

Shamanism in XXI Century China: Social Functions and Local Specifics

Maxim Mikhalev

Russian Academy of Sciences

Abstract: This paper elaborates on the phenomenon of shamanism revival in modern China based on the fieldwork data gathered among Shenehen Buryats living in the north-eastern part of the country. It discovers that traditional shamanism that was often labeled as pheudalistic superstition and has been long predicted to vanish, grows in popularity despite the current economic growth and the rise of living standards. Hidden and concealed, it remains an integral part of modern Chinese society as it helps people cope with the challenges of everyday life and pays attention to the needs of an individual that are often ignored by the other institutions. Unlike in the neighboring countries, shamans in China do not venture into the politics and limit their role to that of an individual crisis manager, occupying relatively small, but nevertheless an important niche of “folk healers and psychologists.” The recent growth of popularity of such sort of shamanism proves that modern society lacks this kind of service and modern shamans simply feel this gap. The paper concludes that shamanism is almost impossible to eradicate completely. Even suppressed and ousted, it can mimicry and find refuge at the fringes of social structure, from where it may still address the problems of common people.

Keywords: Shamanism, China, Buryat, Religious policy, Social institutions

Shenehen Buryats

Buryats are not officially recognized as a minority in China and are normally included in the ranks of Mongols, despite the fact that they preserved relatively well their own distinctively different language and traditional lifestyle. They still have the strongest

sense of the specific Buryat identity. Those living in China keep close social and cultural connections with the Buryats living in the neighboring regions of Mongolia and Russia. Originally migrants from Aginskoye grassland in Russia's Transbaikalia, in the beginning of the last century they left it and settled in China following the turmoil of the Russian Civil War.¹ Since that time, they have firmly established themselves as an integral part of China's family of peoples, at the same time not breaking ties with the kinsfolk in their original homeland although sometimes it was not easy to keep them. As almost all Buryats in China reside along Shenehen river in the Hulunbuir City of Inner Mongolia Autonomous District, they are known here as Shenehen Buryats, albeit this name is only partially official. As they are not recognized as an official minority, there is no reliable statistics on the exact number of Shenehen Buryats. Researchers normally estimate there are currently five to seven thousands Buryats living in China.²

One of the distinctive features of their spiritual life is the relatively high status that their shamans enjoy. They managed to survive both Mao era purges and modern science development vulgar materialism and are still revered by Buryats who seek their assistance for the number of occasions and reasons. Taken in consideration relatively high standards of living of Buryats that prosper mostly thanks to their involvement in transborder trade of China, Russia and Mongolia, both legal and otherwise, it often puzzles researchers why they still haven't given up their "outdated" shamanistic beliefs. Contrary to popular opinion that shamans are the last resort for the poor and uneducated, there has been recorded a significant increase in both number of practitioners and their clients alike in the recent times. They experience a sort of revival despite the economic boom and the sharp rise of standards of living that rural areas of China currently going through. This phenomenon provides a rare, yet significant insight into the mechanism of survival, revival and even "re-

¹ Zhanjiang Xu, ed., *Zhongguo Buliyate Mengguren* (Hulunbuir: Neimenggu Chubanshe, 2009), 3.

² Lufang Bao, "Buliyate Mengguzu jiqi Yanjiu Gaishu," *Qinghai Minzu Yanjiu* 2, no. 14 (2003): 84.

establishment”³ of the ancient traditions and practices in modern, highly centralized states. They only seem to have been long eradicated, but in reality just swiftly escaped into hiding staying unnoticed and waiting for a suitable moment to re-emerge as a powerful social force.

As local people insist, it was already back in the 1920s that several influential, well-respected shamans were practicing among Shenehen Buryats, who came with them from Aginskoye. A decade after their flight to Hulunbuir, this area was occupied by Japanese forces and became a part of Manchukuo state. During Japanese rule shamanism was not suppressed and shamans were neither arrested nor persecuted in any other way as authorities resorted to careful propaganda, trying to explain to the local population the ineffectiveness of their healing techniques. Shamans were ridiculed and sometimes laughed at, but nothing more serious.⁴ Situation changed after 1949 however, when People’s Republic of China was established. New authorities launched a full-scale anti-shamanism campaign aiming at eradicating this “poisonous phendalistic superstition” completely. Campaign reached its peak during the years of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), when shamans were forced to give up their way of life and practice and sometimes simply murdered. For example, the notorious Buryat female shaman of that era named Handa was forced to stop performing rituals, eventually lost all her divine powers and died shortly afterwards. It looked those days that shamanism is doomed to perish, but common people continued to arrange rituals in secret and this saved it from total extinction. Despite all the pressure, there were even new shamans rising to prominence those days.⁵ Too elusive and too difficult to grasp, amorphous shamanism just went into hiding and by doing this survived an unequal battle against almighty state that was imposed on it. At the same time, its century-old rival Buddhism with its highly elaborated organizational structure was brutally

³ Olle Sundström, “Is the shaman indeed risen in post-Soviet Siberia?,” *Scripta* 24 (2012): 383.

⁴ Walther Heissig, *The Religions of Mongolia* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), 45.

⁵ Shiyu Qiu and Lü Ping, *Dawo’erzu Saman Wenhua Chuancheng* (Shenyang: Liaoning Chubanshe, 2009), 12.

devastated. The monasteries were demolished, its sacred books destroyed, and the monks murdered or exiled.

After the reforms were launched in China in the late 1970s and the freedom of religion partially restored, Buddhism was quick to revive and to take back its former role within the society, while shamanism remained semi-illegal and found refuge in the remotest periphery of the public discourse. Officially, it was labeled as “pseudalistic superstition” and scientists researched it as a relic of a bygone era. Articles and documentaries dedicated to “the last shaman” popped up routinely, while the ultimate “victories over the heritage of the dark past” were declared once and again. In reality, however, it was just wishful thinking of the officials as while both scientists and politicians spoke of the shamanism as something that belonged exclusively to the past, the next “last shaman” was born from ashes and ancient tradition was evolving in the universe that existed parallel to the one that they both stayed in. The state and the shamans were no longer in direct confrontation, but they didn’t co-operate either. They simply ignored each other. In fact, the situation hasn’t changed much ever since, and all the above-said is true for modern China too.

Concealed Shamanism

In order to illustrate this quite paradoxical situation, I would like to come up with some fieldwork conversations from Nantun, the capital of Evenk autonomous banner of Hulunbuir City in China’s Inner Mongolia Autonomous District. “Shamanism is our grandfathers’ belief, however among eastern Buryats, including those of us in Shenehen, it has been long replaced by Buddhism. So, if you wish to speak with real shamans, you shall better travel to Baikal, as shamanism is best-preserved there, and particularly on the Olkhon Island,” explains with an elderly Buryat intellectual who used to be both people’s representative and a deputy head of the local administration. “Does anyone need shamans now, when Buddhism effectively replaced them, and people choose to visit lama if they need help or advice?”, a young lama from Shenehen lamasery shrugs his shoulders visibly irritated. “Shamanism is a cultural anachronism from the pseudal past, and there are no social premises for its existence in our country anymore,” explains

current state of affairs the head of the religion supervision department at the local administration, a native Buryat himself. “Shamanism is something from the very remote past, we have heard about it from our grandmothers, but it simply does not exist anymore,” the manager of a local eatery looks totally confident. The words of the scientists echo those of the local people in Nantun. Dr. Meng Huiying, a prominent Chinese expert on shamanism, claims: “The development of education and science brings great changes to the culture and the everyday lives of the northern minorities that leads to the gradual, but irrevocable elimination of the irrational shamanistic magical weltanschauung as an ideological system.”⁶ It seems that speed of evolution of the modern society makes shamanism in China lose its social ground, and it is indeed doomed to disappear.

After staying in Nantun for a little longer, however, the overall picture changes dramatically. “There has been recently a sharp increase in the number of young shamans practicing in Nantun, but I do not believe in their newly acquired magic powers,” the same head of the religion supervision department who has just assured me in the absence of any social premises for shamanism revival, suddenly shakes his head and smiles. “There is one new shaman practicing in our neighborhood – some say, he is a decent one,” a visitor in the local eatery joins our conversation with the manager. “Can you give me his phone number?” – the same manager, who just told that shamanism belongs to the world of ancestors seems to be sincerely interested in visiting this young new shaman in the future. “In fact, every Buryat here pays visit to shaman occasionally, but this is not something that can be discussed openly and with the strangers,” a colleague from Nantun Evenk research and study center finally explains this “shaman paradox”.

As it appeared to be, the shamanism is still wide-spread and more and more popular among different groups of Shenehen Buryats, but unlike, say, in Russia, where it enjoys some sort of a

⁶ Huiying Meng, “Zhongguo Beifang Shaoshu Minzu Samanjiao” (PhD diss., Chinese Academy of Sciences, 2000), 122.

“golden age”, having just “risen from the ashes”⁷, it is shamanism of concealed sort here that is not supposed to be told about. Practicing shamans in contemporary China still have numerous clients, but people prefer not to admit their existence and try not to discuss this sensitive topic with the strangers. They are even more reluctant to confess that they themselves use their services occasionally, because such behavior is considered backward, shameful and even reprehensible. As common people do not admit they occasionally visit shamans, local government does not recognize their existence at all. Buddhism, Islam, Christianity are all taken seriously, and they are closely supervised and carefully researched. These well-established religions are considered an important factor of the social life of local people and China’s officialdom feels it necessary to develop and to execute special policy towards them. At the same time, to their opinion, shamanism is just a “pseudalistic superstition” doomed to vanish in times of the rapid modernisation of the country as it lacks any social base, and as such there is no need for developing special policies with regards to it or for close monitoring of the activity of the shamans. If nothing else, the “superstition” can be included in the “heritage list” of Buryat or Mongol culture, put into museums and then marketed to a mass tourist as an odd exotics in order to deprive it from its social significance. As Xing and Murray noted, “government support does not include shamanic spirit healing traditions. We are aware of no specific policy statement prohibiting such support. However, though hostility to shamanic healing is not official, it is real.”⁸

On their side, shamans in China look fully satisfied with such state of things and are not eager to expose their identities either as they are not interested in increasing their public profile. They seem to prefer staying away from both business and politics so they do not advertise themselves openly in order to avoid unnecessary attention from the authorities. Sidinjabu is probably the most famous of modern Shenehen Buryat shaman and is a good example

⁷ Valentina Kharitonova, *Feniks is pepla? Sibirskii shamanizm na rubezhe tsysyacheletii* (Moscow: Nauka, 2006).

⁸ Haiyan Xing and Gerald Murray, “The evolution of Chinese shamanism: A case study from Northwest China,” *Religions* 9, no. 397 (2018): 16.

of such sort of shamans. Being 11 to 14 years old, he was a novice in the nearby Shenehen lamasery. As he recounts now, at the age of 13 he started to see prophetic dreams and could predict future as he knew the whereabouts of the lost objects. Having discovered that, old lama his teacher told him to undergo shaman initiation ritual with an experienced Buryat shaman from Outer Mongolia. He did so at the age of 15, and although still a relatively young man, these days Sidinjabu already has his own apprentices both from Inner Mongolia and beyond.

His home is known as “shaman house” in Nantun and visitors flock to its doors. He receives them in his impromptu reception hall, where one can immediately notice a simple desk with books in Tibetan language and a poster from the nearby lamasery. At the same time the walls of his room are decorated with bow and arrows that is aimed to manifest his direct connections with his ancestors and the local spirits alike. Same fusion characterizes the contents of the four of his prayer cabinets, where Buddhist figurines and photos of Mongolian high-ranked lamas rub shoulders with traditional Buryat felt dolls and different shaman paraphernalia like horsehead staffs etc.

The visitors too are a motley crew of people of all ages and nationalities – in “shaman house” one can meet both a Buryat, Daur or Evenk and an occasional Han also. Some come with their children, some travel from as far as Beijing, Mongolia or Russia. Most of those seeking a piece of advice from Sidinjabu are however still Chinese nationals. Students come before their examinations, while those to embark themselves on a long journey expect some sort of “travel insurance” from the shaman. There are visitors who came to ask him to bless their newly acquired possessions, while others need to find the old ones that are lost and missing. The other reasons for visiting “shaman house” include protection from the fraud in business, health problems and job-related issues. As Sidinjabu himself notices, people were mostly seeking for his health advice in the past, while nowadays the majority of his visitors complain about mental problems and general life disorder.

“Nantun shaman” doesn’t have any civil job as he earns his livings performing rituals and consulting people, so each visitor is eventually a *client* for him. Unlike modern Buryat shamans in

Russia,⁹ he doesn't consider himself as a serviceman for his kinsmen, neither performs he any social duties for the community. As such, he is more a medicine man than a religious or a community leader. His sphere of responsibility is individual pains and sorrows that modern society simply does not want and has no capacity to heal. Most of these modern shamans in China do not go beyond this role, and only few of them are trying to do something more. Among those is Siqingua, another famous shaman of the Evenk autonomous banner, who used to work as a school teacher before undergoing shaman initiation ritual in 1998. Her reception hall is totally different from that of Sidinjabu as it looks more like a decent business office than a religious establishment with its cozy courtyard, massive reception desk and an impressive collection of certificates and awards brought from international symposia that are hanging on the walls in their neat wooden frames. This is not simply a show-off, however, as Siqingua is a frequent guest at scientific conferences held around the world, where she is routinely interviewed both by scientists and local TV hosts. As she is indeed quite famous, there are many rich local businessmen and some governmental officials among her clients, albeit the latter prefer to come to her office in secret. There were even several books published both in China and abroad that explore this phenomenon of Siqingua,¹⁰ while "The Foundation for Shamanic Studies", founded by Dr. Michael Harner, a prominent American scientist-turned-shaman, awarded her with an honorable title "Living Treasure of Shamanism."¹¹

She is still an exclusion rather than a rule however, as most of the shamans in contemporary China limit their role to that of an individual crisis manager, occupying relatively small, but nevertheless an important niche of "folk healers and psychologists." They ease the burden of daily life for the common people by channeling out their troubles, helping them cope with

⁹ Natalia Zhukovskaya, "Buddhism and Shamanism as Buryat Mentality Shaping Factors," in *Religion in History and Culture of Mongolian-speaking Nationalities of Russia*, ed. Natalia Zhukovskaya (Moscow: Vostochnaya Literatura, 2008).

¹⁰ Mihaly Hoppal, *Shamans and Traditions* (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 2007).

¹¹ Qiu and Lü, *Dawo'erzu Saman Wenhua Chuancheng*, 27.

anxiety and allowing to get rid of the pains and sorrows of everyday life. They are not interested in politics and have no willingness to promote their views in mass-media. It is impossible to imagine that anything similar to Russia, where Buryat shamans were protesting against pipeline in Tunka valley and fought for the autonomy of Ust-Orda Buryat Autonomous District,¹² could ever happen in China. Shamans here are not involved in any educational activities or promotion of a healthy lifestyle like it is the case just across the border, in Aginskoye of Russia. They are not part of the society or even their community as they serve exclusively their individual clients, solving, but not preventing their individual problems. Unlike in many other countries, they don't even attract the attention of the tourists as "any attempt to publicly display shamanic healing for visiting tour groups would more likely draw ridicule than admiration from middle or upper class urban tourists from other parts of China."¹³

Shenehen shamans do not wish to present themselves as important symbols of national revival either that is being so common among Buryat shamans in the neighboring Russia. In China, this sort of revival is something that is exclusively associated with Buddhist clergy. Buddhism indeed provides the most effective basis for strengthening Buryat unity here, and local shamans never challenge its superiority in this aspect. For example, Shenehen lamasery that was rebuilt and reopened by local Buryats with their own money, in the eyes of the entire population of Hulunbuir is not simply another religious object. It solidifies and personifies the identity of Shenehen Buryat, it is the basis of their unity and solidarity and as such is revered as the only viable community center and the true bearer of tradition. All the important social activities, including traditional holidays and festivals, as well as the tradition of obo sacrifice are nowadays also almost completely monopolized by the local Buddhist lamas.

At the same time shamans here remain divided and marginalized. Unlike those in the Republic of Buryatia and the

¹² Zhukovskaya, "Buddhism and Shamanism as Buryat Mentality Shaping Factors," 34–5.

¹³ Xing and Murray, "The evolution of Chinese shamanism: A case study from Northwest China," 16.

neighboring regions of Russia, where shamans are often engaged in “the establishment of clinics, the publication of a certain kind of literature, the arrangement of sacred places and buildings for rituals and worship, the organization of public rituals and feasts, and the creation of a network of national and international relations,”¹⁴ they do not have her their registered society in China and haven’t developed any universal code of conduct, examination system or the certificate system of their own. All such activities do not correspond with the spirit of Chinese law, of course, but shamans do not feel it is necessary for them to have this anyway. They do not publish lengthy monographs and do not print throw-over calendars like their colleagues just across the border do.

They even prefer not to communicate with each other and limit the scope of their co-operation to the occasional jointly-held small ceremonies for a group of close relatives. Unlike in Russia, most of these modern shamans in China are of a peasant stock, they all are poorly educated and they do not have any management experience. Their low social status and limited social functions results not from their modest descent, poor competences, lack of organizational resources or low ambitions, however. The main reason for this is that Chinese society needs none of their services and thus is not in a position to recognize them as an important social factor, effectively ignoring them and isolating them wherever and whenever possible. One can say that shamans in China are nowadays placed beyond the society itself.

To certain extent, their status is closely related to the type of problems that those modern shamans normally solve and to the attitude of the society towards such problems in general. As it was noted, people visit shamans, when haunted by nightmares, when their business run out of luck and when they suffer health and mental problems or any sort of internal disorder. In highly competitive Chinese society, where individual success is necessary for getting respect and for maintaining one’s personal dignity, it is sometimes simply a shame and a failure to even admit that you are experiencing problems of this sort. Nightmares are simple child tricks, bad luck is just a poor excuse for job incompetence, mental problems and internal disorder is pure sentimentality and

¹⁴ Sundström, “Is the shaman indeed risen in post-Soviet Siberia?,” 369.

weakness from the point of view of such society that doesn't accept or recognize them as real problems. In this context, a visit to shaman is just a sign of someone's incapability and inadequacy, and due to this, it is always better to keep it in secret and to forget about it as soon as it is possible. Shaman is seen as something inevitable, but people try to minimize communication with him and never speak about any interaction with him with others. Their attitude towards shaman is often a mix of fear and disgust, as it is the fear and disgust that they feel about their own problems that they ask shaman to find solutions for.

As the result of all of this, shamanism in contemporary China remains hidden and completely asocial, as it is seen in this way both by the authorities and the society itself that prefer to ignore its existence and to reject its right to play any significant role in the life of people. Evicted to the fringes of social structure, it remains disorganized, spontaneous, amorphous, agile and apolitical. It does not harbor any intentions to replace the state or to co-operate with it. From its part, the state shows no interest in co-operation with shamanism either. Positioning itself as being able to solve all problems of the society as a whole and its individual members alike without any help from shamans, it considers then neither foe nor ally.

The real problem and the real challenge is, however, that in reality both state and shamans still need each other and that this sort of mutual ignorance can't last long without dire consequences for both. The case of post-Soviet Buryatia and the neighboring regions,¹⁵ where shamanism eventually came out of the underground in the wake of the state crisis, and became an integral part of the new social order, providing balance and necessary ideology postulates in times of moral chaos and society stricture collapse, proves this point. It illustrates that during social crises shamans can be recalled by the society to help solving pressing problems that government and other social institutions fail to cope with. In this case, shamanism may become an important element of the social structure. Keeping this in mind, a careful incorporation of practicing shamans into legal socio-

¹⁵ Agnieszka Halemba, "Contemporary religious life in the Republic of Altai: the interaction of Buddhism and Shamanism," *Sibirica* 3 (2003).

political framework may become more optimal strategy for the state. It can leverage on their spiritual resources and moral authority and at the same time do not let spiritual leaders from the periphery of society to take the real lead if one day state loses its grip.¹⁶

Conclusion

Shamanism has long been predicted to extinct, but has nevertheless survived all the wars that were waged against it, proving once and again that it is impossible to eradicate it completely. It will exist as long as the society itself, and those will only be its shape, its appearance, and probably its functions that will be slightly changing with times. Even ousted to the remotest fringes of the social structure, it will retain its power and the harder will state suppress it, the stronger it will. The case of shamanism in contemporary China proves this point.

According to the popular belief shared by many in modern China, shamanism has long doomed to vanish here, and those are predominantly poor people from the rural areas that still need and still use the services provided by shamans.¹⁷ In reality however, we witness its unprecedented revival, as both number of shamans and of that of their clients that continue to grow in the wake of rapid social development and the tremendous growth of China's economics. Moreover, contrary to the popular belief that the majority of shamanists are either desperate herders or the miserable destitute villagers with no access to modern medical facilities, they rather represent middle-class urbanites that have been taken away from their normal social rural environment through relocation and who eventually lost their frame of reference. It seems that the reason for this remarkable fact is that while political and economic problems in the country indeed start decreasing, the intensity of its social conflicts shows growth. This is in turn due to fact that while the system itself is getting stronger,

¹⁶ Maxim Mikhalev, "Transformation of Shamanistic Worldview as the Reflection of the Contemporary Buryat Society and its Values," *Bulletin of the Kalmyk Institute for Humanities of the RAS* 1, no. 35 (2018): 89.

¹⁷ Meng, "Zhongguo Beifang Shaoshu Minzu Samanjiao."

the problems of its individual members look less and less important to its operators.

In fact, the society, no matter how developed or strong it can become, is able and willing to solve only its own problems or such problems of its individual members that are directly related to the wellness of the society as a whole. At the same time, it shows no any interest in the individual cares of its citizens, sometimes even rejecting to recognize them as problems at all. Bureaucratic, driven by egoism and economic greed, the most developed and elaborated social structures stay in the state of complacency and ignore concerns of its individual members as long as they do not pose a threat to the stability and development of themselves. As a result, those concerns constantly multiply as in our increasingly global and dehumanized, rapidly developing world an individual becomes disposable and feels more and more desolated.

Unable to find acceptable solutions to their individual problems within this framework of a materialistic, technocratic, success-oriented society, people start searching for them in its outskirts and beyond. There they eventually discover shamans and find them ready to take into consideration all their “small” problems, as they do not feel they are shameful. It is important to note, that those shamans who live in the fringes of the social system, manage to retain their ability to connect themselves to the energies flowing from beyond the encapsulated social system, so they can indeed solve those problems. By doing this in turn, shamans continue to serve people and shamanism becomes an alternative and a supplement to the state and its institutions.

Such is the status of Buryat shamans in modern China’s North-Eastern region, where state and other social institutions are strong, self-sufficient and recognize no other power besides themselves as they believe they can offer to citizens of the country acceptable solutions for the most if not all their problems.¹⁸ Shamans here are effectively evicted to the remote periphery of the social structure and their status is extremely low as they perform no any social functions while their clients are almost exclusively those with problems that society either refuses to recognize or

¹⁸ Tamier, “Zhong’E Buliyateren de Samanjiao Fuxing Xianxiang Bjjijiao Yanjiu,” *Shijie Zongjiao Wenhua* 2 (2017): 93–7.

rejects to solve considering them unimportant or shameful. Important to note, however, that this type of shamanism is still in high demand, and this demand has only been growing recently. This signals that the modern society is probably just too arrogant while it is becoming less and less able of providing solutions for the problems of its individual members. That naturally forces them to start looking for such solutions outside the net of the conventional social institutions.

Until society changes its attitude to the problems of its individual members, the perspectives of such concealed, marginalized shamanism will be improving as it will grow and develop. At the same time, success-blinded and increasingly ignorant society would pay little or no attention to its existence as it sincerely believes in its own almightiness. It will only when an imminent crisis finally strikes such society, would it discover that all its “last shamans” that it forgot have already brought up a generation of new apprentices ready to return to the stage. This happened in post-Soviet Buryatia in the wake of the Soviet system collapse, and this can also happen in China if the growing social problems here would ruin its economic and political stability one day and state for one or another reason becomes fragile. In order to avoid this scenario, the current policy of ignorance shall in this case be replaced with careful research of shamanism as a system of thought and co-operation with practicing shamans.

References

Bao, Lufang. “Buliyate Mengguzu jiqi Yanjiu Gaishu.” 布里亚特蒙古族及其研究概述 [Buryat Mongols and Brief Description of Their Research]. *Qinghai Minzu Yanjiu* 2, no. 14 (2003): 84–90.

Halemba, Agnieszka. “Contemporary religious life in the Republic of Altai: the interaction of Buddhism and Shamanism.” *Sibirica* 3, no. 2 (2003): 165–82.

Heissig, Walther. *The Religions of Mongolia*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980.

Maxim Mikhalev, *Shamanism in XXI Century China: Social Functions and Local Specifics*

Hoppal, Mihaly. *Shamans and Traditions*. Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 2007.

Kharitonova, Valentina. *Feniks is pepla? Sibirskii shamanizm na rubezhe tysyacheletii*. Moscow: Nauka, 2006.

Meng, Huiying. 孟慧英. “Zhongguo Beifang Shaoshu Minzu Samanjiao.” 中国北方民族萨满教 [Shamanism among Northern Minorities of China]. PhD diss., Chinese Academy of Sciences, 2000.

Mikhalev, Maxim. “Transformation of Shamanistic Worldview as the Reflection of the Contemporary Buryat Society and its Values.” *Bulletin of the Kalmyk Institute for Humanities of the RAS* 1, no. 35 (2018): 89–97.

Qiu, Shiyu, and Ping Lü. 邱时遇, 吕萍. *Dawo'erzu Saman Wenhua Chuancheng*. 达斡尔族萨满文化传承 [Inheritance of Shaman Culture among Daurs]. Shenyang: Liaoning Chubanshe, 2009.

Sundström, Olle. “Is the shaman indeed risen in post-Soviet Siberia?” *Scripta* 24 (2012): 350–87.

Tamier. 塔米尔. “Zhong'E Buliyateren de Samanjiao Fuxing Xianxiang Bijiao Yanjiu.” 中俄布里亚特人的萨满教复兴现象比较研究 [Comparative Research of Shamanism Revival among Buryat in China and Russia]. *Shijie Zongjiao Wenhua* 2 (2017): 93–7.

Xing, Haiyan, and Gerald Murray. “The evolution of Chinese shamanism: A case study from Northwest China.” *Religions* 9 (2018): 397.

Zhanjiang, Xu, et.al., ed. *Zhongguo Buliyate Mengguren*. 中国布里亚特蒙古人 [Buryat Mongol People of China]. Hulunbuir: Neimenggu Chubanshe, 2009.

Zhukovskaya, Natalia. “Buddhism and Shamanism as Buryat Mentality Shaping Factors.” In *Religion in History and Culture of*

Mongolian-speaking Nationalities of Russia, edited by
N. L. Zhukovskaya, 9–36. Moscow: Vostochnaya Literatura, 2008.

Maxim Mikhalev
State and Religion in Asia Research Center,
Institute of China and Contemporary Asia,
Russian Academy of Sciences.
32, Nakhimovsky Ave., Moscow, 119997, Russia.
<m.mikhalev@iccaras.ru>