

# Shamanism in Siberia and European Russia



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# Shamanism in Siberia and European Russia

By

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Translated by

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**Shamanism in Siberia and European Russia**, being the second part of "**Shamanstvo**," by Professor V. M. MIKHAILOVSKII, of Moscow, Vice-President of the Ethnographical Section of the Imperial Society of Natural History, Anthropology, and Ethnography.<sup>1</sup> Translated by OLIVER WARDROP (Part I).

*Shamanism in Russia at the present day.*—Hitherto the word *shamanism* has been used in a narrow and strictly defined sense, geographically and ethnographically. The term has been applied especially to certain phenomena in the life and philosophy of our foreign fellow-subjects, in particular the inhabitants of Siberia, and therefore, when we enter upon a wider consideration of the question, and consider shamanism as a phenomenon characteristic of many peoples, scattered throughout many parts of the world, we must begin by examining it in the region where it was first observed and studied, *i.e.*, among the Asiatic and European tribes of Russia. Since it is our intention to regard this phenomenon from the point of view of universal ethnography, we shall not give an exhaustive account of all the facts collected by Russian enquirers, but shall limit our investigations to those data sufficient

<sup>1</sup> Professor Mikhailovskii's essay forms the twelfth Vol. of the Proceedings of the Ethnographical Section, and was published in 1892.

to furnish materials for a characterisation of shamanism in Russia in order to compare it with similar institutions in other lands.

Shamanism among the Siberian peoples is at the present time in a moribund condition; it must die out with those beliefs among which alone such phenomena can arise and flourish. Buddhism on the one hand, and Mohammedanism on the other, not to mention Christianity, are rapidly destroying the old ideas of the tribes among whom the shamans performed. Especially has the more ancient Black Faith suffered from the Yellow Faith preached by the lamas. But the shamans, with their dark mysterious rites, have made a good struggle for life, and are still frequently found among the native Christians and Mohammedans. The mullahs and lamas have even been obliged to become shamans to a great extent. Many Siberian tribes who are nominally Christians believe in the shamans, and have recourse to them. The Yakuts, for instance, when called upon by the government to give information about their customary law, in the third decade of the present century, insisted on excluding shamanism from the question of any particular profession of religion. They said, "Shamanism is not the faith or religion of the Yakuts, but an independent set of actions which take place in certain definite cases." And they endeavour to explain and justify the attachment of Christian Yakuts to their shamans.<sup>1</sup>

*The names applied to Shamans by the various Siberian tribes.*—Shamans, though of a degenerate type, are to be met with throughout the whole of Siberia, and they are known by various names. The word *shaman* is only found among the Tunguses, Buryats, and Yakuts.<sup>2</sup> It is only among the Tunguses that this is the native name; the Buryats, like the Mongols, also call their shamans *bö*, and the female shamans *ödögön* or *utygan*.<sup>3</sup> Among the Yakuts, a shaman is called *oyun*, a female shaman *udagan*.<sup>4</sup> The Altaians use the term *Kam*, and call the shaman's dealings with spirits *kamlanie*, i. e., *kam-ing*. The Samoyeds called their shamans *tadibei*.<sup>5</sup> Despite the different names, the performances of the shamans are the same among all these peoples, though all acknowledge that the modern shamans are less powerful than the ancient.

*The first Shamans and their origin.*—There are some curious tales about the first shamans and the origin of shamanism. Mr. Shashkov has copied down among the Buryats of Balagan a long legend about the cause of the deterioration of the shamans. The first shaman, Khara-Gyrgen, had unlimited power, and God, desiring to prove him, took the soul of a certain rich maiden, and she fell ill. The shaman flew through the sky on his tambourine, seeking the soul, and saw it in a bottle on God's table. To keep the soul from flying out, God corked up the bottle with one of the

<sup>1</sup> Samokvasov : "Sbornik obychnago prava sibirskikh inorodtsev," 218-219.

<sup>2</sup> Shashkov, 80.

<sup>3</sup> Agapitov and Khangalov, 41. Potanin, iv. 61.

<sup>4</sup> Pripuzov, 64.

<sup>5</sup> Radloff : "Aus Sibirien," ii, 16.

fingers of his right hand. The cunning shaman changed himself into a yellow spider, and bit God on the right cheek, so that, irritated by the pain, he clapped his right hand to his face, and let the soul out of the bottle. Enraged at this, God limited Khara-Gyrgen's power, and thenceforth shamans have been getting worse and worse.<sup>1</sup> The legend which we summarize is interesting for the glimpse it gives of the coarse ideas of an earlier period, underlying the modern mask of monotheism. The god referred to is but one of the spirits of the animistic epoch. The Buryats also have the following story about the appearance of shamans among men:—In the beginning there were only the good spirits (*tengri*) of the west, and the evil spirits of the east. The western *tengris* created men, who were at first happy, but afterwards, through the wickedness of the evil spirits, they began to fall sick and die. Then the good *tengris* decided to give a shaman to mankind, to aid in the struggle with the evil spirits, so they made the eagle a shaman. Men did not put faith in a mere bird, and, besides, they did not understand its language; the eagle therefore prayed the western *tengris* either to allow the post of shaman to be given to a Buryat, or to bestow human speech upon the eagle. By the will of the good spirits, the first shaman became the offspring of the eagle and a Buryat woman.<sup>2</sup> The Yakut tradition is that the first shaman was of extraordinary strength, and would not acknowledge the chief god of the Yakuts, for which reason the wrathful deity burned him up. All the body of this shaman consisted of crawling reptiles. One frog escaped from the fire, and from it issued the shaman demons, who still supply the Yakuts with famous shamans, male and female.<sup>3</sup> The Tunguses of the Turukhan region, though the miraculous element is not wanting in their story, have a less fantastic account of the first shaman. According to their version, the first shaman was formed in consequence of his particular fitness for this occupation, and by the aid of the devil. This shaman flew up the chimney of the *yrta* (hut) and came back accompanied by swans.<sup>4</sup> The stories about ancient shamans, and the supernatural appearance of persons destined to enter into immediate intercourse with spirits and gods, arose, on the one hand, from the desire of the shamans to give a special sanction to their proceedings; on the other hand, they are due to the peculiar character of their doings, which produced an exceedingly powerful impression on the minds and imaginations of uncivilised people.

*Forms of "kamlanie" and exorcism among the Tunguses.*—Among the various performances of the shamans, the most characteristic of all is that which is now generally called *kamlanie*. The presence of a shaman at a festival, as priest and sacrificer, is but of secondary importance, and is not of the essence of shamanism. Scenes of *kam-ning* among the various foreign peoples in Russia have been

<sup>1</sup> Shashkov, 81.

<sup>2</sup> Agapitov and Khangalov, 41-42.

<sup>3</sup> Pripuzov, 64.

<sup>4</sup> Tretyakov: "Turukhanskii krai," 210-211.

described in detail by ancient and modern travellers, especially Gmelin and Pallas. In Argunsk, Gmelin saw the juggling, as he calls it, of a certain Tungus shaman. The *kamlanie* took place at night, in the open air, by a fire. The spectators sat round the fire; the shaman stripped, and then put on his shaman costume of leather, hung with pieces of iron; on each of his shoulders was a toothed iron horn. But this particular shaman had as yet received no tambourine from the demons, of which there are a vast number; each shaman has its own demons, and he that has most is considered the cleverest. The *kamlanie* consisted of running round in the circle, and singing, in which he was supported by two assistants. Another Tungus shaman, seen by Gmelin, had a tambourine; he made a speech in a drawling chant, and the Tunguses present chimed in. The language of the shaman's utterances was unknown; he then cried out in the voices of various animals, and drove back spirits. The spirits did not say anything to him, but tormented him a great deal.<sup>1</sup>

*Among the Yakuts.*—The description of *kamlanie* by a Yakut *oyun* is especially remarkable; this *oyun* seems to have made a great impression on Gmelin. The ceremony took place in a birch-bark *yurta*, in front of which a fire was burning. When it was dark, a shaman, with long black hair, undressed in the *yurta*, and put on a coat hung with iron; he left on his breeches, but changed his stockings for others which were embroidered, and are only worn by shamans during the *kamlanie*. He took his tambourine, sat down with his face to the south-west, and began to beat the tambourine and cry out. The spectators did not join in chorus. He sat thus for a while, grimacing, shouting, and beating the tambourine. Gmelin's companions told him that the man was summoning the spirits. Suddenly the shaman leaped to his feet, the beating on the tambourine became faster, the shouts louder, his black hair was flying while he rushed about the *yurta*. At last the shaman was overcome, and fell fainting. Then two chiefs seized him, for if the exorcist falls on the ground while he is delirious, misfortunes will happen to the whole people. Afterwards, while a third chief was holding over his head a flint, and sharpening a knife on it, the shaman looked round for a moment, and again became delirious; whilst in this state, he often stopped, fixedly looked upwards, and grasped at the air with his hand. Then followed his prophecies, and when all was over, and the shaman had doffed his dress, he declared that he remembered nothing.<sup>2</sup> Klark describes the *kamlanie* of a Yakut shaman in terse but impressive language, and declares that the sound of the tambourine, the convulsive antics of the shaman, his fierce screams, his wild stare in the dim light, all strike terror into the hearts of semi-savage people, and powerfully affect their nerves.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gmelin, ii, 44-46, 193-195.

<sup>2</sup> Gmelin, ii, 351-356.

<sup>3</sup> Klark: "Vilyuisk i ego okrug. Zapiski Sibirskago otdyela," 1864, kn. vii, 139.



In the "Syevernyi Arkhiv" for 1822, there is a description of the healing of a sick person by a Yakut shaman. There we find him playing another part; that of the leech, driving away evil spirits which possess the sick and cause illness. His performance consisted of two parts; first of all he did not put on his dress, but took a piece of tinder in his hand, twisted into tufts some hairs from a horse's mane, then embraced the patient, and thus took into himself the demons that caused the illness, found out what village they came from, and designated a sacrifice. When the animal destined for sacrifice was brought, the second part of the ceremony began; the shaman put on his professional costume, went up to the beast, and conveyed into it the demon that had entered him from the sick man. This process had a terrifying effect upon the animal; it seemed to be paralyzed. After the beast was killed, the head and flesh were eaten, and the skin and bones were hung on a tree.<sup>1</sup>

*Among the Samoyeds of Tomsk.*—In Western Siberia also, among the Tomsk Samoyeds, the shaman alone has access to the dark world of spirits; according to Castren, he performs his functions in a place specially prepared. He sits down in the middle of the room, on a bench or trunk, in which there must be nothing of a dangerous nature, neither knife, nor bullet, nor needle; behind the shaman, and beside him, are ranged the numerous spectators; but nobody must sit in front of him. The shaman's face is turned to the door, and he affects to see and hear nothing. In his right hand he holds a stick, smooth on one side, and on the other, covered with mysterious signs and figures; in his left hand are two arrows with the points upwards; on the point of each a little bell is fixed. The raiment of the conjurer has no distinctive character; he generally dons the clothes of the enquirer or patient. The *kamlanie* begins with a song, summoning the spirits, and during this the shaman beats with the stick on the arrows, and the bells ring out the measure, while the audience sit devoutly silent. As soon as the spirits begin to appear, the shaman stands up and begins to dance, accompanying the dance with very difficult and ingenious movements of the body. Meanwhile the song and the sound of the bells go on without pause. The subject of the song is a conversation with the spirits, and it is sung with varying degrees of excitement. When the singing has become exceptionally enthusiastic, the spectators also join in it. After the shaman has learned from the spirits all he wants to know, he declares the will of the gods. When he is consulted about the future, he divines by means of the stick, which he throws down; if the side marked with signs is downwards, this foretells misfortune, if it is uppermost, good fortune. To convince their fellows of the reality of their intercourse with spirits, the shamans have recourse to the following plan: the ghost-seer sits down in the middle of a dry reindeer skin which is stretched on the floor, and has his hands and feet tied; then the shutters are closed and the shaman summons the

<sup>1</sup> "Syevernyi Arkhiv," 1822, 274-277.

spirits subject to him. In the various corners of the dark *yurta*, and even outside, different voices are heard, there is a sound of scratching and drumming in time on the dry skin, bears growl, snakes hiss, squirrels jump. When the noise ceases, the unbound shaman goes out of the *yurta*, and the audience are convinced that the whole performance has been the work of spirits. Farther to the north, the Samoyed shamans, to prove their mysterious power, ask to be shot in the head.<sup>1</sup>

*Among the Ostyaks.*—As early as the days of Peter the Great, Novitskii, in his description of the Ostyaks, near akin to the Samoyeds, portrayed picturesquely the manner in which an Ostyak shaman conjured. When the natives wish to make enquiries about matters affecting their daily wants, fishing, hunting, or the like, they lead the wonder-worker into a dark hut, and there bind him firmly; they themselves sit down and play on reed pipes; the captive shouts out necromantic words, invoking his ally, Satan. The performance always takes place by night, and, after some hours of invocation, a stormy and noisy spirit enters the hut. Then the spectators flee, and leave the wizard alone with the spirit. The spirit takes him, raises him up and lets him down again, and torments him in all kinds of ways. Some hours later, the demon makes his revelation to the shaman, and then leaves him; the shaman communicates the message to the enquirers.<sup>2</sup> Tretyakov has given the substance of some of the sacred songs of the shamans among the Ostyaks and Yurak-Samoyeds. An Ostyak shaman sings that he is raising himself to heaven by means of a rope let down to him; he pushes aside the stars that block his way. In the sky, the shaman floats in a boat, and then sails down a stream to the earth, with such rapidity that the air blows through him. Afterwards, with the aid of winged devils, he descends below the earth, and asks the dark spirit "Ama," or the shaman's mother, for a cloak. (At this moment the bystanders throw a cloak over his shoulders.) Finally the shaman informs each of those who are present that his happiness is secured, and tells the patient that the devil is cast out. Among the Tazovsky Ostyaks and Yuraks, the shaman sings of his journeyings, and tells how he flies amid blossoming wild roses, and rises to the sky, where he sees on the *tundra* seven larches; there his grandsire formerly made his tambourine. Then the shaman enters an iron hut and falls asleep, surrounded by purple clouds. He comes down to earth on a river, and then adoring the heavenly deity the sun, the moon, the trees, the beast of earth—the ruler of the world, he prays for long life, happiness, &c.<sup>3</sup>

*Among the Chukchis and Koryaks.*—Passing to the extreme side of Siberia, on the Pacific coast, we find, among the tribes there, similar phenomena. Among the Chukchis, according to Litke, the

<sup>1</sup> Castren: "Reiseberichte und Briefe," 1845-1849, 172-174.

<sup>2</sup> "Kratkoe opisanie o narode ostyatskom," Grigoriya Novitskago, 1715g. Izd. L. Maikov, 1884, 48-49.

<sup>3</sup> Tretyakov, 217-218.

shaman, in his *kamlanie*, began by retiring behind a curtain, then were heard groans, and gentle tappings, with a thin whalebone, on the tambourine; opening the curtain, he was seen swaying from side to side, the shouts and drumming became louder, he threw off his coat, and stripped himself to the waist. The performance concluded with jugglery. First of all, the shaman took a smooth stone, gave it to Litke to hold, then took it between his hands, rubbed one palm on the other, and the stone disappeared; it was found in a swelling near the elbow, and was cut out. The last trick of the shaman, before retreating behind the curtain, was to cut his tongue with a knife until blood flowed.<sup>1</sup> The Koryak shamans, according to Krasheninnikov, had no special dress, and were only remarkable as healers of the sick and performers of tricks, *e.g.*, they thrust a knife into the stomach. In healing diseases they designated the kind of animal which ought to be sacrificed. In their *kamlanie* the tambourine played an important part.<sup>2</sup>

*Among the Kamchadals.*—Among the Kamchadals there were no special shamans, but their place was taken by women; these were chiefly old, and they cured diseases by whispered charms. Their chief form of shamanism consisted of two old women sitting in the corner and ceaselessly whispering. One of them tied round her leg a garland of nettles ornamented with red wool, and shook her leg about. If the leg rose easily this was a good omen, but if it rose with difficulty misfortune would happen. But the *kamlanie* did not terminate with this. The female shaman summoned the devils with the words, "gut! gut!" and gnashed her teeth, and when the devils appeared she met them with laughter and cries of "hoi! hoi!" Half an hour afterwards the devils departed, and when this happened the witch cried "ishki," *i.e.*, no. Her assistants were all the time whispering and telling her not to be afraid, and to notice everything and not forget the response. Some, adds Krasheninnikov, say that in time of thunder and lightning the *bilyukai*, spirit, comes to the women shamans and enables them to give responses.<sup>3</sup> Although Krasheninnikov, in his account of shamanism among the Kamchadals, declares that this tribe consider all women, especially old ones, capable of *kamlanie*, yet from the facts he gives we arrive at the conclusion that it is only certain women, exceptionally gifted, who can call up spirits, and become united with them.

*Among the Gilyaks.*—The Gilyaks carefully conceal all information about their shamans, and it is therefore very interesting to find that a merchant named Ivanov has given a detailed account of them, published in the "Sibirskii Vvestnik" for 1866. Mr. Ivanov lived on the Amur river from 1855, managed a Gilyak school, and had close relations with the Gilyaks of the Amur and of Sakhalin Island. A shaman, out of friendship, allowed him to be present at

<sup>1</sup> Erman: "Archiv," 1843, 459.

<sup>2</sup> Krasheninnikov, ii, 158-159.

<sup>3</sup> Krasheninnikov, ii, 81-82.

a *kamlanie*. At ten o'clock Mr. Ivanov reached the *yrta*. "As soon as I entered," says he, "he began to put on his shaman costume, hung with heavy iron rattles, took in his hand a tambourine covered with fish skin, and beat upon it with a hair-brush. On his head he had long wood shavings, and to the sound of the tambourine he began dancing about the *yrta*, and shouting in a wild voice, endeavouring to show the spectators that he possessed that inspiration which is the mark of his profession. Among his various gymnastic feats and tricks, he took in his right hand a knife and in his left hand an axe, and going over to the door, where there was no light, placed the knife against his stomach and struck with the axe on the handle of the knife until the blade of the knife had penetrated his entrails, then turning to the spectators he showed them that the blade had entered his stomach. All the bystanders went up to him to see; one of them took hold of the handle and pulled it away from the blade; the latter, according to the shaman, was left in his stomach, and thence he afterwards produced it." Mr. Ivanov afterwards detected the shaman's trick, and exposed him.<sup>1</sup>

*Among the Mongols.*—Shamanism was especially developed near Baikal Lake and in the Altai Mountains. In these classic lands of the Black Faith, capable enquirers like Yadrintsev, Potanin, and Radloff have laboured. There, in the south of Siberia, we find not only examples of the productions of the shamanist mind excited by an inflamed imagination, but whole mystery plays in which the conjurers up of spirits are the actors, plays distinguished by a strong dramatic element. Among the ancient Mongols, as early as the time of Chingis Khan and his immediate successors, the shamans were at the height of their power; they were priests, leeches, and prophets. As priests they need not occupy us at present. For healing purposes, the ancient Mongol shamans employed the methods which are still used in Siberia. When the exorcist of the spirits guilty of causing the illness could not fall into a state of delirium, the spectators tried to excite him by clapping of hands, shouts and songs; this custom is called *togokha* by the Mongols. As soothsayers, they either foretold the future, or divined according to the flight of arrows, or by the shoulder-blade; they burned the shoulder-blade of a sheep, and made responses to enquirers according to the cracks caused by the fire.<sup>2</sup>

*Among the Buryats.*—Among the Alarsk Buryats, the shaman, when called in to heal a sick person, makes a diagnosis, *i.e.*, he enquires into the cause of the illness, and decides what has happened to the patient's soul, whether it has lost itself, or has been stolen away and is languishing in the prison of the gloomy Erlik, ruler of the underground world. A preliminary *kamlanie* decides this question. If the soul is near at hand, the shaman, by methods known to him alone, replaces it in the body, if the soul is far away, he seeks it in every part of the world; in the deep woods, on the

<sup>1</sup> "Sibirskii Vvestnik," 1866, No. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Banzarov, 114-115.

steppes, at the bottom of the sea, and when he has found it, restores it to the body. The soul frequently escapes from its pursuer; it runs to a place where sheep have walked, so that the shaman cannot discover its traces, which are mixed with the footprints of the sheep, or it flees to the south-western spirits, where it is safe from the wiles of the shaman. If the soul is not to be found anywhere within the limits of our world, the shaman must seek it in the realm of Erlik, and perform the toilsome and expensive journey to the underground world, where heavy sacrifices have to be made, at the cost of the patient. Sometimes the shaman informs the patient that Erlik demands another soul in exchange for his, and asks who is his nearest friend. If the sick Buryat is not of a magnanimous disposition, the shaman, with his consent, ensnares the soul of his friend when the latter is asleep. The soul turns into a lark; the shaman in his *kamlanie* takes the form of a hawk, catches the soul, and hands it over to Erlik, who frees the soul of the sick man. The friend of the Buryat, who recovers, falls ill and dies. But Erlik has only given a certain respite; the patient's life is prolonged for three, seven, or nine years.<sup>1</sup> The famous Berlin ethnographer Bastian describes the *kamlanie* of a Buryat shaman, at which he was present. An old shaman, in the company of three of his pupils, who assisted him, by night, in a *yurta* half lighted up by a fire, flung himself about, stamping wildly, and, while performing his dance round, summoned the spirits in a monotonous chant with a rhythmic cadence. When the shaman reached his pupils they fell down prostrate before him, and he touched their heads with two wands which he waved during his performance. Bastian's guide asked a question about a box that had been lost on the road. One of the pupils carefully laid a shovel on the coals, and filled it with thin splinters of wood, keeping up the fire so that the whole surface of the shovel would be on fire at the same time; then he reverently carried over the shovel full of flaming chips to his master, who spat on it several times and eagerly noticed the crackling of the burning wood, at the same time groaning and twitching convulsively. Unfortunately the response was indefinite and obscure.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Pozdnyeev gives, among his specimens of the popular literature of the Mongol tribes, an interesting wizard song of a Buryat shaman. It was sung, apparently, before a Buryat set out for the chase, and reminds him of his duties towards the Russian Government.

“Tree of the western rock  
Spread in thy youth,  
Taking a blue colour,  
Bloom with blue blossoms.”

“Father heaven, O take!  
Thou must make a ramrod,  
Thou must kill the roebuck's mate,  
Thou must pay tribute to the Tsar,  
Thou must do carting for the Kazaks.”

<sup>1</sup> Potanin, iv, 86-87.

<sup>2</sup> Bastian: “Geographische und ethnologische Bilder,” i, 404-406.

“ Tree of the southern rock  
Spread out from thy root ;  
Taking a blue colour,  
Bloom with blue blossoms.”

“ Father heaven, O take ! ” &c.

“ Tree of the northern rock  
Spread out from thy branches,  
Taking a blue colour  
Bloom with blue blossoms.”

“ Father heaven, O take ! ” &c.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Pozdnyeev has copied from Castren's Buryat grammar another specimen of a shamanist prayer. It differs from the foregoing in that it was uttered at public worship (*kerek*) and was not called forth by a private accidental demand. It begins by referring to various gods giving authority to the shaman's invocation. Then it goes on as follows :

“ At this was present (here the name of a spirit invoked is given).

? “ At the invocation *bylp* (a certain spirit).

“ We invoke long life,  
We invoke long prosperity,  
We invoke a skin a *chetvert* thick,  
We invoke life strong as iron,  
We invoke the effectiveness of sacrifice,  
Entrance into a happy fate,  
We invoke the driving away of infection,  
The healing of sickness,  
We invoke wealth in flocks,  
We invoke a numerous progeny.”  
“ Make ready at once ! ”<sup>2</sup>

*Among the Altaians.*—In various corners of the Altai Mountains, among the Turkish tribes, Teleuts, Altaians and Chernev Tatars, the *kams*, or shamans, tenaciously preserve all the traditions and ceremonies connected with their calling. Mr. Potanin was fortunate enough to observe several cases of *kamlanie*. A very curious instance was that of a young shaman named Enchu, who lived in an *aul* on the river Talda, six versts from Angudai. His *kamlanie* consisted of four parts : 1. Before the fire, sitting with the face towards it ; 2. Standing with the back to the fire ; 3. A pause, during which the *kam*, leaning on the side of his tambourine, narrated all that the spirits had said or done ; 4. Finally, he *kam'd* with his back to the fire, in front of the place where the tambourine always hangs, and undressed himself. Enchu said he did not remember what had happened to him while he was dancing with his back to the fire. At that time he madly twisted his body without moving his feet ; he squatted down, writhed and straightened himself out again, as if imitating the movements of a snake. Owing to the rapid movement of the upper part of his body, the twisted handkerchiefs sewed on his dress spread out and whirled in the air, forming exquisite wavelike lines. Meanwhile he beat the tambourine in various ways,

<sup>1</sup> Pozdnyeev, i, 289.

<sup>2</sup> Pozdnyeev, i, 280.

and produced the most varied sounds. Sometimes Enchu held the tambourine upside down, holding it horizontally, and struck it violently from underneath. Potanin's Angudai guides explained that the shaman was collecting spirits in the tambourine. When the *kam* sat with his back to the fire he was much quieter; sometimes he interrupted his beating of the tambourine, conversed with somebody, laughed, thus indicating that he was in the company of the spirits. At one time Enchu sang slowly and pleasantly, while producing on the tambourine sounds similar to the trampling of horses' feet; the spectators explained that the shaman was riding with his guards.

On the Elegesha, Potanin was present at the *kamlanie* of an old female shaman in the *aul* of Uryankhai. The *yrta* (or hut) was very close. The *shamanka's* husband helped in the preliminary part of the ceremony: he gave her dress to her, dried the tambourine before the fire, threw juniper branches into the fire, &c. The distinctive features of this performance, as compared with Enchu's, were delirium and spasms; throwing away her tambourine, she began to drag herself towards those who were sitting in the *yrta*, showing her teeth, and stretching out her fingers to make them look like the claws of a beast; then she fell with a crash on the ground, and her head almost struck the hearthstone. As she lay on the floor she twisted herself about, and tried to gnaw with her teeth the hot stones around the hearth. Her husband held up her head, and muttered: "Stinkard!" According to the Altaians, the procedure varies among the different *kams*.<sup>1</sup>

*A shaman's journey to Erlik's realm.*—But Erlik, the malicious ruler of the underground realm, always plays an important part, and Mr. Potanin has written down, from Father Chivalkov's account, a story giving a full and dramatic description of a *kam's* journey to Erlik's abode. The shaman begins his travels from the place where he is performing. He describes his entry. The road runs southward. The *kam* passes through the neighbouring districts, climbs over the Altai, and describes, in passing, the Chinese land with its red sand; then he rides over a yellow steppe across which a magpie cannot fly. "With songs we shall traverse it!" cries the *kam* to his followers, and draws out a song; the young braves mount with him, and accompany him in song. After the yellow steppe comes a wan-coloured steppe, over which no raven has ever flown, and the *kam* again incites his followers to make merry with song. Beyond these two weary steppes is the iron mountain, Temir Shaikha, whose summit reaches heaven; the *kam* tells his followers that concord is necessary for this dangerous ascent. Then the *kam* describes the difficult ascent of the mountain, pretends to climb, and when the top is reached breathes heavily. On the mountain he sees the bones of *kams* who have failed to reach the summit for want of power. "On the mountains men's bones lie heaped up in rows; the mountains are piebald with the bones of horses." Then, leaving the mountains behind, he rides up to a hole which leads

<sup>1</sup> Potanin, iv, 60-62.

into the underground world, "the jaws of the earth." On entering he finds a sea, over which is stretched a hair. To give a visible representation of his passage over this dangerous bridge, the shaman totters from side to side, and seems sometimes to be on the point of falling. At the bottom of the sea he views the bones of many fallen shamans, for a sinful soul cannot cross the hair bridge. When he reaches the other shore, the *kam* meets several sinners suffering punishments corresponding to their guilt, e.g., an eaves-dropper is fixed with his ear against a pillar. Finally the shaman rides up to Erlik's abode; he is met by dogs; at first the porter will not let the *kam* pass, but he is at length appeased with presents. Before the ceremony begins, pots of home-brewed beer, boiled beef, and skunk skins are prepared for this purpose. After receiving the gifts, the porter lets the traveller into the *yurta* of Erlik. Hereupon the *kam* goes up to the door of the *yurta* in which the performance is taking place, and affects to believe that he is approaching Erlik, who is sitting at the other end of the *yurta*; he bows, and puts his tambourine against his forehead, saying, "Mergu! mergu!" and then tells whence and why he has come. Then the *kam* cries out; this means that Erlik has noticed him, and has cried out from anger at his coming. The alarmed *kam* runs back to the door, and then again approaches Erlik's throne. He repeats this manœuvre three times, and then Erlik says, "Those that have feathers fly not hither, those that have bones walk not hither; thou black, ill-smelling beetle, whence comest thou?" The sage shaman explains who he is, and treats the lord of hell to wine; in doing this, he pretends to take wine from the pots, fills his tambourine, and presents it to Erlik-Khan. Then he represents the Khan drinking the wine, and hiccoughs in his stead. After slaking the Khan's thirst, he offers him an ox, which has been previously killed, and the use of a collection of furs and clothes taken from the chests and hung on a rope; touching these things with his hand, the sorcerer hands them over to the khan, and says, "May this *tolu* of varied shapes, which cannot be lifted by a horse, be for clothes on thy neck and body." But these things are left with the master of the house. As each thing is handed over, the tambourine is tapped. Erlik becomes drunk, and the *kam* mocks the drunken god. The propitious deity now gives his blessing to the suppliant, promises to multiply cattle, and even reveals what mare will bring forth a colt, and how it will be marked. The *kam* joyfully returns homeward, not on a horse, as before, but riding on a goose, and he walks about the *yurta* on tiptoe, as if he were flying. He imitates the cry of a goose. The *kamlanie* comes to an end, the shaman sits down, somebody takes the tambourine out of his hands, and beats on it thrice. The *kam* goes on beating his palm or his breast with his drum-stick, until it is taken away from him. After this the *kam* rubs his eyes as if he were awaking. He is asked, "What sort of ride had you? How did you get on?" And he replies, "I have had a successful journey! I was well received!"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Potanin, iv, 64-68.



*Ceremonies and Songs of an Altaian Kam while Sacrificing to Bai-Yulgen.*—The activity of the *kam* as a sacrificer, a conjurer up of spirits, and a soothsayer, is manifested most brilliantly in the ceremonies attending a great sacrifice to the celestial deity, Bai-Yulgen, who dwells on the golden mountain in the sixteenth heaven. All the songs and invocations were written down in the fifth decade of the present century, at the Altai mission, and were published by the priest Verbitskii. Mr. Radloff made a translation, and gave a full account of this festival, which is kept from time to time by every family. The festival takes place in the evenings of two or three days. On the first evening begins the preparation for the sacrifice. The *kam* selects a spot in a birch thicket in a little meadow, and there he places a new and ornamented *yrta*. In the *yrta* they put a young birch with the foliage on it; the lower branches are lopped off close to the trunk; on one of the topmost branches a flag is hung. At the bottom of the tree they cut on the trunk, with an axe, nine steps (*tapty*). Round the *yrta* a penfold is made, as if for cattle; opposite the door of the *yrta* is the entrance of the courtyard, and by the entrance is a birch stick with a noose of horse-hair. Then they choose a horse agreeable to the deity, and the *kam* has it held by a special person chosen from among those present, and called *Bash-tutkan kiski*, *i.e.*, holder of the head. The shaman takes a birch twig and waves it over the horse's back, thus driving the soul of the sacrificed animal to Yulgen, at the same time the *Bash-tutkan's* soul accompanies it. The assembling of spirits in the tambourine takes place with great solemnity; the *kam* summons each spirit separately, and with a groan replies, "Here am I also, *kam*!" at the same time moving the tambourine as if taking the spirit into it. When he has assembled these assistants, the *kam* goes outside the *yrta*, sits down on a scarecrow in the form of a goose, and moving both arms rapidly like wings, he slowly sings in a loud voice :

" Below the white sky,  
Above the white cloud,  
Below the blue sky,  
Above the blue cloud,  
Mount, O bird, to the sky ! "

To all the speeches of the shaman the goose replies by quacking, "*Ungai gak gak, ungai gak, kaigai gak gak, kaigai gak.*" The shaman himself, of course, does this imitation of the goose's voice. On his feathered steed the *kam* pursues the soul, *pura*, of the sacrificed horse, and neighs like a horse; finally, with the aid of the spectators, he drives it to the penfold, to the birch stick with the noose which represents the guardian of the animal's soul. The *kam* neighs, kicks, and makes a noise as if the noose were catching him by the throat, pulls, and sometimes throws down his tambourine as a sign that the horse has freed itself and run away. Finally, having recaptured the *pura*, he fumigates it with juniper and discards the goose. Then the animal destined for sacrifice is brought, the *kam* blesses it, and, with the aid of some of the

bystanders, kills it in a most cruel manner. The bones and skin become the sacrifice, and the flesh is eaten up, with various ceremonies, the *kam* receiving the choicest portion.

The most important part of the performance takes place on the second day, after sunset; it is then that the *kam* must display all his power and all his dramatic art. A whole religious drama is performed, descriptive of the *kam's* pilgrimage to Bai-Yulgen in heaven. A fire burns in the *yurta*, the shaman feeds the lords of the tambourine, *i.e.*, the spirits, personifying the shamanistic power of his family, with the meat of the offering, and then sings:

“Accept this, O Kaira Khan!  
 Master of the tambourine with six bosses,  
 Come to me amid the tinkling!  
 If I cry ‘Chokk!’ bow thyself!  
 If I cry ‘Mé!’ accept this!”

With a similar invocation he addresses the master of the fire, representing the power of the family of the owner of the *yurta*, the organiser of the festival. Raising a cup, the *kam* with his lips makes a noise as if invisible guests had assembled and were drinking, and he cuts up the meat into morsels and gives them to the spectators, who greedily gulp them down, as representatives of the unseen spirits. Fumigating with juniper nine garments, hung on a rope and decked with ribbons, which the master of the house offers to Yulgen, the *kam* sings:

“Gifts which no horse can carry,  
 Alás! Alás! Alás!  
 Which no man can lift,  
 Alás! Alás! Alás!  
 Garments with threefold collars,  
 Turn them over three times and look at them,  
 Let them be a cover for the racer,  
 Alás! Alás! Alás!  
 Prince Yulgen full of gladness!  
 Alás! Alás! Alás!”

When the *kam* has donned his shaman's dress, and carefully fumigated his tambourine, he sits down on a bench, and, striking his tambourine, summons many spirits, primary and secondary; on behalf of each he answers “Here am I, *kam*!” Towards the end of this invocation the shaman addresses himself to Merkyut, the bird of heaven:

“Celestial birds, the five Merkyuts!  
 You with mighty brazen claws,  
 The claw of the moon is of copper,  
 And the beak of the moon is of ice;  
 Mighty is the flapping of the broad wings,  
 The long tail is like a fan,  
 The left wing hides the moon,  
 The right wing hides the sun;  
 Thou, mother of nine eagles,  
 Without straying thou fliest over Yaik,  
 Thou art not wearied over Edil.  
 Come to me with song!  
 Sporting, approach my right eye!  
 Sit on my right shoulder!”

The shaman imitates the cry of this bird, and says: "Kagak, kak kak! *kam*, here I am!" He then bows down his shoulders, as if crushed by the weight of a huge bird. As the number of the spirits assembled increases, the *kam* beats more loudly on the tambourine, which becomes so heavy that he staggers under it. After having collected such powerful protectors and helpers, the shaman walks several times round the birch placed in the *yrta*, then kneels in front of the door, and asks the porter spirit to grant him a guide. A favourable answer being given, he noisily comes out into the middle of the *yrta*, and sharply beats his tambourine; the upper part of his body is shaken with convulsive movements, and an unintelligible muttering is heard. Then, with a peculiar motion of his drum-stick, the shaman pretends to scrape from the back of the master of the house all that is unclean, and thus liberates the soul, which, according to the belief of the Altaians, is in the back, from the influence of the wicked Erlik. Then he embraces the host, the hostess, their children and kinsfolk, in such a way that the tambourine touches the breast of each, while the drum-stick is held behind their backs. The shaman thus, with the aid of all the spirits collected in the tambourine, purifies them from all ills and misfortunes that the hostile spirit could bring upon them. After this purification, the people return to their places, and the shaman drives all the potential misfortunes out of doors. Then he puts his tambourine close to the host's ear, and with blows on this sacred instrument drives into him the spirit and power of his forefathers, thus preparing him to receive and understand the succeeding prophecies of the shaman. Indicating in pantomime that he is investing the host, hostess and all the members of the family with breast-plates and hats, the *kam* passes into a state of ecstasy; he jumps, knocks against those who are present, and suddenly places himself on the first step cut out of the birch trunk, at the same time raising the tambourine, thumping it with all his might, and shouting "gok, gok!" All the shaman's movements indicate that he is rising to the sky. In a joyous ecstasy he runs round the fire and the birch, imitating the sound of thunder, and then with convulsions he runs up to a bench covered with a horse-cloth. This represents the soul of the *pura*, the sacrificial horse; the *kam* mounts it and cries:

"I have mounted one step,  
Aikhai! aikhai!  
I have attained one zone.  
Shagarbata!  
I have climbed to the top of the *tpty* (the birch steps),  
Shagarbata!  
I have risen to the full moon.  
Shagarbata!"

The shaman passes through one zone of heaven after another, and orders the *Bash-tutkan* to hurry. In the third zone, the *pura* is tired out, and, to relieve it, the *kam* calls the goose, which he mounts. But this temporary relief is of no avail; the shaman, on

behalf of the *Bash-tutkan*, makes a long speech in a tearful tone, telling of his exhaustion, and that of his steed. In the third space of heaven there is a halt, and the shaman tells the audience of all he has seen and heard in that zone; here it is that information is given about approaching changes in the weather, impending sickness and epidemics, misfortunes that are to befall neighbours, sacrifices to be offered by the district. In foretelling rainy weather, for instance, the *kam* sings:

“ Kara Shurlu with six staves,  
Drips on the low ground,  
Nothing with hoofs can protect itself,  
Nothing with claws can uphold itself.”

The *kam* may also make similar prophecies in other regions of the sky, at his discretion. After the *Bash-tutkan* is rested, the journey is continued; before each heaven, the shaman mounts on the next step of the birch tree. To give variety to the performance, various episodes are introduced: first the *karakush*, a black bird in the service of the *kam*, is treated to a pipe of tobacco, then the *karakush* chases the cuckoo; during this, the shaman coo-cooes, and imitates the report of the *karakush's* gun; in the third place, he waters the *pura* horse, and imitates the sound of a horse drinking. In the sixth sphere of heaven takes place the last episodic scene, and this has a comic tinge. The shaman sends his servant Kuruldak to track and catch a hare that has hidden itself. For a time the chase is unsuccessful, new personages are introduced, and one of them, Kereldei, mocks Kuruldak, who, however, at last succeeds in catching the hare. The fifth heaven is particularly interesting, for there the *kam* carries on a long conversation with the mighty Yayuchi (supreme creator), who reveals to him many secrets of the future. Some of these things the shaman communicates aloud, others he mutters rapidly.

In the sixth heaven he bends before the moon, who dwells there, and in the seventh, before the sun. In a similar manner the *kam* makes his way to the eighth, ninth heaven, &c. The more powerful the *kam* is, the higher he mounts in the celestial regions; there are some, but few, who can soar to the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and even higher. When he has reached the summit of his power, the *kam* stops, drops his tambourine, and, gently beating with his drum-stick, invokes Yulgen in a humble prayer:

“ Lord to whom three ladders lead,  
Bai-Yulgen, owner of three flocks,  
The blue slope which has appeared,  
The blue sky which shows itself,  
The blue cloud which whirls along.  
Inaccessible blue sky,  
Inaccessible white sky,  
Place a year's journey distant from water,  
Father Yulgen thrice exalted,  
Whom the edge of the moon's axe shuns,  
Who uses the hoof of the horse.  
Thou, Yulgen, hast created all men,

Who are stirring round about us,  
 Thou, Yulgen, hast endowed us with all cattle,  
 Let us not fall into sorrow!  
 Grant that we may resist the evil one!  
 Do not show us Kermes (the evil spirit that attends man)  
 Give us not over into his hands!  
 Thou who the starry sky  
 Thousands and thousands of times hast turned,  
 Condemn not my sins! ”

From Yulgen the shaman learns whether the sacrifice is accepted or not, and receives the most authentic information concerning the weather, and the character of the coming harvest; he also finds out what sacrifices are expected by the deity. On such an occasion the shaman designates the neighbour who is bound to furnish a sacrifice, and even describes the colour and appearance of the animal; Mr. Radloff remarks that the *kam* is not wholly disinterested in these cases. After his conversation with Yulgen, the ecstasy of the shaman reaches its highest point, and he falls down completely exhausted. Then the *Bash-tutkan* goes up to him, and takes the tambourine and drum-stick out of his hands. The shaman is quite motionless and silent. After a short time, during which quiet reigns in the *yrta*, the shaman seems to awake, rubs his eyes, stretches himself, wrings out the perspiration from his shirt, and salutes all those present as if after a long absence.

Sometimes the festival ends with this great ceremony, but more frequently, especially among the wealthy, it lasts another day, which is spent in libations to the gods, and feasting, during which an enormous quantity of *kumys* and other strong drink is consumed.<sup>1</sup>

The account, given above in an abridged form, of the journeyings and spirit-raising of an Altai shaman, is taken from Mr. Radloff's detailed description, and is the most exhaustive and complete picture we have of the fantasy of the Siberian shamanists, and is consequently of great value for the comparative ethnographical study of our subject.

*The tambourine and drum-stick.*—The shaman, as mediator in dealings with the spirit world, must, during his functions, bear outward signs to distinguish him more or less from other people. The most important appurtenances of the profession are the tambourine and drum-stick, and the various parts of the shaman's dress. The tambourine is met with amongst almost all the Siberian tribes who have shamans; besides its power in calling up spirits, it has the miraculous power of carrying the shaman. Mr. Potanin dwells in detail on the shamans' tambourines among the Altaians, and compares them with the tambourines of the other Siberian peoples. All the tambourines seen by Mr. Potanin were circular; but, according to Mr. Yadrintsev, all those used among the Chernev Tatars are oval. The tambourine consists of a hoop or rim, of a palm in breadth, with skin stretched over it on one

<sup>1</sup> Radloff: "Aus Siberien," ii, 20-50.

side; on the concave side of the tambourine two vertical cross pieces of wood and one horizontal iron cross piece are fixed. The wooden cross piece is called by the Altaians *bar*, but other tribes give it other names. The *bar* has the form of a spindle broadening at the upper end (the broad part is shaped like a human head), at the lower end it forms a fork, resembling legs.<sup>1</sup> On the upper part, eyes, a nose, mouth and chin are marked. The iron cross-piece is called *krish* (bow-string) among the Altaians; it is an iron rod on which are iron rattles, called *kungru* in Altaian; the number of these rattles is greater or less according to the rank of the *kam*. Their number corresponds with that of the *chalus*, or spirits, subject to the shaman. Besides the *kungrus*, there are small sword-shaped trinkets fixed on the inner side of the tambourine, to the right and left of the head of the *bar*. On the outside of the hoop or rim are bosses about the size of a bean, and sometimes smaller. On the bow-string, under the beard of the *bar*, are fastened bands of narrow cloth, and these are called *yalama*. On the skin of the tambourine, sometimes on both sides, sometimes on the inner side only, are drawings in red paint. According to Mr. Yadrintsev's description, the tambourines of the Chernev and Kumandinsk Tatars differ from those of the Altaians; the vertical cross-piece has no representation of a human face, and is only a plain piece of wood. On the outer side of the tambourine of the Chernev Tatars there are drawings of animals and trees. A horizontal line separates it into two unequal parts; the upper part is the larger, and on it is figured a bow, the ends of which rest on the horizontal belt. Within the bow are two trees, and on each of them sits a *karagush* bird; to the left of the trees are two circles, one light, the sun, the other dark, the moon. Under the horizontal stripe are frogs, a lizard, and a snake; on the cross stripe and the bow are stars.<sup>2</sup> A certain *kam* gave Mr. Klements some curious explanations of the pictures on a tambourine.

(A) *Lower part of the tambourine.*

- (1) *Bai-kazyn* (painted in white), literally "the rich birch." This is the name given to the birches at which the yearly sacrifices take place.
- (2) *Ulug-bai-kazyn* (in white paint). Two trees that grow in Ilkhan's kingdom.
- (3 and 4) *Ak-baga* (white frog), *Kara-baga* (black frog), servants of Ilkhan.
- (5) *Chzhity-us*, certain spirits with seven nests and seven feathers.
- (6) *Chzhity-kyz* (seven maidens), who let loose seven diseases against man.
- (7) *Ulgere*; he is invoked in case of diseases of the teeth and ears.
- (8) *Ot-imeze*, signifying "mother of fire."

<sup>1</sup> Figs. *b* and *c* on p. 18, vol. ii of Radloff's "Aus Siberien."

<sup>2</sup> Potanin, iv, 42-43.

(B) *Upper part of the tambourine.*

- (1) *Solban-ir* (translated by the *kam* as "dawn").
- (2) *Kyun*, the sun.
- (3) *Ike-karagus*, two black birds; they fly on errands from the shaman to the devils.
- (4) *Aba-tyus* (bear's *tyus*, whatever that may mean).
- (5) *Sugyznym-karagat*, the horses of Ilkhan.
- (6) *Kyzyl-kikh-khan*. He is invoked when men set out for the chase.

The remaining figures, painted with white colour, are the beasts chased by *kyzyl-kikh-khan*.

These pictorial representations on the tambourines have a peculiar interest for us; they are intimately connected with shamanist beliefs, and would throw light on the mysteries of shamanist necromancy, but, like all pictorial signs, these drawings need to be explained by persons intimately acquainted with the ideas and facts to which they refer. We have as yet but few materials of this kind, and must restrict ourselves to the vaguest conclusions, *e.g.*, that the terrestrial and underground worlds are portrayed on the tambourine, separated by a horizontal band. Mr. Potanin notes such a division in the Ostyak tambourine of which he gives a drawing in his book.<sup>2</sup> If we were in possession of more of these pictorial materials, and texts like that published by O. Verbitskii, light might be thrown on this important question, but so far, all explanations have been rather of the nature of guess-work. Among the Buryats, the tambourine has been almost supplanted by the bell, and Mr. Khangalov only saw a tambourine in the hands of one shaman, who was an inexperienced beginner. If we may judge from this specimen, the Buryat tambourine has the dimensions and shape of a sieve; horse-skin is stretched upon it, and fastened behind with small straps; there were no drawings on it, either inside or outside, but the surface was bespattered with some white substance. According to Khangalov, the tambourine among the Buryats has a symbolic meaning; it represents the horse which can convey the shaman whither he will. The Yakuts make their tambourines of a lengthened circular form, and cover them with cowhide. On the inner side are two iron cross-pieces, arranged crosswise, and forming a handle. The tambourine is hung with little bells and rattles; it serves the Yakut, like the Buryat shaman, as a horse on which he rides to the spirit realm.<sup>4</sup>

But it is not all shamans who attain the high honour of having a tambourine; frequently a long time passes during which the spirits will not allow this magic instrument to be made. Gmelin, for instance, says that many Buryat shamans are not permitted by

<sup>1</sup> Klements: "Nyeskolko obraztsov bubnov minusinskikh inorodtsev. Zap. Vos. Sib. Otd. I. G. O. P.," v, 2, 26.

<sup>2</sup> Potanin, iv, 680.

<sup>3</sup> Agapitov and Khangalov, 4 t.

<sup>4</sup> Pripuzov, 65.

the demons to have a tambourine, and during their *kamlanie* use two long sticks, striking them crosswise against each other.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it is to this cause that we must attribute the fact that Mr. Khangalov saw no tambourines among the Buryat shamans, excepting in one instance. With the decline of shamanism, the number of persons able to make this sacred instrument, duly observing all the unknown ceremonies necessary, becomes smaller; the process of *kamlanie* is simplified, and the will of the spirits is made the excuse. As regards the mallet with which the tambourine is beaten, it is sufficient to observe that this instrument is encased in skin of some sort, so that the sound may not be too sharp. Among the Altaians, for instance, the mallet is covered with the skin of a wild goat or a hare.<sup>2</sup> Among certain tribes, *e.g.*, Buryats, Soicts, Kumandintses, Yakuts, they use for divining and for summoning spirits, a peculiar musical instrument giving out a feeble, jarring sound.<sup>3</sup> Despite all these, the tambourine continues to occupy the first place among shamanist instruments.

*Shamanist dress and horse-sticks.*—The shamans put on a special dress only when they are engaged with the spirits; in private life they are not distinguished from other people by any outward signs. Shashkov considers the following list to comprise all those articles of dress which are common to all the Siberian tribes: 1. An outer *caftan*; some of them are made of cloth, others of beasts' skins. They are hung with various rattles, rings, and representations of mythical animals. 2. A mask; among the Samoyed *tadibeis*, its place is taken by a handkerchief with which the eyes are covered, so that the shaman may penetrate into the spirit-world by his inner sight. 3. A copper or iron breast-plate. 4. A hat, one of the chief attributes of the shaman.<sup>4</sup> Gmelin describes the costume of a Tunguz shaman, and points out that, in addition to the ordinary shaman's dress, he also put on an apron hung with iron plates, bearing figures either sunk or in relief. His stockings were of leather, and trimmed with iron. He had no hat, for his old one had been burnt, and the deity will not give a new one. This shaman put on his dress over his shirt.<sup>5</sup> The Yakut shamans adorn their fur coats with representations of a sun with holes in it, and a half moon, thus indicating the twilight that reigns in the spirit land. The coats are hung with monstrous beasts, fishes, and birds, as a sign that there are monsters in the spirit world. Behind hangs an iron chain, which, in the opinion of some, shows the strength and endurance of the shaman's power, while others think it is the steering gear for the journey to the spirit land. The iron plates serve as a protection against the blows of malevolent spirits. The tufts sewed on the fur coat signify feathers.<sup>6</sup> The travellers of the eighteenth century

<sup>1</sup> Gmelin, iii, 26.

<sup>2</sup> Potanin, iv, 48.

<sup>3</sup> Agapitov and Khangalov, 43.

<sup>4</sup> Shashkov, 86.

<sup>5</sup> Gmelin, ii, 193.

<sup>6</sup> Pripuzov, 65. Mr. Pripuzov's description agrees in the main with that given by Mr. Shchukin in his "Poyezdka v Yakutsk," 1833, pp. 200 201.



paid great attention to the dress and accessories of the shamans. Pallas describes in detail the costume of a Buryat shamanka that he saw; she was accompanied by her husband and two Buryats, each with a magic tambourine. She held in her hands two sticks, ornamented at the upper end with a representation of a horse's head, and hung with small bells. From her shoulders there hung down her back to the ground about thirty snakes made of black and white fur, sewed together in such a way that the snakes looked as if they were formed of black and white rings. One of the snakes was divided into three at the end, it is therefore called *lyuga*, and is considered to be an indispensable ornament of every Buryat shamanka. Her hat was covered by an iron helmet, from which rose horns with three antlers, like the horns of a deer.<sup>1</sup>

Gmelin visited the *yurta* of a much respected Buryat shamanka near Selenginsk. Her dress consisted of all the rags she could hang round her; most of the rags were more than a yard long and about 7 inches wide; almost every rag was adorned with embroidered images, and hung with silk strings and tassels. A box which stood in the *yurta* was full of clouts, flints and meteorites. All these things served for healing purposes; there was also a felt bag full of felt idols of various shapes.<sup>2</sup> The shaman's costume, hanging in the *yurta*, was, she declared, incomplete. These scanty descriptions of former travellers must be compared with the scientific investigations of modern ethnographers. In the exhaustive work of MM. Agapitov and Khangalov there is a systematic account of an ancient costume of the Buryat shamans, which is hardly ever met with nowadays. 1. An indispensable part of a shaman's belongings was a fur cloak or *orgoi*, white for a white shaman who dealt with good spirits, and blue for a black shaman, representative of evil spirits. The *orgoi* is made of silk or cotton stuff, and does not differ in cut from an ordinary fur cloak; on it are sewed metallic figures of horses, birds, &c. Some cups, representations of a certain animal, and an idol in a rhombic frame, which have been found, may, according to Agapitov and Khangalov, with plausibility be considered as belonging to the number of such adornments. 2. The hat among the shamans of the present day is of lynx skin, with a tuft of ribbons on the top; a peaked cap is even worn sometimes, but the tuft is indispensable. After a fifth ablution the shaman receives an iron hat<sup>3</sup>; it has the form of a crown and consists of an iron hoop to which two half-hoops are fixed crosswise; on the top of one of them is fastened a small iron plate, with the two ends turned up to look like two horns. Where the half hoops join the horizontal hoop there are fastened, in three places, three *kholbokho*, *i.e.*, conical pendants, and at the back of the hoop is a chain of four links united by small rings; on the end of the chain hang objects resembling a spoon and an awl. 3. Horse-

<sup>1</sup> Pallas, iii, 181-182.

<sup>2</sup> Gmelin, ii, 11-13.

<sup>3</sup> Fig. 3 in Pl. III, Agapitov and Khangalov.

sticks are met with among all the Baikal Buryats; among those of Balagansk they do not exist. The shaman has two horse-sticks; they are made either of wood or iron.<sup>1</sup> The iron sticks are acquired by the shaman, like the iron cap, only after the fifth ablution. The wooden sticks are prepared on the eve of the first dedication; they are cut out of a growing birch; an endeavour is made to perform the excision in such a way that the birch will not wither. If the tree from which the stick is taken dies, it is considered an ill omen for the shaman. A birch is selected from among those that grow in the wood set apart for the burial of the shamans. The top of the stick is decorated with a horse's head; at some distance from the lower end a horse's knee is cut out, and the bottom has the form of a hoof. Some bells are fastened to the horse-sticks, and one of them is larger than the others. These sacred sticks are adorned with hollow *kholboko* cones, ribbons of four colours (blue, white, yellow, and red), skins of ermine, squirrel and skunk, and to make them still more like horses, small stirrups are hung on them. The iron sticks do not essentially differ from the wooden ones. The Olkhonsk Buryat shamans have also a *shure*, i.e., shrine. This is a box about 3 ft. 6 in. in length and 1½ in. in height, to the top of the lid, having the form of a roof with a double slope. The box stands on legs about 28 in. high; it is decked with ribbons, bells and skins, and on one of the long sides are painted in red, or carved, representations of men, animals and other things.<sup>2</sup> Usually, at the end, on the right side, is a picture of the sun, and on the left, the moon. The sun has the form of a wheel, and in the middle of the moon is a human figure grasping a tree. The central part of the plank is occupied by three human figures; one of them is a woman, the other two are men; these are the inferior deities to whom they offer libations of wine several times in the year. In a line with these are drawn two quivers, a case for a bow, a bow and a sword, and under each human figure is a horse. In the *shure* are kept the horse-sticks, tambourine, and various sacrificial instruments. Nil, Archbishop of Yaroslavl, mentions two other objects: *abagaldei*, a monstrous mask of leather, wood or metal, with a huge beard painted on it, and *toli*, a metallic mirror with figures of twelve animals; it is worn on the breast or neck, and is sometimes sewed on to the shaman's dress; at the present time these two objects are hardly ever used by Buryat shamans.<sup>3</sup>

From Mr. Potanin's investigations it would seem that the special dress of the *kams* has been better preserved among the Altaian tribes than among the other Siberian peoples, and he gives some very curious information about this costume. The shaman's dress consists of the skin of a wild goat or reindeer; the outside is almost covered with a multitude of twisted handkerchiefs of various sizes,

<sup>1</sup> Fig. 2 in Pl. III, Agapitov and Khangalov.

<sup>2</sup> Figs. 4 and 5, Pl. III, Agapitov and Khangalov.

<sup>3</sup> Agapitov and Khangalov, 42-44.

which represent snakes; they are embroidered with cloths of several colours, and sometimes with brocade. Some of the handkerchiefs are not sewed to the dress by the end, but in such a way that the upper end remains free, and looks like the head of a snake. On this are sometimes sewed imitations of eyes; on the thicker rolls, this end is slit, so that the snake's jaws are open. The tails of the larger snakes are forked, and on each end hangs a tassel; sometimes three snakes have a head in common. Besides these twisted handkerchiefs, narrow straps of reindeer skin are sewed on to the dress in bunches of nine. It is said that rich *kams* have a thousand and seventy snakes or twisted handkerchiefs. The small twisted handkerchiefs are called *manyak* by the Altaians; this name is also applied to the whole dress. Besides the twisted handkerchiefs and straps, *i.e.*, the *manyaks*, many other symbolic signs and rattles are fixed to the dress. Stirrup-shaped triangles of iron are often met with, on one of the corners of which iron trinkets are put, a small bow fitted with an arrow to frighten away evil spirits from the shaman during his *kamlanie*, and some *kholbogos*. On the back, two round copper plates are sewed; sometimes two others are sewed on the breast. Skins of small animals, such as ermine, striped squirrel and flying squirrel, are also sewed on with the *manyaks*. In the case of one *kam*, Mr. Potanin noticed four tobacco-pouches sewed on; these were feigned to be full of tobacco, though they were empty; the *kam* gives away this tobacco to the spirits during his wanderings in their country. The collar is trimmed with a fringe of the feathers of the white owl or brown owl; one shaman had sewed to his collar seven small dolls, and on the head of each was a plume of brown owl's feathers; these dolls, the shaman said, were the celestial maidens. In some dresses, the *manyaks* do not cover the whole dress from the collar to the waist, but a shred of cloth of some particular colour, *e.g.*, red, is sewed on, and to it are fastened round copper plates, *kholbogos*, and frequently little Russian bells; the wealthier *kams* have nine bells. The noise they make is asserted to be the voice of the seven maidens sewed to the collar, calling the spirit to come to them.

The hat of an Altaian shaman is a square or four-cornered piece of young reindeer's skin; the front is covered with cloth, or some other bright-coloured material. On one side are sewed two brass buttons, on the other are two button holes. Mr. Potanin saw a hat the upper edge of which was adorned with feathers from a golden eagle or brown owl, arranged in tufts; on the lower part was a fringe of cowrie shells hung on strips of skin. This piece of skin is laid with its lower edge on the brow; the sides are turned to the back of the head, and it is buttoned at the back, thus forming something like a European tall hat. If the strip of skin is narrow and stiff, the upper part of it sticks straight up, and the plume gives the head-dress the appearance of a diadem. Some Teleut shamans make their hats of brown owl's skin; the wings are left as ornaments, and sometimes the bird's head is left on too. It is not all shamans who have the right to wear the *manyak* and the brown owl hat;

during the ceremony of *kamlanie* the spirits reveal to their favourites that the time has come when they may prepare this professional dress. Among the Chernev Tatars, the shamans sometimes use a mask (*kocho*), made of birch bark and ornamented with squirrel tails to represent eyebrows and moustache. Among the same people Mr. Yadrintsev remarked the use of two crutches; one of them was considered to be a staff, the other a horse, like the horse-sticks of the Buryat shamans.<sup>1</sup>

All the separate parts of the dress of Siberian shamans, and their other professional belongings, have a threefold significance, both separately and conjointly. The shamans, by the outward appearance of their costume, in consequence of its originality, endeavour to produce a strong impression on the spectators; the sound of the bells, metal trinkets, and rattles on the tambourine, and the sticks which are struck against each other, agitates the audience, and puts them into a peculiar state of mind. Finally, all the objects and ornaments belonging to the shaman have their definite meaning, sometimes even of a mystic character, intelligible only to shamanists, and closely connected with their philosophy.

*How the rank of shaman is attained.*—It is not everyone who can become a shaman, and the position is bestowed, among the Siberian tribes, either by hereditary right or in consequence of a special predisposition manifesting itself in a boy or youth chosen by the spirits for their service. Among the Trans-Baikal Tunguses, he who wishes to become a shaman declares that such and such a dead shaman has appeared to him in a dream and ordered him to be his successor; in addition, everyone before becoming a shaman "shows himself to be crazy, stupefied and timorous."<sup>2</sup> According to the stories of the Tunguses of Turukhansk, the man who is destined to become a sorcerer sees in a dream the devil "*khargi*" performing shamanist rites. It is at this time that the Tungus learns the secrets of his craft.<sup>3</sup>

The Yakut shamans and shamankas do not receive the magic talent by inheritance, although there is a tradition that if a necromancer arises in a family the dignity is not transferred; they are preordained to serve the spirits whether they wish it or not. "Emekhet," the guardian spirit of the dead shaman, endeavours to enter into some one among the kinsfolk of the deceased. The person destined to shamanism begins by raging like a madman; suddenly he gabbles, falls into unconsciousness, runs about the woods, lives on the bark of trees, throws himself into fire and water, lays hold of weapons and injures himself, so that he has to be watched by his family; by these signs they know that he will be a shaman; they then summon an old shaman acquainted with the abodes of the aerial and subterranean spirits. He instructs his pupil in the various kinds of spirits, and the manner of summoning them. The consecration of a shaman among the Yakuts is accom-

<sup>1</sup> Potanin, iv, 49-54.

<sup>2</sup> "Sibirskii Vyestnik," 1822, 39-40.

<sup>3</sup> Tretyakov, 211.

panied by certain ceremonies ; the old shaman leads his pupil on to a high hill or out into the open field, clothes him in shaman's dress, invests him with tambourine and drum-stick, places on his right nine chaste youths and on his left nine chaste maidens, then dons his own dress, and, standing behind the new shaman, causes him to repeat certain words. First of all he demands that the candidate should renounce God and all that he holds dear, promising that he will consecrate his whole life to the demon who will fulfil his prayers. Then the old shaman tells where the various demons dwell, what diseases each causes, and how he may be appeased. Finally the new shaman kills the animal destined for sacrifice, his dress is sprinkled with the blood, and the flesh is eaten by the throng of spectators.<sup>1</sup> Among the Siberian Samoyeds and Ostyaks the shamans succeed to the post by inheritance from father to son. On the death of a shaman, his son who desires to have power over the spirits makes of wood an image of the dead man's hand, and by means of this symbol succeeds to his father's power.<sup>2</sup> Among the Ostyaks, the father himself selects his successor, not according to seniority but fitness, and conveys to the chosen one all his science ; the childless leave their profession to friends or pupils. Those destined to be shamans spend their youth in practices which irritate the nervous system and excite the imagination.<sup>3</sup> Tretyakov describes the ordination of shamans among the Samoyeds and Ostyaks of the Turukhan district. According to his account, the candidate stands with his face to the west, the old shaman prays the dark spirit to aid the novice, and expresses the hope that the latter will not be left without an assistant spirit. Finally the instructor sings a sort of hymn to the spirit of darkness, and the new shaman has to repeat a prayer after him. The spirits try the beginner, they demand his wife, his son, and he ransoms them with sacrifices and promises to share the offerings with them.<sup>4</sup>

In the southern part of Siberia, among the Buryats, anybody may become a shaman, but the profession is generally only followed by those who belong to a shamanist family and have had ancestors, paternal or maternal, engaged in that occupation. Besides these, there are shamans specially chosen by the gods themselves ; if anyone is killed by lightning, this is looked upon as a direct expression of the will of the gods, who thus indicate that the family has been selected by them ; the deceased is considered to be a shaman and is buried as such ; his nearest kinsman has a right to be a necromancer. Stones that fall from the sky may also give a Buryat shamanist power. It is said that a man once drank *tarasun* in which such a stone had been washed, and became a shaman in consequence. These fortuitous shamans are generally unfitted for this work, through lack of early training, and, owing to their

<sup>1</sup> Pripuzov, 64-65. V. S.—kii : "Kak i vo chto vyeruyut Yakuty," "Sibirskii Sbornik," 1890, v. ii, 130.

<sup>2</sup> Tretyakov, 211.

<sup>3</sup> Belyavskii, 113-114.

<sup>4</sup> Tretyakov, 210-211.

ignorance, they are guided by old men, appointed for this purpose, who are experienced, and know the ceremonies and prayers. But usually the dead ancestors who were shamans choose from their living kinsfolk a boy who is to inherit their power. This child is marked by special signs: he is often thoughtful, fond of solitude, a seer of prophetic visions, subject occasionally to fits, during which he is unconscious. The Buryats believe that at such a time the boy's soul is with the spirits, who are teaching him, if he is to be a white shaman, with the western spirits, if he is to be a black shaman, among the eastern spirits. Dwelling in the palaces of the gods, the soul, under the guidance of the dead shamans, learns all the secrets of the shamanist craft; it remembers the names of the gods, their dwelling place, the forms used in their worship, and the names of the spirits subject to these great gods. After enduring trials, the soul returns to the body. Year by year the tendency of mind becomes more pronounced; the youth begins to have fits of ecstasy, dreams and swoons become more frequent; he sees spirits, leads a restless life, wanders about from village to village and tries to *kam*. In solitude he carries on shamanist exercises with energy, somewhere in a forest or on a hill-side by a blazing fire. He invokes the gods in an unnatural voice, shamanizes, and frequently falls fainting. His friends follow him at a distance to see that no harm befalls him.

As long as the future mediator between gods and men is preparing for his new duties, his parents or kinsfolk appeal for help to a skilled shaman; they summon the gods and offer them sacrifices, praying that their kinsman may come safely through the ordeal. If the future shaman belongs to a poor family, the whole community helps to get animals for sacrifice and objects necessary for the rites. The preparatory period lasts some years; its length depends on the abilities of the youth. As a rule the candidate does not become a shaman before he is twenty years of age. Before entering upon his duties the candidate must go through a ceremony known as body-washing. One ablution does not suffice to give all the rights of the office; the operation must be repeated from three to nine times, but the majority are satisfied with one or two; indeed, there are some who omit the ceremony altogether, dreading the vast responsibility it brings, for the gods deal exceptionally severely with those who have undergone consecration, and sternly punish with death any serious mistake. The first ceremony of consecration is preceded by what is called the water purification. For this purpose an experienced shaman is selected, called the father-shaman, and nine young men, called his sons, are appointed his assistants. The water for the ablution must be spring water; sometimes it is drawn from three springs. They set out for the water on the morning of the day when the ceremony is to take place; they take with them *tarasun*, and offer libations to the master and mistress spirits of the well. On the way back they tear up by the roots young birch trees, shoots sprouting from seeds, bind them up into brooms, and carry them to the *yurta* of the candidate. The water is warmed in

a kettle on the hearth, and they throw into it juniper, wild thyme, and fir bark to purify it. Then they take a goat which is held in readiness, cut a little hair off its ears, a fragment from each hoof and horn, and throw all this into the kettle. After this, the goat is killed in such a way that drops of its blood run into the water, which is then ready for the ceremony. The goat's flesh is given to the women, and they cook and eat it. The father-shaman first divines from the shoulder of a sheep, then he summons the shamanist predecessors of the candidate, and offers wine and *tarasun* as a sacrifice; after the sacrifice he dips the birch brooms in the water and beats the future soothsayer on the naked back; the sons of the shaman do likewise, at the same time saying, "When a poor man calls thee, ask little of him in return, and take what is given. Have a care for the poor, help them, and pray the gods to protect them against evil spirits and their power. If a rich man call thee, ride to him on a bullock, and do not ask much for thy services. If a rich man and a poor man both send for thee at the same time, go first to the poor and then to the rich." The new shaman promises to observe these precepts, and repeats the words of a prayer uttered by the father-shaman. When the ablution is finished they make a libation of *tarasun* to the guardian spirits, and this concludes the ceremony. The water purification is frequently performed subsequently by the shaman; it is compulsory once a year, but sometimes even monthly, at the new moon, and also on special occasions when the shaman feels himself defiled in any way, *e.g.*, by contact with unclean things; when the defilement is very grievous the purification must be by blood. The shaman also purifies himself when any death takes place in the village. Some time after the ceremony of purification, the first dedication, called *kherege-khulkhe*, takes place, and large contributions are raised in the community to cover the expenses. A father-shaman and nine sons are again chosen, and the ceremony of dedication begins with a procession, on horseback, of the shaman, his guide, and the nine helpers, to their acquaintances, to collect offerings. In front of each *yurta* the riders stop, and cry out a summons to the inhabitants, who entertain them, and hang offerings in the form of kerchiefs and ribbons on a birch, which the candidate holds in his hands; they also give money sometimes. Then they purchase wooden cups, bells for the horse-sticks, and other objects, silk, wine, &c. On the eve of the ceremony they cut down in the forest the necessary quantity of thick birches. The young men cut the wood, under the direction of the old man. From a very strong and straight birch they carefully cut out two planks to make the horse-sticks. They also hew down a fir tree. All this timber is taken from the wood where the inhabitants of the village are buried. To feed the spirit of the wood, they bring sheep's flesh and *tarasun*. At the same time they get ready the shaman's outfit, and the father-shaman and his colleagues from other places shamanize, and invoke the protecting gods. On the morning of the day on which the ceremony happens, the trees that have been brought in are put in the proper

places. First of all they lay in the *yurta* a great thick birch with its roots stuck in the right hand south-western corner, at the point where the earthen floor lies bare round the hearth; the top of the tree is thrust out through the smoke hole. This birch symbolically indicates the porter god who allows the shaman ingress into heaven; it is left there permanently, and serves as a distinctive mark of a shaman's abode. At the consecration, the remaining birches are placed outside the hut, in the place where the ceremony will be performed, in a certain order, beginning from the east: 1. A birch under which they place, on a piece of white felt, *tarasun*, &c.; to the tree are fastened red and yellow ribbons if the shaman is a black shaman, white and blue ribbons if he is a white shaman, and all four colours if he is going to serve both good and evil spirits; 2. A birch to which they attach a large bell, and the horse that is to be sacrificed; 3. A birch tree, of sufficient size, which the new shaman must climb; all these three birches are called *sergé* (pillars), and they are generally dug up by the roots; 4. Nine birches, in groups of three, bound round with a rope of white horse-hair, to which are fastened ribbons in a certain order, white, blue, red, yellow, and then the same colours again; on these birches are hung nine beasts' skins, and a *tuyas* of birch bark containing food; 5. Nine posts to which they fasten the animals for sacrifice; 6. Thick birches laid out in order; to these are afterwards tied the bones of the sacrifices, enveloped in straw. From the chief birch in the *yurta* to all the birches outside, two tapes are stretched, one red and one blue; this is a symbol of the shaman's road to the spirit land. To the north of the row of birches are placed nine great kettles, in which the meat of the sacrifice is cooked.

When all is ready, the newly consecrated shaman and the other participators in the ceremony deck themselves, and proceed to consecrate the shaman's instruments; it is then that the horse-sticks are endued with life; they turn into living horses. From early morning the shamans collected in the *yurta* have been shamanizing, summoning the gods, and sprinkling *tarasun*. After the ceremony of aspersion, the old shaman summons the protecting deities, and the young shaman repeats after him the words of a prayer, at the same time he occasionally climbs up the birch to the roof of the *yurta*, and there loudly calls upon the gods. When the time for issuing forth from the *yurta* is come, four shamans take each a corner of the piece of felt, and sing and wail; at the entrance to the *yurta*, on the street, they kindle a fire, and throw wild thyme on it. The fire serves to purify everything that is carried through it. During the time spent in the *yurta*, human beings and inanimate objects undergo purification. The procession, in a certain order, goes to the place when the birch trees are arranged; in front walks the father-shaman; then comes the young shaman, followed by the nine sons, the kinsfolk and guests. The essential features of the consecration may be considered the following:



- (1) When the shaman anoints himself with the blood of the sacrificed kid, on the head, eyes and ears,
- (2) When he is carried on the felt carpet, and
- (3) When he climbs up the birch, and from the summit of the *yrta* calls upon the gods and his kinsmen, the dead shamans.

The ceremony concludes with various sacrifices and popular games<sup>1</sup> It will be seen, from the above description, that the consecration of a shaman is expensive, and accompanied by sacrificial rites which produce on the beholders a lasting impression, and give dignity to the profession in the eyes of the Buryats.

Among the tribes in the Altai, the ability to shamanize is inborn; instruction only gives a knowledge of the chants, prayers and external rites. The future *kam* begins to realize his destiny at an early age; he is subject to sickness, and often falls into a frenzy. In vain do many of the elect struggle against this innate tendency, knowing that the life of a shaman is not an enviable one, but this restraint brings greater suffering upon them; even the distant sounds of a tambourine make them shiver. Those who have the shamanist sickness endure physical torments; they have cramps in the arms and legs, until they are sent to a *kam* to be educated. The tendency is hereditary; a *kam* often has children predisposed to attacks of illness. If, in a family where there is no shaman, a boy or girl is subject to fits, the Altaians are persuaded that one of its ancestors was a shaman. A *kam* told Potanin that the shamanist passion was hereditary, like noble birth. If the *kam*'s own son does not feel any inclination, some one of the nephews is sure to have the vocation. There are cases of men becoming shamans at their own wish, but these *kams* are much less powerful than those born to the profession.<sup>2</sup>

Thus all the preliminary development of the shaman, from his childhood to the time when he is consecrated to the profession of *kum* or shaman, is of such a nature as to augment his innate tendencies, and make him an abnormal man, unlike his fellows. The ceremony of consecration has a similar character; the shaman assumes an exceptional position, takes vows upon himself, becomes the property of spirits who, though subject to his summons, have yet full power over him.

*Cases in which necromancers are applied to.*—To these soothsayers, skilled in all the secrets of the world of gods and spirits, the superstitious shamanist tribesmen, imbued with the gloomy ideas consequent upon their coarse animistic philosophy, address themselves in all the perplexities of life. All misfortunes, diseases, and death itself, are attributed by shamanists to the influence of external, supernatural causes, to remove which every effort is made. It is not to be wondered at that on the occasion of the great festivals connected with the sacrifices the shaman plays the chief part; he is then not so much a priest, a guardian of the ritual, as a

<sup>1</sup> Agapitov and Khangalov, 44 52.

<sup>2</sup> Potanin, iv, 56-57.

necromancer acquainted with the sacrifices agreeable to the gods, and the means of appeasing them. This characteristic of the shamans is especially apparent from the custom existing among the Turukhan Samoyeds of organising an annual necromantic ceremony. At the beginning of winter, when the hunting season ends, diseases begin to prevail among the Samoyeds, and they decide in an assembly that it is time for the shamans to watch the road, for it will be bad if men begin to die. The shamans give their consent to the preparation of "a clean *chyum*" (*i.e.*, *yurta* or hut), and every Samoyed helps to make ready the materials; they get poles, bring reindeer and black oxen for sacrifice; from the skins they make coverings for the *chyum* and clothes for the shamans. The *chyum* is built on the shore of a lake, and has the form of an elongated tent; on the top of it, at the southern end, they place, in an inclined position, a wooden statue representing a man or a reindeer. On the north side, the poles are fastened in such a way that they form something like a tail extended in the form of a fan; this tail is anointed with reindeer's blood. Many traditions are connected with this hut, and it is the scene of various ceremonies, the most essential of which is the senior shaman's entry into it. The young people busy themselves with games, songs, and dances, then they kill a reindeer, and the eldest ghost-seer drinks its blood, and shamanizes in the presence of the other assembled necromancers and the older men. The ceremony concludes by the shamans kissing one another's hands.<sup>1</sup>

*Doings of the shamans among the Koryaks and Gilyaks.*—The above description of the construction of a clean *chyum* among the tribes of the Turukhan region exhibits a full view of the social duties of the shamans, and clearly indicates the great importance of these guardians of the Black Faith. Although in many cases the shamans act as priests, and take part in popular and family festivals, prayers and sacrifices, their chief importance is based on the performance of duties which distinguish them sharply from ordinary priests. The essential attributes of these gloomy mediators between men and the dark hostile powers of the spirit world will become apparent on reviewing the most important cases in which the chief tribes of Siberia have recourse to shamans. The Koryaks, according to Krasheninnikov, look upon shamans as leeches, who by beating their tambourines drive away diseases, and declare what sacrifices must be offered to the spirits in order to cure the patient. Sometimes they order a dog to be slain, sometimes the laying of twigs, and other similar trifles, outside the *yurta*. The Gilyak shamans, also, busy themselves chiefly with healing the sick, by means of invocations, tambourine playing and whirling round; at times they cause the sufferer to leap through the fire, but they do not despise drugs prepared from plants, with the healing properties of which they are well acquainted. Besides their medical duties, the Gilyak shamans foretell the future, bring

<sup>1</sup> Trctyakov, 220-222.

down rain, and do other things connected with their secret science.<sup>1</sup> Though at the present time, according to our missionaries, paganism among the Gilyaks and Golds is beginning to yield to Christianity, nevertheless, christened as well as pagan natives are still unable to give up the use of shamans and their fantastic rites. Twenty-five years ago, shamanist ceremonies were in universal use among them, and no one could do without the shaman. At a birth or a death, when a Gold or Gilyak set out on his winter hunting expedition or when he went fishing, the shaman was in every case indispensable.<sup>2</sup>

*Shaman leeches among the Daurrs and Manchzhurs.*—Among the Manchzhurs and Daurrs, on the banks of the Amur River, notwithstanding the extreme poverty of the people, their attachment to the shamans, as doctors, is remarkable. Although the Russian doctors charge nothing for attendance, and supply drugs almost free, the natives, in all diseases except fever, apply to the shamans, although their services cost a great deal. These native practitioners live at the cost of the family until the patient has recovered, and insist upon the sacrifice of a pig worth from twenty to twenty-five roubles. The shamans cure all diseases except fever. Each *kamlunie* lasts, with interruptions, from eight o'clock in the evening until dawn. During the intervals the shaman fortifies himself with tea and tobacco. At the end, there is a feast of the animals sacrificed. During the *kamlanie* itself, in order to nerve the shaman in his struggle with the demons, they give him *khanshin*.<sup>3</sup>

*Healing of diseases among the Yakuts.*—In recent times, much interesting information has been collected concerning the Yakut shamans. In a long article on the beliefs of the Yakuts, a writer in the "Sibirskii Sbornik," calling himself V.S.—skii, describes in detail the shamanism existing among the natives. The shaman prescribes for all diseases, but especially Yakut maladies. The following diseases are looked upon as Yakut: obscure nervous complaints, such as hysteria, madness, convulsions, St. Vitus's dance, also barrenness, puerperal fever and other diseases of women, diseases of the internal organs, all kinds of abscesses, wounds, headaches, inflammation of the eyes, rheumatic fever, typhoid, inflammation of the lungs and larynx. There are some diseases that the shamans refuse to treat, *e.g.*, diarrhœa, scarlatina, small pox, measles, syphilis, scrofula, and leprosy. They are especially afraid of small pox, and will not shamanise in a house where it has been. All diseases proceed from evil spirits who have settled in human beings, and their treatment is intended to drive out or win over the unwelcome guests. The simplest method is that of healing by fire. In the Kolymsk district, a lad had an injured finger, which was painful, and occasionally broke out into an abscess. It was decided that the wicked spirit *Er* had taken possession of the finger.

<sup>1</sup> Krasheninnikov, ii, 58–59. Deniker, 294, 306.

<sup>2</sup> "Pribavlenie k Irkutskim Eparkhialnym Vvedomostyam," 1887, 267.

<sup>3</sup> "Vostochnoe Obozrenie," 1890, 20, 9; 32, 6.

Desiring to drive it thence, the patient took burning coal and blew it round the abscess. When the burnt flesh burst with a crackling sound, the patient, with a smile of satisfaction, remarked to the spectators, "Did you see him jump out?" Other domestic remedies to relieve suffering are the clanging of iron, loud cries, &c. When simple treatment of this kind is of no avail, the Yakuts apply to the shaman; he acts as intercessor for the unfortunate, and mediator between men and spirits when they come into collision. The obligations he takes upon himself are not light, the struggle he enters upon is a dangerous one. The author of the article describes that part of the shamanist ritual which is invariable. The shaman called in to visit a patient takes the post of honour, in the corner opposite the fire on the right hand wall, when one is looking towards the chimney hole and the door. Stretching himself out on his white mare's skin, the leech lies waiting for night, and the hour when he may begin his sorcery. All this time he is treated with deference, and supplied with food and drink. At length, when the sun has set, and the hut begins to be dark, hasty preparations are made: they chop wood, make faggots, and cook an exceptionally abundant and choice supper. Gradually the neighbours arrive, and take their places on the benches along the walls, the men on the right side, the women on the left. Conversation is carried on in a very sober manner, the movements of the visitors are slow and gentle. When all are at supper, the shaman sits up on the edge of his pallet, slowly unplaits his hair, in the meantime muttering something, and occasionally giving various orders. Sometimes he nervously hiccoughs, artificially, and then his whole body trembles in a strange way. The sorcerer's eyes do not look about; they are either cast down or fixed motionless on one point, generally on the fire. The fire gradually becomes dull, thick darkness fills the hut, the door is shut, and there is almost complete silence. The shaman slowly takes off his shirt and puts on his wizard's coat, then, taking a lighted tobacco pipe, he smokes for a long time, and swallows the smoke. The hiccoughs become louder, the trembling more alarming. When the shaman has finished smoking, his face is pale, his head has fallen far forward, and his eyes are half shut. In the meantime, the white mare's skin has been laid in the middle of the hut. The shaman takes a jar of cold water, drinks a few large gulps, and, with a slow sleepy motion, seeks on the bench the whip, twig or drum-stick prepared for him. Then he goes out into the middle of the hut and, bending his right knee four times, makes a solemn bow to the four sides of the universe; at the same time he spurts water from his mouth, all round. A tuft of white horse hair is thrown into the fire, which is then put out. By the faint glimmer of the smouldering coals, one can still see in the darkness, for a short time, the motionless figure of the shaman sitting with downcast head, holding in front of his breast, like a shield, a large tambourine. His face is turned to the south. All the people who are sitting on the benches hold their breath, and nothing is heard in the darkness save the indistinct muttering and hiccoughs of the

wizard. At last these sounds also cease; for a moment complete silence reigns. Soon after, there is heard a single yawn, sharp and metallic in sound, and then, in some part of the dark hut, a falcon cries loudly and clearly, or a sea-mew utters a piteous wail. After another interval, the tambourine begins to make a slight rolling noise, like the buzzing of mosquitoes: the shaman has begun his music. At first it is tender, soft, vague, then nervous and irregular like the noise of an approaching storm; it becomes louder and more decided. Now and then it is broken by wild cries; ravens croak, grebes laugh, sea-mews wail, snipes whistle, falcons and eagles scream. The music becomes louder, the strokes on the tambourine become confused in one continuous rumble; the bells, rattles and small tabors sound ceaselessly. It is a deluge of sounds capable of driving away the wits of the audience. Suddenly everything stops; one or two powerful blows on the tambourine, and then it falls on the shaman's lap. Silence at once reigns. This process is repeated, with slight variations, several times. When the shaman has worked up his audience to a sufficient pitch, the rhythm of the music is changed, and it is accompanied by broken phrases of song, gloomy in tone:

- (1) Powerful bull of the earth! . . . Steed of the steppe! . . .
- (2) I am the powerful bull . . . I roar! . . .
- (3) I neigh . . . steed of the steppe! . . .
- (4) I am a man placed above all! . . .
- (5) I am a man gifted above all! . . .
- (6) I am a man created by the lord powerful among the mighty! . . .
- (7) Steed of the steppe, appear! . . . Teach me! . . .
- (8) Magic bull of the earth appear! . . . Speak! . . .
- (9) Mighty lord, command me! . . .
- (10) May everyone with whom I go, hear with the ear! . . .  
Let no one follow me to whom I say not—come! . . .
- (11) Henceforth, come no nearer than is allowed, let everyone  
look with a keen eye! . . . Let him be quick to hear! . . .  
Have a care of yourselves! . . .
- (12) Look to it well! . . . Be all such, all together . . .  
all, as many as there are of you! . . .
- (13) Thou on the left hand, lady with the staff, if it happen  
that I wander, or take not the right road, I pray thee  
direct me! . . . Get ready! . . .
- (14) Show me my mistakes and show me the road, my mother!  
Fly with a free flight! . . . Clear my broad path! . . .
- (15) Spirits of the sun, mothers of the sun, dwelling in the  
south, in the nine woody knolls, you who will envy . . .  
I pray you all . . . let them stand . . . let your  
three shadows stand high! . . .
- (16) In the east, on his mountain, is the lord my grandsire,  
mighty in strength, thick of neck—be with me! . . .
- (17) And thou greybeard, most worthy of wonder-workers (the

fire) I pray thee: approve all my thoughts without exception, grant all my wishes . . . hearken! . . . Fulfil! . . . All, all fulfil! . . .

The ritual used by the Yakut shamans is always the same. There are two forms of it—one longer and one abridged. It is the latter that we have given. The remainder of the ceremony is an improvisation adapted to certain cases and certain persons. When the shaman, by his singing, has brought down upon himself his guardian spirit, he begins to skip and move about on his skin mat, thus beginning the second part of his dramatic performance. The fire has been made up again, and its bright gleam illumines the hut, which is now full of noise and movement. The wizard ceaselessly dances, sings and beats his tambourine; first turning to the south, then to the west and east, he madly jumps and contorts himself. The time and step of his dance somewhat resemble the Russian *trepäk*, but it is faster, and lacking in boldness. Finally the shaman has learnt all he needs to know; he has discovered who caused the illness, and has assured himself of the support of the powerful spirits. Then begins the third part of the performance. Whirling, dancing, and beating the tambourine, the shaman approaches the patient. With fresh invocations he expels the cause of the disease, frightening it out, or sucking it out of the diseased place with his mouth. When the disease has been driven out, the shaman takes it into the middle of the hut, and, after many invocations, spits it out, drives it from the hut, kicks it away or blows it from the palm of his hand far up into the sky or under the earth. But it is not sufficient to drive out the disease: it is indispensable to appease the gods who have relieved the sufferer, and the shaman decides what sacrifice must be offered to the mighty spirits of heaven. At the termination of the ceremony, the shaman sits down again on his mare's skin, and sings and plays, the spectators lift him and his mat back to the place of honour which he occupied at the beginning.<sup>1</sup>

*Divination and propitiatory invocations of the Yakut oyuns.*—Side by side with the healing of diseases is divination, with its various ceremonies. Gmelin refers to prophecy among the Yakuts, accompanied by the following methods: the shaman takes a ring or a coin, and holds it in the midst of the palm of the enquirer, moving it about in various directions as if examining it, and then foretells the future.<sup>2</sup> In an article in the "Sibirskii Sbornik," we are told that the Yakut shamans accompany the foretelling of the future with dramatic performances like those used in healing the sick.<sup>3</sup> These necromancers are called in in all cases when it is desired to win success or avert misfortune. Mr. Vitashevskii tells how a

<sup>1</sup> "Sibirskii Sbornik." "Prilozhenie k Vostochnomu Obozreniyu," 1890, v. ii. "Kak i vo chto vyeruyut yakuty (Etnograficheskii nabrosok)." V. S.—kago, 141-153.

<sup>2</sup> Gmelin, ii, 364-365.

<sup>3</sup> "Sibirskii Sbornik," 158.

young Yakut, Siancha, on a visit to his father-in-law, who lived a verst and a half from the author, invited a shaman to offer a sacrifice, and invoke a blessing from the guardian spirit of hunters and fishermen. The Yakuts represent this spirit as a beast the size of a big year old calf, with hoofs like a cow, a dog's head, small eyes, and long hanging ears. The performance at which Mr. Vitashevskii was present took place on the night of the 8-9th February, 1890. It was extremely dramatic, and the author of the article gives a careful and detailed account of it. In many points, Mr. Vitashevskii's description is of great interest for comparative ethnography, and presents quite a unique phase of shamanist ritual. As a preliminary, an image of the spirit of hunting and fishing was made. It was simply a log of wood 3 in. thick and rather less than 28 in. long. On this log a rough drawing of a human face was made with a piece of coal. Besides this, the so-called "pillow" was made from a saddle, formed of two thick willows and twenty willow twigs. Both objects were taken to the door, and placed in such a way that the face of the image looked inwards. The performance began in the following way: three young fellows stood with the shaman, each holding in his right hand three lighted faggots. The shaman fumigated with the smoke of his faggots the three young men who stood facing the fire. Then all four threw down their faggots at random, and the young men mixed with the crowd. The shaman sat down on a stool facing the door, and, holding an arrow in his right hand, pronounced the following words. First of all he addressed Baryllakh, the spirit of the chase. We only give the beginning of the address:

"Baryllakh of my rich forest;  
My lord grandsire,  
Now—then!  
Smile! . . ." &c.

The shaman then, in the name of the spirit, asked the young Yakut, who was going to hunt, what he was called, and receiving the answer, "They call me Sencha," the shaman pronounced some untranslated Mongol words and went outside, saying that Baryllakh himself would knock directly.

In a short time there was a knock outside, and by the open door entered the shaman, who was triumphantly met by the spectators. He acted the part of spirit of the chase, laughed, smirked, and, sitting down on the ground, to the right of the chimney, said, "Give me my darling, my friend!" Then they gave the shaman the image of Baryllakh and the pillow which had been made from the saddle. He smelt both all over, and caressed them; then he ordered them to be placed against the post which is in the *peredni ugol* (place of honour) under the *ikons*. On the pillow they placed a cup of *salamata* (hasty pudding), and threw butter in the middle of the fire. In the morning, the master of the house where the performance took place ate up the *salamata*. The image of Baryllakh, and the saddle pillow, were taken away into the woods. Thus ended the shaman's sorcery. It is to be noted that the Yakuts

represent Baryllakh as always giggling, and fond of laughter. When huntsmen have killed an elk, they go up to the beast laughing, in order to win the favour of the spirit.

Mr. Vitashhevskii has given another detailed account of a shamanist ceremony, organised, to appease the spirits, by a converted Yakut who wished to ameliorate his disordered affairs. The same shaman, one Simen, officiated.<sup>1</sup> In this, as in the preceding case, one can see, in a coarse form, the simple beginnings of those dramatic tendencies which among highly cultured peoples have reached such an extensive development, and have become one of the highest phases of literature. The shaman, in presence of his uncritical fellow-countrymen, gives the reins to his fancy, and tries by an original *mise-en-scène* to make an impression on the visual faculty; he brings up spirits, mingles the comic with the tragic element, and, with an art surprising in a semi-savage, enchains the minds of his audience. Even the Russians who have inhabited the country for a long time are often attracted by these shamanist shows.

*Methods of healing among the Tunguses.*—Among the Tunguses, both pagan and Christian, the shaman, according to Shchukin, is not a priest, but a wizard who heals and divines.<sup>2</sup> For the cure of the sick they apply to shamans, who, by inspecting the blood and livers of slain birds or other animals, diagnose the disease. They declare the means by which the gods may be appeased. By direction of these necromancers new idols are made, and sacrifices are offered. The sacrifice takes place inside the *yurta*, in the evening. The shaman takes the patient's head between his hands, sucks his brow, spits in his face, and fixedly looks at the affected part.<sup>3</sup>

*And Ostyaks.*—The Ostyaks, by command of the shaman, bring into the *yurta* of the sick person several reindeer; to the leg of one deer they fasten one end of a rope, the other end is held by the patient, and when the latter pulls the rope they kill the deer. The head and horns are laid on the floor, the flesh is eaten, and the sick man is anointed with the fat.<sup>4</sup> In order to extract the devil, the Ostyak shaman takes hold of the diseased part with his teeth, and in a few minutes draws from his mouth a piece of the entrails of some beast, a small worm, or simply a hair. All these objects are considered to be embodiments of a disease.<sup>5</sup>

*Leechcraft among the Kirghizes.*—The Kirghiz shaman, like his colleagues in other tribes, adopts various methods to represent in a dramatic form his struggle with the spirits that possess the sick. Sitting down opposite the patient, he plays on the *balalaika* (three-stringed guitar), cries, sings, grimaces, then he runs about the

<sup>1</sup> V. Vitashhevskii: "Materialy dlya izucheniya shamanstva u Yakutov, Zup. V. S. O. R. G. O. po etnografii," ii, v. 2<sup>3</sup>, 37-48.

<sup>2</sup> "Poyezdka v Yakutsk." Izd. N. Shch., 91.

<sup>3</sup> Shashkov, 99-100.

<sup>4</sup> Shashkov, 98-99.

<sup>5</sup> Tretyakov, 218.



*Yurta* and out into the open air, where he mounts the first horse he can find, and gallops about on the steppe, chasing the spirit that torments the sick man. On his return, the shaman beats the patient with a whip, bites him till the blood flows, waves a knife over him, spits in his eyes, hoping by such radical means to drive out the spirit. These performances are repeated for nine days.<sup>1</sup>

*Among the Teleuts.*—On the shores of Lake Teletsk, Helmersen witnessed the healing of one of his Telent companions. The natives believed that evil spirits had entered his body, and were causing his pain and dismay. The *kam* Jenika undertook the cure. He began by tying some twigs together, put a red hot coal on the bundle, and waved it over the patient, meantime muttering some incoherent words. The sounds he made gradually became louder and more guttural, and finally broke into a wild song, accompanied by a swaying motion of the body. From time to time the chant was broken by loud deep sighs. The exorcism went on increasing in energy for a quarter of an hour; then Jenika placed the bundle of twigs by the sick man, sat down, and quietly smoked a pipe. The result of the treatment was that the patient was cured.<sup>2</sup> In the Altai Mountains, nightmare is attributed to the spirit Aza. To drive it away, a *kam* is summoned, who conjures in the *yurta* before a willow twig with five colours bound to it (*i.e.*, rags or ribbons of five colours).<sup>3</sup>

*And Vogul Manzes.*—On the borders of Siberia and European Russia, among the Vogul Manzes, the medical functions of the shamans consist of invocation of the gods, whispered charms, and the use of certain therapeutics. In all cases they enquire of the gods the cause of the illness. The gods receive sacrifices of reindeer, garments, and hides, then the patient drinks charmed water, vodka, and blood; he is anointed with blubber, reindeer fat, and still more frequently bear's grease, he is fumigated with castoreum and the sediment of boiled larch or birch, and rubbed with a bear's tooth. Frequently the same remedy is used for different diseases.<sup>4</sup>

*The duties and functions of Mongol and Buryat shamans.*—The Buryats, by their social life and education, stand on a higher level than the other Siberian peoples. Among them, shamanism must have undergone a greater degree of elaboration, and, thanks to certain Buryat scholars, we are in a position to give a detailed account of Buryat shamanism, notwithstanding the fact that the Yellow Faith of the Buddhist lamas is rapidly driving out the old Black Faith.

Dorji Banzarov examines the duties of the Mongol shamans in general, and the Buryat shamans in particular, under three heads:

<sup>1</sup> Shashkov, 99.

<sup>2</sup> Helmersen: "Reise nach den Altai (Baehr u. Helmersen Beiträge)" B. xiv, 71.

<sup>3</sup> Potanin, iv, 130.

<sup>4</sup> Gondatti: "Slyedy yazycheskikh vyerovanii u Manzov," 54.

as priest, physician, and wizard, or diviner. As priest, the shaman, knowing the will of the gods, decides what they want from men, and he performs sacrifices as an expert in ritual and prayers. Besides the ordinary general sacrifices, the shamans performed private sacrifices, of which, in Banzarov's opinion, the following were the most important: 1. On beginning any enterprise; 2. For the healing of disease; 3. To prevent murrain, the attacks of wolves on cattle, and, in general, any pecuniary loss; 4. A libation to the sky, on the occasion of a thunderstorm, especially the first thunder in spring. As physician, the shaman has a definite method of expelling the spirit from the patient's body, at the same time he performs tricks, and acts like a madman. The gift of prophecy makes him very powerful. He either prophesies simply, or by means of divination. Divination is by the shoulder bone, and by the flight of arrows.<sup>1</sup> While agreeing with the learned Buryat in many points, we must take exception to his view of the part played by the shamans as priests, which in Banzarov's classification of their duties occupies so prominent a place. More than once, we have pointed out that the priestly function of the shamans is of secondary importance, while the essence of shamanism is in sorcery, which is especially apparent in the curing of diseases and in divination. The majority of cases of sacrifice, of a so-called accidental character, mentioned by Mr. Banzarov, arise precisely from this fundamental source of shamanism. The Buryats chiefly apply to shamans and shamankas in two cases: when a member of a family falls sick, or when a horse is lost.<sup>2</sup> According to Mr. Sidorov, every shamanist ceremony due to disease or theft begins with divination by the shoulder bone of a sheep or a goat. The Buryats have a tradition about this shoulder bone. A written law was given by God to the chief tribal ancestor of the Buryats; on his way home to his own people he fell asleep under a haystack. A ewe came to the stack and ate up the law with the hay; but the law became engraved on the ewe's shoulder blade.<sup>3</sup>

In the Alarsk department of the government of Irkutsk, according to the priest Eremyeev, there is a superstition which does not exist in other districts. If anyone's child becomes dangerously ill, the Buryats of that region believe that the crown of his head is being sucked by Anokhoi, a small beast in the form of a mole or cat, with one eye in its brow. No one except the shaman can see this beast and free the sufferer from it.<sup>4</sup> Shamans called in to visit patients, especially children, are called by the Buryats, Naizhis. If the patient recovers, he rewards the shaman, and calls him his *naizhi*. If anyone has sick children, or if his children die, any new born infants, or young sick children are visited by the shaman,

<sup>1</sup> Banzarov: "Chernaya vyera," 107-115.

<sup>2</sup> "Mongoly Buryaty v Nerchinskoy Okrugye Irkutskoi gubernii." Zh. M. Vn. D., 1843, ch. iii, 85.

<sup>3</sup> Sidorov: "Shaman i obryady shamanskoi vyery." Irkutskiya Eparkh. Vyed., 1873g, 465.

<sup>4</sup> "Shamanstvo Irkutskikh Buryat." Irk. Eparkh. Vyed., 1875g, 21, 300.

who, in order to preserve them from unclean spirits, makes a special amulet, called *khakhyukhan*. If the infant lives or recovers, as the case may be, the shaman is called *naizhi*, and rewarded for his trouble. If the child dies, the *khakhyukhan* is returned to the shaman, and the title of *naizhi* ceases to be applied to him. The duty of the *naizhi* is to protect the child, with the aid of the *zayans*, from evil spirits, and grant it his powerful protection. There are not *naizhis* in every family, and the Buryats only apply to such shamans in extreme cases. The *naizhis* are changed at the wish of the parents. It sometimes happens that one family has several guardian shamans. If the child grows up, he shows special respect to his *naizhi*.<sup>1</sup>

(*To be continued.*)

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