

METAMORPHOSES OF THE “TUVAN FIELD”

The article demonstrates the metamorphoses of the Tuvan field of study. Currently, there have been significant changes in the object of research in Tuva, including the relationship between the subject and the object of the study. There are different strategies for the relationship between the anthropologist and the respondent. One is a model of an official and a respondent, where the relationship between the subject and the object of research is strictly regulated. The other is the model of anthropologist being a “good friend” when he or she “helps his/her local source of information to comprehend their own culture”. The third one is the model where the researcher learns on the spot and takes the position of an “eternal student”, including in relation to his or her interlocutors (local sources). It is here, that “the key source” of information appears and is carefully guarded. What does an anthropologist become for his key source — an administrator, a “good friend”, an assistant in solving problems, a guest, an extra freeloader or a relative? Each of these strategies requires reciprocity and genuine dialogue. The metamorphosis of the Tuvan field is rather not a change in the focus of the study, but a transformation of the scientist, and also of time. The article concludes that in the modern anthropological field, a unique opportunity is given to scholars to open a new, valuable dialogue. The article is written in the genre of an anthropological essay, and is based on my own observations and impressions, collected in the course of many years of expeditions in Tuva.

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