, *oyarons*, spirits taking animal form, and spirit guides, who took more human form. In their **healing** sessions they routinely dealt with spirit **possession** and de possession (**exorcism** or **extraction**) and the loss and retrieval of the various aspects of the soul.

Training

An individual shaman’s training was defined by his or her *oyarons* who taught through the shaman’s dreams. Training frequently involved prolonged periods of fasting and isolation to induce dreams and **visions** and to allow the focus necessary to apply the teachings, learn the songs, and master the techniques.

Diagnosis

Shamans used dreams primarily to determine the hidden cause of an illness and the appropriate course of action. Remedies prescribed in dreams often involved communal feasting and dancing and/or the ministrations of one of the **medicine societies**. Dreams could also diagnose the cause of the illness as an act of **sorcery** and reveal its origin.

Methods of **divination** were also used. These varied widely influenced by individual preference, the medicines possessed by a shaman, and/or the practices of a medicine society to which he or she belonged.

The Shaman and Dreams

The Iroquois trust that the spirit beings who communicate through dreams do so as clearly as possible. However, because they exist in a formless reality that is infinitely larger and deeper than that of **ordinary consciousness**, they must often communicate through **symbolic language**. The burden of interpretation lies on the dreamer and those trained to help others in unfolding the true meaning of their dreams. The safety and well-being of the individual and often the whole community depended on the correct interpretation and application of the dream to life.

Correct interpretation was particularly important in respect to “big

dreams,” dreams involving contact with supernatural beings or warnings of imminent disaster. It was regarded as a supremely important social duty to help someone unfold the meaning of a big dream and design the appropriate course of action.

Traditionally, shamans and “grandmothers” were the respected specialists in dream interpretation and enactment. The most frequently consulted dream interpreters were the “grandmothers,” older women past menopause who were respected faith keepers and **clairvoyants**. Traditionally, they might use **scrying** with **water** or **fire** to help divine and clarify meaning of the dream.

Interpretation of a dream or the diagnosis of an illness always took into account the two creating forces of the Iroquois Universe: Order and **Chaos**. These two forces are embodied in the Cosmic Twins who share the power of this world. The twin who embodies the creative life force is steady and helpful to humankind. The twin who embodies chaos is changeable and unpredictable, the **Trickster**. The Mohawk call the twins *Tharonhiawakon*, the sky-holder, and *Tsawiskaron*, which roughly translates to whirlwind.

Soul

The Iroquois believe that there are three aspects of the human soul. There is a **vital soul** that sustains the physical body; it is the sensing soul that remains in the body. There is a **free soul** that is reasonable and intelligent and is meant to travel to and from the body independent of space time. The third aspect of the soul varies. Some people have four or five of this latter type of soul aspect at one time and possible none of this type at another time.

The three aspects of the human soul have different natures and destinations at death. The vital soul is of the body and the physical existence. It becomes one with the **earth** after death.

The free soul is a higher spirit that returns to the **Upperworld** where it existed even before the creation of the

earth. The free soul may linger until *ohkiwes*, the Feast of the Dead, is performed, during which all aspects of the soul are released and the bones are reburied. Afterwards the free soul can reincarnate, which the Iroquois recognize during name-giving ceremonies performed for an infant or a captive.

The final aspect of the soul, sometimes called the double, stays close to earth unless appropriately honored in the Feasts of the Dead. This **ritual** is designed to avert problems with ghosts who can cause harm or sickness in the living. All the spirits of the people, from the earliest **ancestors** to the newly buried, are honored and fed spirit food during this **ceremony**.

When the ceremony is conducted properly the soul will leave the earthly realm and **journey** along the Path of Souls, the Milky Way, toward the lands of the dead. Here the nature of the death, for example suicides, warriors killed in battle, people of other nations, etc., determines the final destination for the soul. See also **Haudinashone**.

Gunn, Allen P. *Grandmothers of the Light*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Moss, R. “Blackrobes and Dreamers.” *Shaman’s Drum* 50 (Winter 1998): 53–59.

I-wa-musp

I-wa-musp is the **gender-variant shaman** of Yuki, a people of the northern **California region of North America**. The *i-wa-musp* comprised a special order of **teachers** of the **sacred**. Their primary focus was instructing the children in the legends and moral tales that comprise the oral traditions of the people. After years of **training** they were able to **sing** the entire tribal history in sing-song monotone without error or repetition. See also **transformed shaman**.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*.
Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Iyári

The shared heart memory of members
of **Huichol** families. Iyári is experienced

and reinforced by participation in the
community, **peyote dance** rituals, and
on the **peyote hunt**. This heart memory
is a kind of genetic memory that comes
simultaneously from the past and from
the present family members.

J

Janai Purnima

Janai Purnima is the most **sacred** pilgrimage and full **moon** festival in the Nepalese shamanic calendar. It is also one of the holiest days throughout **Nepal** as it is the “day the deities return.” For this reason it is also the time of year for the most powerful shamanic **initiations**. *Janai Purnima* is the full moon of the lunar month of Saun, roughly August.

For a full month prior to *Janai Purnima* all the deities retreat to the **Lowerworld** to replenish their powers, or *sakti*. The shamans’ **drums** are silent for the whole month. Upon their return to the **Middeworld** the deities will again be able to help humans. Shamans across Nepal travel to holy **shrines** and **power places** to acquire this rejuvenated **healing** power. They perform many **soul retrievals** and healing rituals for other travelers who leave **offerings** and are in need.

The **Tamang** are of Tibetan ethnicity and are the largest ethnic group in Nepal. Nepal is at the geographic crossroads of the Hindu and Buddhist civilizations of India and Tibet. The Tamang have developed a unique blend of these spiritualities, combined with their own much more ancient pre-Buddhist oral **Bön-po** shamanic tradition.

Peters, L. G. “Mystical Experience in Tamang Shamanism.” *ReVision* 13, no. 2 (1990): 71–85.

Japan

In ancient Japan the **shamans** were predominantly female. Men, called by the **spirits** to be shamans, became

transformed shamans who changed their **gender** to fulfill their calling. Much of the history of **shamanism** in Japan, other than the exclusivity to women, is obscure. However, shamanism continues to be practiced in Okinawa today, still mainly by women.

There is much in the symbolism of Japanese shamanism that is found in shamanism globally. In **rituals** the shaman works with a central mast or tree, which functions as the **Tree of Life**, the “road to the gods.” The essential function of the central mast or tree is to provide a path for the **spirit** who enters the shaman during her **embodiment** to come and go from the ritual. This is particularly important when the shaman is working with spirits who inhabit the **Lowerworld**.

The seven **colors** of the rainbow are incorporated into the symbolism of the seven layers of the **Upperworld**. The rainbow itself serves as the bridge connecting the earthly realms to the **sky** and the spirits inhabiting the Upperworld. By climbing the rainbow while in an ecstatic **trance** state, the shaman, serving as **psychopomp**, can deliver the souls of the dead to their final resting place. The Rainbow Bridge is also used as a rendezvous with their spirit **teachers** and husbands.

Training and Initiation

Today, many Japanese shamans are blind from birth. Young girls are **apprenticed** to accredited shamans and trained for three to seven years. **Training** culminates in an **initiation** ritual. In some districts, the initiation involves an exhausting physical ordeal, designed to induce a deep trance during which the initiate appears unconscious. When the spirits have completed her initiation into the spirit world, she is reanimated and reborn a shaman.

To prepare for the final part of the initiation, the new shaman dons wedding garments. She is wed in a mystical marriage to her deity and **helping spirit**. Through her mystical marriage the shaman becomes a “spirit-woman god”

or *mikogami*, and gods will be born of the marriage between the spirit-woman and the god.

In other Japanese initiations, the candidates must construct a bridge of seven arrows and seven boards that connects the earthly realm to the spirit world. She must construct the bridge, complete this dangerous passage, and successfully establish communication with the spirit world. The successful completion of this initiatory test demonstrates her mastery of trance.

Japanese training often involves paradoxical reversals to cultivate trance mastery. For example, novices stand under ice-cold waterfalls or immerse themselves in cold **water** continually for up to a hundred days in winter. This extreme exposure to cold creates a need within the novice for the spirits to intervene and assist in the cultivation of magical **inner fire**. After a time, the novice masters her own inner **fire** and emerges from the icy water refreshed. Similarly, mastery of fire is cultivated so the novice can touch fire and hot coals while her skin remains cool. These reversals are a general sign of a well-developed trance state.

Healing

Japanese shamans work primarily in an embodiment trance state, allowing the spirit to speak through them to the patient. The shaman works with different types of spirits to accomplish different functions. When the shaman invokes the **spirits of the dead** the ritual is commonly called *shinikuchi*, “dead man’s mouth.” In most cases these are the spirits of parents, relatives, lovers, or friends with whom the patient wants to communicate.

The ritual is called *ikikuchi*, “mouth of a living person,” when the shaman invokes the spirit of a living person from far away. **Divination** rituals are called *kamikuchi*, “mouth of the god,” during which the shaman divines the success or failure in the client’s future or the location of lost objects or people.

Shamans also extract **illness** and malevolent spirits in rituals of **purification** and **cleansing**. The shaman also divines any medicines or other remedies necessary to complete the cure for the physical aspect of a particular illness.

Paraphernalia

The **paraphernalia** of the Japanese shaman is similar to that of the shamans of other cultures on the mainland. Her primary **power object** is her **drum**, used to induce trance, **rattles**, a **mirror**, and the *katā.na*, or saber, used to battle malevolent, harmful spirits.

Transformed Shamans

The *winagu nati*, “becoming a woman,” ritual is central to the male shamans’ transformation. The initiates dress in the sacred garments of female shamans and enter a sacred grove, which would be closed to them as men. The function of the *winagu nati* is to initiate the men and complete their transformation into female shamans. These *yuta* are **gender-variant** shamans who are identified by their culture as females.

Gender transformation is also seen in Shinto rites, during which drumming is used as a device to effect **altered states of consciousness** (though the Shinto trance work is not shamanism). In some Shinto rites men serve as *miko*, spiritual functionaries who embody female deities and spirits in **possession** trance states. The *miko* dresses in the sacred feminine garments and jewels of the deity or spirit he intends to embody. A strongly symbolic characteristic of these **costumes** is the endless knot pattern in the square brooches worn at the waist and loins.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Jesako

An **Ojibwa shaman** known for his performance of the **Shaking Tent Ceremony**, a form of **divination**. The *jesako* performs this **ritual** in the *jesakan*, or *djesikon*, a tent made specifically for the ritual. The practice of the *jesako* flourished side by side with the **Midewiwin Society**.

Wissler, C. *The American Indian*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938.

Jivaro

See **Shuar**.

Journey

A **shaman** is a person who enters an **altered state of consciousness** at will to contact and use an ordinarily hidden reality in order to acquire **knowledge**, **power**, and to help other people. The journey is a general term referring to the shaman's experience contacting and using the ordinarily hidden reality. The journey and the **embodiment trance** are the two poles of a continuum of altered states used by the shamans in their work.

The journey is an **art** form. Like **singing**, dancing, drawing, and all the expressive arts, humans have an innate ability to journey. Innate artistic abilities reside in every human and can be developed through **training**. In addition to innate abilities, some people are also gifted in one or more of these areas. This explains why most people can journey, but only a few become shamans. The shaman is to others what the singer who can add nuance and phrasing to exquisite vocalization is to those who only **sing** in the shower. The shaman is the master of the journey.

In the journey the shaman is often filled with an ineffable joy in what he or

she sees, feels, and experiences. In awe the shaman moves through beautiful and mysterious worlds that open before him/her. Journey experiences are like **waking dreams** that feel real and in which the shaman can control his or her actions and direct his or her adventure. The shaman gains access to a universe that is both new and ancient, strange and familiar. It provides the shaman with profound information about the meaning of his or her own life and death and place within the totality of all existence.

Tribal **cultures** make a careful distinction between those who are qualified to heal, to diagnose, or to teach **rituals** and those who, over and above these qualifications, are able to communicate with the powers of the spirit world by journeying from their bodies. A **medicine man** may be capable of telepathy, clairvoyance, or precognition, but he will remain incomplete and in need of further training as a shaman if he can not journey into the spirit world at will.

The ability to journey allows the shaman to become part of everything in creation, to be connected to all things. This is the key component of shamanism. The shamans' "**techniques of ecstasy**" or their mastery of the use of altered states are not just techniques for standing outside one's own consciousness.

There are two qualities which, when experienced simultaneously, distinguish the altered state of the shaman's journey: First, that the shaman is outside of his or her consciousness of self (ego) and is connected to all things; second, that the shaman can communicate with and affect intentional change in the ordinarily hidden reality. This type of journey defines the shaman from other healers and other out-of-body travelers.

The first movement of the shaman's **soul** on the shamanic journey is to move outside him/herself. However, the next step is what truly distinguishes the shamanic journey from other **out-of-body experiences**. In the journey the

shaman has the ability to enter other realms of existence, participate in the lives of the beings who live there, and communicate with **spirits** and the souls of humans. The shaman's ability to send his or her own consciousness into the consciousness of another entity and return to his or her own self at will is the essence of the shaman's journey.

The shaman is considered to have partial control of experience in the journey. In some journeys this experience may be similar to **lucid dreaming** or a variety of psychotherapeutic visualization techniques like guided imagery, guided meditation, "waking dreams," and Jungian active imagination. However, this is not to say these are all the same states, but that there may be overlap and similarities between them.

There is still something unique, undefined, and as yet not duplicable in the **healing** that a shaman can bring to a damaged soul through a journey. To accomplish this healing the shaman often encounters strange worlds, frightening spirits, and life or death battles, as well as profound states of ecstasy in the journey. These experiences all directly affect the life and longevity of the client and the shaman.

Drawing from descriptions in the literature, interviews with a variety of shamanic practitioners, and personal experience, Roger Walsh, MD, PhD, author and professor of psychiatry, philosophy, and anthropology, outlines the general profile of the shamanic journey:

1. The journey is undertaken for a specific purpose, e.g., to heal a client, bring rain in a time of drought, escort the soul of a dead person to the Source, etc.
2. The shaman enters an altered state by means of their particular practice or discipline. The altered state is controlled and the shaman's concentration is fluidly focused, moving freely from object to object while in the journey.
3. Once established in the altered state, the shaman begins his or her journey, experiencing separation from the

body, decreased awareness of the body and environment to greater and lesser degrees, and traveling as a **free soul** or free spirit.

4. The free soul/spirit enters the shamanic cosmology of the particular shaman or shaman's culture, often involving an **Upperworld**, **Middeworld**, and **Lowerworld** though not always, and the shaman's attention is fluidly focused there.
5. The shaman experiences the journey vividly through multiple sensory modalities, visual, auditory, intuitive, sensory, proprioceptive, emotional, etc.
6. In the journey the shaman calls on personal **helping spirits** for assistance.
7. The shaman moves through **non-ordinary reality** as is necessary to discover the source of the presenting problem and resolve it, returning with **energy** in the form of information (e.g., course of action, ritual, remedies), power (e.g., spirit animals or personal power), or lost soul parts.
8. The shaman reenters his or her body and exits the altered state of consciousness at will.
9. The shaman transmits the energy retrieved from the journey by communicating the information or physically returning the lost energy to the client. Some shamans narrate the content of their journey as it proceeds and upon their return they transmit the energy retrieved to the client and/or further interpret particular aspects of the journey.

In the journey, shamans experience themselves as individuals freed from their physical bodies and the limitations of the physical world. The journeying experience often involves traveling with a helping spirit or merging with and traveling as the helping spirit. For example, an Amazonian shaman may experience running as a jaguar through the rain forest or running with a jaguar.

The content and context of the journey experience are complex and coherent, multilayered in meaning and often

rich in humor. The content is consistent with the shaman's learned cosmology and the purpose of the journey. However, the journey is never the same twice, e.g., no two journeys to the **Land of the Dead** are the same.

Shamans use a variety of practices, or **vehicles**, to enter the altered state of their journey: drumming, chanting, dancing, fasting, sleep deprivation, ingesting **psychotropic plants**, concentration, visualization, running, jumping, and engaging in sexual activity. These practices are often used in combination. For example, fasting and sleep deprivation may be part of three- to four-day **dance** rituals or chanting and dancing may be used after ingesting psychotropic plants. The vehicle chosen depends on many variables, including tradition, training, degree of mastery, the purpose of the journey, cultural expectations, and/or personal preference.

The journey is used for **diagnosis**, **divination**, and healing. The journey is one of many diagnostic techniques used to determine the source of the problem and the course of resolution; for example, what herbs to prescribe, how to use them, what rituals to perform, **taboos** to observe, and what spirits or soul parts are involved. The diagnostic techniques used by a shaman depend on training, development, mastery, cultural expectation, and/or innate gifts of the shaman.

Mircea Eliade, author and professor of theology, explains that the shaman is distinguished by the journey, a magico-religious technique that is exclusive to the shaman and may be called ecstatic whether it is to the Upperworld, the Lowerworld, or the depths of the ocean. In practical application it is more accurate to say that the journey is potentially ecstatic because the shaman is in connection with the spirit world while in the journey. However, the actual depth of the trance state used, which affects the completeness to which the shaman slips into ecstasy, is determined by the shaman's diagnosis. The

diagnosis is relative to the healing needed by the patient, not religious beliefs or cultural biases.

Cowan, Tom. *Fire in the Head: Shamanism and the Celtic Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Eliade, Mircea. ed. *Ancient Religions*. New York: Citadel Press, 1950.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1990.

Walsh, R. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. Palo Alto, CA: Transpersonal Institute 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Juggler

The **shaman** in much of the early literature. The shaman's ability to perform extraordinary feats was called "jugglery." All aspects of the shaman's **healing** and **divination** that employed supernatural powers were considered acts of slight of hand or deception. The explanation offered by the shaman that he or she received his or her **powers** directly from the spirit world was disregarded as the superstition of an ignorant, primitive person.

The shaman's **power displays** were given dismissive, condescending names, though they could not and cannot be adequately explained or duplicated by the untrained. For example, shamans performing Spirit Lodge rituals were (and are still) regularly untied from tight bonds as one of many signs of the presence of spirits. This was labeled the "rope-tying trick."

Displays of mastery of **fire** and **sword** swallowing were dismissed though not explained. Conversations between the shaman and the **spirits** that were audible by anyone present during shamanic **rituals** were dismissed as "ventriloquism." The ability of some shamans to cause seeds to grow instantaneously into full fruit-bearing plants or to transform objects from one form to

another was labeled the “plant-growing trick.”

Profound acts of healing in which the shaman sucks the **disease-causing energy intrusion** from the body of the patient are dismissed as “pretending” even when the object removed ran or flew back to the sorcerer who had sent it.

Wissler, C. *The American Indian*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938.

Ju|'hoansi

A group of **!Kung** of the western Kalahari Desert in southern Africa, also referred to as **San**. Ju|'hoansi language uses four click sounds that are represented in the four symbols (|, ʘ, !, ||). The language has many specifics that cannot be assimilated into English. The Ju|'hoansi, the “real” people, are one of the few groups that practice hunting and gathering at least part time. They live in small groups, often extended families, and maintain strong ties to the land and its resources. Their traditional way of life enables them to create and enjoy a sustaining community solidarity.

This way of life is significantly threatened by the massive loss of land to cattle grazing by the Herero and Tswana peoples and to the general encroachment of contemporary life, Western products, and academic education. In the 1990s the Ju|'hoansi have found it increasingly necessary to replace their extensive economy of hunting and gathering, which requires large land areas, with more intensive economies, like small scale animal husbandry and agriculture, which require less land. Their struggle to live on a land that is dwindling is escalating.

As long as they have land to live on, the Ju|'hoansi continue to practice a powerful, ancient **healing** tradition that is fueled by regular and frequent community healing dances. During the **dance**, healing/spirit energy or *n|om* (*num*) boils in the bodies of the men and women who have been taught to activate it and allow its healing potential

to flow through them. A few individuals emerge as healers or *n|omkxaosi*, “masters of *n|om*,” who serve as stewards of *n|om* and guide its flow toward the service of others. The *n|omkxaosi* could be considered the **shamans** of the Ju|'hoansi.

Many values, beliefs, and ceremonies persist because they perpetuate the creation of fundamentally useful social structures even as the Ju|'hoansi change. For example, there is little difference in authority among individuals and substantial equality between the sexes. Each person is responsible for a set of personal tasks and has a voice in group decision-making.

The community healing dance is largely responsible for maintaining the harmony and balance in Ju|'hoansi life. It is a prime example of shamanic preventative **medicine**. The dances are called when individuals need healing or when the community wants to dance. On an average they are performed four or five times a month. Everyone who is within earshot joins in the celebration and deep sense of collective healing.

The dance is a **vehicle** through which the specific sicknesses of individuals are healed and the community's health is maintained. The dance reinforces the interdependence of everyone and of the land on which they live. It provides an experience of the spiritual interconnectedness of all things, an expression of joy, a constructive outlet for tensions, and an opportunity to participate deeply in the spiritual well-being of others.

Ju|'hoansi healing extends far beyond curing individual illnesses, though that occurs. Healing is an integrating and enhancing force that affects the individual, the group, the environment, and, the Ju|'hoansi believe, the **Kosmos** as well. Healing means the well-being and growth of each individual physically, socially, psychologically, and spiritually. To be well is to be able to apply **knowledge** and summon the strength necessary to fulfill one's individual and community responsibilities.

The all-night dance is the center of this healing tradition. Though the Ju|'hoansi are changing due to the constant impact of the world around them, they return to their n|om. The n|om is the same as it was for their **ancestors** even though it keeps changing. As new degrees of complexity and fluidity enter into the dance, it remains an expression of the values embodied in the Ju|'hoansi way of life—knowledge, strength, and the willingness to help one another.

The Ju|'hoansi way of healing through the dance is but one reflection of a profound spiritual dimension that pervades their lives. As the Ju|'hoansi say in their own words, “being at a dance makes our hearts happy.” Thus their hearts remain a calm center in a sea of contemporary change.

Cosmology

!Xu is believed to be the original source of n|om for humankind, and, in special cases, he still is. !Xu is the leader of the **spirits of the dead** and the husband of Koba, the mother of the bees. (The bee is one of the four most ancient symbols of the Great Goddess in the Old World.) !Xu's village is the place healers journey to retrieve the lost and stolen souls of the sick from the g|aoansi, the spirits of the dead who steal souls and create sickness.

The full cosmology of Ju|'hoansi gods and goddesses is not codified. Who the gods are and the nature of the Ju|'hoansi relationship to them is an individual matter. Ordinarily, the Ju|'hoansi do not speak of gods or the spirits of the dead. However, healers enter into direct communication with the gods and spirits, bargaining, insulting, and doing battle.

N|om

Ju|'hoansi healing is based on n|om, the spiritual energy that pervades and strengthens the lives of the Ju|'hoansi. In the healing dances everyone participates in and shares n|om. Though n|om is often translated in the literature as “medicine,” perhaps *manitou* or

Great Mystery are more accurate comparisons.

N|om resides in the bellies of the men and women, and when they dance it boils. “Boiling” means that the n|om moves from the belly, up the spine, out the arms, and into the fingers where it may be used to heal through the laying on of hands. Those who have been taught to activate n|om are able to cause n|om to boil intentionally by dancing strenuously or singing spirit songs with great strength. These individuals are highly respected for their willingness to activate n|om and the courage to endure the pain of n|om moving through their bodies in the service of their community.

N|om can be sensed by experienced healers in a state of enhanced awareness. Otherwise n|om is visible only in its effects. N|om can be “seen” in the actions of beings and in certain things like a **song** or **music**. N|om is not personal, even when boiling in one's body. N|om can not be possessed or controlled completely, very much like the relationship between shamans and spirit powers in other cultures.

However, unlike other shamanic cultures, n|om is not considered a spirit or a power from outside of the individual. N|om is the primary force in the Ju|'hoansi universe, and it is present in all things of power. It is in the dance fires, the healing songs, and the people, particularly the healers. N|om is at its strongest when it is concentrated and boiled, as it is in the healing dances of the Ju|'hoansi.

Healing

Healing for the Ju|'hoansi is primarily an ongoing process of preventative medicine assimilated at the dances. While individuals with specific problems are healed at the dances, the healers in !aia (the healing altered state) go to everyone at the dance, whether they are presenting symptoms of **illness** or not. This method of healing simultaneously cures on the physical and psychological levels while it stimulates

emotional and spiritual growth, which support the individual's well-being and overall good health.

The Ju|'hoansi believe that for healing to be successful it must take place simultaneously on the personal and communal levels. Dances are held to allow this simultaneous healing to happen. The dance allows the direct intervention on the behalf of another and an opportunity to express and release the pent-up energies of conflict so that peace can be maintained between people. For the Ju|'hoansi whose way of life is interdependent, the basic necessities of food and shelter depend on peace being maintained between people.

In the heightened state of !aia healers communicate with the gods, pleading, arguing, and demanding that the gods save the sick from illness. The healers lay their hands on the sick and, letting loose earth-shattering cries of healing, they pull the sickness out of the patient's body. The screams and howls of the healers are expressions of the intense effort and pain involved for the healers, yet the healing work goes on, often for several hours.

The dance is used to treat virtually every illness. In addition, the Ju|'hoansi use medicinal herbs and salves for minor injuries and infections as well as antibiotics acquired from government agencies.

Healing Rituals

The dance revolves around the fire. The structure is simple, designed to facilitate the activation of n|om and allow the entire camp to participate in this energy. As night falls the women begin the dance by seating themselves around the fire. Shoulder to shoulder, legs intertwined, they sing healing songs and clap rhythmically. The all-night dance will usually end before sunrise the next morning.

The men begin to dance, circling around the singers. The women will get up to dance and heal when their n|om moves them to do so. As the dancing and singing intensify, the n|om is activated in those who are healers. As the n|om

boils, the mood of the dance intensifies and the laughter recedes. Working in an !aia state and working with others who need help to enter their !aia state requires great concentration and care. The dancers, mostly men, do most of the healing, though the singers also enter !aia and heal.

Often, in the case of serious illness, a smaller healing dance is called in which one or two healers and several singers work exclusively on the sick person. If that individual takes a turn for the worse, a full community dance may be called to continue to deepen the power of the healing. The Ju|'hoansi also call dances to heal communal illness like rips in the social fabric, arguments between villages, disagreements about the distribution of food, or anything that disrupts the peaceful flow of their normal interdependent daily life. The healing dance is effective on many different levels simultaneously.

!Aia

!Aia is a transcendent state of consciousness in which the healer experiences an altered sense of consciousness. When the boiling n|om reaches the base of the healer's skull, he or she enters !aia. Once in this state, the dancer can heal. The healer can see into the normally invisible aspects of **ordinary reality** and travel into the realms of the gods and spirits of the dead ancestors. !Aia makes healing possible, enabling those with the courage to enter it able to see what is troubling others or causing their illnesses.

Sickness is understood as a process of **soul loss** in which malevolent spirits of the dead, sent by the gods, try to carry the **soul** of a living person into their realm. In !aia the healer enters directly into **non-ordinary reality** and into the struggle with the malevolent spirits on behalf of the sick person. The more serious the illness, the more intense the struggle.

The healer begins by expressing the wishes of the living to keep the sick person with them and the struggle

escalates from there as necessary. If the healer's *n|om* is strong and the spirit willing, the malevolent spirits will retreat and the soul of the sick person is allowed to return.

The bulb of *Pancreatium trianthum* is occasionally used as an aid in learning to enter !aia. This flowering plant has hallucinogenic properties. It is sliced open and rubbed over cuts made in the scalp. *Pancreatium trianthum* is found in tropical and warm regions of Africa and Asia.

To enter !aia you must die. This is the way the Ju|'hoansi experience and explain !aia. In !aia the soul (*moa*) leaves the body and travels into the spirit realm as it does at death. There is only one experience of death, thus these experiences are the same. The Ju|'hoansi distinguish between final death and the death of !aia in their hope that the healer's soul will return and the healer will come alive again.

The Healing Cry

In the midst of the healing process healers cry out, expelling sickness from themselves. This spontaneous expulsion of breath, sound, and rhythmic thumping is an expression of pain, pain felt as the boiling *n|om* works to heal inside and the pain of the dramatic shuddering and convulsive movements that accompany the movement of *n|om* in the body.

The !aia give the healers “**spirit vision**” so that they can diagnose the cause of the illness in the individual or the community. !Aia allows the healer to heal with the laying on of hands and the **extraction** of malevolent energies from the body. !Aia also allows the soul of the healer to enter the spirit world on the behalf of another and negotiate for the return of lost souls.

Training

The healer's vocation is open to all. Most of the men and many of the women will attempt the difficult training. The pain of boiling *n|om* is quite real. It brings the novice face to face with his or her own death. To move

beyond that fear, one must die and be reborn into !aia. This passage is a terror-filled experience of real physical death. About half the men and one-third of the women will succeed in this training.

With emotional and physical support, inexperienced healers may learn to regulate the intensity and speed with which *n|om* boils up inside them so as to keep a balance between the fear of !aia (death) and the intensity of the boiling *n|om*. If the fear can be contained or accepted, the dancer will dance with greater abandon, wanting the *n|om* to boil and become hotter.

The stronger the *n|om*, the stronger the healing power. *N|om* is at its peak when the songs are sung with great abandon and the healers are working with intensity and depth. At this point in the dance, regulation of *n|om* is critical, especially with inexperienced healers.

Healers must first learn through experience to control their boiling *n|om*. “It hurts,” describes a healer. “It is like fire—it burns you.” Dance after dance, they are overwhelmed with the searing pain of boiling *n|om*, legs go rubbery and bodies writhe in rigid convulsions. Others hold the young healers to prevent them from injuring themselves or running into the fire. Eventually the inexperienced healer learns to regulate the *n|om* and to cool it down. Then they can begin to direct the *n|om* and to heal.

The struggle with the spirits who cause illness, misfortune, and death is the essence of the healer's art, skill, and power. Young healers must learn to activate the *n|om* in their bodies, to control the boiling *n|om*, and finally to function with clarity and intention while in the extreme state of !aia. In !aia healing has three main aspects: seeing properly to locate and diagnose the sickness, pulling out the sickness, and arguing with the gods.

Seeing properly enables the healer to see beyond mere appearances to other realities. During !aia the reality of the invisible world dominates perception. The insides of a healthy person are

clearly different from the insides of a person whose soul the spirits of the dead are trying to steal.

Next, the young healer must learn to pull the sickness out of the body of the patient and to release it from his or her own. The hands are vibrated or lightly shaken close to the skin's surface on either side of the location of the illness. Healers may wrap their whole bodies around a person to pull the sickness out. Once it is drawn out the new healer must learn to expel the sickness from his or her own body. This is done with the release of an earth-shattering scream, shaking it from the hands out into space, and the body's instinctive shuddering to expel the pain.

The young healer must learn to bargain and argue with the gods and to do battle with the spirits of the dead. Healers struggle with the spirits of the dead in an effort to retrieve a sick person's soul. This struggle is the art of the Ju|'hoansi healer, working in !aia is the skill, and n|om is the power.

Finally a healer must learn to "slip out of his or her skin" and to travel to the **Upperworld** "like a breath being released." Once freed from the body, the healer's soul must climb fragile threads or "wires to the sky" that lead to !Xu's village. The threads can break and the souls can fall back to earth. This makes it terrifying.

Shapeshifting

Ju|'hoansi healers also speak of **shape-shifting** once they have left their bodies in !aia. Sometimes they become animals, like lions or vultures, to travel farther and faster. As animals, healers

check up on relatives in faraway places and bring healing if necessary.

Healers also use their animal forms to tease and play jokes on other healers. They are able to appear in animal form in ordinary reality to playfully startle their "prey" or to enter their **dreaming** and make mischief. This back-and-forth is perceived as good-natured play among healers, not competition.

N|omkxaosi-Healers

Healers are first hunters and gatherers and secondarily healers. They enjoy no privileges. For some of the most powerful healers life becomes somewhat different as heightened spiritual dimensions begin to pervade their daily lives. These healers dance frequently, sometimes every day. Unlike ordinary healers, these healers can routinely travel to !Xu's village during !aia. They become able to heal themselves as a state of being, without the need for the healing dance. Even as their healing abilities and general wisdom become widely recognized, they do not gain status nor do they feel a need to hoard their power.

Katz, R. "Education for Transcendence: Lessons from the !Kung Zhu/twasi." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 2 (1973): 136–155.

———, Megan Biesele, and Verna St. Denis. *Healing Makes Our Hearts Happy: Spirituality & Cultural Transformation Among the Kalahari Ju|'Hoansi*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1997.

Schultes, R. E. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

K

Kahuna

The highest expert in a particular field in a given *ohana* (family) or island. *Kahuna* means “keeper of the secret” in Hawaiian. When an elderly *kahuna* passed from this life he or she passed on to a chosen student the secret piece of **knowledge** not taught in school. As the elder breathed his or her last breath, the chosen one became the “keeper of the secret.”

The core of the *kahuna* practice is communicating with the spirit world for information about what is needed for **healing** and how to bring it about. The *kahuna* use drumming, dancing, and massage to connect to the **helping spirits** in ecstatic **trance** states and chanting to speak to the **spirits** through **prayer**.

What would now be considered psychology is a large part of the traditional *kahuna's* practice. Balance in the internal emotional life and between the physical and spiritual sides of life was believed necessary to express *aloha 'aina*, the reverence and love for all things that is central to the Hawaiian way of life.

The *kahuna* believe that fear-based emotions such as greed, hatred, and jealousy need to be understood and not suppressed or denied. These emotions need to be brought into balance with love-based emotions like **humility**, patience, kindness, and “seeing the truth of reality.” It is the *kahuna's* psychological job to help the client understand and heal by restoring balance to his or her life.

The **power** of *kahuna sorcery* comes from using the same psychological understanding to create disharmony. *Kahuna* have the ability to use the opening created by an individual's own

suppressed or denied emotions to manipulate or cause harm. Sorcery can also be used to heal. By looking at the disharmony, pain, or **chaos** in an individual, the *kahuna* and client work backward to the suppressed, fear-based emotions that allowed the sorcery in the first place.

Training

Central to Hawaiian **shamanism** is the awareness of the four basic worlds, or levels of experience. They are *ike papakahi* (the ordinary world), *ike papalua* (the psychic world), *ike papakolu* (the dream world), and *ike papaha* (the world of being). All people move in and out between these worlds with little awareness and often mixing the worlds. The **shaman** is not only aware of them and where he or she is relative to them, but he or she cultivates them and uses them with knowledge, the ability to act on that knowledge, and with purpose.

In *ike papakahi*, ordinary or objective reality, the operating assumption is that Everything Is Separate, which is as it appears to be. The *kahuna* assumes that everything has a beginning and an end and that the laws of cause and effect operate on all things. Mastery of this reality allows the *kahuna* to master healing methods like massage, chiropractic, herbs, medicines, nutrition, and exercise.

In *ike papalua*, the psychic or subjective world, the *kahuna* is aware of the connectedness and inter-relatedness of all things. The operating assumption is that Everything Is Connected. The assumptions that follow are that everything is part of a cycle, in transition, and synchronous. Mastery of this world allows the *kahuna* access to telepathic, **clairvoyant**, **clairsentient**, and **clairaudient** skills.

Mastery of these skills enables the *kahuna* to work with **energy** fields, communication with the **helping spirits** of all kinds, and timelessness. Mastery in all of these areas allows the shaman to utilize healing methods such

as acupuncture, acupressure, and energy balancing.

In *ike papakolu*, the dream world or symbolic world, the central assumption is that Everything Is Symbolic. This leads to the secondary assumptions that everything is part of a pattern and therefore exists in relationships to something(s) else and that everything means what one decides it means. This world materializes when the *kahuna* realizes that reality is a dream.

The flow of logic in *ike papakolu* is that everything is symbolic, and dreams are symbolic; therefore, everything is a dream. By developing mastery of this awareness and this world, the *kahuna* is able to enter into the dream and change it. Changing the dream allows the shaman to change everything. Mastery at this level gives the *kahuna* access to the healing methods of dreamwork, **ritual** work, verbal and visualization therapies, placebos, faith healings, and the use of **power objects**.

In *ike papaha*, the world of being or the holistic world, the central operating principle is that Everything Is One. Mastery of this world allows the *kahuna* to identify with other things, like animals, rocks, or spirit **teachers**. The *kahuna* develops the **art of shapeshifting** or simply gaining the knowledge of the new identity. In this world the healing methods available to the *kahuna* are **divination**, merging with an greater healing energy to heal, or merging with the patient and healing oneself.

It is the *kahuna's* objective to operate effectively in all worlds. The shaman moves into the world in which the source of the problems lie. Once there the *kahuna* acts in the ways and in the worlds that are necessary to achieve healing and a return to balance for the patient or community. In doing so, the *kahuna* aligns his or her actions with the seventh principle of Huna, "Effectiveness is the measure of truth."

In a healing session the *kahuna's* first function is to diagnose the psychological, spiritual, and/or physical cause of the **illness**, ailment, or accident.

Given that **diagnosis** the *kahuna* can use any of the following methods: family therapy, medicinal herbs, prayer to the *aumakua* (family spirits), **nature spirits**, and greater gods and goddesses, massage (*lomi-lomi*), and other physical treatments to restore the balance and harmony with the universe. The *kahuna* works with the client and the client's family to restore interpersonal and intra-personal harmony.

There were over 40 different kinds of craft *kahuna*, 14 *kahuna* of the healing arts, as well as *kahuna* counselors, chiefs, spiritual leaders, and politicians. The variety of *kahuna* specializing in different aspects of the **shamanic healing** arts speaks to the Hawaiian's eloquent and highly developed relationship between the ordinary and non-ordinary world. The *kahuna* related to shamanic techniques and methods are:

Kahuna la'au kahea—one who heals psychological traumas and illness through prayer and esoteric practices.

Kahuna na'au ao—teacher of esoteric wisdom and the practices of spiritual illumination.

Kahuna keuho—one who drives off harmful spirits.

Kahuna kaula—prophet, pure energy, carrier of light.

Kahuna ninau 'uhane—one who speaks with spirits.

Kahuna haha—one who diagnoses illness by feeling the body.

Kahuna pa'ao'ao—one who diagnoses childhood illness by feeling the body.

Kahuna haku mele ula—makers of **chants** and **music**.

Kahuna 'ea—one who could raise the dead.

Kahuna pule—expert in prayer or the calling in of spirit and power (*mana*).

Kahuna pale—one who says the life affirming counter-prayer to neutralize the life-draining, harmful prayer.

Kahuna po'i Uhane—expert in spirit catching.

Kahuna makani—one who works with the wind and with the power of mystic spirits.

Kahuna ho'o-noho-noho—a division of the *makani* who conveyed the spirits of the deceased through the process of death.

King, Seide K. *Kahuna Healing: Holistic Health and Healing Practices of Polynesia*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1983.

———. "Seeing Is Believing: The Four Worlds of the Shaman." *Shaman's Path*. Gary Doore, ed. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Lee, Pali Jae, and Koko Willis. *Tales from the Night Rainbow*. Honolulu: Night Rainbow Publishing Co., 1990.

Yardley, L. K. *The Heart of Huna*. Honolulu: Advanced Neuro Dynamics, Inc., 1991.

Kakonsa

Masks of the Iroquois False Face Society. *Kakonsa* are masks of exaggerated, grotesque, or comic human faces. In their earliest forms they may have been portraits of ancestral shamans. Today they sometimes depict the **spirits** of different **diseases**. See also *gagohsa*.

Moss, R. "Blackrobes and Dreamers." *Shaman's Drum* 50 (1998): 53–59.

Kam

The masculine form of **shaman** in the Altaic language. *Utugun* is the feminine.

Kamay

See *camay*.

Kami

A manifestation of the **sacred** in pre-Buddhist **Japan**. These *kami* were associated with the deities of heaven and **earth** and became associated with specific objects, actions, clans, and individuals, as well as **birds**, **trees**, plants, seas, mountains, and so forth.

In ancient usage, *kami* was the awe-inspiring, superior **power** of the mystical emanating from anything outside of

the ordinary. *Kami* refers to this quality in all things: the superior, the good, the deeds of merit as well as the evil deeds, malevolent forces, and mysterious things that are extraordinary.

Grim, John A. *The Shaman*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

Karadji

An **Aboriginal shaman**. Each tribe has a word for shaman. Many tribes have many **words** distinguishing between **gender**, different aspects like rain-making, and healing by sucking or **divination**, as well as words to distinguish between witchcraft, **sorcery**, and healing. Some examples are *wiringin*, *wireenuns*, *ngangkari*, and **clever man** or **Man of High Degree** from the literature.

The Call

Three general methods of selection are found across **Australia** for male *karadji*: community selection, heredity, and selection by the **spirits**. Some tribes favor one over another; however, talent rarely goes unnoticed and undeveloped. *Karadji* selected and initiated by the spirits are considered the most powerful practitioners.

In most tribes a child's natural gifts are noted as well as inclinations toward psychic experiences, **dream** themes, and association with elders and *karadji*. In southeast Australia these early signs of a natural gift are necessary for candidacy. The child undergoes intense **training** in the tribal mythology and the simpler aspects of the shamanic profession. The child also receives a **helping spirit** in addition to that of his or her family or clan.

The profession can be handed down from parent or grandparent to child, however inheritance alone is not enough. The candidate must have natural talent, training, acceptance by the helping spirits, and ultimately the ability to effect cures.

The third method of selection is a spontaneous dream or **trance** experience. These spontaneous experiences necessarily involve the spirits, particularly the **Ancestors** or the **spirits of the dead**. This type of experience, though spontaneous, can be provoked by sleeping in an isolated place near a grave—particularly that of a deceased shaman, or a sacred cave or waterhole frequented by spirits. If the **vision** or dream is interpreted as “a call” by an initiated *karadji*, the candidate is taught what to expect, trained, and eventually initiated into the profession.

Initiation—the Making

Only individuals who have completed their **initiation** into adulthood can be initiated as *karadji*. The specifics of “*the making*” vary tribe to tribe; however, the pattern of shamanic initiation was laid down in the **dreamtime** and is therefore the same across the continent.

In summary, first the candidate is “killed” by the initiation spirits or by the shamans acting for those initiation spirits. How this occurs and whether it is perceived of as a “death” or a trance varies by region and tribe. The initiation spirits dismember the candidate. Body parts, usually the internal organs, bones (**skull**, thigh, ankles), and/or joints are removed, cleansed, and replaced.

Magical objects and substances are added to the candidate’s body. These **animal spirits** and objects (crystals, liquid **crystal**, pearl shells, stones, cords, and spirit-snakes) embody the power of the **Rainbow Serpent** and are the source of the *karadji*’s power. The candidate is restored to life and returns home. He may appear a bit mad for several days as he establishes his own contact with the spirits of the dead and the spirit beings of the dreamtime. If contact is established he returns to **ordinary consciousness** and professional training begins with elder *karadjis*.

Helping Spirits

Every initiated individual inherits his or her family or clan totem animal. This helping spirit can bring the individual

information in a waking or a trance state. In addition, a shaman connects with an individual, personal helping spirit(s), a *yunbeai*, who assists the shaman. The shaman can draw on the *yunbeai* for help in performing healing and magic, transform into the *yunbeai* in times of danger, or send it to remote locations to take messages or gather information.

An initiated shaman can get a *yunbeai* by going to the “*clever place*” of that bird or animal, which is its sacred center in the dreamtime. In some tribes there is no clear distinction between helping spirits and the magical cords and crystals that are the source of the shaman’s power. They are all manifestations of the powers the shaman receives from the spirit world and can all be used as tools.

Tools

The magical substances can be shot or pressed into the body of a patient to aid in the healing or shot into the body of an initiate to send him into trance and as a transfer of power. The magical cord that is sung or slung into the body of the *karadji* during his making is used to travel to the **Upperworld**.

The **bullroarer**, an **ordinary reality** tool, is the voice of *Baiami* of the **Sky**, the Dreamtime being from whom many *karadji* receive their powers. The bullroarer is used in **weather** magic and to induce trance.

Healing

Karadji practice curing, divination, clairvoyance, mind reading, and some rain making. Every shamanic act begins with a **diagnosis**. Complex cases may require time during which the *karadji* consults with fellow practitioners and relatives of the patient. Some healings are accomplished in a **journey** during with the *karadji* travels to the Upperworld to cure the **illness**, locate a lost **soul**, or influence people at a distance.

Extraction

When sorcery is diagnosed and the cause of the illness is determined to be a magical intrusion in the patient’s body,

the shaman must extract the harmful object. The *karadji* calls his helping spirits and the patient is brought into the cleared **space** and supported in a half-sitting position. The shaman stands close by, gazing at the patient and locating the offending object.

The *karadji* suddenly goes off some distance and looking fiercely at the object within the patient, he bends slightly forward and repeatedly jerks his arm outward at full length, with the hand outstretched, to project magical stones into the patient's body from his own. He then dances across the space with characteristic high knee action and repeats the movements that project the magical stones. Finally, the *karadji* returns to the patient, searches for the offending substance and sucks it out. Often the harmful bone, stone, or thorn is displayed. The *karadji* quietly returns his **power objects** to his own body.

The **extraction** of bones and stones during the healing ritual accomplishes two things. First, it demonstrates the *karadji's* victory over the malevolent activities of the sorcerer. Second, it provides an explanation for the illness and a focus for the patient's willingness and desire to get well and be healthy.

Soul Retrieval

Karadji who have the ability to see the spirits of the living and the dead are said to "possess the strong eye." This ability is necessary to find stolen or wandering souls. A *karadji* must have this power to locate and retrieve lost and stolen souls. Souls are stolen by sorcerers and mischievous or malevolent spirits from other tribes. In Arnhem Land where soul theft by sorcerers is prevalent, the *karadji* then uses the Rainbow Serpent and/or one of its earthly representatives to aid in frightening the mischievous spirit or sorcerer and rescuing the soul. The *karadji* returns with the soul and replaces it in the patient's body.

Power Displays

The *karadji's* powers are used to cure the sick, to detect sorcery, to gather

information of social importance, to visit the sky to release **water** stored there to make rain, to influence people at a distance, and to protect the group.

In addition male shamans sometimes engage in **power displays** to show off the heights of knowledge and power they have obtained. This serves in part to build faith in the shaman's abilities and to advertise those abilities. Initiations are favorite times for power displays.

Power displays common for *karadji* include **mastery of fire**, most often expressed by rolling or walking in hot coals without harm. However *karadji* are also believed to be able to travel on cords of fire or to send fire along their cords into something or someone else. This power is believed to extend from the flame of original fire sung into the *karadji* during his making by *Baiami*.

The magical cords are also used in power displays to show off the *karadji's* ability to travel up into the Upperworld, to the sky, or to the tops of **trees**. After gathering his power, the *karadji* lies on the ground below a tree and sends his cord up into the tree. He then "climbs" the cord into the tree, though the "climbing" often involves no movement of the limbs or the body from its incline position other than the **levitation**.

Disappearing and reappearing are also potent displays of power. *Karadji* were known to suddenly disappear from a group and reappear a great distance away. *Karadji* disappear into trees and emerge from within trees. These acts are distinct from the *karadji's* ability to create illusion, making things appear as things that they are not. This power was more often used as a magical aid to warriors in raiding and defending.

Finally the *karadjis* are said to have powers for traveling at speeds and distances that exceed the physical ability of Aboriginals, who are able in general to walk long distances at a remarkable speed. The *karadji* "run" great distances just above the ground traveling faster than a normal runner and arriving without being winded. It is believed that their helping spirits aid them in this feat.

When Healing Fails

When the healing rituals fail, Aborigines believe that the *karadji* was summoned too late to be effective or that the power of the sorcery was significantly greater than the power of *karadji*. The ritual may fail when the illness is the result of the patient breaking a very important, sacred **taboo** or when the illness is caused by spirits of the dead who will not be appeased and thus continue to pull the soul of the patient over into the **Land of the Dead**. However, consistent failures cannot be explained away. Faith in an ineffective *karadji* will eventually wane and he will be discredited by his people.

A *karadji* can lose his connection to the helping spirits, which will result in the loss of the powers necessary to perform effective rituals. This occurs when the *karadji* breaks one or more of the taboos they must follow. For example, he must not drink hot water, be bitten by certain ants, immerse in salt water, or eat certain foods. When these taboos are broken accidentally it is possible for the powerless *karadji* to re-establish his or her link to the helping spirits with the help of other *karadji*.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994.

Parker, K. L. et al. *Wise Women of the Dreamtime: Aboriginal Tales of the Ancestral Powers*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International Limited, 1993.

Karpay

Karpay is “to be initiated” in the traditions of the **Q’ero** people of the Peruvian Andes. The *karpay* always involves a transmission of **knowledge** and **energy**. In this sense initiation is not a measure of spiritual success, like a graduation, but a creation of potential, like the planting of an **Inka** seed in one’s **soul**. Anyone can receive the *karpay* rites. The *paq’o*, or **shaman**, is distinguished by what he or she is able to do

with the energy and knowledge transmitted in the *karpay*.

Kikituk

A *kikituk* is a figurine of an *angakok’s* (shaman’s) **helping spirit** carved from wood or ivory. It is kept in a warm place in the igloo or on the *angakok’s* body when he or she travels. When animated by the spirit of the *angakok’s* helper, it travels in the *angakok’s* body, entering and exiting through the mouth or armpit.

To use the *kikituk* the *angakok* must first call the spirit into the figure, using drumming, **singing**, and dancing. When the *kikituk* is empowered it can be used to heal or to harm others. When used for healing the *kikituk* is directed to bite the afflicted body part to bite into the spirit that is causing the patient’s illness. When used for **sorcery**, the *kikituk* is sent to burrow into the victim’s body and bite the heart, causing death. See also **Eskimo**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Kila

The *kila* is a special coat that is used by the *angakok* (shaman) of the Copper **Eskimo** to perform **divination**. The *kila* is tied up and, holding it, the *angakok* calls on the **spirits** to enter the *kila* to answer questions for the people. One at a time the members of the audience speak their questions in a form that requires a yes or no answer. If the *kila* becomes heavy, the spirits indicate no; if the *kila* becomes light, the spirits indicate yes.

Different spirits may come and go from the *kila* over the course of the session. At times two spirits may possess the *kila* simultaneously. It also appears that any coat may be used as long as the *angakok* can entice the spirits to enter and interpret their answers correctly. See also *qilaneq*.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Kinaroq

Masks, or *kinaroq*, are important **power objects** for the *tungralik*. Each *kinaroq* houses a **helping spirit** and, when worn during the **dance** rituals, the *kinaroq* allows the *tungralik* to draw the spirit of the mask into his body. This spirit power is called *tunraq* and it enables the *tungralik* to enter a full **embodiment** trance.

Kinaroq are carved secretly, exactly as they are seen in the *tungralik*'s **dream** or **journey**. When completed the *tungralik* conducts the necessary rituals to invoke the spirit in the *kinaroq*. Once housed in the mask, the spirit must be "fed" *yutir (mana)* on a regular basis.

Some examples of traditional *kinaroq* are animal masks like *kaupaq*, the walrus, used to hunt walrus successfully; *ertjeq*, the white-fox, used to get caribou; *juk*, the human female spirit, used to ensure favorable **weather**; and *kukil-luneq*, the wolf, used to acquire *sernililiti*, "the characteristics of the wolf," such as quickness, scent, and skill at attacking prey.

Dialectical variants: *kenaroq*, *kenarqoq*, *kenaijoq*, *kenaujaq*, *kenagpiik* and *kenarpäk*. See also **aghula**; **Alaskan**; **angakok**; **Eskimo**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Kitchi Manitou

(Also known as *Kitshi Manitou*, **Gichimaido**) *Kitchi Manitou* is presented in the literature as the Great Spirit or God of the **Algonquian** peoples. However, the term does not appear in the early accounts of the spiritual practices of these people and may be the result of an infusion of Christian beliefs into the traditional beliefs of the Algonquian. See also **Manitou**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Kitetau

Kitetau are the **sucking shamans** of the Chilula tribe of the Hupa in northern California. They are considered the most powerful shamans among their neighbors in the region.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Knowledge

The fact or condition of knowing is not considered knowledge from a shamanic worldview. Knowledge is mastered only when the shaman is capable of putting the information into action in a way that manifests the intended result. Knowledge is gained then through **training**, skill, and experience. The shaman's knowledge of reality beyond the apparent limitations of the physical world is the means by which the **shaman** accesses and directs power.

Michael Harner, anthropologist and world-renowned expert on **shamanism**, explains that shamanism is not a belief system. Shamans live and work in a system of knowledge that is based on first-hand experience. Every **journey** the shaman takes to get information or to heal is part of a series of personal experiments that expands that system of knowledge.

In this system of knowledge shamans talk and interact with "**spirits**." However, shamans do not believe in spirits. Harner explains that shamans "no more believe there are spirits than they believe they live in a house with their family. This is a very important distinction; shamanism is not a system of faith, but of experience." See also **non-ordinary reality** and **power**.

Nicholson, S., ed. *Shamanism: An Expanded View of Reality*. London: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1987.

Villoldo, A. "Healing and Shamanism." in Mishlove, J., ed. *The Shaman's Message*. Berkeley, CA: Thinking Allowed Productions, 1992.

Korea

The Korean people are descended from Tungustic tribes and are racially and culturally distinct from the Chinese and Japanese. In Korea the *mudang* (shamans) are female. Some scholars believe that the Korean shamanic traditions extend from Tungustic roots and other scholars believe the diversification of practices between provinces is so great that there is no clear unifying source. The rituals of the *mudang* involve **costumes**, dancers, musicians, and the shaman's deep **embodiment** trance, or intentional spirit **possession**.

The influence of the Chinese over Korean life began as early as the 12th century B.C.E. Buddhism entered Korea in the 4th century C.E. and became dominant in the 7th through the 10th centuries. In the 10th century Confucianism controlled the government and became the official **religion** from the 13th to the 20th centuries. Given the powerful suppressive force of these governments and state religions and the powerful persuasive influence of the Soviets and United States, what was once the rich shamanic tradition of the female *mudang* (shaman) was transformed in the minds of the people into a backwards practice of superstition and quackery.

Mudang and Ecstasy

Mudang is derived from "Mu" which means "one who performs miracles" or "the performance of miracles." *Dang*, which was added later, means **altar** or **shrine**. The power of the *mudang* is acquired from the **spirits** while she dances in an ecstatic trance state. In this state she is able to divine the will of

the spirits, communicate to determine **diagnosis** and remedies, and perform healings.

Mu-A, or **ecstasy**, is the essence of the *mudang's* ritual performance. Without it the Korean rituals are simply beautifully crafted ceremonial dances. For the *mudang*, *Mu-A* is a sensation that arises from the heart while the *mudang* is in trance allowing her to see and hear with her heart. *Mu-A* is only possible after the death of the ego force on the *mudang* by the spirits.

The First Mudang

There are many stories that tell of the appearance of the first *mudang*. In all of them the first *mudang* were women, usually princesses of the highest rulers, who were mistreated or came into misfortune. They experience some painful ideal or tragedy, which functions as a shamanic **initiation**. From this they gain their shamanic powers from the spirits, usually *Hanunim* who lives in the **Upperworld** and is the highest deity of all the deities in Nature.

In each of the stories there is a close association between the *mudang*, her powers, and the mountains. We see this association around the world. Wherever there are mountains they are a source of power for the **shaman**. In these stories of the first *mudang* we see Mount Tebek function as the **World Mountain** and the sandalwood tree function as the **Tree of Life**. Bear and Tiger, the top of the food chain in Far Eastern Asia, are commonly associated with the *mudang* as **helping spirits**.

Trance, Dance, Music, and Song

The ability to perform intricate ritual dances while in an embodiment trance is the essence of the *mudang's* power and performance. To this end **dance**, **song**, and **music** play a significant role in the practice of *musok yesul*, the *mudang's* **healing** arts. The survival of a new *mudang* depends upon her artistic skill at performing the rituals and ceremonies, acceptance by society, and the efficacy of her healing work.

The primary role of men in shamanic rituals is that of the musician who accompanies the *mudang* as she performs the dances that are inherent in the rituals and ceremonies of her practice. Traditionally, the role of the musician is highly regarded and is handed down from generation to generation within families.

There are two classes of *paksu mudang*, or male *mudang*. However, both are relatively insignificant as they do not derive their powers from trance, but from reciting sacred **mantras**. The first class is populated by traditionally masculine men who are blind or otherwise visually impaired. The second class of *paksu mudang* is populated by **gender-variant males** who dress in women's garments during the rituals. Male shamans specialize in exorcisms and **divinations** involving the use of drums, cymbals, and the forceful chanting of mantras.

Ritual

Korean shamanic rituals have many parts, often twelve or more, and can take from hours to days to perform. They are performed for protection from harmful spirits and disease, the elimination of malevolent or unclean spirits, blessings, to make offerings, and to gain wealth or longevity. Chaesu gut, the ritual of welfare and prosperity, is typical of Korean seasonal rituals, which are performed based on seasonal timing. Through it the people make seasonal blessings, give offerings of the new crops for future prosperity, and show reverence to their Ancestors and family.

Temporal rituals are performed as they are needed. They are rituals associated with pleasant events like birth, weddings, anniversaries, and with tragic life events, like illness and death. For these events to be fortunate and prosperous they must involve the will of the divine spirit. For example, child bearing and childbirth are not the activities of a man and a woman alone for they necessitate the assistance of divine spirit and therefore the assistance of the *mudang*.

Costume

The traditional *mudang's* headdress of stag horns from the Han period indicates an ancient relationship between the *mudang* with the stag spirit. Today the *mudang* has a different costume for each of the spirits she embodies in ritual. The more powerful and accomplished the *mudang*, the more costumes and **paraphernalia**.

Paraphernalia

The *mudang's* paraphernalia varies greatly between provinces; however, most of the objects are natural or simple household items. For the sake of description, paraphernalia can be divided into five categories of use: altar, charms and oracles, divinations, offerings, and musical instruments.

Altar

Folding screens, often with images of spirits, are used to define **sacred space** and pine branches are placed to define the sacred **space** of the altar specifically. Sacred flags made of paper are used to define the five directions: **north, south, east, west**, and center. Various other sacred flags, made of paper or colored fabrics, are used corresponding to the deities invoked in different rituals. Altar paraphernalia also includes tables set with food **offerings**, straw used to make various effigies in the course of different rituals, and images of spirits and deities placed on the altar to symbolize spiritual presence.

Charms and Protection

Charms and symbols drawn on paper are used to prevent the intrusion of malevolent spirits during the ritual. The "sacred branch" made from a bamboo branch with red, blue, and white paper or fabric on it is placed on an outside wall to prevent the intrusion of malevolent spirits into the home. Pictures of bird symbols, some of mythical **birds**, are used to prevent misfortune or ensure good fortune, depending on the image, how it is used, and within which ritual.

A number of items are used in exorcisms. Beech branches that grow in an eastward direction and cooking knives are used to exorcise malevolent spirits from people. A three-meter bamboo pole is used to exorcise spirits from the home while the *paksu mudang* recites **exorcism** mantras. Also a high chair or poles are used to secure the patient so that the spirit cannot force the patient to run away before the exorcism is complete.

Effigies are used in healing rituals in the place of the sick or the dead. They are made of straw or paper and used to house the spirit of the illness so that it can be sent away or the spirit of the patient so that it can be brought back. A straw puppet is used in a similar way. The spirit of the illness is extracted from the body of the patient and placed into the puppet, then the puppet is left at a crossroads or in the forest to dispose of the illness. Jars or bottles are used to capture harmful spirits in the house. The containers are then sealed and thrown away or buried to dispose of the spirits.

Sacred **mirrors**, or *myongdo*, usually made of **metal**, are used for various purposes, primarily to banish spirits. The reflections in these mirrors are believed to be light spirits who have mysterious powers.

Divination

The *mudang* employs a large variety of divination tools before, during, and after, depending on the ritual being performed. Which tool is used is often determined by the ritual. There are six basic forms of divination.

The first form of divination is whether or not an object balances and stands, or falls. Examples are, *G'omsasil*, knowing truth through a **sword**, and *Ch'angsasil*, knowing truth through a spear. In the former the *mudang* balances a large sword on a table; in the latter she balances the *Ch'ang*, a large three-pronged spear.

The second form is whether or not an object moves up or down. The most

common object used in this technique is *soji*, or burning paper. The paper is folded, prayed into, and burned. Upward motion of the burning paper is interpreted as good health and blessings, downward motion as misfortune.

The third form reads the position or arrangement of an object or objects that have fallen. Common methods involve tossing three *P'ansan*, coins with a square hole in the center and Chinese characters on one side, or five split wooden pieces, each piece representing one of the five elements: **Earth, Fire, Water**, metal, and wood, and all together representing the entire universe. The *mudang* also throws six small swords with fabric attached to the hilt. The direction the fallen swords point is read.

The fourth method, *San'ul bonda*, involves counting a random collection of items. These items can be simple, like pine needles (eight or forty-eight) or seeds, or sophisticated, like the *Sant'ong*, the counting cylinder. This cylinder contains stalks with numbers on them which are drawn, three stalks, three times. The numbers are added and related to a hexagram of the *I Ching* from which the meaning of the divination is interpreted. The *Sangu*, or counting tortoise, is a similar instrument from which coins are taken and meaning divined.

The fifth method of divination involves feats of delicate balance and concentration that can only be accomplished with the assistance of spirit embodied in the *mudang*. In these acts the success or failure of the *mudang's* performance is interpreted as the divine message, not the wisdom or skill of the *mudang*. In the death ritual a whole assortment of objects are balanced upon each other and in the ritual of the heavenly palace the *mudang* dances on paper placed across the mouth of a jar of water.

The most common performance of this type of divination is *Chakdo t'anda*, during which the *mudang* walks on sharp swords, or Chakdo, in bare feet. Success in this endeavor is evidence of

divine assistance for the *mudang* and divine favor for the individual or family for whom the ritual is being performed.

The sixth method of divination employs a physical manifestation of the message of the divine as markings in white rice powder. A paper effigy of the deceased is placed on the smooth surface of the rice powder and covered with a white paper of the clothes of the deceased. The *mudang* offers **prayers** and then removes the covering and the effigy. The markings in the rice powder are read. Footprints of an animal are common and they imply the animal form the spirit of the deceased has reincarnated into. If there are no prints of any kind, then the spirit still wanders in ghost form, which is interpreted as a bad sign as ghosts can cause the family members illness and harm.

Offerings

Offerings of food and drink are left on the altar for the spirits and deities. It is of primary importance that these are clean, and though many are common food items, that they are prepared in a sacred way. **Incense** is burned to cleanse the air. Artificial flowers are made from paper and left on the altar as offerings to the spirits.

Fabric and threads are symbols of long life. Fabrics of all kinds, particularly silk, cotton, and hemp, are placed on the altar as offerings to the spirits. Paper cut in different shapes and designs is offered to the spirits.

Coins and paper money are offered to the spirits during various rituals. They will later be used to pay for the ritual preparations and the services of the *mudang*. Various special offerings that pertain to specific aspects of specific rituals, for example the clothing used in the ritual of the sick and the dead to substitute for the patient or the deceased.

Musical Instruments

The **drum** plays an important role, for it is the rhythmic drumming, often accompanied by **rattle** or chanting, that is used to induce the shaman's trance. The *Buk*

drum is played primarily by men and *paksu mudang*, particularly accompanying the ritual recitation of mantras. The *Chango* drum is shaped like an hourglass and played by the *mudang* during ritual. She plays the left head with her left hand and the right head with rod. Another drum-like instrument is made by placing a gourd dipper bottom up in a jar of water. The base of the gourd is played with the fingertips.

Several bells and gongs are used to call the spirits into the ritual and into the *mudang*. The *Baul* or *Bangul*, bells, are a cluster of seven small bells attached to the end of a stick. The *Okhwangse* is a larger brass bell that is sometimes played with a deer antler. The *Ch'ing* is a small, brass gong used in rituals. The *Dongg'ori*, or sounding bag, is woven from reeds and used to call the **spirits of the dead** or to accompany prayers.

Other instruments include the *Ulsae*, or the bell of mirrors. Clusters of round or square metal mirrors are attached to the two ends of a metal crescent-shaped handle. The *mudang* plays the *ulsae* while she dances into trance. The *Chaek'um* is made from two brass cymbals connected by a piece of white fabric and played during ritual. Finally, two wooden flutes are played during ritual; *Ch'ottae*, the large flute, and *P'ili*, the small flute.

Current History

Communism and religion have implanted the belief that **shamanism** is no more than a superstition. Korea's modernization program continues to attack the spiritual content of shamanism and dismantle the *mudang's* reputation. Physical healing is now left for the doctors and a *mudang* who works with physical illness is considered a quack. The *mudang* is expected to cure the tricks of the spirits that result in mental illness and misfortune.

The artistic quality of the performance is becoming more important than the actual access to spirit through the *mudang*. The success and reputation of today's "*mudang*" can be built on

charisma, artistry, and use of the media, not on whether or not the performance succeeds in fulfilling its original healing or divinatory function.

In the current capitalist climate of competition and aggression, the *mudang* is called on to heal the psycho-spiritual suffering induced by materialistic misfortune. The Korean government's embrace of capitalism as the cornerstone of modernization demands an abrupt shift of values in people whose traditional **ethics** emphasize the metaphysical and spiritual. The resulting social confusion and mass urban migration have created a prevailing sense of uprootedness, fear for personal well-being, and tension and jealousy due to the uneven distribution of wealth. Since the 1980s, most of the shamanic rituals performed in Korean cities are performed to bring the client material prosperity.

To complicate the issue, the Cultural Conservation Law, passed in 1961, encourages preserving the original form of the disappearing folk culture and ritual arts. Through this movement toward conservation, a presentational form of each shamanic ritual is designated the official form of that ritual and protected. This program succeeds in preserving a single form of a traditional ritual, and in effect turning the songs, music, dances, costumes, and **ceremony** into a museum piece. This serves to preserve the form without the function or the essence of the **art**.

The history of shamanism, the ritual music, costumes, and dances are taught at institutions such as The Korean Shamanism Research Institutes (Seoul) and The Folklore Institute of Kyonghi University (Seoul). Shamanic "scholarship" demands the perfect performance of the ritual text and procedure, not the efficacy of the ritual. The focus in these institutions has shifted from the results of the ritual to the accurate reproduction of a registered version of a ritual performance.

The power of Korea's shamanic past may actually be preserved by a third

force, the rising nationalism among college students and activists. They criticize the cultural conservation policy for turning their folk traditions into beautiful but lifeless artifacts devoid of spirit. They criticize the government's oppression of the folk culture and hold up shamans as victims of that oppression.

In their own movement of cultural revitalization, the students and activists recognize the transformational power in shamanic ritual if it is allowed to remain a living art form. The students and activists have learned the traditional rituals and successfully used them as a tool for social reform by adapting them to the purposes of their movement.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Lee, Jung Y. "Korean Shamanistic Rituals." In *Religion and Society* 12. The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1981.

Koryak

A shamanic people of the **Chukchee** Peninsula of eastern **Siberia**. A legend tells of the origins of *amanita muscaria*, the **sacred entheogenic** mushroom of the Koryak shamans. Big Raven caught a whale, but did not have the strength to put it back into the sea. Big Raven called out to Vahiinin (Existence) for help. Vahiinin instructed Big Raven to eat *wapaq* **spirits** for strength and with that, Vahiinin spat upon the **earth**. Where the god's spittle landed, small white plants sprung up, each wearing little red hats, spotted with Vahiinin's white spittle. These were the *wapaq* spirits, *amanita muscaria* **mushrooms**.

Big Raven ate the *wapaq*, became very strong, and, liking this feeling, he pleaded with the *wapaq* to grow forever on the earth. Big Raven then instructed the

humans in how to prepare this gift from Vahiyinin, so that they could learn what the *wapaq* spirits had to teach them.

The mushrooms are dried in the **Sun** and then boiled in water to make a liquor. The **shaman** drums, dances, and sings to the *wapaq* spirits and then drinks the liquor. Once she has entered **trance** the shaman is able to divine answers, predict the future and the **weather**, locate lost objects and people, determine the name of a new child or the best place to drive the reindeer herd, and communicate with the Ancestor spirits.

Male Koryak shamans were predominantly **transformed shamans** who dressed as female shamans and carried out the tasks of the female **gender** role in the community. They entered the woman's door to the dwellings and slept on the woman's side of the animal hide. Traditionally, the gender transformation of the Koryak shaman was quite complete.

Schultes, R.E. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 1992.

Kosabandjigan

The cylindrical tent constructed for the **Shaking Tent Ceremony**. Also known as *djesikiwin*, *kosabatcigan* (Cree), *kocapahtcikan*, *kushapatshikan* (Montagnais). See also *djesikon*.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Kosmos

The Kosmos is everything; it is that which contains the cosmos (matter or physiosphere), the bios (life or biosphere), the nous (**psyche** or noosphere), and the theos (divine **domain** or theosphere). This original meaning of Kosmos is the closest English/Greek

word for the shaman's perspective of all that exists in the universe.

Kosmos was reintroduced into our contemporary vocabulary by Ken Wilber, one of the foremost visionaries of our time. Kosmos, originally a Pythagorean term, is usually translated as cosmos, which means only the physical universe. However, Kosmos is all that is and the connection of all that is. It is the patterned nature of all of existence within which the **shaman** travels while in **altered states of consciousness**.

Traditional science agrees that "self-transcendence" is part of the inherent nature of the Kosmos. However, traditional scientists also believed that random chance events (over a great deal of time) explained the creation of the universe. This theory is no longer believed to be true. Further research has shown us that even twelve billion years, the time since the **big bang** birth of our universe, is not enough time for chance to create a single enzyme necessary for the **evolution** of all life on **earth**. Therefore, there is something other than chance driving the self-transcendence of the Kosmos. Wilber believes that it is Creativity, not chance, that drives the constant evolution of our Kosmos.

Creativity in this sense (and on this scale) is most appropriately understood as the unbound and unquantifiable, which Wilber calls Emptiness. Shamans refer to this Emptiness as the Unknown, the Void, and the Source. It is that which created the Creator. For the shaman, Emptiness is accessed through **ritual** in altered states of consciousness. Emptiness is a potent **space** from which the shaman draws his or her **power** and magic.

It is not appropriate to equate the creativity that builds the Kosmos with anyone's God to make the concept easier to understand. Trying to explain the unexplainable is limited by **language**. Any Kosmos-equals-God explanation is limited in a discussion about shamans because **shamanism** predates **religion**.

Religious beliefs about the Kosmos are based on the fundamental idea that humans are separate from God.

Shamanism is based on the experience that humans are not separate from God. To understand shamanism and its relationship to the Kosmos, we must understand the Kosmos from a non-religious, yet spiritual point of view.

The shaman's Kosmos is grounded in Emptiness. From that Emptiness through Creativity comes Form. Creativity recognizes pattern is the randomness of chance and draws forth order in Form. The shaman does the same on a smaller scale. By accessing this Creativity while in trance, recognizing patterns, and drawing forth order the shaman returns our physical reality to harmony with the Kosmos.

The Kosmos has a formative drive, a direction. That direction is what the shaman recognizes as the flow of the Kosmos. When shamans restore harmony by moving energies between the physical and spiritual worlds, they are redirecting these energies back into the inherent flow of the Kosmos.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

!Kung

A people of the Kalahari Desert on the border of Botswana and Namibia. They are also called **San** in general or Bushmen by outsiders. See also **Ju|'hoansi**.

Kupitja

A magical structure worn through the nose of *urtuku*, shamans of the Waramunga tribe of the Northern Territory of **Australia**. The *kupitja* are made by powerful **spirit** snakes from the **dreamtime** and are full of magic and power. *Urtuku* are initiated by **spirits** of the Dreamtime or by shamans from the Worgaia tribe in a secret **initiation** process. The *kupitja* signifies the initiated *urtuku* and is the source of his power.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994.

Kupuri

Lifeforce energy. See **Huichol**.

Kwaatsi

The leather mask of a Hopi *kachina* performer. *Kwaatsi*, meaning "friend," refers to the understanding that these **masks** are alive with the spirit of the *kachina*. They must be fed **offerings** like **corn pollen** and hidden when they are not in use. A *kwaatsi* is a **power object** that must be cared for as a **sacred** being. Also called *twiku*, *itaakwatsim* (pl).

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.



Ladder

One of many symbolic variations of the paths used by the **shaman** to access the Upper and Lower realms of the spirit world. The ladder and its variation the stair are found in countless examples of shamanic ascent to the **Sky** and descent to the **Lowerworld**. The same pathways are used by the **spirits** as they travel from the spirit world to join with the shaman in **trance** and by the souls of the dead as they travel to their final resting place in the spirit world.

Making the ladder literal, the Dusun shaman of Borneo sets up a ladder in the center of the room in which he will treat the patient. Like the central poles erected in the yurts of **Siberian** shamans, the ladder reaches the roof allowing the spirits easy access to the shaman as he or she enters trance.

These **sacred** ladders and stairs are usually described as having a sacred number of rungs or steps, often six, seven, or twelve. The ladder also appears in the final stage of **initiation** of the shamans of many cultures, for example **Korea** and **Nepal**.

The ladder is primarily associated with the final passing of the souls of the dead from the **earth** plane and of the soul of the shaman in the initiatory death, before his or her rebirth as a fully recognized shaman. The ladder then plays a part in the **psychopompic** work of the shaman when it is necessary for the shaman to escort the souls of the dead on their **journey** to their final resting place. Without having successfully completed this passage into death and return to the living in his or her **initiation**, the shaman would be unable to safely or successfully function as a psychopomp.

However, the ladder and stair are only two of many traditional, symbolic expressions for ascent and descent. The **Upperworld** can be reached by rising smoke, a rope, the rainbow, or a ray of sunlight. Another variation found in Melanesia, **North America**, and **South America** is a series of arrows shot into the sky to create a ladder in the air. In **Australia** a long strip of cloth is fixed to a lance that is hurled into the celestial vault, allowing the shaman to ascend the trailing cloth.

The journey of the souls of the dead is different in every shamanic culture; however, it is always long and difficult and fraught with distractions and dangers. Nonetheless, the symbols of this passage repeat in patterns around the world. They are all created from the images arising from the shaman's experience of moving between the worlds in the **World Tree** or along the *axis mundi*.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Lahatconos

The elaborate communal **dance ritual** for the initiation of new shamans among the **Wintun**. Unmarried men and women between the ages of fourteen and thirty-five participated. Those who were taken by **spirit** in a spontaneous **possession trance** during the night-long dance ritual were then taken into **training** by elder shamans. Not everyone who participated was necessarily taken by spirit; the dance ritual was an opportunity for selection by spirit. *Lahatconos* is derived from the Wintu stem *laha*, which means to go into trance.

A *lahatconos* ritual was conducted by elder shamans in an earth lodge evening. A manzanita-wood **fire** is built in the center of the lodge in the evening and the shamans and participants **sing** to invoke the **spirits**. Everyone then dances naked through the night inviting the spirits into their bodies. The arrival of the spirits is heard in a whistling at the top of the lodge.

As the spirits enter the lodge, they find a desirable candidate and enter through the ears. The elder shamans aid spirit's entry by placing **feathers** in the ears and on the heads of the dancers who are taken. When first possessed by spirit the dancer's body jerks convulsively, his or her behavior is crazed, and he or she may salivate or bleed from the mouth and nose. The dancer rarely remembers what occurs during this spontaneous possession trance. Dancers may try to reach the roof, climb the central pole, or leave the lodge.

The attending shamans facilitate the trance states of the novices, helping them in their bid to acquire power. They perform sucking **extractions** on the foreheads, chests, backs, and arms of the novices to purify them. The shamans may transfer **power** to the novice to facilitate the acceptance of the possessing spirit with a feather. Yellowhammer feathers are placed into each ear of the candidate or on the head from where they are seen being absorbed into the candidate's head.

Candidates chosen by spirit during the *lahatconos* will remain in the lodge with the elder shamans for five days. The activities of the five days are secret; however, it is assumed that the candidates are aided in recovery from their spontaneous ecstatic experience and taught to control the entry into and exit from trance, enabling them to call on their new **helping spirits** at will in the future.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Lakota

A people of the northern plains of **North America**. They are one of many Siouian peoples. Several hundred years ago they moved from the South, settled on the Plains, and adjusted their lifestyle to harmonize with the **rhythms** and resources of this new environment. As

they moved across the Plains the buffalo became central to their daily survival and their spiritual life.

The Lakota have a rich ceremonial life. One of the best-known ceremonials is the **Sun Dance**, held at midsummer by the Lakota and other tribes of the Plains. Lakota rituals and ceremonies involve intricate symbolism and many separate **sacred** acts go into the preparation and execution of these ceremonies. This is seen in specific ways in which the ceremonial **paraphernalia** is laid out to create **altars** and in the traditional **offerings** of **blood sacrifice**. The symbolism of *cangkdeska wakang*, the sacred hoop or medicine wheel, is found in most sacred acts. The Lakota associate black with the **West** and the home of the Thunderbeings who send them rain. White is associated with the **North**, the source of the great white **cleansing** wind. Red is associated with the **East**, the source of light and home of the morning star who gives humankind wisdom. Yellow is associated with the **South**, the summer, and the power to grow.

Giveaway

Generosity is a deeply held Lakota value. The Giveaway is a ceremonial expression of this value and is often held in tandem with the Sun Dance Ceremony. In the Giveaway **ceremony** the chief redistributes most of his wealth to others in the community or extended family.

Yuwipi

The **yuwipi** is a traditional **healing ritual** performed by Lakota shamans. The *yuwipi* ritual is a form of the **Spirit Lodge** or **Shaking Tent Ceremony** common in North America. The name *yuwipi*, from the Dakota **language**, refers to the binding and wrapping of the practitioner before he or she enters trance. The Lakota **shaman** uses the *yuwipi* for **divination** and healing.

The Lakota recognize shamans and diviners or **seers** who perform the *yuwipi*. They also recognize medicine people who heal with herbs and plant

preparations, individuals with medicinal powers that are not used for healing, and sorcerers, whose powers are often used to create **illness** and death in others.

Wakan

Wakan is the essential life force in all things. In its manifestation as a fiery spiritual power it is called *wakanda*. “*Wakan*” is also used to denote a sacred person like a shaman, **medicine man**, or a *winkte*.

Wakan tanka, the “great mysterious one,” is the power of the universe or the **Great Mystery**. The **medicine pipe** provides a way for the people to talk to *wakan tanka*. The pipe was brought to the Lakota by White Buffalo Calf Woman who by giving them the bowl that represented the sacred feminine and the stem that represented the sacred masculine showed them the power in balance.

White Buffalo Calf Woman

The coming of *wohpe*, White Buffalo Calf Woman, formalized the compact between humans and animals in which the animals allow themselves to be killed. Mediating this agreement is one of the primary roles of the shaman.

White Buffalo Calf Woman taught the Lakota to plant corn and use horses in the process of killing buffalo. Prior to her arrival the Lakota were a nomadic people with **fire**, bow and arrows, and yucca as a food staple.

Inipi

The Lakota practice of *inikagapi wójeya*, or *inipi* for short, is the most widespread **sweat lodge** tradition in North America. The Stone People Lodge, as it is also known, was brought to the Lakota by White Buffalo Calf Woman. She gave the Lakota directions for building the lodge and instructions for using it. If done properly, all the powers of the Universe are brought into play through the ceremony and to the aid of the participants.

Hanblecheyapi

The Lakota **vision quest**, or *hanblecheyapi*, is the primary means of

gaining power for Lakota shamans. It is a sacred practice they repeat over the years to gain new powers, songs, and medicines. The term is derived from *hanblecheya*, which means “crying for a vision,” the purpose of all vision quests.

The Call

A young Lakota person gains spiritual power from the visions given by spirit during his or her first vision quest. The vision instructs the young person in what he or she came into this life to be. A person is directed to become *wakan*, a sacred person, if Bear, Wolf, Thunder, Buffalo, White Buffalo Calf Woman, or Double Woman appears in the vision. Each of these **helping spirits** brings to the person a different gift that guides them in becoming a shaman, or a *winkte* (*berdache*) or an *Anukite ihanblapi* (**transformed shaman**).

All three of these sacred people are given unique instructions for life and for rituals from their helping spirits. These people were not bound by normal rules of conduct because they are instructed by spirit. Their unusualness is seen as an indication of their sacredness.

Shamans, *anukite ihanblapi*, and *winkte* are distinguished among the Lakota by their direct relationships with spirit. Shamans specialize in divination, the creation of healing rituals, and procuring medicines for different purposes. The *anukite ihanblapi* tended to specialize in some aspect of curing like chanting. Many were given special chants by spirit for curing illness, insanity, and for aiding in childbirth and love medicine.

The *winkte* often specialized in funerary preparations and were the first person consulted after a death in the community. They prepared the dead, made preparation for the necessary **singing** and dancing rites for the living, and prepared the wake, often doing all the cooking themselves. *Winktes* could become shamans, however they usually did not. Nonetheless, they tended to show at least some *wakan* powers for healing.

Transformed Shamans

The *anukite ihanblapi* were the transformed shamans of the Lakota. The name means “they who dream of face-on-both-sides” and refers to Double Woman, the spirit who comes to these bodies during their *hanblecheyapi*. Double Woman calls these boys to their vocation and its required **gender** transformation. As boys and men, the *anukite ihanblapi* dress and wear their hair in the tradition of females in their tribe and serve the community at large as shamans.

Gunn, Allen P. *Grandmothers of the Light*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Lamaism

A Tibetan form of Buddhism. There is crossover from Buddhism to **shamanism** and vice versa in Tibet. The distinction between lamas and **shamans** is in the source of their information. The lama studies the Buddhist scriptures at great length. The shamans’ study takes place in the spirit world through direct transmission of information while in trance. The shamans’ source of information is purely visionary.

Land of the Dead

The Land of the Dead refers to a place in **non-ordinary reality**, or the invisible world, where the souls of the dead travel once they leave the physical body. Many shamanic cultures place the Land of the Dead in the **Lowerworld** and some place it in the **Upperworld**. Others make no such distinction other than its existence in the spirit realms.

The Land of the Dead is of primary importance to shamans, who must know how to get there and how to safely enter, exit, and return from the **domain** of the dead. It is often the place

to which the shaman must travel to retrieve the lost souls of the living. Lost souls may get stuck accidentally as they wander in search of deceased loved ones, while others are taken there by the **spirits of the dead**.

The Land of the Dead is also the destination of the shaman when he or she is acting as a **psychopomp** for a **soul**. The soul may be recently deceased or a lingering ghost. As psychopomp, the shaman guides the soul and assures its safe and complete passage to the Land of the Dead.

Language

One of the shaman’s primary roles is to mediate between the spirit world and the human world. Therefore it is essential that the shaman can clearly and accurately communicate the experiences and messages from **non-ordinary reality** to an audience bound to **ordinary reality**. The basis of human language is metaphorical and clarity is created through comparing the unknown idea or thing to known places, actions, or things.

Shamans often speak poetically and use a vocabulary of **words** far outnumbering the words used by the average speaker of his or her language. For example, a **Yakut** shaman was recorded using 12,000 words, while the average Yakut uses approximately 3,000. The increased vocabulary allows the shaman to communicate the extraordinary qualities of the spirit world through comparisons with and similarities to ordinary places, actions, and things.

The spirits often use a special language to communicate with the shaman. It is considered an ancestral or primal language of spirit that is imbued with the **power** to create. Like all things with creative potential, the primal language also has the potential to be lethal. When spoken under certain circumstances this special language has the power to manifest what is uttered, for better or for worse. Shamans can work with this power to heal through words

and language. A simple, single phrase at the right moment is often the key to unlocking higher consciousness, unrealized potential, or the patient's innate capacity to heal. See also **glossolalia** and **sacred language**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Pennick, N. *Magical Alphabets*. York Beach, ME: Samuel Wieser, Inc., 1992.

Somé, M. P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Lapps

See **Saami**.

Lehs

Lehs is the **Wintun** word for **soul**, the animating life force of the body. It refers to the human soul in the living and as it leaves the deceased. A *lehs* can become a **helping spirit** for a **shaman**. When a *lehs* remains around the living inappropriately or malevolently it is considered a ghost, or **loltcit**. It can be dangerous to come in contact with a *loltcit*. Also known as *les, läs*. See also **yapaitu**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Lehstconos

Lehstconos, or the Wintu Soul Dance, is a particular type of **shamanic healing ritual** involving both **exorcism** and **extraction of energy intrusions**. It can only be performed by powerful shamans. The *lehstconos* involves displays of power with **fire** swallowing by the **shaman** and is considered the most spectacular of the **Wintun** healing

rituals to observe. The *lehstconos* is performed by a single shaman, accompanied by **singing** and percussion performed by the audience, as with other Wintun healing rituals.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Levitation

Levitation is the act or phenomenon of rising or floating in the air. In **trance** states induced by hallucinogens, the person in trance often reports the feeling of leaving the body and floating or flying. To determine whether or not the individual is actually flying, one would have to decide whether the individual is actually the body or the soul.

There are countless stories of the **First Shaman** and the ancient shamans taking their bodies with them on their soul **journeys**. They were said to physically fly through the air, swim into the **earth** to enter the **Lowerworld**, and literally change the shape of their bodies into the forms of other living things. Though we assume that these stories are metaphors, we will never truly know how different the world was after the **Dreamtime**. We will never be able to prove that these magical acts did not happen then.

Lhamana

A **gender-variant male**, or **berdache** (**berdach**), of the Zuñi. The *lhamana* served their people as sages, healers, and **ritual** artisans. In Zuñi tradition, biological sex does not dictate the social role or **gender** that an individual will assume as they mature. Gender is seen not as an inborn trait, but as an acquired trait with a corresponding social role to fulfill. Zuñi believe gender is not limited to two types and all genders have well-defined, traditional roles.

The underlying wisdom of this belief is seen in a key episode in the Zuñi

creation mythology. This story tells of how the *lhamana* was created by the deities for the special purpose of mediation between people and **spirits**.

In a battle between the kachina spirits of the agricultural Zuñi and spirits of the enemy hunters, *Ko'lhamana*, a kachina spirit, was captured by the enemy spirits and transformed into a man-woman being. From this transformation, *Ko'lhamana* acquired peace-making skills that allowed him/her to understand both sides and mediate effectively. Through mediation, *Ko'lhamana* came up with a way for the different lifestyles of the hunters and farmers to both be honored while allowing the people to live together peacefully.

We'wha, born in 1849, was the most famous and celebrated *lhamana* of the Zuñi by contemporary standards, largely due to her travels to Washington, D.C., with her friend, anthropologist Matilda Stevenson. In Washington, We'wha charmed social circles and met the president of the United States Grover Cleveland, without raising suspicion of her alternative gender.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Lhamo/Lhapa

A type of traditional Tibetan oracle who can temporarily embody deities and perform acts of **shamanic healing** and **divination**. The *lhamo* usually embody *srungma*, fierce protective deities associated with **Bön shamanism** instead of the highest ranking Buddhist deities who are embodied by the monastic oracle **priests**. The *lhamo* (*lha* meaning deity and *mo* meaning female) and her male counterpart the *lhapa* usually perform their healing rituals in their own homes for ordinary people.

As with other shamanic healers the *lhamo* is selected by spirit, which often

manifests in the onset of an unexplained mental or physical **illness**. To become a practicing *lhamo*, the candidate must receive the **training** and healing necessary to fully embody the possessing spirit, usually from an initiated *lhamo*. The *lhamo* must also learn to master the **embodiment trance** state.

The *lhamo* is primarily a sucking doctor or a specialist in the **extraction** of poisons, toxic substances, and **energy intrusions** from the patient's body. Sucking is performed directly with the mouth on the skin or with a thin tube. The intrusive substance removed from the body of the patient is spat into a container to be disposed of in a later ritual with hungry **spirits**. Typical physical manifestations of the energy intrusions removed by the *lhamo* include: putrid meat, tar-like blood clots, stones, worms, hairballs, nails, or pus-like liquids.

Given the fierce and compassionate nature of the deities embodied by the *lhamo*, the healing rituals are intense and dramatic. The healing procedures, primarily extraction work, can become brutal and painful in climactic moments depending on the *lhamo* and the deity she embodies. The deity moves so forcefully in the body of the *lhamo* that she may slap or pound on the patient, grab their hair, bite, spit holy water, rub the deities' blood in their face, or forcefully throw holy water on them. The extractions are painful procedures that often leave red marks on the patient's body that later turn to bruises.

The *lhamo* is also considered an exorcist. Some of the brutality of the extraction procedures is understood in **Tamang** culture as attacks on the malevolent **spirit** that is invading the patient's body. The pain is endured because the healings are successful.

The *lhamo's* healing rituals begin with **prayer** and a **cleansing** bath of sage smoke while facing the altar. She begins the process of **trance induction**, each *lhamo* using her unique variation on the general pattern of invoking spirit within the body. Eventually the *lhamo* dons her ritual **costume** and completes

her entry into trance and transformation into the possessing deity.

Once the healing begins patients approach the *lhamo* one at a **time**. A **diagnosis** is made and, when the diagnosis is unclear, a short divination is performed using her **drum**. When appropriate the *lhamo* refers patients to allopathic doctors to have the physical manifestation of an illness treated physically. The *lhamo* often has more than one *srungma*, which are embodied for different healing purposes. Transition from one deity to another is rarely apparent to the patient.

Strong *lhamo* and *lhapa* are versatile healers. They treat the full range of physical, mental, and spiritual illnesses. They are also able to heal at a distance. For this procedure a *khata* is used, a long white silk scarf. A person, often kin of the absent patient, holds one end of the *khata* and the *lhamo* holds the other, often with a picture of the patient. The *lhamo* sucks on her end of the *khata* until the illness is extracted and spit out, just as if the patient were present.

Peters, L. "The Tibetan Healing Rituals of Dorje Yüdrönma: A Fierce Manifestation of Feminine Cosmic Force." *Shaman's Drum* 45 (June–August 1997): 36–47.

Libation

A liquid substance used as a sacrificial **offering**. Common libations include fresh water, honey, milk, oil, and wine, mead, or other fermented beverage.

Life Cycle

The life cycle of the human is often used as a layer of symbolism by shamans working with divination tools. Each layer of symbolism adds meaning to the particular cast of the cards, shells, **runes**, etc. Different cultures orient the life cycle in different ways.

For example, **Celtic** beliefs place the child in the northeast with the spring

festival Imbolc, the youth in the southeast with the summer festival Beltaine, the adult in the southwest with the harvest festival Lughnasadh, and the elder in the northeast with the festival Samhain.

In contrast **Si.Si.Wiss** of the Pacific Northwest coastal region place the child in the **East**, the place of souls coming in, the youth in the **North**, the adult in the **West**, the place of facing fears, and the elder in the **South**, the carrier of knowledge and the place of souls leaving. However the life cycle is oriented by a particular culture it creates a potent layer meaning for divination.

Matthews, J., et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Moses, J. personal communication, 1993.

Liminal States

The term was introduced into anthropology specifically to refer to the critical, transitional state within the **initiation** process. In this state the individual is no longer who, where, or when they were, but are not yet the person they are to become. They are neither here nor there. They are nowhere relative to their familiar, cultural **space/time** construct. Without entering this state, the individual will not experience initiation. Without successfully passing through this transitional state, the individual can not re-establish a sane and balanced relationship with reality.

Recently, anthropologists have begun to use "liminal" to refer to any of the shaman's deep **trance** states, during which the **shaman** communicates with **helping spirits**. However, from the practitioners perspective the deep, working trance states are qualitatively different than the transitional nature of the liminal state. Indigenous peoples usually refer to the shaman and initiates in deep trance states as "dead."

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Loltcit

The common **Wintun** word for a ghost formed from a *lehs*, the **soul** of a human, living or deceased. Contact with a *loltcit* is dangerous. It can cause **illness** from fright or **soul loss**. Symptoms of illness caused by contact with a *loltcit* are weakness and the loss of speech, hysterical laughing and weeping. For this type of illness the patient must see a **shaman**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Lowerworld

From a shamanic perspective anything and everything has, or is, spirit. The **spirit** aspect of everything, which is normally invisible, is experienced directly by the **shaman** through his or her senses while in an ecstatic **altered state of consciousness**.

This invisible world, or **non-ordinary reality**, is experienced by the shamans of many different cultures to have three realms: the **Upperworld**, **Middeworld**, and Lowerworld. These realms are non-linear, with limitless **space** and without **time**.

The Lowerworld is accessed through things that exist physically in **ordinary reality** that go down, like **trees**, tree stumps rooted in the ground, **caves**, holes, natural springs, hot springs, wells and tunnels that lead downward. The shaman's spirit enters one of these openings and travels downward until he or she reaches the intended area of the Lowerworld. The shaman then journeys through the Lowerworld with his or her **helping spirits**. The **power animal** either travels downward with the shaman or joins the shaman in the Lowerworld.

The Lowerworld is inhabited by power animals and other helping spirits, like the spirits of Nature or the **elements**. The shamans enter this realm to retrieve information, helping spirits, and lost souls. The shaman works in a journeying **trance** state, which is often ecstatic, to maintain a presence in the Lowerworld.

In seafaring cultures, like the **Inuit**, Lowerworld **journeys** are journeys to the bottom of the sea to meet the **Mistress of the Beasts** and the spirits of her sea creatures. Here the shaman must pass tests, promise to conduct healing rituals, and please her in order to receive the **sacrifice** of her animals for humans to kill and eat. The Lowerworld is traditionally a place of tests and challenges for the shaman.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Lucid Dreaming

A lucid dream is a dream in which the dreamer is aware that the dream is a dream while it is taking place. This quality of "waking up" in the dream enables the dreamer to act and interact with dream figures with some degree of intention. Mastery of this dreaming state of awareness is a highly valued shamanic skill.

Shamans in various cultures use this dream state as a **divination** tool to diagnose **illness** and clarify remedies. Some use this state as a **healing** tool to work with a patient's soul in the dream state to facilitate healing. In many shamanic cultures this dreaming ability is nurtured in everyone to encourage and enhance their own encounters with **spirits** in the dream state. Since this ability is not limited to shamans, any dreamer who learns to enter the lucid dream state can communicate with entities and energies who are otherwise invisible in the waking state.

The lucid dream state is one of many **altered states of consciousness** used by

the **shaman**. A lucid dream is not the same altered state as a shamanic **journey** or an **embodiment** trance. This does not diminish the **power** of lucid dreaming, but defines it as a different type of shamanic trance. For example, a shaman may dream at night that the cause of the patient's illness is soul theft

and then journey the next day to recover the lost soul of the patient from the **soul thief**.

Taylor, J. "The Healing Spirit of Lucid Dreaming." *Shaman's Drum* 27 (Spring 1992): 54–62.

M

Maban

Magical substances of **power** inserted into **Aboriginal** shamans in **Australia** during their **initiations**. *Maban* are most often manifest in quartz crystals, other magical stones, pearl shells, and little rainbow snakes. They convey the power of the **Rainbow Serpent** or other Creator **spirit** into the **shaman**. With **training** the shaman can use the power of the *maban* for healing, **divination**, clairvoyance, travel in the **dreamtime**, **power displays**, and to gather wisdom and **knowledge**. Also known as *maban-ba* and *mabain*. See also *karadji*.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994.

Machi

A *machi* is a **shaman** of the **Mapuche** people of southern Chile in **South America**. They are predominantly female and **gender-variant males**.

Madu

The **sucking shaman** of the Pomo people of coastal California in **North America**. The *madu*, also called “maru doctors” or **dream shamans**, are one of two types of Pomo shamans. The second type, the *qoobakivalxale*, gain their **power** through the hereditary transfer of songs and the outfit (tools and **power objects**). The *madu* gain their power from spontaneous **mystical experiences** of the *Marumda*, the creator, who transmits the power to perceive **disease** and heal it.

These spontaneous mystical experiences come as dreams or visions usually

during an **illness** and not before middle age. This visionary experience usually comes twice, allowing the *Marumda* or an unnamed **spirit** to transmit to the novice songs and techniques for **diagnosis**, sucking, and curing.

The *madu's* tools are songs, angelica root chewed for protection, and the *dupaxaka*, a long obsidian knife carved for each **healing ceremony** and never used twice. The *madu's* ability to diagnose is often instantaneous as soon as he or she sees the patient. If there is uncertainty, the *madu* will **sing** to embody his power more fully. The *madu* may rub his hands and the patient with the chewed angelica root, then massage, suck, and taste the patient's skin to complete or confirm the diagnosis.

If the *madu* determines that sucking is the appropriate remedy, he or she will proceed with the treatment. The *madu* usually sucks a clot of **blood** through the skin, instead of **pains** or **disease objects**. The *madu* will also perform bloodletting treatments when appropriate. See also **extraction**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Magical Alphabets

Magical alphabets, like **Celtic oghams** and Norse **runes**, were used by the shamans of many different cultures for **divination** and magic. As a set, the characters of a magical alphabet describe the metaphysical nature of reality. Individually, each character is associated with a **sacred sound**, name, and a specific object or quality, like **water** and the flow of the unseen forces of life or **fire**.

These alphabets are used as a shorthand to communicate complex concepts that often defy explanation in **words** alone. As a divination tool, the multiple layers of meaning associated with each character allow the characters, when brought into association

with each other, to reveal the true depth and complexity of reality. In adept hands the esoteric nature of the characters allows these nonverbal expressions of reality to alter the consciousness of those who work with them.

Pennick, N. *Magical Alphabets*. York Beach, ME: Samuel Wieser, Inc., 1992.

Magical Darts

The intrusion of a magical dart or other object into the body is believed to be the cause of **illness** in many shamanic cultures around the world. To intentionally send a dart into another is universally considered an act of **sorcery**. In many cultures the **shaman** uses one of his or her darts to **extract** the offending dart by blowing a dart into the patient's body where it skewers the offending dart and then sucking both darts out together.

In the Amazon region these darts are called *tsentsak*, *chonta*, or *virote*, a Spanish word. Working with darts often involves working with magical **phlegm**.

Mahu

A **gender-variant male** functionary in traditional **Hawaiian** ceremonies and rituals, similar to the North American *berdache*. A candidate was required to succeed in **training** and **initiation** to be recognized as a *mahu*. The *mahu* was androgynous in character, performed a mixture of men's and women's work, and dressed in a blend of male and female attire. *Mahu* were the receptive sexual partners to traditionally masculine men. However, due to their spiritual role within the culture, they were considered different from homosexual men. See also *kahuna*.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Making

Shamanic **initiation** in **Australia** begins only after an individual has completed his or her initiation into adulthood. An individual who has completed this process has been "made a man (or woman)." To be made is to be transformed, which refers specifically to the existential changes that occur during **initiation**. In the initiation of shamans one is "made a **clever man** (or woman)," by further existential changes and the transmission of **power** from the **spirit** world.

Shamanic initiation in Australia follows a general pattern: selection, death or trance, **dismemberment**, insertion of power, rebirth, and working relationship with the spirits established. There are variations by region and tribe, primarily in the site of the initiation and who the initiating spirits are.

In the regions where circumcision is not part of initiation rites into adulthood, the central **altered state of consciousness** experience of shamanic initiation is understood as a deep trance, not as a "death." The initiation **ritual** or some significant part of it is carried out in a burial place to connect the candidate with the Ancestor spirits. Examples include:

South, Murry River

A supernatural spirit, or **spirit of the dead**, initiates the candidate in the bush or the **Upperworld**. The candidate's side is opened by the **spirit** who inserts magical substances and quartz crystals. These become the source of the shaman's power to travel to the Upperworld and to converse with the spirits who dwell there.

Northwest Victoria (Wotjobaluk, Jupagalk, Mukjarawaint, Jajauring People)

Ngatya, a supernatural being who lives in the bush, initiates the candidate by opening his side, inserting quartz crystals, removing fat, and closing the wound seamlessly with **song**. The candidate is sung to wake him while a star falls from the **Sky** into the man's heart,

forever connecting the new **shaman** to the Sky. This **trance** period may last as long as three days.

Southwest and North Coast, New South Wales and Gippsland (Kurnai people)

A **Dreamtime** hero or other shaman initiates the candidate. No incision is made, instead the helping spirit inserts quartz crystals and magic cords into the candidate's body by pressing, rubbing, or **singing** the **power objects** in. Then the candidate is taken to the sky on the shaman's magical cord.

For the Kurnai, there is a distinction made between shamans and *Birraark*. The *Birraark* are made by spirits in the bush and are **seers**, mediums, and bards. Shamans are made by Ancestral spirits in either spontaneous trance experiences or in trance experiences provoked by participation in rituals conducted by other made men.

Southeastern New South Wales (Ngarigo, Wolgal, Yuin Peoples)

Daramulan, culture heroes and Dreamtime Sky beings, initiate the candidate and are the source of his power, which is manipulated in particular through quartz crystals. Other made men train the new shaman.

North Coast, New South Wales

The candidate must fast and observe other restrictions for months. He often sleeps on graves to provoke a visit from the Great Spirit of the Sky. The Sky Spirit cuts the candidate open, removes the intestines, inserts quartz crystals, replaces the intestines, and closes the candidate up.

Northwestern New South Wales (Yualai and Weilwan peoples)

The main initiatory operation is performed by a spirit near a burial ground. The spirit makes a hole in the initiate's head and fills it with a **sacred** stone **crystal** that is associated with the Sky Spirit. The power of this stone is also obtained by swallowing the stone or rubbing and pressing it into the head.

Eastern Queensland

Spirits of the dead, nature spirits, and/or the **Rainbow Serpent** initiate the candidates and remain as the source of the shaman's power. Quartz crystals and magical cords are inserted into the candidate during the making and remain there to be used in the shaman's work.

In the regions where circumcision is part of initiation rites into adulthood, the central altered state experience of shamanic initiation is understood as a death. Examples include:

Western South Australia

A spirit makes the incision in the abdomen and inserts spirit snakes. The candidate visits the Sky by means of a cord. Or the spirit drives a "pointing-stick" into the candidate's head. Or the candidate is put in a waterhole where he is swallowed by *Wonambi*, a great snake from the ancestral Dreamtime who is alive today. *Wonambi* is the guardian of all doctors. After an undefined period of time, *Wonambi* ejects the candidate as a baby in an unknown place.

The shamans of his tribe find him and **sing** him back into adult size in a **circle** of fires. After conversing with the spirits, the candidate is covered with **red ochre** and treated as a corpse. The shaman ritually "breaks open" the neck, wrists, and joints by marking them with a sacred australite stone. A *maban*, or life-giving shell, is inserted into each cut and into the stomach to serve as sources of power. The candidate is then sung back to life.

Western Australia

Similar to the above, but two spirits "kill" the candidate, cut him from neck to groin, take out his organs, shoulder, thigh and frontal bone of the **skull**, and insert *mabain* or magical substances. The ankles are also stuffed with *mabain*.

Central, Northern Central Australia

The spirits kill the candidate, cut open the abdomen, remove the organs, and then replace them with crystals and magical substances. Or the shamans initiate the candidate They extract the

crystals from their own bodies and press, score, and rub them into the candidate's body. The candidate consumes crystals in his food and drink and a hole is pierced in his tongue.

Northwestern Australia, Kimberleys

The candidate is made by the Rainbow Serpent or mythical **water** snake who takes the candidate into the Upperworld. These initiatory spirits give the shaman power and insert *maban* (pearl shells and crystals) into his body, from which he draws power.

When initiated by a shaman the candidate is turned into a baby and taken to the Upperworld where he is killed. The shaman inserts *maban*, quartz crystals, and little rainbow snakes. Back on **earth** the shaman inserts more *maban* through the navel and wakes the candidate with a magical stone. The new shaman then learns how to use his new *maban*, to travel to the sky, and to speak to the spirits of the dead.

Far Western Queensland

The candidates are made by nature spirits who were **Ancestors**, by a water snake, or by shamans. The candidate is "killed" when magical substances are shot into his body.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994.

Mambo

The *mambo* (female) and the *houngan* (male) function as the "shamans" and **priest/priestess** within the **Vodoun** tradition. The *mambo's* role is to intercede in the realm of the *loa*, or **spirits**, on behalf of the living. The contemporary techniques, rituals, and ceremonies of Vodoun are the accumulated **knowledge** of the Haitian and West African people cultivated through trial and error in their application over centuries.

The *mambo* works with the *loa*, who are the major forces of the Universe expressed in anthropomorphic characteristics as they are seen by the Vodoun

culture. In the Vodoun **religion** to "be mounted" and become "the horse" for the *loa* is an honor. This type of **embodiment** trance, or intentional **possession** by the *loa*, allows the *mambo* and initiates to connect with the **spirit** realm and experience that state in which everyone and everything are connected.

A full, transcendent possession by the *loa* in which the person allows the most intimate surrender of him/herself to the *loa* can leave "the mount" with new capabilities, like increased conscious awareness. The *mambo* must cultivate **trance** state abilities well beyond this full, transcendent possession. The *mambo* must learn to enter and exit the trance as needed and without **ritual**, and to hold a clear and strong intention for the merging. Without the intent, the trance state can not be used for **divination, diagnosis**, or healing of the patient.

The "ultimate stage of possession" is achieved only after years of practice at an advanced level of mastery. In this state there is a access to spirit information in a trance state so subtle that only a person who knows the *mambo* personally can detect the minute voice and behavior changes and increased sweating. In this possessed state the *mambo* is lifted to a place where the knowledge of the *loa* is accessible and the *mambo* can move between this state and **ordinary reality** to answer her patient's questions.

Patients come to the *mambo* for both the source of and the cure for a wide variety of physical ailments, existential anxiety, conflicts with people of different cultures, predictions of the future, and a desire to change the **power** loss that generates bad luck.

In a private session with the *mambo*, the **altar** is a focal point of **energy** in the **sacred space** for all kinds of **healing** work. The altar is populated with an eclectic mix of images, including the Christian cross, and bottles of alcohol, placed there as **offerings** to the *loa*.

The **drum** plays an important role in inducing the possession trance in

Vodoun rituals; however, it is not always used by the *mambo* in private sessions. The *mambo* can work in direct contact or at a distance from the patient.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Man of High Degree

An initiated male **Aboriginal shaman** in Australia. See **clever man**; *karadji*; and **shaman**.

Mana

A Maori term for the inherent and invisible **power** in magic that is drawn from its origin in the **Great Mystery**. It is the power or energy that is given will and form in what the shamans refer to as the spirits. *Mana* can be conveyed in almost anything, which allows the creation of **power objects**, but the spirits contain *mana* in a way that they can give it to others. This is the power directed by shamans in the supernatural aspects of their work.

Anthropologists use the term to refer to the invisible life force that pervades and connects all things and forms, animate and inanimate. This life force is fundamental to the worldview of many indigenous cultures around the world. See also **Orenda**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Manang

A shaman among the **Iban Dyak**. The *manang* is typically female; however *manang* can be female, male, or a **gender-variant transformed shaman** called *manang bali*. None of these types of *manang* possesses a particular rank or special powers above the others, though an individual *manang* of any type can become quite powerful and renowned in his or her own right.

A *manang mansau* (ripe) is a fully initiated **shaman**. The *manang mata* (unripe) is still in **training** and not yet fully initiated. The *manang mata* is able to perform some of the functions of the *manang* and to assist the *manang mansau*.

The Call

The novice is called to become a *manang* by the **spirits** in a **dream**. This call cannot be dismissed without angering the spirits who then cause illness, mental illness, or death for the individual.

Initiation

The **initiation** of the *manang mata* to the *manang mansau* is conducted in private, by the *manang mansau* as a group. The novice's head is symbolically opened by the splitting of a coconut shell and other symbolic actions are performed in **ordinary reality**. These actions correspond with actions being taken in the spirit world.

In the spirit world, the novice's head is opened so that the brains can be cleansed and replaced, giving the new *manang* a clear mind to penetrate the mysteries of malevolent spirits and **disease**. Gold dust is inserted into his or her eyes to grant the **power** to see the *semengat* wherever it wanders. Barbs are inserted into the fingers to allow the new *manang* to capture and hold *semengat* and an arrow pierces the heart to soften the heart to others and generate compassion for others suffering in the new *manang*.

Initiations at the completion of different stages of training appear to continue throughout the *manang's* life. These initiation rituals are similar; central to each is the transformation from one state to another, for example regular Iban to *manang*. These rituals mark the *manang's* transformation from one status to another, involving wider-ranging skills or newly acquired powers. In each **ritual** the form represents the transformation that occurs, while the specific symbolic **elements** and functions of the ritual are defined by the powers or skills acquired.

Divination

Divinations are performed at various stages in the **healing** process. The *manang* uses a variety of techniques depending on the apparent severity of the **illness** or the stage in the ritual.

When the *manang* is called to assist, he or she first consults the patient and family members about dreams they have had and the omens they have noticed. Information from this consultation may factor into the **diagnosis** or it may clarify extraneous factors that would hinder the patient's healing if they were not neutralized through a secondary ritual after the initial healing. In some circumstances the neutralization of unpropitious omens and dreams is performed in a ritual in and of itself, which functions as preventative **medicine**, averting the need for further healing.

During the *pelian* (healing ritual), the *manang* uses the quartz crystals, or *batu ilau*, "the stones of light," for **divination**. By looking into these "light stones" the *manang* is able to see into the spirit world and watch what the *semengat* and the *antu* (spirits) are doing. The *manang* can see the location and state of health of the patient's *semengat*, the plant-like form (symbolic of the patient's soul) tended by celestial *manang*, or the place and the reason *antu* may have harmed the patient by placing an **energy intrusion** into the patient's body.

At the close of a *pelian* or *saut* ritual the *manang* performs a divination to determine whether or not the healings have been successful. For example, the flower bud of the *areca* palm is investigated and read or the *pentik* (carved wooden figure) is stuck into the ground and its position, standing or leaning, is read in the morning.

Healing

When an Iban becomes ill a series of progressively more powerful rituals are performed until the patient is healed or dies. In general the ritual progression begins with the *bedara* performed by the family, then the *manang* is called on to

perform the *pelian*, *saut*, and as a last resort the *nampok*.

Illness is interpreted as the result of interference by harmful spirits, energy intrusion, or **soul loss**. The most common diagnosis is that some misfortune has befallen the *semengat* (soul) in the spirit world that keeps it from returning to the body of the patient. To some degree, the more serious the illness, the further away the *semengat* is believed to be. If the *semengat* is close to the body the *manang* may simply coax or entice it back into the body without necessitating the *manang's* entry into trance.

If the *semengat* is determined to have wandered far away or is being held by malevolent spirits, the *manang* will need to enter trance, dispatching his or her own *semengat* into the spirit world to track and capture the patient's *semengat*. In this case, one or more *manang* will prepare for a full night-long **soul retrieval** *pelian*.

To prepare the long handle of a spear is covered with leaves and fixed, pointing up, in the center of the room with the *lupong* (medicine boxes) of the *manang* clustered around the base. They begin to **chant** the appropriate invocations, dancing and moving quickly around the spear until one falls to the floor in trance.

Once a *manang* has entered trance, a blanket is thrown over him and the remaining *manang* and the audience await the result of his **journey**. The *manang's* *semengat* goes down to the **Lowerworld** in search of the patient's *semengat*. When the *semengat* is captured, the *manang* rises, holding it in his hand, the replaces it in the patient through the fontanelle in the top of the head.

Pansa utai refers to illness caused by passing a spirit who strikes the patient or wounds him/her with the dart from a blowpipe, often without the individual's awareness of the encounter. When the *manang's* divination indicates this type of spirit interference, then either the spirit itself or something the spirit has lodged in the patient's body is causing

the illness. The *manang* uses his or her *batu ilau* to locate the injury or intrusion. Other **power objects** from his or her *lupong* are used to stroke the patient's body and remove the pieces of bone, wood, hair, cloth, etc., that are the physical manifestation of the spirit's intrusive object.

If the spirit itself is the problem, then the *manang* has a variety of techniques to exorcise it. The *manang* may offer sacrifices, entice it into a *pentik* (small wooden figure), and dispose of the figure, will it away with invocations to benevolent powers, frighten it, or even summon it to take form and kill it.

In extreme cases in which an incubus or other spirits are ravaging the living the *manang* uses both protection and action. A male *manang* might use his powers of invisibility (protection) on himself. He then entices the offending spirit into physical form in which it is both visible and vulnerable. The *manang* then springs from invisibility into action and attacks the manifest spirit. This healing takes a great deal of power. It is usually performed by male *manang*.

A female *manang* might approach the situation differently. Her actions tend to place more power and effort into protecting the patient and denying the incubus access to the patient by ritually destroying access to the patient. Both solutions are equally effective, and they represent only two of the *manang's* many healing options.

Soul Counterparts in Healing

Among the Iban the *ayu* and *bungai* are two soul counterparts of an individual that affect his or her health. Exactly what they are is not completely clear; however, in general they are "lives" that cannot be seen but are visualized in metaphor as plants that can be tended by the celestial or terrestrial *manang*.

For example, the *bungai* has been described as an invisible plant tended by mythical *manang* that grows in the central post of the extended family's home or somewhere in the spirit world. The *bungai* can be seen by the *manang*

through his or her quartz **crystal**. The shape and health of the plant reflects the health, welfare, and unity of the family it represents. During a *pelian* the *manang* may weed the *bungai*, free it from encumbrances, or wrap its cluster more firmly together, effectively performing the same on the spirit of the family.

Similarly the *manang* is often called to tend to a plant *ayu* in healing. For example, in the case of adoption, the *manang* performs *nusop ayu*, in which the *manang* cuts the child's *ayu* away from that of its birth family and replants it with the *ayu* of its adoptive family. During funeral rites the *manang* performs *besserara*, in which the *ayu* of the deceased is cut from the *ayu* cluster of the living family members.

In some *pelian* the *manang* enters a **trance** state and sends his or her soul to perform these tasks in the spirit world. In other *pelian* the *manang* performs the actions on a plant surrogate in the physical world while a celestial *manang* performs the corresponding actions on the *bungai* or *ayu* in the spirit world.

Paraphernalia

The *manang's* **paraphernalia** is contained in the *lupong*, a basket or box in which the *manang* keeps power objects, **charms** with medicinal powers, and occasionally medicinal herbs. The *lupong* contains stones, glass, pieces of tusk, wood, root, and the most important item, the quartz crystals, or *batu ilau*, used for divination and diagnosis.

The *engkerabun*, or "blinder" is a protective **talisman** kept in the *lupong*. The *engkerabun* is used to render the *manang* invisible to malevolent spirits. It functions in the reverse of the *batu ilau*, which renders the invisible world visible to the *manang*. Much of the *manang's* healing involves various applications of these two abilities together, to make the visible invisible or protect humankind, on one hand, and to make the invisible visible and restore humankind, on the other.

The blossom of the *areca* palm is used to drive away harmful spirits and

to prepare the *manang's* spirit for entering trance. The *areca* blossom disperse harmful spirits from patients during healings, from novices during training, and from the *manang* while in performance of rituals. To aid novices in developing mastery of their trance states, the *manang* whip novices with *areca* blossoms until they fall into trance and drums to assure they are able to return.

The **drum** is also used in any ritual or **ceremony** in which the *manang* will enter into a trance state. The continuous beat of the drum assures that the journeying *semangat* will find its way back to the *manang* and strengthens the *semangat* while it journeys in the spirit world.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Graham, Penelope. *Iban Shamanism: An Analysis of the Ethnographic Literature*. Canberra, ACT, Australia: Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University, 1987.

Manang Bali

A **gender-variant male** or female **transformed shaman** of the **Iban Dyak** people of Borneo. The *manang bali* tradition, which is primarily the transformation of men to women, stretches from the remote past into the early 20th century. "Bali" means to change in form, referring to the *manang bali's* transformation that renders the *manang bali* of a third gender.

In Iban society gender roles are clearly and dogmatically defined. The *manang bali* does not belong completely to either the world of the men or the world of the women. He does not live fully in the real world and is believed to be partly of the world of **spirits**. The *manang*

bali is highly valued as a shaman, paid well, and respected. However, he was also devalued, in that he lacks the social prestige that is defined by gender, and is at times ridiculed.

The First Shaman

Iban mythology tells of a time long ago when three semi-divine beings lived. *Singalang Burong* was the great god of war, *Ini Inda* his sister was the supreme healer, and *Menjaya Raja Manang* was their brother. *Singalang Burong's* wife became ill, and *Ini Inda* initiated her brother, *Menjaya*, so that he could heal his sister-in-law. *Menjaya Raja Manang* became a woman and a healer and saved his brother's wife. *Menjaya Raja Manang* is worshipped by all **manang** and *manang bali*.

The Call

Young men are summoned by *Menjaya Raja Manang* or *Ini Inda* in a **dream**. In this dream the young man experiences himself as a woman, wearing *bekain* (female garments) and *besanggol* (female hair braid) while he performs the mundane and the **sacred** tasks of Iban women.

These young men may also have physical and/or **vision** impairment. The Iban believe that these traits, in addition to gender variance, foster prophetic talent.

Initiation

The **initiation** of the *manang bali* is not significantly different than that of the *manang mansau*. The *manang bali* does not appear to acquire any skills or powers other than those acquired by non-gender transformed *manang* in initiation. The only distinguishing aspects are the substantial initial **offerings** and the closing gender transformation represented in the change of clothing and the new female name.

Traditionally, the *manang bali's* initiation begins with a seven-fold **ritual** offering, which includes pigs, fowls, eggs, jars of *tauk*, etc. Then the initiate, dressed in men's clothing, is taken into a private room where the sacred aspects

of the initiation are performed by the *manang mansau* as a group. The novice's head is symbolically opened by the splitting of a coconut shell and other symbolic actions are performed in **ordinary reality**. These actions correspond with actions being taken in the spirit world.

In the spirit world, the novice's head is opened so that the brains can be cleansed and replaced, giving the new *manang* a clear mind to penetrate the mysteries of malevolent spirits and **dis-ease**. Gold dust is inserted into his or her eyes to grant the **power** to see the *semengat* wherever it wanders. Barbs are inserted into the fingers to allow the new *manang* to capture and hold *semengat* and an arrow pierces the heart to soften the heart to others and generate compassion for others suffering in the new *manang*.

The new *manang bali* is then stripped of male garments, dressed in women's garments and given a new female name. The *manang bali* will wear women's clothing and perform women's cultural task from that day forward. Everyone in the community is required to use the *manang bali*'s new name and refer to the *manang bali* as she. Those who do not are fined.

The *manang bali* must sever all ties prior to taking on her new role. If she had children she must give them their portions of her assets as if she were dead. All ties to her old self, familial and sexual, are completed and wiped clean, so that she may enter her new life unencumbered.

Training

The novice is instructed primarily by **helping spirits** in dreams and **trance** states and secondarily by initiated female *manang* and *manang bali*. The *manang bali* learns everything other *manang* learn. She learns to divine the cause of **illness** with *bata ilau* (quartz crystals) and to perform the *pelian* (**healing** rituals). In these *pelian*, the *manang bali* will enter trance states to retrieve lost souls, remove **energy intrusions**, and exorcise **spirit intrusions**, among other healing and protective actions.

To become *bali*, completely transformed, the *manang bali* must begin to function sexually as the receptive partner with non-gender variant, traditionally masculine men. Marriage between the *manang bali* and traditional men was common and sanctioned within the community. See also **gender variant**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Graham, Penelope. *Iban Shamanism: An Analysis of the Ethnographic Literature*. Canberra, ACT, Australia: Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University, 1987.

Manão

The *manão* is a type of **Ojibwa** healing **shaman** who receives his or her **power** to heal from the *memengwéciwak* spirit. The Ojibwa recognize three general types of shamans: healing, conjuring, and **seers**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Manchu

A people of southern **Siberia** and north-east **China** (formerly Manchuria) who became the modern emperors of China. The Manchu are considered a southern group of the **Tungus**. Manchu shamanic traditions began in the 11th century C.E. and have been practiced for centuries. One derivation of the word **shaman** comes from the Tungus-Manchu world *saman*, meaning "she who knows through ecstatic experience."

The following entry includes items distinct to Manchu shamanism, which

is otherwise quite similar to that of the Tungus.

Manchu mythology is filled with goddesses and female **spirits**. More than three hundred goddesses have been identified. They are creators, shamans, warriors, cultural heroes, **nature spirits**, fertility keepers, and guardians. The most powerful goddess is *Abkia Hehe*, the **Sky Mother**. She gave birth to the universe and created the **First Shaman**, *Nisan*, also a woman, who is still regarded as the most powerful shaman ever.

Abkia Hehe also made the first **drum** and beater from a piece of the sky and a mountain. These became her **sacred** tools. From her drumming came the first man and woman. The shaman's drum and beater remain closely associated with life and procreation. *Nisan* used her drum to enter the **Lowerworld** to retrieve the lost souls of the people and heal them.

Traditionally the Manchu recognize two types of shamans: the *boo saman* or clan shamans, who are chosen by the clan through **divination**, and the *cha saman* or big shamans, who are spontaneously chosen by a powerful **spirit** or the spirit of a deceased *cha saman*. These two types of shamans conduct rituals in the same way; however, the *cha saman* invokes animals and nature **spirits**, performs outdoors, and is considered more powerful.

The clan shamans are trained by other shamans and must pass the test of their **training** and spirit **power** in the final **initiation ritual**. The *boo saman* enter **trance** for divination and to perform the annual ancestral **offering** rituals.

The big (also called "independent" or "selected" in the literature) shamans are trained primarily by the spirits directly while in trance. The *cha saman* enter trance for divination, various types of **healing** rituals, and to perform the more archaic *bigan-i weceku*, rituals for wild spirits.

Initiation

After years of training a new shaman must perform a public initiation to be

recognized by the community. Traditionally, these rituals involved displays of power, particularly **mastery of fire**, like walking over burning coals. Severe cold is also used as a test of the shaman's mastery of **inner fire**. In one winter initiation ritual nine holes are drilled in the ice spaced a regular distance apart. The new shaman must dive into one hole and come out the next until he or she emerges from the ninth hole.

All of the wild spirits who help the independent shamans possess mastery of fire. The eagle spirit is the head of the wild **animal spirits** and Fire Spirit is the head of the wild nature spirits, e.g., mountain, **water**, stars, and **elements of weather**. They all possess the mastery of fire and the shaman derives this power from them.

Drum

The construction of the drum is of primary importance to the newly initiated shaman. The design of the drum, the procedure for making it, the rituals for **purification**, and the appropriate offerings and sacrifices all come to the initiate from the spirits in a **dream**. This dream must be followed exactly in the preparation to construct, the gathering of materials, and the construction of the drum. All unused portions of the tree and the sacrificed animal must be honored, cremated, and buried.

When the construction of the drum is complete, a subsequent dream clarifies how the drum is to be decorated, including **colors**, designs, and **metal** frogs. When the drum is complete, additional animal sacrifices are made and the drum is awakened in an all-night drumming **ceremony** that announces the birth of a new drum to the spirits. Additional rituals are performed to embody the power of the spirits in the drum.

Manchu shamans use two types of drums. The ancient name for the single headed **frame drum** is *wendun*, meaning "vast space" or "female hand drum" and the drumstick, or whip, is the *keshun*. The modern word for this drum is *nimachin*, meaning "male hand

drum." It is approximately 50 centimeters in diameter and round or oval.

The second type of drum is the *tongken*, meaning "big drum." This drum is approximately 40 centimeters in diameter, two headed, and played with two drumsticks while it rests in a stand. This drum is used only in grand **offering** rituals where it is accompanied by hand drums, bells, and wooden clappers.

Mirrors

A **mirror** of copper or glass called the *panaptu*, meaning "soul shade," is used as a divination tool to locate the souls of dead people and spirits in general, to see at a distance, and to divine the needs of the people. The copper *panaptu* is also used as a tool for disbursing malevolent spirits.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Kun, S. "Flying Drums, Dancing Shaman: Shamanic Practices among the Manchu of Northern China." *Shaman's Drum* 25, 1991.

Mandala

Mandalas are graphic symbols of the mystic nature of the Universe. These visual representations are two dimensional blueprints of the multi-dimensional Universe. They function like a portal, providing access to **non-ordinary reality**. A mandala can be seen as a point of communication between the **Upperworld**, **Lowerworld**, and **Middleworld**. In this way mandalas function like the **Tree of Life**.

Mandalas are also receptacles for the energies of deities or **spirits**; they are visual **power objects**. The traditional form of a mandala is a **circle** enclosing a square filled with symmetrically arranged patterns that hold the **energy** signatures of concepts or deities. Simple mandalas, called yantras, are the graphic versions of the energy pattern of a specific deity. Mandalas are used chiefly as an aid to mediation in Hinduism and Buddhism.

Masacarin, M. "Journey Into the Cycles of Time." *Shaman's Drum* 30 (Winter 1993): 40-49.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Mandrake

One of the **hexing herbs** used in the magic and witchcraft of medieval Europe. No other plant in European folklore is more valued as a remedy for a wide range of diseases, evils, and difficulties or more feared for its magical and hallucinogenic properties.

Mandrake was harvested with great care and respect. If not, the root was believed to shriek when pulled from the ground inappropriately, driving naive harvesters mad. In one third century B.C.E. description harvesters began by drawing **circles** around the plant and cutting off only the top part of the root while facing **west**. Then dances and precise **spells** were performed before the remainder of the root was gathered. Another account from the first century C.E. explained that mandrake hid when man drew near, but that it could be drawn out with sacrifices of urine and menstrual **blood** sprinkled on the ground.

There are six species of *Mandragora* of *Solanaceae*, the Nightshade Family. It is found in southern Europe, **North Africa**, and western Asia to the Himalayas. The root is thick and usually forked in such a way as to create the image of legs and arms on a torso. The stemless herb has stalked, wrinkled leaves that stand about one foot high. Small, whitish-green, purplish, or bluish bell-shaped flowers grow in clusters. The yellow berry is quite fragrant. *M. officinarum* plays the most important role as a hallucinogen in magic and witchcraft.

Use

Mandrake is best known as a main ingredient in the potions of witches, whose herbal brews were used for hallucinogenic properties and other effects characteristic of their intoxication.

Potions were added to other liquids to drink or to ointments for absorption through the skin. Mandrake was used medicinally as a panacea in one form or another for a wide range of diseases, evils, difficulties, and situations of disharmony.

Mandrake's usefulness is said to have been determined by the Doctrine of Signatures, a philosophy that an object that resembles a human has supernatural effects on the mind and body of a human. Mandrake, which means "the man-like plant," has roots that often grow in ways that look like a little human figure. The real and perceived medicinal properties of this plant are inextricably tied to its anthropomorphic shape through the Doctrine of Signatures.

Preparation

Hallucinogenic mixtures of the hexing herbs were prepared as potions to drink or ointments to be applied to parts of the body where the blood vessels are naturally close to the skin.

Active Principle

The primary tropane alkaloids found in Mandrake root are hyoscyamine and scopolamine, with atropine, cuscohygrine, or mandragorine present in lesser degrees. Scopolamine is the primary hallucinogenic constituent.

Schultes, R. E. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Manitou

The term used by the **Algonquian** people to refer to the power/**energy**/force that is the resonant relationship between spiritual, natural, and human worlds. In short, it is that which binds the **Kosmos** for which we have no word. *Manitou* is used interchangeably with power, energy, and force.

Manitou also refers to the **helping spirits** of the **shaman** and the **medicine man**. In this sense *manitou* encompasses a wide variety of spirit presences, all

of which can take human form at will. *Manitou* is also associated with a variety of natural occurrences and mythic personalities. The wide range of references demonstrates the transformative power that is an aspect of *manitou*. This richness also suggests that the experience of the **sacred** was found in all things and experiences among the Algonquian peoples.

The *manitou* are often described as having different ranks or degrees of power. The spirit prototypes of all plants, **birds**, beasts, elemental forces, and life circumstances such as Poverty or Motherhood were all of similar rank. This rank includes useful **trees** like cedar and birch; certain roots, plants, and berries; the **Sun**, **moon**, thunder, lightning, meteoric stones, and winds of the cardinal points. The seasons are *manitou*, as are extraordinary circumstances like cannibalism, the heedless self-assurance of elder siblings, the vulnerable aspect found in the mighty. Things of *manitou* may possess different powers, but were held to have relatively the same amount of power. (Also: *manitu*, *manidoo*, *mannittos*, *manito*, *manitoes*.) See also **Ojibwa**.

Grim, John A. *The Shaman*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

Mantra

A **spell**, hymn, **prayer**, ritualistic **incantation**, or mystic formula used devotionally. A mantra can be spoken, chanted, or sung; it is a verbal **power object**. The sacred syllables arranged in the specific patterns of traditional mantras each invoke a deity of that tradition when verbalized. In this way the mantra of a deity is equivalent to the deity itself. Mantras are used traditionally in Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Maparn

Special **healing** powers, particularly of a place in Nature. See also **aboriginal** and **Australia**.

Mapuche

The Mapuche are the **First People** of southern Chile in **South America**. The Mapuche, which means “people of the land,” are largely matriarchal. Though their lives are difficult today, they have survived and their numbers have greatly increased. More than one half million live on reservations in southern Chile.

Central to the Mapuche concept of right action, personally and communally, is the maintenance of a sustained and responsible link between the living and the **Ancestors**. The Ancestor **spirits**, in turn, provide a link to the **spirit** world of gods, goddesses, and natural phenomena. This way of life has withstood the test of time and remained relatively unchanged, in spite of the strong efforts of missionaries to convert the Mapuche, during more than four hundred years of contact with white civilization.

The Mapuche **machis** (shamans) are women and **gender-variant males**. The *machi* excels in the fundamental act that allows shamanic magic to happen: the ability of the **shaman** to literally be a vessel for spirit. The *machis* practice ancient lunar rites of healing, a reminder that the primordial power that all shamans call on is biologically rooted in the **womb**, menstruation, and the **blood** mysteries.

Cosmology

In Mapuche cosmology the gods and goddesses are old spirit people who are invisible and who have rather specific and limited powers. They are conceived of as androgynous beings and/or comprised of sets of husbands and wives, who have children, all of whose exploits are described in the Mapuche mythology.

Ñenechen the Supreme Being or “ruler of the Mapuche” is not to be

confused with the Judeo-Christian God. The Mapuche have other creators. Ñenemapun is the creator and ruler of **earth** and Elchen is the creator of the people. Then there are minor gods who control specific phenomena.

The minor gods who appear to be truly significant in Mapuche rituals are Pillan Fucha and Pillan Kushe, the god and goddess of thunder and volcanoes; Lafken Fucha/Kushe, god and goddess of the sea; Kuyen Fucha/Kushe, god and goddess of the **moon**; and Huilli Fucha/Kushe, god and goddess of the south wind. Then there are pillan who are the **helping spirits** of the *machi*.

These minor gods have considerable force and freedom. The purpose of most Mapuche community rituals is to channel these forces by proper propitiatory rites. In some rituals the people are asking Ñenechen to oversee and direct the activities of the minor gods and their related natural phenomena on behalf of humanity. In other rituals the minor gods are asked to intercede on behalf of humanity before Ñenechen.

Wekufe

The *wekufe* are malevolent forces in general, which the Mapuche believe are always around. The *wekufe* can make themselves visible or invisible instantaneously. They manifest in the forms of certain animals, natural phenomena, or ghosts, by their own power or as directed by a sorcerer. *Wekufe* usually act under the control of a sorcerer, however they may act independently, particularly to kill a sorcerer whose powers are not strong enough to protect her against them. The *machi* must constantly protect herself and her community, living and dead, from contamination by the *wekufe*.

The most common manifestation of *wekufe* is in the form of a normal animal in abnormal conditions. They also manifest as mythical beings like the *chon chon*, a bird with a human head, or a *waillepen*, a large beast of the forest that takes the shape of a huge sheep or a combined sheep-cow creature.

Another subset of *wekufe*, the *cherufe*, manifest as fireballs, comets, shooting stars, and whirlwinds. These phenomena are believed to be possessed by a malevolent spirit and their presence forebodes suffering and death.

Ghosts are the third type of *wekufe*. They are ancestral spirits contaminated by the *wekufe* or by the **spells** of a sorcerer. When the **spirits of the dead** become contaminated in this way, they cease being classed as Ancestors. They can only cause trouble for the living in this state and no longer function as wise ancestral spirits. Two common forms of malevolent, blood-sucking ghosts are the *witranalwe*, a large male figure, usually mounted on a horse who terrorizes the roadways, and the *anchimallen*, a child-sized spirit dressed in white or appearing as a luminous blob.

Ancestor Spirits

The Mapuche attend to the welfare of their ancestors through **ritual** and prayer to maintain the link between the ancestral and contemporary worlds. The ancestors must be kept safe from contamination by *wekufe*. The Mapuche believe that their ancestors will dwell together happily in the afterworld, if their souls are properly handled at death. Some ancestral souls go to *Wenumapu*, the **Upperworld**, and others go to *Nomelafken*, “across the ocean.”

When spirits of ordinary ancestors meddle in the affairs of the living, it is usually because their descendants have failed to carry out a ritual obligation, causing the spirits to return from the **Land of the Dead**. These spirits do not belong in the land of the living and once there they run the risk of contamination and becoming a threat to the well-being of the living.

The danger of the deceased’s spirit being contaminated at death is even greater. In a special **ceremony**, the *amulpellun*, the *wekufe* are first driven from the locality and then the spirit of the deceased is sent on its way into the afterworld. If all goes well, the danger is

greatly reduced and the mourning continues through the four days of *kurikawin*, the wake ceremony.

On the morning of the fifth day after death, the coffin is carried on a bier to the center of a field for the *weupin* ceremony. Members of the community speak, praising the deceased. When the last has spoken the coffin is transferred to the cemetery and placed in a prepared grave. If all the ceremonies of the funeral process are successful, the spirit succeeds in a complete and proper departure to the afterworld, and the living have fulfilled their obligation to their ancestor.

Kalku, the Sorcerer

Sorcerers, or *kalku*, cause the supernaturally induced illnesses, personal misfortune, and death, which the *machi* work to heal. The power comes to the *kalku* as it does to the *machi*, from the spirit world. It comes in dreams and visions or it may be inherited from an ancestor who was also a *kalku*. Conversion to **sorcery** can come through misadventures, like stumbling into a *reñu* (sorcerers cave), soul theft, or an **illness** that exposes the individual to *wekufe* contamination.

To become a sorcerer or shaman a woman must invest years in **training** and practice. The success of either professional is determined by the power of the individual’s helping spirits. Sorcerers and shamans both use an assortment of plants and animals in their practice of malevolent and benevolent medicine respectively. The Mapuche see this polarity in all aspects of life and healing. They also distinguish between good and bad internal organs, bodily juices, animals, and insects.

Machi, the Shaman

To become a *machi* a woman trains years to learn all the necessary esoteric lore, songs, shamanic techniques, and *machitun*, Mapuche curing rites. She must learn to perform **diagnosis** and **divinations** of various kinds and to induce trance. Above all she must

acquire power through her relationship with her *pillan* (the ancestral *machi*) to be able to prevail over the forces of *wekufe* and acts of sorcery.

Acquiring her tools is part of her training. The *kultrun* (shallow **drum**) is beaten almost continuously in some ceremonies and is used to induce the *machi's* trance. The *machi* makes her *kultrun* from a tree, tans the leather for the drumhead, and fill it with **crystals** and stones. One special stone, the *pedra de la cruz*, must be found for the drum. Its natural shape must be of a circled, equal-armed cross, the symbol for the Mapuche **Kosmos**. The head of the drum is painted in blood-red with the equal-armed cross with crescent moons at the ends of the arms which point in each of the four directions.

The *rewe* (carved pole) is the **sacred** symbol of the *machi's* profession. She climbs her *rewe* during ceremonies as she enters a deep **trance** and stands on the top playing her drum and communicating with the beings of the spirit world. The *rewe* is planted into the ground outside her house indefinitely. A three-meter section of a tree is barked, notched to form steps, and set in the ground at a slight tilt that makes it easier to climb. Tall branches may be stuck into the ground around the *rewe* to create an enclosure of 15 by 4 meters for special rituals.

The *machi* also makes a special drumstick to beat her *kultrun* and gourd **rattles**. Sleigh bells may also be part of her **paraphernalia**. Her additional tools are fire and songs.

There is a fire burning in the healing **space** and it is an integral part of the curing. It is used for light, to burn **tobacco**, and to heat and tighten the drumskin. In her trance state, the *machi* may work with the fire with her bare hands, picking up hot coals or rearranging the fire to light her tobacco.

Songs

Songs are invaluable tools for the *machi*. They are an important part of mastering the shamanic lore and ritual

techniques. Songs are used in the diagnosis of illness, divination, autopsy, and in preparing herbal remedies. The songs are given by spirit and a repertoire of magical songs, **incantation**, and chants increase the efficacy of the *machi's* work.

Traditionally, songs are monotonously chanted, with a high, wailing break at stanza endings. Many chants are preparatory chants used to clear the ritual space or dispel the buildup of *wekufe* in the immediate area. Some songs are used to lull *wekufe* into inaction, to chase them away, or to weaken the power of the *kalku* who has harmed the patient. Some songs are preparation for the **singing** of others songs and the gradual buildup of power for the *machi's* entry into trance.

There are trance-inducing songs that lead to the **possession** of the *machi's* body by her *pillan*. These songs begin with special songs directed first to the androgynous "father god" in the Upperworld, then another **song** to the "sweetheart" (partner) of the **Sun**, and finally to the *pillan* spirits of powerful deceased *machi*, some of whom are the *machi's* literal ancestors.

Training of the Machi

A novice must study with an initiated *machi* to learn the **knowledge** and traditions. This is a long, difficult, expensive, and dangerous process. In addition the novice must receive power, which she cannot get from her **teacher**. The *machi's* power comes directly and spontaneously from the spirit world. This summons from the spirits enters the novice's life, unbidden and irresistible. In fact, to resist **the call** is considered a folly that could bring on death prematurely.

The call is recognized in dreams, visions, omens, or in the woman's recovery from a serious illness during which her soul (*am*) comes into contact with malevolent forces and remains unscathed and uncontaminated. The illness may be followed by an ecstatic **vision** during which the novice's soul

travels to the Upperworld where she meets spirit beings who show her the remedies and cures.

When the novice's training is complete she must demonstrate her ability before a gathering of initiated *machi*. These gatherings are held at pre-arranged times during each year for the dual purpose of initiating new *machi* and revalidating the rank of those already of full-fledged status. The festival includes **power displays**, such as walking barefoot on coals and other acts displaying **mastery of fire**.

Initiation of the Machi

The **initiation** of a new *machi* is centered around the ritual climbing of her *rewe* to enter trance and speak with the god/goddesses of Mapuche cosmology. When the *rewe* is set up, the candidate, wearing only her shift, lies down on a bed of sheepskins and blankets. The women attending the ritual **sing** in chorus accompanied by bells. A master *machi* rubs the candidate's body with *canelo* leaves, repeating this ritual massage several times. Then master *machis* extract energies from her body, sucking her breasts, belly, and head with such force that they draw blood. When this healing is complete the candidate dresses and sits while the singing and dancing continue through the day.

The following day a crowd of guests arrives for the celebration. The master *machis* form a **circle**, drumming and dancing one after the other about the center. Then they go with the candidate toward her *rewe* and begin to ascend after her one at a **time**. This ceremony is closed with the ritual **sacrifice** of a sheep.

At dawn the next day the candidate and the master *machis* drum, **dance**, and sing until they begin to fall into trance. One of the master *machi* blindfolds herself to make several cuts in the candidate's fingers and lips with a knife of white quartz. She makes similar cuts in her own body and, touching the candidate cut to cut, she mixes their blood.

After other rites the candidate is adorned with a necklace of greenery and the blood-stained fleece of the sacrificed sheep. Then dancing and drumming, she climbs her *rewe* in trance as the master *machi* follow her. The candidate's two sponsors stand on either side of her on the platform waiting for her trance to reach the state required for initiation. When she demonstrates her ability they strip her of the necklace and fleece, which then are hung on the branches of the shrubs where they will disintegrate over time. When the woman, now officially a *machi*, comes down her *rewe* this time, she is greeted by an immense uproar as soon as her feet touch the ground. Everyone wants to see and touch the new *machi*, to be close to the **energy** of the spirits who have initiated her. A feast follows.

The new *machi*'s wounds will heal in a week. She prays to *vlieo*, the *Machi* of the **Sky**, to grant her curative powers, clairvoyance, and the magical objects necessary for healing. For example, she will pray to find a striped or colored healing stone that can be projected into the body of the patient. It can be used in healing to purify the body or as an aid in diagnosis. If it comes out of the body bloody, the patient is in danger of death.

Healing

The healing ways of the *machi* are known collectively as *machitun*. The basis of *machitun* is the circle that connects us to all things, to the Sacred Feminine, the earth, and the **Great Mystery**. The dancing, chanting, drumming, and other percussive sounds used are collectively called the *purran*, which specifically includes the earth dances, the particular drumming rhythms used to induce and maintain trance states, and the songs sung to honor the Source of all life.

Each *machi* has unique songs and dances to call on her *pillan* and to enter trance. She also has unique means for diagnosis. The *machi* usually **sings** and dances to the accompaniment of rattles to enter trance. Her full trance is

obtained atop her *rewe* where she drums and speaks to the beings of the spirit world.

Curing usually takes place indoors in a space with a fire. If the patient is very sick or in a sustained state of fear the *machi* performs rituals to protect the patient from a *kalku* or to protect a spirit visiting the patient from sorcery or contamination by *wekufe*. When sorcery is diagnosed the *machi* rubs and massages the patient's body and then sucks, sometimes to the point of drawing blood, on the parts of the body in which the sorcerer's attacks are lodged. In some healings the *machi* opens the body, feels around in it, and extracts whatever is causing the illness, like a pebble, worm, or insect. The opening closes itself when the offending object is removed.

Many cures do not involve trance or directly grappling with *wekufe*. The diagnosis may call for the application of herbal remedies, a specific dietary schedule, or herbal infusions. The *machi* may perform cleansings by blowing tobacco smoke or pouring medicinal **water** over the patient's body. The *machi* is also asked to interpret dreams and omens, which may or may not involve entering trance.

Community Ritual

The *machi* plays the principal role in *ngillatun*, a community ritual designed to strengthen relations between the god/goddesses of the Upperworld and the Mapuche. The *machi* mounts her *rewe* where she goes into trance, **journeys** to the Upperworld, and presents the wishes of her community to the god/goddesses there. While the *machi* journeys in the spirit world, riders on horseback fight the demons and expel *wekufe*. When the *machi* completes her journey, she describes it in detail and announces whether or not the Sky god/goddesses will grant the wishes of the community.

Plant Hallucinogens

As the *machi* stands atop her *rewe* beating her drum and communicating with

the spirit world it is possible that one or more of several hallucinogenic plants, *Datura*, *Brugmansia*, or *Anadenanthera*, were used to enhance her journey into the spirit world. The Mapuche also use a narcotic tea called *taique* made from the leaves of *Desfontania spinosa*, a shrub with holly-like leaves and red flowers with a yellow tips that grows in the highlands of Central and South America. The Mapuche also used *Tupa*, a hallucinogen made from the leaves of the herb *Lobelia tupa*.

In the past the Mapuche used the fruit of *Gomortega keule* as a narcotic. This small tree belonging to the laurel family, *Gomortega* is found only in central Chile. No studies have been done to determine its active principle.

Tobacco is used extensively by the *machi*, though not to enter trance. The smoke is sent skyward to carry prayers to the god/goddesses of the Upperworld. It is also used to clear the space and the energy around the patient's body before deeper healing work.

Costume

Sacred dress for the *machi* includes a skirt and shawl over a shift and a scarf to cover the head. Some articles of jewelry are also considered sacred and therefore appropriate.

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Mara'akame

The **shaman-priest** of the **Huichol**; *Mara'akate* (pl). The role of the *mara'akame* includes that of the shaman and healer as well as the formal, public role

of the priest, particularly as the leader of the **peyote hunt** and the singer priest at annual community ceremonies.

With the assistance of his or her **helping spirit**, *Kauyumari*, the Sacred Deer Person, the *mara'akame* performs **divinations** to diagnose the cause of **illness** and **healing** rituals. The *mara'akame* is able to **shapeshift** into animal forms and to send his or her **soul** into the **spirit** world while in trance.

The *mara'akame* is chosen by spirit, usually while still a child, and will learn directly from spirit as he or she matures. The individual chosen is one who tends to seek solitude, which is odd for a Huichol, and who is profoundly spiritual by nature. *Mara'akame* were frequently youngest children or only children who do not know their father. That one is chosen does not guarantee he or she will become an *mara'akame*. The candidate must be willing to **sacrifice** physically and materially and to dedicate his or her life to the service of others.

For a candidate to succeed he or she must show great intelligence, strength, and endurance. The candidate must be able to fast, go without sleep, and travel over two hundred miles while caring for the well-being of others on the peyote hunt. Many rituals proceed over a number of days and many chants require thirty-six to forty-eight hours of continuous chanting, so endurance and commitment are essential. The candidate must have an extraordinary memory to learn the chants, **myths**, and songs of the **culture**. The candidate must also cultivate compassion, social sensitivity, and **knowledge** of psychology and interpersonal relations.

The truly critical quality of a successful *mara'akame* is self-control and personal psychological equilibrium. These qualities are necessary to master **trance** states and direct one's own actions and movement while in **altered states of consciousness**. While this is true for all shamans, the *mara'akame* must master, in addition, the peyote-induced trance state.

Given these qualities and the dual role as shaman and priest, the social prestige of the *mara'akame* is clearly earned. The *mara'akame* also enjoys a sense of internal balance, uniqueness, and **power** that may offset the regular sacrifices required by the role.

Acquiring Power

The *mara'akame* is called in a **dream** or **vision** by *Tatewarí*, the **First Shaman** and the Spirit of Fire. Shamanic powers are not inherited, though latent shamanic talent tends to run in families, skipping generations. The *mara'akame* can be male or female, though male *mara'akame* are more common today.

The *mara'akame* acquires shamanic powers to cure and to retrieve lost souls primarily from *Tatewarí* and secondarily from *Tayaupá*, the **Sun**, except in the western regions where they are equally important. *Tayaupá* is considered extraordinarily powerful to the point of being dangerous. In mythology and contemporary rituals *Tayaupá* must be kept from getting too close to the **earth** and scorched.

Tayaupá is not approached with the same familiarity and enthusiasm as *Tatewarí*, but the *mara'akame* does approach the Sun to gain special powers. *Tayaupá* is the only deity who sends misfortune and illness (smallpox, esp.) to humanity as punishment or warning. *Tayaupá* is associated with sacred animals that are also harmful to humans, like poisonous snakes. The *mara'akame* is not immune from the dangers of *Tayaupá*, particularly when retrieving stolen souls from the Sun.

Training

The candidate learns directly from *Tatewarí* over many years. The candidate may also choose to learn myths and songs from an older *mara'akame*, but apprenticeship is not formal. Candidates participate in many ceremonies beginning as children, like all Huichol, and then eventually assisting with the chanting and preparations.

Over the years he or she must master an enormous body of cultural and shamanic knowledge and develop considerable skill in **singing, storytelling,** and violin playing.

Peyote, taken from the time he or she is a child in community rituals, helps to establish contact with *Tatewari*. *Tatewari*, who is also known as *Hikuri*, the Peyote-god, sends messages from the spirit world through visions. The *marakame* must learn to interpret these visions accurately.

When a candidate is guided to complete his or her **training**, he or she begins a five-year period of specific sacrifices, prohibitions, and leadership of the sacred peyote hunt for those five consecutive years. The hunts must, of course, be successful. During this five-year period the candidate must maintain fidelity to his or her spouse, abstain from salt and at times sleep, fast frequently, and observe any specific instructions received from *Tatewari* in his or her own visions.

The leadership of the peyote hunts grows more severe and strenuous with each year as the *marakame* is able to take on more and more of the psychospiritual weight of his or her people and of the pilgrims on the hunts. To fail is a serious matter and the hardships involved in becoming an *marakame* only become more severe. Those who fail are in danger of becoming sorcerers because they have acquired some magical powers but not the strength of character nor the courage of heart to control them. The actual assumption of the role of *marakame* usually does not occur until middle age.

Healing

The *marakame* used the following standard **shamanic healing** techniques: **cleansing** with smoke by **camaying** and healing through sucking, massage, and **soul retrieval**. The *marakame* also functions as the **psychopomp**, traveling with the souls of the deceased to the **Land of the Dead** to assure their safe passage.

Tatewari is called on to cleanse the Huichol, returning those who participate in **ritual** with Grandfather Fire to their original condition of innocence and purity.

Paraphernalia

The Huichol construct two types of **sacred spaces**, the small family temple called the *xiriki* and the community temple called the *tuki*. The *xiriki* house the **urukame crystals** and **offerings**, including: deer horns and tails, gourds of sacred **water**, musical instruments used in ritual, and staffs of office. The deer horns of Kaenyumari are placed on top of both structures.

The *marakame*'s personal **power objects** include the *'uweni* or chair that is the sacred place of the *marakame* while he or she chants during **ceremony**. The *'uweni* is constructed with a round seat and a backrest displaying woven designs of the five-petal flower symbol for peyote and trimmed in deer skin.

The *takwatsi* is an oblong woven basket with a fitted lid that is constructed specifically to carry the *marakame*'s ceremonial **feathers** and arrows, or *muveri*. The *muveri* are distinguished from weaponry by bundles of hawk, eagle, or turkey feathers tied to them. They are a multi-purpose power objects that are used in cleansing and curing rituals. A full complement is ten, five major *muveri* for singing ceremonies and five minor *muveri* for healing rituals.

The *marakame*'s power objects also include miniature deer snares and miniature *'uweni* for the **spirits, rattles**, rattles from rattlesnakes, the violin and other musical instruments.

Myerhoff, B. G. *Peyote Hunt: The Sacred Journey of the Huichol Indians*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974.

Masinisawe

Masinisawe, an **Ojibwa** term meaning "he makes marks with **fire**," is a form of

divination called **scapulimancy**. An animal bone, most often the scapula or shoulder blade, is held near enough to a fire to scorch it. The bone is removed and either the scorch marks or the fissures and lines created by the heat are read. Only initiated shamans can perform *masinisawe*, which is usually practiced in solitude. The shoulder blade from any animal can be used, including the porcupine, marten, lynx, rabbit, beaver, moose, or caribou. This divination technique is often used to find someone who is lost or to foresee the future.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Mask Dances

Dances that played a central role in the psychospiritual well-being and preventative **medicine** of the peoples of the Pacific Northwest from Alaska to Oregon. There are three main types of mask dances: the *swaihwe* and *tal* involve wooden **masks** and the sacred winter ceremonies involve both wooden and painted faces. Permission to **dance** the dances had to be given, bought, or inherited by the families who were the keepers of the dance.

As preventative medicine, one function of the *swaihwe* dances was **purification** and **cleansing**. The Winter Ceremony dances, or “spirit **singing**,” functioned as an opportunity to honor and renew connection with totem **animal spirits** and ancestral beings, both sources of **power** and well-being. Once permission was granted, mastery of the dance and story were necessary to be allowed to dance the *swaihwe* and the *tal* masks.

The dancers of the Winter Ceremony dances were required to complete an elaborate **initiation** process to earn the honor to dance. Full spirit **possession** is necessary, among other skills, to correctly perform these dances. The initiation process employed fasting, sweating,

seclusion, intermediate rituals, testing by those initiated, transmission of power through breath by the initiated, **ritual** death and rebirth, extreme physical challenges, and controlled “possession” by **power animals**.

These dances were both **healing** and entertaining. They conveyed the history of creation, the heroic accomplishments of Ancestors and animals in the survival of humanity, and the social values of the people. Mask dances were used to enhance the impact and power of marriage, potlach, and reception ceremonies.

Barnett, H. G. *Gulf of Georgia Salish*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1939.

Masks

A **costume** worn over the face as means by which the **spirits** are brought into the physical world to interact with humans. Masks can be receptacles for spirit, and when used in this way, they are **power objects**. Masks are often conceived in the visions or **journeys** of the shaman in the spirit world. These masks are not meant to be realistic, but to interpret an idea or **vision** and capture the spirit of it. The creation of the mask brings the spirit of the vision into the physical world for the whole community to see, to witness, and to experience the power.

In general, masks can be used to share visions and oral histories through **storytelling** and dramatization. Other masks, created to hold the energies of specific spirits, can be used as power objects that focus the spirit power on specific tasks. The masks used by shamans in healing rituals are a way for the shaman to draw the spirit powers in the mask into the healing of individuals and communities.

The structure of a mask varies relative to tradition, purpose, and available resources. The most basic mask is face paint. Some masks are constructed to be held over the face, or eyes, like a

masquerade mask. There are hand masks, finger masks, jaw and mouth masks, face masks, and masks constructed to be worn over masks.

Masks used in dancing rituals are often constructed to be worn on the forehead, like a baseball cap, with the mask face protruding out and down over the dancer's face. These masks often have hair, grasses, bark, or some sort of material in strips that hang from the lower rim, covering the dancer's face and shoulders and enhancing the otherworldly effect with the appearance of additional height.

Masks are widely used throughout **North America**, particularly among the cultures of the Pacific Northwest Coast, Northeastern, and Southwestern regions. Some are made of wood and others of skin or cloth. The effect of the mask is enhanced with paint, **feathers**, hair, corn husks, fur, etc.

The peoples of the Northwest Coast area carve elaborate masks of cedar with moving parts mounted on hinges. Parts of the mask fold open or can be manipulated in some way so that the original "face" of the mask is transformed into a second character. These masks are used in powerful transformation stories that tell of heroes who changed from animal to human, human to animal, and from one **gender** to the other to succeed against impossible odds.

Traditionally, shamans carved their own masks, often on the living tree. Today, craftsmen specialize in carving the masks, locating the sacred **trees** for the wood, and the **ritual** process of creating a living mask. The tree spirit and the spirits of the forest are an important part of the process. Cultures that use wooden masks use a particular tree for their sacred masks, like the basswood tree used by the **Iroquois** or the kepuhrangdu tree used in Bali.

Masks play an important role in shamanic rituals. However, the actions of the shaman, not the form of the mask, determine its use. Furthermore, the mask face is the face of the spirit,

but the shaman must dance the dance of the spirit and **sing** the curing songs to embody the spirit and make its powers fully available to the healing.

Masks as Power Objects

Masks are power objects. Images for the mask often come from dreams or journeys during which the spirit instructs the dreamer to create the mask, often also specifying the tree to be used and the rituals to be performed in the process. The wood from sacred trees must be cut in a sacred way at specific times. The mask is created using specific rituals and observing specific **taboos**. Once completed, a ritual is performed to formally invite the spirit into the mask.

When made in a sacred way masks embody the **energy** of spirit and will continue to do so until they are destroyed or disrespected. When a sacred mask is danced the spirit in the mask can enter the body of the dancer or shaman. When the ritual ends, the spirit returns to the mask. Masks provide such an inviting home for spirit that even masks not made in a sacred way have been known to become embodied by spirits.

In many cultures these sacred masks are cared for with respect and treated as living things. These masks are kept in a special location or container, fed regular **offerings**, and amends are made if the mask is accidentally dropped or harmed. The Zuñi, for example, chew a variety of seeds and spray them over the mask as an offering to give it life.

It was not uncommon for masks to be made for a specific ritual and then burned after the last dance on the last night of a multi-day ritual. The **fire** provides a means of releasing the spirits embodied in the masks in a way that assures **purification** and the transformation of anything harmful or malevolent. A mask and the spirit within it are the responsibility of the creator, dancer, or shaman who uses it. If the spirit is not cared for, it must be released. Many powerful, sacred masks were burned

rather than allowed to be taken by white men out of reach of the caretaker's ability to properly honor and control the spirit powers in the mask.

Masks Used in Healing Rituals

Masks are used in **healing** rituals to access the spirits in the masks whose powers are needed for the healing. For example, the Iroquois explain that the false face masks of the healing society came from dreams. In these dreams the forest spirits told the dreamer that they possessed the power to heal sickness. The spirits instructed the dreamer how to carve the mask, conduct the feast, make the sacred **tobacco** offerings, and sing the curing songs. When performed as instructed, the spirit powers entered the person wearing the mask to be directed into healing.

Yup'ik masks are also conceived of in the dreams and visions of the shaman. However, these masks are created for a healing ritual and then burned or left in a sacred way on the tundra away from the village. New masks are created each year, carved from wood, painted, and decorated according to the *angalkuq's* (shaman's) **vision**. Many masks represent things the people are asking the spirit world for, like animals for subsistence, good **weather**, or the power of a spirit for healing.

The Yup'ik term, *agayuliyararput*, means "our way of making **prayer**." It refers to the way in which masks and their dances and songs are ways of opening a connection to the spirit world through ritual. See also **False Face Society**.

Fienup-Riordan, Ann. *Agayuliyararput, Our Way of Making Prayer*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1996.

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White, T. ed. *Shaman's Drum*. Vol 36, Fall 1994, pg. 21–24.

Master of the Fish

An aspect of the **Master of the Beasts**. The *payés* (shamans) of **Amazonia** journey to the Master of the Fish to negotiate for the release of fish to feed the people. The *payé journeys* into the **sacred** waterfalls and encloses himself in an air bubble to continue to the bottom of the river. There he negotiates with the Master of the Fish for days. See also **hunting magic**.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Master of the Spirits

The **shaman** is often described as the Master of the Spirits because his control over the **spirits** causes them to help in the shaman's rituals. However, the true nature of the shaman's relationship with the **helping spirits** is one of **interdependence** rather than control. The shaman is powerless to heal shamanically without the intervention of spirit. The spirits take this **power** away with even greater ease than they grant it in the first place.

Even experienced shamans approach **spirit** with respect and **humility**. The **words** spoken and songs sung in **ritual** are largely the shaman requesting help, understating his powers, and asking that spirit bring the powers necessary to accomplish the act of **healing** or magic for which the ritual is being conducted.

The notion of mastery over the spirits contradicts most of what we know about how shamanic powers function. The majority of shamans attribute their power directly to the spirits or to a

special, non-ordinary **energy**. Traditionally, shamans do not claim to be the source of their power or that power will be taken away. Though the shaman may show off, basically advertise, in competitions or displays of power in some cultures, his or her relationship with spirit is grounded in humility.

Many former shamans explain their loss of powers as a result of breaking a **taboo** or transgressing in some way such that the spirit withdraws permanently and terminates the relationship. When shamans do not do as their helping spirits require they and their relations may suffer illness, madness, and death. Author and anthropologist Piers Vitebsky explains that “the relationship between shaman and spirit can be an uncertain one, and the shaman’s anguish can be too intense to justify the name of master.”

It is necessary for a shaman to develop mastery over his or her **trance** states. It should not be interpreted as control of the spirits themselves. The shaman’s powers are based on a mastery of self, ego, and fear, in short on a mastery of personal state.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Master of the Beasts

A **spirit** being who is the guardian or keeper of the animals and their **spirits**. The Master of the Beasts is thought of in some cultures as the collective **soul** or essence of the animals. The **shaman** journeys into the **Lowerworld** or to the bottom of the sea to appease the Master or **Mistress of the Beasts** in the performance of **hunting magic**.

The shaman negotiates with the Master of the Beasts to release animals

in exchange for human **sacrifices**. These sacrifices usually take the form of strict observance of moral behavior and confessions of trespasses against others, however rituals, feasts, **offerings**, and in some cultures humans lives were also exchanged.

Though the Mistress or Mother of the Beasts is the original form, in some cultures she later transformed into the Master of the Beasts.

Ripinsky-Naxon, M. *The Nature of Shamanism: Substance and Function of a Religious Metaphor*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Maya

A people living in independent states covering more than 100,000 square miles of forest and plain in what is now Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador. Today, Maya live throughout this region, though no longer in the independent city-state structure. The history of the Maya is to Central America what the history of the Egyptians is to the Mediterranean region and that of the Chinese is to Asia.

Worldview

The Maya worldview is similar to that of shamanic peoples around the world. The physical world and the spiritual world are seen as two planes of existence, inextricably locked together, in which everything is alive and **sacred**. The physical world is the material manifestation of **spirit** forces and the spirit is the essence of all things material. Objects, people, and places in the physical world acquire dangerous **power** when the connection between the two worlds is made manifest through **ritual** and trance.

For the Maya **time** was not linear, but cyclical. Time plays out in repeating patterns woven directly into the **space/time** fabric of the Universe. The

Maya not only saw the past returning in endless cycles of historical symmetry, but they chose to act on particular dates to replay that symmetry and use that symmetry to draw power from the past into the present time.

To use contemporary terms, one could say that the Maya saw time and space as a matrix of **energy** fields. These fields of energy affect the beings within them, both human and spirit. Simultaneously, the actions of the beings in the field affect the patterns of the matrix. For the Maya, this relationship of inextricable interaction is obvious and they exploited it to their advantage, as all shamanic peoples do to greater and lesser degrees.

Cosmology

The Mayan world is made up of three interrelated **domains** that are each alive and imbued with sacred power. The **Upperworld** is the **Sky**, the starry arch that is represented by the great crocodilian cosmic monster. The **Middleworld** is the **earth**, the human world that floats on the **primordial sea**. The **Lowerworld** is the dark, watery world of *Xibalba*, filled like **ordinary reality** with animals, plants, beings, landscapes, and structures. *Xibalba* rotates above the earth at sundown, becoming the night sky and returns below the earth at dawn, becoming a **mirror** image of the earth and its beings.

Xibalba, though called the Underworld, is understood by the Maya to be the Otherworld, the spirit realm that is visited by the **shaman** in an ecstatic trance state. *Xibalba* and its spirit world population are often represented underwater or as a mirror image of the Middleworld population. Many of the *Xibalba* creatures are depicted in glyphs that designate them as co-essences, or **helping spirits**.

The *wacah chan*, or **Tree of Life**, creates an axis through all three realms, coexisting in and connecting them. The branches of *wacah chan* reached to the highest layers of the Upperworld and the roots touched the deepest layer of

the Lowerworld, providing a means by which the shaman travel between the worlds. *Wacah chan* is represented by the color blue-green and is associated with specific **birds**, gods, and rituals.

The principal axis of the Maya Middleworld is the path of the **Sun, east to west**. Mayan maps are oriented with the east at the top. Each direction is the home of a sacred tree and is associated with a bird, a color, specific gods, and the rituals necessary to honor and work with them.

The four cardinal directions provided the grid for the Middleworld and Maya community. The Maya utilized the matrix of power points in the land, particularly mountains and **caves**, which were created by the gods when the gods created the cosmos. The expressions for the directions and the names vary greatly depending on the Mayan **language** being spoken. The following examples are from the Yucatec language.

Lakin, the east, is represented by *chac*, red, and the tree, *Chac-Xib-Chac*. *Xaman*, the **north**, is sometimes called the “side of heaven” and contains the north star around which the sky pivots each day. *Xaman* is represented by *zac*, white, and the tree, *Zac-Xib-Chac*. *Chikin* is the leaving place of the sun, the west. *Chikin* is represented by *ek*, black, and the tree *Ek-Xib-Chac*. *Nohol*, the **south**, is represented by *kan*, yellow, and the tree *Kan-Xib-Chac*.

The H'men

The *h'men*, meaning the “one who knows,” can be a man or a woman. The *h'men* is distinguished from the **medicine** people who heal only physical **illness** and those who heal only spiritual illness. The *h'men* is a “doctor-**priest**” who is called on to heal physical and spiritual ailments.

Training

The *h'men* is called in a **dream** by the Nine Mayan Spirits, who are heard in the thunder and seen in the lightning. These spirits continue to teach the novice techniques, medicinal plants,

and sacred **prayers** in his or her dreams. The sacred prayers are the most important and powerful tool of the *h'men*. The novice may also **apprentice** him/herself to a master *h'men*. In that way the huge body of knowledge of medicinal plants and sacred plants gathered during the *h'men's* lifetime can be passed on to the next generation.

Illness

The Maya believe that illnesses are caused by an array of obvious physical causes. The non-physical causes include: **susto**, (fright), *mal aire* (malaise), *envidia* (misfortune caused by an enemy), and *mal ojo* (evil eye). Illness is also attributed to **sorcery** and malevolent spirit **possession** caused by sorcery.

Healing

The *h'men* is called on to conduct rituals to affect the **weather** and protect the crops, e.g., to bring rain or to stop the rain or the wind. Some of these rituals may last two to three days. The *h'men* is called on to assist the growth of crops by protecting them from malevolent spirits or strengthening their benevolent spirits.

The *h'men* can ask animals to lay down their lives for the people to eat. The *h'men* is called on for all forms of **healings, exorcism, soul retrievals**, and counteracting the harmful effects of sorcery.

Divination

The *sastun* is one of the most important tools of the *h'men* and is used primarily in **divination** and **diagnosis**. The *sastun* (*sas*, meaning "light" or "mirror" and *tun*, meaning stone) is found in various shapes and forms. The one consistent quality is that the stone has a transparent quality that allows the *h'men* to look into it.

The *sastun* is a **power object** given by spirit, in that traditionally spirit shows the *h'men* the *sastun* or where to find it in a dream. The *sastun* is a channel through which the *h'men* contacts the spirits for divinations and empowering

cures. It can also be used to answer yes or no questions from the patient.

Paraphernalia

The *h'men* uses his or her *sastun* when the direction from spirit is unclear or is not forthcoming. Copal resin is burned and the resulting smoke is used for **cleansing** and clearing. Leaves from the *tzib* che plant are used similarly, stroking the body in sets of nine strokes to cleanse and clear. The *h'men* also uses tallow candles and an assortment of other personal power objects.

Yucatán shamans set up their **altars** as models of the Maya worldview and put them in traditional places of power, the mouths of caves, the foot of hills, or out in open fields. The altar, arbor, or corral created for the **ritual** involves the four **trees** at the four corners, six poles holding up the altar, and blood-letting, now from chickens, turkeys, deer, or pigs. All the shaman acts and rituals of the Maya employ the principle that the place will be opened through the ritual as the central axis that allows communication with the spirit world.

For the Maya, ritual **sacrifice** is the highest act of spiritual devotion. The Maya see their relationship with the cosmos in the **life cycle** of maize, the staple of Mayan life. The maize cannot renew its life cycle without human hands to plant the seeds. The Maya believed that the Universe could not renew itself without the sacrifice of blood.

Maya shamans maintain a link with the ancient gods and help to preserve the language, worldview, and the Maya understanding of the reality of the universe in the face of great pressure from Western **religions** to conform. The shamans help to heal the contradictions in the village priorities that arise from diverse cultural influences. Their actions conserve things of value by constantly reframing and explaining the changes in the world based on fundamental ideas that are thousands of years old.

Arvigo, Rosita. *Sastun: My Apprenticeship with a Maya Healer*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1995.

Hammond, N. *Ancient Maya Civilization*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1982.

Schele, L., and D. Freidel. *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1990.

Schultes, R. E. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Maya Prophecy

This prophecy is very like the prophecies of the Hopi and the **Q'ero (Inka)** in its general message of the coming of a new **time** for humanity and the **earth**. The Maya prophecy, linked to its calendar and astronomy, is complex, exacting, and frighteningly accurate. To vastly oversimplify, the Maya understood time to be cyclical in nature and that cycles are fifty-two years in length.

The Maya prophecy predicted that their own culture's lifespan was to be seven heaven cycles of decreasing choice followed by nine hell cycles of increasing doom. After the ninth hell cycle the "Lord of the Dawn" would return. At the end of the seventh heaven cycle the Spanish conquistadors and **priests** arrived and began the conquest and conversion of the peoples of Mexico.

The atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima at the end of the eighth hell cycle. Humanity is now coming to the end of the ninth, and final hell cycle. The end of the cycles described in the prophecy is also the beginning of the return of the "Lord of the Dawn." This is described as a time of not only new thinking, but of a complete paradigm shift and a quantum leap for humanity.

Hammond, N. *Ancient Maya Civilization*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1982.

Schele, L., and D. Freidel. *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1990.

Mazatec

A native people of Mexico who use **psilocybe mushrooms** extensively in their practice.

Medicine

The **sacred**, mysterious, supernatural **power** inherent in all things. The term is usually used with regard to **aboriginal** North American peoples and generally does not refer to something used for medication. Medicine powers are a normal aspect of daily life and can be found manifest in ordinary places and objects, as well as things publicly recognized as sacred.

Indigenous North Americans understand that there is an invisible power that connects everything in the universe. Everything is alive and contains an animating power. The **Lakota** call this power *wakan* and the **Iroquois** call it *orneda*. Medicine is the aspect of anything associated with this supernatural power. North American shamans use both "medicine powers" and **spirit** powers.

Each individual possesses **original medicine**, which is the unique quality of personal power that arises from the combination of talents, gifts, and challenges innate to that individual. An individual may be granted additional medicine powers as a result of a profound life transformation, dedicated work, or a successful **vision quest** or **initiation**. Any single medicine power granted one of these ways can often be put to more than one use. However, the range of uses or the number of times the individual may use that medicine may be limited by spirit.

Consciousness and wisdom are fundamental characteristics of medicine. This consciousness is innate in all

things and creates a basis for communication and connection between all things. Therefore, medicine can be seen as the thread of the **Great Mystery** that moves within and connects all things.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Medicine Bundle

A collection of **power objects**, medicines, and sometimes ritual **paraphernalia** wrapped in a skin or skin pouch. The contents of each bundle are unique and defined by the purpose for which it was created. The handling and care of a bundle, which is considered a living, conscious being, are **sacred ceremony** that is defined by the owner, cultural traditions, and the nature of the powers contained in the bundle.

A medicine bundle can be owned by a regular person or a **shaman** or other person of power, and is thus privately owned. A bundle can also be associated with a particular ceremony or **ritual**, a **medicine society**, a particular clan, or an entire nation as with the Sacred Calf Pipe bundle of the **Lakota**. These bundles are publicly owned and the honor and responsibility of their care is handed down through the generations, often within families. See also **medicine pouch**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Medicine Dance

The term most often refers to the performances of the **Midewiwin Society** in the anthropological literature. However, it is also appropriate to apply it to the sings of the Navajo or the performances

of the **medicine societies** of the Southwestern region of **North America**.

Technically, the term applies not only to the formal **healing** rituals of these medicine societies and traditions, but to the many creative acts of **shamanic healing** performed around the world by single shamans or groups in which the shaman's **dance** or the dancing of the patient or community is the "medicine" that facilitates the cure. A medicine dance is a shamanic healing **ritual** in which dance is the tool of healing.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Medicine Man

A popular term applied to healers of indigenous cultures, particularly those of **North America**. This term overlooks the fact that there are many different kinds of healers in indigenous cultures and that healers are just as often women as they are men. Female healers may have been less apparent given that they were not as prone to **power displays** as their male counterparts.

The terms medicine man and **shaman** have become interchangeable in the literature. This leads to confusion and propagates misunderstanding. For example, shamans do not always use their powers for **healing**. Nor are all healers skilled in directing supernatural powers.

In European literature *shaman* tends to be reserved for practitioners who access their powers through mastery of **altered states of consciousness** and medicine man refers to practitioners who do not use altered states in their healing work. While this distinction still lumps a great diversity of practitioners together, it does reflect the general truth that most shamans are medicine men, while not all medicine men are shamans.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Medicine Pipe

See **sacred pipe**.

Medicine Pouch

Also called **medicine** bag, medicine sack, **medicine bundle**, etc. A medicine pouch contains **elements** of the shaman's personal medicine. Medicine in this context means those items associated with supernatural power. Like other **power objects**, the items in a medicine pouch are ordinary items which embody non-ordinary power.

The medicine pouch has consciousness. The pouch must be regularly fed with **sacred offerings** and handled in a specific fashion. Breaking **taboos** connected with a medicine pouch can have serious harmful consequences.

Every **culture** has a prescribed way of handling a shaman's medicine pouch after the **shaman** dies. Ideally a shaman transfers the pouch to a new owner before his or her death. In some cultures the medicine pouch and other power objects stay with the shaman's body throughout the funerary process. In other cultures the shaman's **spirit** enlivens the pouch and other power objects in a **ritual** during which they pick their new owner.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Medicine Singing

Medicine singing is a practice of **healing** with **spirit** songs. The songs are gifts from spirit and they are often given to heal a particular illness or to resolve a particular situation. The songs must be sung exactly as received from spirit to be effective. The songs and the right to **sing** them are passed on from generation to generation.

Singing is used by shamans in healing rituals around the world. In North America, medicine singing is also used by non-shamans for doctoring. There are songs for curing and for protection from malevolent **spirits** and acts of **sorcery**. There are different songs for children, adults, and elders.

One must prepare to receive medicine songs by observing rituals of **cleansing** and **purification**, sometimes for as long as a year or more. The songs come spontaneously from the spirits, often during **vision quests** or in **dreams**, and they teach themselves to the singer. Songs can come gently or with great force, often making the singer sick for the first few days as the **song** settles in and decides if the person is fit to sing it. Then it may take decades of singing the song for the individual to actually be able to heal with it. See also **medicine**; **medicine societies**; **music**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

———. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Medicine Societies

An anthropological term used to refer to organized societies of **shamans** or **priests** who perform complex **rituals** or **ceremonies** as a group. These rituals and ceremonies change very little over time, largely because preserving the form is part of the purpose of the society. Individual shamans continue to practice alongside the practices of the medicine societies in most of these cultures.

Versions of ceremonies do evolve between tribes who share the same medicine societies. For example, there is widespread variation of the **Ojibwa midewiwin** ceremony. There are three main types of **Midewiwin Society**: Central **Algonquian** including the Fox,

Illinois, Kickapoo, Menomini, Miami, Potawatomi, and Sauk, the Omaha/Ponca, and the Dakota including the Iowa, Oto, Winnebago, and Wahepton Dakota.

Variation also occurs among the medicine societies of the Pueblo people—the Hopi, Zuñi, Tiwa, Tewa, Towa, and Keres—whose priests perform very complex ceremonial forms. The Navajo *hataáál* is perhaps the most complex healing ceremonial form; however, the *hataáál* is performed by a qualified *hataáali*, not a society.

Each society has a head priest, who in some cultures is a powerful elder shaman and in other cultures is a practitioner distinct from the shamans of that **culture**. The priests and/or shamans of these societies are very powerful and influential. Each medicine society has specific functions and duties, although each also has a healing function. Some societies are specifically for curing, while others are for bringing rain, empowering various medicines, offering **blessings**, and the curing of illnesses caused by something related to their primary function.

Admission into a society has specific conditions and protocols that vary between societies. Each society trains and initiates its candidates, often in elaborate **initiation** rituals. Many societies have numerous levels of **training** and initiation. Advancement between levels is based on performance alone. All of these characteristics differ from culture to culture. However, it is consistent across cultures that initiation, or some part of the initiation, is kept secret from the uninitiated, as are essential parts of the healing rituals and the internal affairs of the society.

Most medicine society rituals and ceremonies have two parts, part performed in secret and the other performed in public. For example, in the southwestern medicine societies the secret rites are conducted in kivas (underground rooms) and among the Ojibwa they are performed in the Midewiwin Society's lodge. The public

part of the ceremony usually involves songs, exact enactment of chants and corresponding ritual actions, dancing often in **costumes, singing, music**, and often displays of **power** by the most accomplished society members. It is not unusual for either part of the ceremony to last for several days.

An altar is created within the designated ceremonial **space**, dividing the public and secret parts of the ceremony or ritual. Altars may be elaborate Hopi altars with **prayer** sticks and sacred offerings, Navajo **sand paintings**, or a buffalo **skull** or other power object symbolic of and sacred to the society performing.

Medicine societies are also called dancing societies, ceremonial societies, or sodalities in the literature.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Mediumship

The capacity, function, or profession of acting as an intermediary between the living and the spirit world. Mediumship alone does not make one a **shaman**; however, shamans may serve as mediums to restore harmony to the individual or community. When a shaman serves as a medium it is called **divination**.

Divination is the act of consulting the beings, or wisdom, of the spirit world to gain information about the past, present, or future in order to facilitate problem solving. Shamans use **altered states of consciousness** and divination tools to perform their divinations.

Both mediums and shamans are called to their **profession** by the spirit world. The spontaneous initiatory **possession** is often interpreted as **illness**. For individuals who resolve this crisis, the next phase is to learn to induce and control the possessions, not just rely on spontaneous generation. The medium must be able to induce **trance** and to practice in a community context, so that

he or she can help others when they are ill or in need of guidance from the **spirits**. The medium must also learn the internal control to end the trance state and return to his or her ordinary consciousness.

Evidence of full possession and the spirit's presence may be expected by clients, especially among the Buddhists, Taoists, and Hindus in Asia where the tradition of spirit mediums remains unbroken. The medium's state of consciousness may vary from full awareness and memory of the process to no awareness and complete amnesia. The medium's voice, expression, accent, **posture**, and behavior may all change dramatically and suggest that the original person and personality have been replaced by one quite different.

In a survey of 188 cultures, mediumship was found in over half of them. These cultures that use altered states often draw clear distinctions between various levels of trance. The Umbandistas of Argentina, for example, distinguish three levels of trance. The first is *irradiation* (irradiation) during which the medium is basically him/herself. At this stage the spirit **energy** is reaching the medium, but does not have control over the medium's body. He or she may have **intuitions** about problem solving or experience strange sensations in certain body parts.

The second stage is *encostamiento* (to be beside). At this stage the spirit energy is "leaning" on the medium and has control over the medium's body. The medium begins losing memory of what he or she is witnessing and control over his or her body.

In the final stage, *incorporacion* (incorporation), the spirit energy is in full possession. The spirit of the medium has moved out of the way to allow the possessing spirit to fully enter and control the medium's **words** and body. The Umbandista healers are expected to work from this state of *incorporacion*, because their clients are there to speak to the gods, not the mediums.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Mesa

A bundle of **power objects** that function as a portable **altar** and are used in small personal and large group rituals of **Q'ero** shamans, high in the Andean mountains of Peru. For use the *mesa* is unwrapped and its contents placed ritually on the cloth. Typical contents include the *q'uyas* (stones) and objects that embody the power of *Pachamama* (the **Earth**), the *apus* (the mountain spirits), and the shaman's **teachers**, both human and/or **spirit** beings.

The Q'ero shaman's power comes from his or her ability to communicate with the *achachle*, the spirit that lives in everything. The **shaman** must cultivate his or her personal energy to be able to attain this state of **sacred** communication with *achachle* in the different energies in the environment. The Q'ero shaman goes through many levels of **training** and **initiation** and the *mesa* is at the core of this practice.

Mesayoq

There are particular lines of **knowledge** and levels of development for which it is helpful for the *paq'o* to have a teacher, or *mesayoq* (master). All of the next three levels of *paq'o* are capable of extraordinary **healings**, both physical-like paralysis and drug addiction, and spiritual-like psychic and psychological abnormalities. In addition to healings the *pampa mesayoq*, the *alto mesayoq*, and *kuraq akulleq* each use their relationship with the supernatural in unique and increasingly more powerful and enlightened ways.

Mescal Beans

Mescal beans were used thousands of years ago by the **First Peoples** of Mexico and the North American Plains and Southwest. Caches of the beans have

been found in the Rio Grande basin dating between 1500 B.C.E. and 200 C.E.

A hallucinogenic drink was prepared from the bean and consumed during the Red Bean **Dance**, a dance **ritual** performed for **divination** and visions. The Red Bean Dance and use of the mescal bean gave way to **peyote** and the practice related to it. This transition occurred in part because peyote is a much safer hallucinogen.

Mescal beans are the seeds of the *Sophora secundiflora* tree. The active constituent in the mescal bean is cytisine, a highly toxic alkaloid. Cytisine is not known to be hallucinogenic by chemical standards; however, it is present in several hallucinogenic plants whose active principle is still unknown.

Schultes, R. E. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Mesoamerica

The cultural and geographic region of Central America limited by **aboriginal** farming to the north and Mayan-speakers to the east. All Mesoamerican peoples share a variety of traits that are absent or rare elsewhere in the New World.

These traits are highly specialized markets, a game played with a rubber ball in a special court, hieroglyphic writing, accordion-folded books of fig-bark paper or deerskin, a complex calendar, **knowledge** of the movement of planets (esp. Venus) against a background of stars, bloodletting from the ears, tongue, or penis, human **sacrifice** by removing head or heart, belief in an multi-layered upper and lower worlds of spirit, a universe oriented in the four directions and center, specific **colors** and gods assigned to each of these five points, and a highly complex pantheistic **religion** recognizing **spirit** in nature, mythical gods and goddesses, **ancestors**, and the living royalty.

The Olmec of the Yucatán peninsula developed the template of complex

cultural traits of the Mesoamericans in the Early Preclassic period, 1500–900 B.C.E. The term was first defined by Paul Kirchhoff in 1943.

Coe, Michael D. *The Maya*. London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1999.

Schele, L., and D. Freidel. *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1990.

Mestizo

People of the Americas who are of mixed Indian and European blood. Though not a traditional native group, they are included here because Mestizo shamans of the upper Amazon, called **vegetalistas**, have vital contemporary shamanic practices employing the plant hallucinogen **ayahuasca**.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Metal

A substance with powerful protective functions in shamanism. The ringing of metal, fashioned into bells, cymbals, gongs, and other jangling objects, was used to drive away harmful **spirits** and the harmful effects of malevolent **sorcery**, **spells**, and curses. Metal objects, primarily of iron or copper, are found in the **paraphernalia** and sewn to the **costumes** of shamans in **Africa**, across **Siberia**, **China**, **Japan**, and parts of ancient Europe.

Metallurgy, which involves the transformation of matter through **fire**, is a central, magical element in the mythology of these peoples. The **blacksmith** is often associated with the **shaman** as an older sibling who, like the shaman, is tortured, tutored, initiated, and given transformational powers by the spirits.

These metal discs and figures and copper **mirrors** have souls and they do not rust. The uses and magical meanings of the metallic objects vary between tribes and from **culture** to culture.

Generally these **power objects** offer protection and the mirrored discs allow the shaman to see and capture souls. For example, the caftan of an Altaic shaman is made of a goat or reindeer skin and hung with a number of miniature iron objects, like bows, arrows, and animals, and copper discs, which frighten harmful spirits.

The caftan of a Siberian shaman is hung with iron discs to protect the shaman from the blows of malevolent spirits. Other iron or copper figures represent mythical animals, a pectoral disc represents the **Sun**, a pierced disc represents the **earth** and the shaman's entry into the **Lowerworld**, and on the back a lunar crescent and chain hang. Each item symbolizes an aspect of the shaman's **spirit** power and strength to resist the attacks of malevolent spirits and sorcerers.

The **costume** of the **Yakut** shaman, similar to that of the **Zulu sangoma**, is hung with thirty to fifty pounds of metal ornaments, which make quite a racket when the shaman dances into trance. These objects embody the shaman's powers to cure: large round discs representing female breasts, the liver, heart, other internal organs, **sacred** animals, **birds**, and a small metal canoe containing the Spirit of Madness who helps the shaman to cure metal **illness**.

In some cultures metal represents a level of development and mastery beyond the shaman's initial **initiation**. For example, after the fifth level of initiation a **Buryat (Buriat)** shaman receives a new cap with a crown of iron bands and its two ends bent to represent two horns. Also after the fifth level of initiation her birch "stick-horse" is replaced by one made of iron, its end sculptured into a horsehead and decorated with metal bells.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Mexoga

The **transformed shamans** of the Omaha people of **North America**. The *mexoga* belonged to a brotherhood of **gender-variant male** healers who served the community as shamans. These men were considered a different gender than the men of the tribe. They dressed and wore their hair in the tradition of the women in their tribe.

The *mexoga* is called to his vocation in childhood. The boy is visited by the goddess of the **moon** in a **dream**. In this dream she asks him to choose between the warrior's bow, symbolic of the masculine gender role, and the burden strap, symbolic of the feminine gender role. If the boy chose the burden strap in the dream, then the boy was destined to become a *mexoga* in life.

Sometime after the dream of the goddess of the moon, the boy is stopped on the road by a matronly woman. This woman is the physical **embodiment** of the goddess of the moon and she knows this goddess's ways. She addresses him as daughter and becomes his **teacher**, instructing him in the mysteries, shamanic techniques, and ways of the moon.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Middleworld

From a shamanic perspective anything and everything has, or is, **spirit**. The spirit aspect of everything, which is normally invisible, is experienced directly by the **shaman** through his or her senses while in an ecstatic **altered state of consciousness**.

This invisible world, or **non-ordinary reality**, is experienced by the shamans of many different cultures to have three realms; the **Upperworld**, **Middleworld**, and **Lowerworld**. These realms are non-linear, with limitless **space** and without **time**.

The Middleworld is the non-ordinary reality aspect of the physical Universe we live in. In it the spiritual, mental, and emotional energies of life flow in patterns that are apparent to the shaman while in an altered state and available to work with. To access the Middleworld the shaman simply leaves his or her body, enters trance, and journeys through the realm.

The Middleworld is inhabited by the spirit aspect of everything in our physical world. It is also populated by ghosts of humans who have not completed their **journey** after death and other lesser **spirits**, depending on the cultural perspective. **Power animals** and other **helping spirits** populate this realm when they choose to or when called on by humans for help. The spirits of Nature, the **elements**, and things in our world, like the **earth**, **Moon**, and **Sun** also populate this realm.

Shamans perform extractions, exorcisms, and **cleansing** healings in the Middleworld. For these healings the shaman enters an embodiment **trance** in which the helping spirit enters the shaman's body to work on the patient.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1990.

Midewiwin

The **healing ritual** of the secret **medicine society**, or **Midewiwin Society**, of many different peoples of the Great Lakes region in **North America**. Among the **Ojibwa**, rituals last for seven to eight days and consist of the activities of a group of Mide shamans who work together in public, private, and secret sessions during the ritual.

In preparation for the ritual all the shamans who will participate cleanse themselves in a **sweat lodge**. This is followed by a processional, full of symbolism and chanting, to the *midewigun*, the lodge in which the Mide ritual and ceremonies are conducted. The shamans rattle turtle shell **rattles** throughout the

processional to call in the **spirits** of goodwill and to disperse harmful malevolent spirits.

When the four rounds of the processional are complete the shamans enter the *midewigun* and seat themselves according to the four orders of Mide shamans. The curing begins with from two to four nights of private sessions depending on the **illness** being cured, then proceeds into one or two days of secret healing sessions, and closes with a day session that is open to the public.

After the curing the patient distributes gifts to the shamans according to order and office. Then, in a final healing session, each **shaman** shoots a *migi*, a **sacred** power shell, into the patient to assure strength and good health. The Midewiwin concludes with a feast and dancing.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Midewiwin Society

The secret **medicine society** of many peoples of the Great Lakes region in North America. The Midewiwin Society developed a strict hierarchic structure for **training** medicine people, shamans, and **seers**.

Initiation

Initially, anyone who demonstrated healing gifts or plant medicine **knowledge** was accepted. Eventually training was limited to the highly gifted and those chosen by the *manitou* (spirits). The spontaneous selection in a dream was considered most proper as it ensured *manitou* approval of the candidate. Patients who were cured by the Mide Society were invited to train after testing for the *manitou* approval.

It was also possible to pay for entry. Each level of **initiation** had a price; the higher the level, the greater the price. However, payment did not guarantee the candidate would acquire the necessary approval of *manitou* necessary for

gaining real **power** and mastery of the *mide's* skills.

Initiation of the Patient-Candidate

At the *midewiwin* healing **ritual**, there are many days of healing during which the sick patient is expected to be cured. On the final day, during a public **ceremony**, the *mide* shamans close the healing ritual by “shooting” the patient with **migis** (shells) from their *midewayan*, **medicine bundles** to give the patient strength and lasting health. The patient drops into a **trance** as if dead, which reenacts the primordial death of **Nanabush** during the first *midewiwin*. This is also the initiation process at each stage of the *midewiwin* training.

The patient-candidate is awakened now filled with an infusion of *manitou* power in the form of *migis* shells. The patient, by virtue of the healing process, is now prepared to be a candidate into the sacred society of shamans. This process parallels that of the initiate within the *midewiwin* and the solitary Ojibwa seeking *manitou* to grant him/her shamanic powers.

Tests are made to ascertain if *Mide Manitou* is pleased with the ceremony and the candidate. Tests primarily involve animating normally inanimate objects, for example, making beads roll themselves, wooden dolls move unaided, or the *midewayan* (mide medicine bag) speak. The success of these displays of power indicates *Mide Manitou's* acceptance of the candidate into Midewiwin Society.

Training

There are believed to be eight levels of Midewiwin training; however, the highest four are completely shrouded in secrecy. Training for each of the first four stages requires the transmission of a precise body of knowledge from the *midewiwinini*, *mide*—mysterious principle—*winini*—man, to the initiate through specific initiation rituals. These four stages produce four levels of medicine people.

The teachings that can be taught are passed on orally and on a symbolic

birchbark script. Each stage involves learning a large body of knowledge and the preparation for the central initiation ritual of that stage. In the initiation ritual, the teachings that can only be experienced are passed on by the highest *midewiwinini* through the *migi* he shoots into the initiates. The initiates are later awakened by the *midewiwinini*. They vomit the *migi*, which is now theirs, and begin to live a life enriched by the teachings and the existential changes brought on by their experience of rebirth.

Though the initiate's status and existence have been changed by ritual, he or she must now prove his or her powers publicly. When all four initiations are complete and mastery demonstrated, the new *midewiwinini* receives a shell that protects against sickness and misfortune, the symbol of the *mide's* status.

The four stages of teaching, greatly simplified, follow. In the first stage the initiate must learn the plant lore, songs, and **prayers**. They must fast and sweat to prepare and provide the **offerings**, without mistake, at the Midewiwin spring ceremony. During this ceremony the initiation ritual takes place. In this ritual the initiate is “shot” with the sacred *migis* and collapses as if dead. In this state the initiate receives a **vision** and a **spirit song**. The *midewiwinini* awakens the initiate and the “newborn” must prove his or her newly acquired powers publicly. Completion of this stage is honored by the presentation, to the initiate, of a medicine bundle, filled with **power objects** and things that symbolize the initiate's personal powers.

In the second stage initiates learn another body of knowledge and preparation for the next initiation ritual. Through this second death and rebirth, the initiate receives an opening of powerful psychic abilities. The initiate must now master sight and hearing beyond the physical ranges of the senses and the ability to distinguish good from evil, read the future, find lost objects, touch people at a great distance, and transcend the limitations of **time** and

space and enter **altered states of consciousness**.

In the third stage initiates learn another body of knowledge and preparation for the next initiation. In this third death and rebirth initiation the initiate becomes a *yeesekeewinini*, one capable of invoking and communicating with higher beings in the spirit realm. When this stage is mastered the initiate can embody the power of Thunder which enables him/her to communicate with the *Mide Manitou* of the **Upperworld**.

In the fourth stage initiates learn another body of knowledge and preparation for the next initiation ritual. In this fourth death and rebirth the initiate receives the power to awaken the first three stages of powers in others. When this stage is mastered the initiate can fly, transform into the animal forms of his or her *manitou*, suck **illness** from the body, and demonstrate **mastery of fire**. The training is considered complete and the new *midewiwinini* is permitted to teach and test others, though he or she must return periodically to the Midewiwin Society ceremonials to regenerate his or her power. After completion of the training, some *midewiwinini* specialize. The *meskekeewinini*, *meskeek* meaning "liquid dose," heals with plant remedies prepared in both liquid and dry forms and can be considered a **medicine man**. The *meskekeewinini* also cures with bleeding, cupping, and the basic healing of ulcers and fresh wounds.

The *midewiwinini*, considered the shaman, heals the illnesses caused by **spirits**, sorcerers, and other energies from the invisible world. They work in trance states induced with drumming and rattling and use the power of their medicine bag, *migis*, and their **helping spirits**. The *midewiwinini*'s practice is not solitary if he or she lives near others of the Midewiwin Society and participates in the *midewiwin* healing rituals.

The *yeesekeewinini*, *yeeseke* meaning "prophecy," is the diviner, prophet or **seer**. They work in trance states, induced by drumming, and draw their

power from helping spirits. They address their question directly to the *Mide Manitou*. The *yeesekeewinini*'s practice may be solitary, due to the nature of that calling.

The **drum** used by the Midewiwin in ceremony is called *mitig wakik*. It is used to induce sustained trance states that allow the Midewiwin access to various modes of perception. Trance states are used to instruct candidates in shamanic lore, magical manipulation of objects, and herbal therapeutics.

The Midewiwin training preserves the knowledge of herbs, medicine songs, and shamanic techniques for prolonging life. One fundamental principle underlying Midewiwin healing is that life is prolonged by right living and use of herbs which were intended for this purpose by the *Mide Manitou*. This herbal lore is woven into all the teachings of the Midewiwin, in the narration of stories of the powers of the *manitou*, the songs and chants, and the techniques for manipulating of objects directing power.

Haines, E. M. *The American Indian (Uhnish-in-na-ba)*. Chicago: The Mas-sin-na'-gan Company, 1888.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

———. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Migi

A small white, **sacred** shell from the saltwater species, *Cypraea moneta* or money cowrie, used by shamans in **midewiwin initiations** and **healings** as a means to transfer **energy**. The *migis* carry a spark of life; the smaller the shell the more potent the charge. Each member of the Mide Society have a number of *migis*.

The *migis*, also called **medicine arrows**, are discharged from a *wayan*, the hide of a small animal like an otter.

The **power** of the *migi* is neutral; the effect of the *migi* is determined by the shooter. *Migis* are sent into victims to cause **illness** and into a patient to ensure good health. During healings *migis* are extracted from the patient as part of the cure.

When members of the **Midewiwin Society** gather for competition and **power displays**, *migi* duels are held between initiates. In these dancing duels, the dancers shoot *migis* at each other until only one remains standing.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Mihi

The Cubeo term for *ayahuasca*. The vulture is the animal **spirit** the Cubeo associate with *mihi* and its use. In *mihi* rituals the participants embody the **spirit** of the vulture as they enter the *mihi*-induced **trance** state. They **dance** bird-like, whistling and speaking in the "he, he, he" sounds of the vulture **spirits**. An effigy of the vulture flies from the roofbeam in the center inspiring the men and women equally to soar.

The powers the Cubeo associate with the vulture are derived from the fact that it effortlessly soars so high that it appears to enter the **Upperworld**. Much like the eagle of North America, the vulture is gifted with extraordinary sight. It can drop from great heights back down to **earth** with lightning speed and pinpoint accuracy.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Furst, P. T. "Feathered Crowns of Power." *Shaman's Drum* 29(Fall 1992):40–47.

Mikenak

In the **Shaking Tent Ceremony** the *djessakid* (shaman) asks *Mikenak* the questions from the audience, who leaves to obtain the answers. When *Mikenak* returns a whistling **sound** can be heard

by all attending as *Mikenak* falls from the top to the bottom of the *djesikon* (tent). *Mikenak* is heard conversing with the *djessakid*, who then shares the answers with the audience. Also: *Michika*, *Mishtapeu* (Montagnais), *Mikana* (Menomini).

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Minggah

A tree that embodies a **spirit** who is one of the *wirreenun*'s (**Aboriginal shaman of Australia**) **helping spirits**. The *minggah* is a refuge for the *wirreenun* in times of danger. The *wirreenun* and the *minggah* have a complex and **sacred** relationship. The heath and magical ability of the *wirreenun* is often dependent upon the condition of the *minggah*. Therefore, acting against one can harm the other.

Parker, K. L. et al. *Wise Women of the Dreamtime: Aboriginal Tales of the Ancestral Powers*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International Limited, 1993.

Mirror

Mirrors are found in the equipment and sewn to the costumes of shamans of many different cultures. The use of the mirror varies. For example, Tuvan shamans use the mirror for **divination** and **diagnosis**, looking into it clairvoyantly to see the spirit world causes of the physical world problems. Buriat shamans use mirrors to concentrate **healing** energies directly over the body parts that need healing. Other shamans use the mirror to see the souls of dead people. The **Zulu sangoma** wears copper mirrors on his or her **costume** so that when the progenitors of humanity return from the stars they will know who among the humans to talk to. See also **metal**.

- Credo Mutwa, V. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.
- Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.
- Van Deusen, K., and T. White, ed. "Shamanism and Music in Tuva and Khakassia." *Shaman's Drum* 47 (Winter 1997–98): 22–29.

Mishikan

The **spirit** of Turtle who performs a pivotal role in some versions of the **Shaking Tent Ceremony**. *Mishikan* acts as a messenger and translator between the **djessakid** (shaman) and other spirit beings. *Mishikan* takes the **djessakid's** questions to the **spirits**, addresses them in a non-human **language** and returns with the spirit answers translated into a language the **djessakid** understands.

Mishikan is known for its humor. During the **ritual** *Mishikan* jokes and plays with the other spirits who try to push each other out of the tent, making it shake even more violently. *Mishikan's* voice is said to sound like "the noise of pulling the fingers over a strip of birch-bark." Also: *Michika*, *Mikenak*, *Mishtapeu* (Montagnais), *Mikana* (Menomini).

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Mistress of the Beasts

A **spirit** being who is the original guardian or keeper of the animals and their **spirits**. The Mistress of the Beasts is thought of as the collective **soul** of the animals or the essence of a particular animal species, depending on the **culture**. The **shaman** journeys into the spirit world to appease the Mistress of the Beasts in the performance of **hunting magic**.

The shaman negotiates with the Mistress of the Beasts to release animals in exchange for human **sacrifices**. These

sacrifices usually take the form of strict observance of moral behavior and confessions of trespasses against others, however **rituals**, feasts, **offerings**, and in some cultures humans lives were also exchanged.

Though the Mistress or Mother of the Beasts is the original form, in some cultures she later transformed into the **Master of the Beasts**.

Ripinsky-Naxon, M. *The Nature of Shamanism: Substance and Function of a Religious Metaphor*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Monophasic Culture

Western psychology, philosophy, and **culture** are predominantly monophasic. They draw their worldview almost exclusively from one state of consciousness, the usual waking state. Other cultures around the globe, e.g., **Australian Aboriginals**, Ecuadorian **Achuar**, West African **Dagara**, and disciplines within cultures, e.g., Jewish Kabbalah, Buddhist *Abhidharma* psychology, and Vedantic philosophy, draw their worldview from multiple state of consciousness. These worldviews are polyphasic and they draw on contemplative and **dream** states as well as the waking state to inform their view of reality.

Walsh, R. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. Palo Alto, California: Transpersonal Institute 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Moon

A **helping spirit** of great **power** for the **shaman**. In some cultures the moon is the primary initiator and **teacher** of shamans. A majority of cultures relate the moon, its cycles, and its everchanging power to the female **gender** and

feminine qualities. However, some cultures like the **Inuit** and the ancient Norse people perceive of the moon as male and see masculine qualities in its nature.

Male or female, or perhaps both, the moon is a spirit being from the **dream-time**. The patterns of the shaman's relationship with the spirit of the moon were laid down in that ancient **time** before time.

The moon presents teachings of **rhythm** and its waxing and waning cycle is the oldest way of marking time. The moon teaches through example the importance of periodic rebirth in maintaining balance in life and the awareness that continual cycles of change are the natural order of things.

The moon exerts real physical influence on the **earth** and on women, controlling menstrual cycles and the rhythms of the tides. Thus the moon affects fertility, **water**, and the **sacred** fluids, like semen and **blood**, that affect the abundance of human, animal, and plant life.

Høst, A. *Learning to Ride the Waves*. København: Scandinavian Center for Shamanic Studies, 1991.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Morning Glory

The seeds of the Morning Glory, *Ipomoea violacea*, are highly valued for their hallucinogenic properties in the Zapotec and Chatin areas of Oaxaca and southern Mexico. *Ipomoea* is also used in Central America and western **Africa**. The Chinantec and **Mazatec** call the seeds *Piule*, the Zapotecs, **Badoh Negro** or *Badungás*, and the ancient Aztecs, *Tlililzin*. The **Aztecs** considered *Ipomoea violacea* and *Turbina corymbosa* the **Ololiuqui**.

Morning Glory is a flowering annual vine common in horticulture. The

trumpet-shaped flowers range in color from white to red to purple, purple-blue, and blue. The ovoid fruit contains elongated, angular, black seeds. Morning Glory is found in western and southern Mexico, Guatemala, the West Indies, tropical **South America**, and in tropical and warm-temperate zones around the globe. *Ipomoea* is often cultivated in the gardens of the shamans or others who sell the leaves and seeds.

The Spanish invaders of Mexico found the **ritual** use of *Ipomoea* offensive. The ecclesiastics were particularly intolerant of the practice and proceeded to suppress and eradicate it. The people took the sacred rituals into the hills, saving the essence of the rituals and merging other **elements** of their spiritual practice with the Christianity imposed on them.

Use

An infusion of these seeds is used in shamanic rituals to communicate with the spirit world for **divination** and **diagnosis**. When entranced, an individual is in communication with the spirit of the Morning Glory plant and that spirit speaks through them.

When *Ipomoea* is to be given to the patient, the **shaman** prepares the infusion and administers it at night. The source of the patient's problems and the appropriate remedy are diagnosed by the shaman from an interpretation of the patient's **words** and visions during the course of the intoxication.

Preparation

The seeds of *Ipomoea* are six times more potent than those of *Turbina corymbosa*. They are often called macho (male) and those of *Turbina* are hembra (female). The usual dose of *Ipomoea* is seven seeds, or a multiple of seven. At other times it is thirteen as with *Turbina corymbosa*. The seeds are ground and placed in a gourd of water to make an infusion. The particulate matter is strained out before the liquid is consumed.

Active Principle

The active principles are the lysergic acid alkaloids, lysergic acid amide and lysergic acid hydroxyethylamide. They are indole alkaloids. Lysergic acid amide differs only slightly in structure from lysergic acid diethylamide or LSD. LSD is a semi-synthetic compound and the most potent known hallucinogen.

Ritual of Receiving the Plant Spirit, or Plant Medicine

Traditionally, *Ipomoea* is administered to a single individual in a secluded, quiet place at night. The shaman prepares the hallucinogenic infusion, creates the ritual **space**, and helps the patient find the correct focus for his or her encounter with the spirit of *Ipomoea*. The patient drinks *Ipomoea* and remains secluded, waiting for the spirit to reveal what he or she needs to know. After the **trance** has run its course, the shaman interprets the cause of the **illness** and the necessary remedies from the patient's trance state experiences.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

Badu-win, the "two little girls in white," are the unique characteristic of the *Ipomoea* trance. They are **spirits** who speak through the *Ipomoea* trance, revealing the cause of the illness and necessary remedies.

Ipomoea intoxication begins rapidly, giving over quickly to visual hallucinations. Full trance is characterized by a state of "sleep" that is filled with visions, often grotesque, and occasionally movement as if sleepwalking. The intoxication lasts approximately three hours. During that time the individual is dimly aware of his or her surroundings, which is the reason the ritual takes place in solitude. There are seldom unpleasant side effects. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **plant hallucinogens**.

Schultes, R. E. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Mudang

A Korean **shaman**. The *mudang* are female. They use **dance, song, music,** and **embodiment trance** states in the practice of their **healing art**, *musok yesul*. The survival of a new *mudang* rests not only on her ability to master her trance states, but also on her artistic skill, the quality of her performance of the complex rituals, her acceptance by society, and the efficacy of her rituals.

There are two classes of *W'on mudang*, or "real shamans." There are those *mudang* who acquire **power** through hereditary lines and those *mudang* who acquire power directly from **spirit** outside of a shamanic lineage. There is also a *S'on mudang*, or **apprentice**, who is not yet a "real shaman." In general there are four classifications of *W'on mudang*. There are those who only perform **divination**, those who perform only rituals, and those who are capable of performing both. These three classifications involve the acquisition of power through trance states. The fourth class is those who acquire power through **sacred mantras** and practice that power through the reading of the shamanic scriptures. This fourth class is primarily the *paksu mudang*, or male shamans.

The Call

In **Korea the call to shamanism** manifests in unusually harsh fate or misfortune or a physical or mental illness. If the call is ignored or the illness misdiagnosed, it continues with increasing intensity. The way in which the call manifests varies regionally. Illness brought on by spirit **possession** is necessary for validation in the **north** and hereditary lineage becomes more important in the **south**.

The lineage and ability to embody spirit are still valued; however, the standards for possession are changing. For a contemporary "*mudang*" personal charisma, an artistic gift, an interest in **ritual**, and ordination by another *mudang* are considered validation since physical healing is no longer expected

from the shaman. The artistic quality of the performance is becoming more important than the actual access to spirit through the *mudang* and whether or not the performance succeeds in fulfilling its healing or divinatory function.

Training

Ordinarily, the teaching occurs within a guild made up of a well-established *mudang* and her performing group of dancers and musicians. The *simjasik* (novice) must master divination, making **amulets (power objects)**, dancing, the playing of musical instruments, chants, the preparation of food **offerings**, and the creation of paper flowers and figures. The *simjasik* is guided through the **training** by her *simbumo*, **teacher** or spiritual mother.

The *simjasik* must learn the appropriate robes, offerings, dances, gestures and chants to call in each of the different deities in performance of divination rituals. Traditionally, these complex performances last for several hours. The *simjasik* learns by first aiding his or her godparents in the rituals with other *mudang*, then performing one particular task within a ritual, and then, continuing to add to her knowledge task by task until the all facets of the complex rituals are mastered.

Living the life of a *mudang* within the "family" of the *simbumo*'s performing group is a major part of the *simjasik*'s training. The *simjasik* learns the cosmology and different functions of the deities as she helps in the kitchen to prepare the food offerings for the deities. She learns social skills simultaneously as she learns divination and ritual skills. She may even begin her own practice while still in the home of her *simbumo* when she has learned to perform full rituals independently. The *simjasik* must also learn *todum'i*, an interrogation technique. In the event that the deity does not appear, a skillful session of *todum'i* enables the *mudang* to gather sufficient information to provide an answer for the person seeking help.

Initiation

In the final **initiation** ritual the *simjasik* will be tested to see if she is possessed by an evil spirit or a deity. Her mastery of trance will be tested by her ability to create and ascend a seven rung **ladder** of swords in her barefoot without harm. Finally the identity of the deities who express themselves through the *simjasik* when she is in trance are determined. The identities of the spirits determines the new *mudang*'s status in the shamanic hierarchy.

Healing Ritual

Korean shamanic rituals have many parts, often twelve or more, and can take from hours to days to perform. They are performed for protection from harmful spirits and **disease**, the elimination of malevolent or unclean spirits, **blessings**, to make offerings, and to gain wealth or prosperity.

Physical, mental, and spiritual illnesses are all believed to be caused by malevolent spirits in the home or body of the patient. A particular disease, like smallpox for example, is believed to be caused by a particular spirit for whom a special form of ritual must be performed. Overall, rituals for the healing of **illness** are designed to purify the body, home, and/or surroundings and restore well-being to the relationship with the ancestral or other disease causing spirit.

The cause of illness within a family, for example, is often determined to be angry ancestral spirits or the presence of unclean spirits. The *mudang* performs a ritual to restore peace to the home and to protect the family from harmful spirits. Angry spirits are appeased through offerings and **prayers**. If the cause is determined to be the latter, the *mudang* performs a ritual to remove the unclean spirits and another to make offerings to the ancestral spirits and the spirits of the mountains to appease any spirits who might be contributing to the family's illness.

In the case of a terminal disease or a deadly disease without any clarifying symptoms, the diagnosis is that Sal, the

spirit of killing has entered the body of the patient. The *Sal* spirit is believed to be very dangerous and there are many forms. There are many different rituals performed, however they are all designed to remove the *Sal* from the body and send it away safely.

The *mudang* is considered quite effective in the treatment of mental illness, both psychosis and neurosis. The spirit that causes psychosis is called *Ch'ungwi*. There are several rituals designed to exorcise this spirit from the patient depending on the exact diagnosis. One ritual removes a mentally ill spirit, another exorcises evil spirits, a third removes destructive spirits, and a fourth removes evil spirits.

In these rituals the *mudang* approaches the patient with her sacred *g'om* (**sword**) and *ch'ang* (spear) as if she were going to behead the patient with the sword and impale the patient's heart of the spear. In this way the possessing spirit is removed from the head and the heart of the patient. **Fire** is also used to exorcise the possessing spirits, however this ritual is dangerous and truly terrifying for the patient.

Neurosis is believed to be caused by a *Ch'ukhi* spirit possessing the brain of the patient. If a *mudang* is not called to perform the ritual to capture the *Ch'ukhi* spirit in this first stage of the illness, then over time the spirit will move from the head to the stomach and kill the patient. The *Ch'ukhi jabi* is a complicated ritual that must be repeated seven times during the full sunlight of the day for three consecutive days.

There are many different rituals performed for the dead. They are all very complicated in form and practice. Overall they function to insure that the dead **soul** is at peace and that the homes of the living are protected from the harmful influences of the dead who have not reincarnated in a new form. The rituals involve both **cleansing** and protection as well as aiding passage of the soul of the dead by creating a bridge or clearing evil spirits from the gate of the dead. In many of these rituals the

influence of Buddhism on Korean shamanism is apparent.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Lee, Jung Y. "Korean Shamanistic Rituals." In *Religion and Society* 12. The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1981.

Multiple Soul Belief

The theory that tribal peoples believed in a body soul, a **vital soul**, and a **free soul** in each individual. In this theory the life of the body was due to the body soul, the animation of the body was due to the vital soul, e.g., in its absence the body appeared comatose, and the free soul wanders in dreams and day dreams without adversely affecting normal bodily functions. This theory was presented by ethnographers in an attempt to explain the distinctions tribal peoples make in the many functions of soul in their daily life and in where different parts of the soul go after death. However, not all researchers of tribal peoples agree with this theory. They see these different souls as different points along a spectrum of experience of how the dynamic relationship between the body and soul functions.

We cannot be certain that tribal cultures believed in the existence of several souls in one individual. We can be certain that their life and survival was based on the experience that soul inspires everything; that all forms—humans, animals, plants, geography, **weather**, everything—were containers for spirit. That understanding was lived by tribal people. It was not simply a belief. Tribal peoples obviously understood the fundamental relationship

between the body and the soul. What we do know is that tribal peoples were able to discern beyond this simple duality and make a very clear distinction between the body, the **psyche**, and the soul that transcends both.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Mushrooms

Simple plants from the Fungi division. However, they are one of only two divisions of the entire plant world that create substances that are hallucinogenic when ingested by humans. All of the plant **entheogens** used by shamans around the world are either mushrooms from one division of the Fungi or an Angiosperm, the highest evolved flowering plants. See also *amanita muscaria*; **psilocybe mushrooms**; and *Teonanácatl*.

Music

What music actually is is unknown, yet it can affect breathing, skin temperature, muscle tension, and states of consciousness within a few minutes. German poet, Heinrich Heine, explains that music exists in a place of **power** between thought and phenomenon. Music arises from something between **spirit** and matter and is both like and unlike each. Music is simultaneously a kind of spirit that requires manifestation in **time** and a kind of matter that can do without **space**.

Music is an essential tool in shamanic work. For example, in **Amazonia** the **payé (shaman)** plays the panpipe or **bow** before and during the **healing** rituals to please the **spirits** and access their power and guidance. The *payé's* chants are an essential element that allows him to speak directly to the spirits of the **sacred** hallucinogenic plants used in

the *epená* (snuff) and *ayahuasca* (drink). These chants, or *icaros* help to create and maintain the **ritual** container and to guide the patient, who is also in an **altered state of consciousness** from ingesting the plant **medicine**.

Tone and **rhythm** affect the individual and his or her ability to experience **alternate states of consciousness**. **Singing**, chanting, **mantras**, toning, **prayers**, and the sounds of sacred instruments, like Tibetan bowls, bells, bowed strings, flutes, digierido can all aid in accessing transcendent realities.

Music is the only human expression that affects so many components within the body in ways that alters our physical state. Music may affect multiple dimensions of the body because the primary function of the ear is not hearing, but balance, movement, and the constant arrangement of our perception of time and space.

Don Campbell, musician, educator, and innovator in **transpersonal** music therapy, believes that music is an essential tool for psychotherapy because it provides a direct line to the unconscious, as do all the expressive arts. Music and its expression through drumming, chanting, singing, and **storytelling**, has always had a profound connection with the human **soul**.

The creation stories of indigenous peoples around the world explain that in the beginning was the **Sound**, and the Sound was the sound of Spirit who caused the world of matter to take form. Innovative research by geneticist, Susumu Ohno, shows us that the body itself is made of music. Musical notes were assigned by Ohno to each of the four bases making up the nucleotides of human DNA, instead of the usual names or letters. Ohno also assigned the key, timing, and duration of the notes so that they could be played. Human DNA was then laid out as a series of notes and played. The resulting musical composition was recognized as melodic music. The body, which is made of vibrations of **energy**, is not random noise, but music.

Dossey, Larry. "The Body as Music." *UTNE Reader* 68 (March–April 1995): 81–82.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Mystical Experiences

Mystical experiences are characterized by a loss of the sense of individual identity which gives over to an experience of self as part of Nature, God, the universe as a whole, or the **Kosmos**. A mystical experience is not composed of thoughts. A mystical experience is known completely, without linear thought, throughout the entire being—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual.

Phenomenologically there is no difference between some psychedelic revelations and mystical revelations. **Entheogen**-induced experiences, in particular, share the same feel and communicate through the same type of "**language**" as mystical experiences.

There is some scholarly debate as to whether or not shamans experience *unio mystica*, the classical, ecstatic mystical union with God described in the mystical traditions of the high **religions**. Some scholars state that mystical union with the Divine is not found in shamanism. However, neither is religious thought and the belief systems upon which it is based, typically an anthropomorphic, usually masculine, God who is separate from Nature, the **Earth**, and humankind. Therefore, there is no reason a pre-religious individual would frame his or her mystical experience in the context of a high religion or use religious metaphors to attempt to communicate that experience to others.

Pre-religious people, like the **shaman** and members of traditional shamanic cultures, experience God and Nature as One, not as two or even as a

union of two. His or her mystical experience would be framed in that context, using metaphors drawn from a life experience in which the spirit world is not separate from the every day world.

Furthermore, one must never lose sight of the universal truth that a true mystical experience can not be accurately written or spoken about. Like the Tao, the Tao you can describe in **words** is not the true Tao. Practically speaking, records of mystical experiences would be very hard to preserve in the oral traditions of shamanic cultures.

For many scholars, particularly today, it is clear that shamans have ecstatic **journey** experiences of an intensity and character to be considered genuine mystical experiences. This is not to say that the shaman experiences *unio mystica* every time he or she enters into a journey of **soul flight**; he or she does not. *Unio mystica* is not the goal of the shaman's journey. The goal of the shaman's **trance** practices is **divination** or **healing**. *Unio mystica* is a common side benefit of the shaman's practices.

Cross culturally, mystical experiences share the common idea that truth is reached by means other than sense information and that other information is accessed through spontaneous or intentionally induced **altered states of consciousness**. The following list includes some of the many names for the mystical experience: cosmic consciousness, *kensho*, oceanic feeling, *nirvana*, *samadhi*, *satori*, and unitive consciousness.

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Hultkrantz, A. "A Definition of Shamanism." *Temenos* 9 (1973): 25–37.

Maslow, Abraham H. *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*. New York: Penguin, 1994.

Walsh, R. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. Palo Alto, California: Transpersonal Institute 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Myth

Patterns for perceiving, experiencing, and expressing the relationships between the visible world and the forces, patterns, and intelligences of invisible world. These relationships have existed since before the creation of the **Kosmos**. The word "myth" evolved from the Greek concept of *mythos*, which refers to psychic and psychological realities that pattern themselves in archetypal themes upon which cultural beliefs and systems have been based.

Myths are not fictitious tales with invented characters and events. They are the patterns of our world and our experience of it. These patterns came from the **dreamtime** and the stories of the Dreamtime **Ancestors** from this time before time.

There are parallels and symbolic connections between the vastly older Dreamtime stories and the mythologies of more recent cultures. For shamanic peoples, time happened in the beginning and myth speaks of the patterns initiated at that beginning. The events of that beginning time are still happening and will continue to happen as long

as there is life on earth. People that acknowledge to power of these mythic stories can become conscious and powerful players in their continual unfolding of mythic patterns.

Shamans can use myth in **healing** because they understand that myth is the reality lived by the ancestors of the patient. Involving a patient in the retelling or reenactment of cultural mythology allows the patient to identify with mythic characters who offer prototypes and pathways back to health and well-being. Shamans use traditional mythology as a paradigm for the patient's **illness** that provides a rationale and gives meaning to the patients suffering. The myth also provides a paradigm for treatment, **offering** the path of the hero as the prescription for healing.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

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Peters, L. G. *Tamang Shamans*. New Delhi: Narola Publications Ltd, 1998.