

SHAMANS WITHOUT DRUMS: HISTORICAL MEMORY IN THE NARRATIVES OF TUVANS

The paper considers the reflection of the historical memory of Tuvans in the narratives that mention the religious situation during the period of the Tuvan People's Republic and the USSR. The topics covered include the persecution of shamans, the ban on shamanic activities, the concealment or confiscation of ritual attributes, the destruction of shamanic burials, and the underground shamanism in 1929–1990. Shamans had to adapt to the new situation, to change their cult paraphernalia and to use smaller ritual objects for the purpose of conspiracy due to the dictates of the time. The rituals were forced to be secret and therefore silent, without drums or ritual costumes, which had never happened before in shamanic practice. Oral stories recorded from both lame people and specialists in magic recall times of anti-shamanistic propaganda and describe the punishments applied to specialists in magic. The underground existence of ritual practice helped to preserve the features of original Tuvan shamanism, which, unlike in other Siberian regions, was not interrupted during the anti-religious period. After the ban on the shamanic tradition Tuvan people did not stop performing collective consecration rites — dagylga, which is a great merit of the underground shamanism.

Keywords: Tuvan shamanism, narrative, historical memory, religious situation, persecution of shamans, destruction and concealment of shamanic attributes, secret ritual

Author Info: Yusha, Zhanna M. — Dr. of Philology, Leading Research Fellow, Department of Ethnography of Siberia, Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation). E-mail: zhanna-yusha@yandex.ru ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4076-4553>

For citation: Yusha, Z. M. 2025. Shamans Without Drums: Reflection of Historical Memory in the Narratives of Tuvans. *Herald of Anthropology (Vestnik Antropologii)* 1: 323–336.

References

- Alekseev, N. A. 1980. *Rannie formy religii tiurkoiazychnykh narodov Sibiri* [Early Forms of Religion of the Turkic-speaking Peoples of Siberia]. Novosibirsk: Nauka. 320 p.
- Alekseev, N. A. 1984. *Shamanizm tiurkoiazychnykh narodov Sibiri* [Shamanism of the Turkic-speaking Peoples of Siberia]. Novosibirsk: Nauka. 233 p.
- Diakonova, V. P. 1975. *Pogrebal'nyi obriad tuvintsev kak istoriko-etnograficheskii istochnik* [Tuvan Funeral Rite as a Historical and Ethnographic Source]. Leningrad: Nauka. 164 p.
- Diakonova, V. P. 1981. Tuvinskie shamany i ikh sotsial'naia rol' v obshchestve [Tuvan Shamans and Their Social Role in Society]. In *Problemy obshchestvennogo soznaniia aborigenov Sibiri i Severa* [The Problems of Social Consciousness of Aborigines of Siberia and the North], ed. by I. S. Vdovin. Leningrad: Nauka. 129–164.

- Funk, D. A., and N. A. Alekseev (eds.). 2008. *Tiurkskie narody Vostochnoi Sibiri* [Turkic Peoples of Eastern Siberia]. Moscow: Nauka. 422 p.
- Grumm-Grzhimailo, G. E. 1926. *Zapadnaia Mongoliia i Uriankhaiskii kraï. Antropologicheskii i etnograficheskii ocherk etikh stran* [Western Mongolia and Uriankhai Region. Anthropological and Ethnographic Sketch of These Countries]. Leningrad: Gublīt. 412 p.
- Karalkin, P. I. 2008. Ostatki shamanizma u tuvintsev i puti ikh preodoleniia [Remains of Shamanism Among Tuvans and Ways to Overcome Them]. In *Kul'tura i traditsii korennykh narodov Severnogo Altaia* [Culture and Traditions of Indigenous Peoples of Northern Altai], ed. by A. V. Malinov. Saint Petersburg: Izdatel'skii dom Sankt-Petersburgskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. 231–249.
- Katanov, N. F. 1907. *Obraztsy narodnoi literatury tiurkskikh plemen. Teksty, sobrannye i perevedennye N. F. Katanovym* [Samples of Folk Literature of Turkic Tribes. Texts Collected and Translated by N. F. Katanov]. Vol. 9. *Narechiia uriankhaitsev (soiotov), abakanskikh tatar i karagasov* [Dialects of Uryankhai (Soyot), Abakan Tatars and Karagas People]. Saint Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Rossiiskoi Akademii nauk. 649 p.
- Kenin-Lopsan, M. B. 1987. *Obriadovaia praktika i fol'klor tuvinskogo shamanstva. Konets XIX — nachalo XX v.* [Ritual Practice and Folklore of Tuvan Shamanism. The End of the 19th — the Beginning of the 20th Century]. Novosibirsk: Nauka. 162 p.
- Kenin-Lopsan, M. B. 2009. *Tuvinskie shamany* [Tuvan Shamans]. Moscow: Maska. 238 p.
- Kharitonova, V. I. 2018. Tuvinskii (neo)shamanizm kak kul'tovaia i tselitel'skaia praktika v sovremennom mire [Tuvan (Neo)Shamanism as a Religious and Healing Practice in Contemporary World]. *Novye issledovaniia Tuvy* 4: 47–76.
- Kon, F. Ya. 1936. *Za piat' desiat let. Ekspeditsiia v Soiotiiu* [For Fifty Years. Expedition to Soyotia]. Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel'. 360 p.
- Mänchen-Helfen, O. 1992. *Journey to Tuva. An Eye-Witness Account of Tannu-Tuva in 1929*. Los Angeles: Ethnographics Press University of Southern California. 292 p.
- Mänchen-Helfen, O. 2007. Puteshestvie v aziatskuiu Tuvu [Travel to Asian Tuva]. In *Uriankhai Tyva depter. Antologiia nauchnoi i prosvetitel'skoi mysli o drevnei tuvinskoi zemle i ee nasel'nikakh, ob Uriankhae — Tannu-Tuve, uriankhaiskakh — tuvintsakh, o drevnostiakh Tuvy* [Uryankhai Tyva Depter. Anthology of Scientific and Enlightenment Thought about the Ancient Tuvan Land and its Inhabitants, about Uryankhai — Tannu-Tuva, Uryankhai — Tuvinians, about the Antiquities of Tuva]. Vol. 6. *Tannu-Tuvinskaia Respublika (1921–1944)* [Tannu-Tuva Republic], ed. by S. K. Shoigu. Moscow: Slovo. 220–351.
- Pimenova, K. V. 2007. Predstavleniia o zlykh dukhakh, porche i obriady ochishcheniia u sovremennykh tuvinskikh shamanov [The Notions of Evil Spirits and Curse, and Cleansing Rites among Today's Shamans of Tuva]. *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 4: 86–100.
- Potanin, G. N. 1883. *Ocherki Severo-Zapadnoi Mongolii* [Essays of Northwestern Mongolia]. Saint Petersburg: Tipografia V. Kirshbauma. Vol. 4. 944 p.
- Potapov, L. P. 1960. Materialy po etnografii tuvintsev raiona Mongun-Taigi i Kara-Kholia [Materials on the Ethnography of the Tuvans of the Mongun-Taiga and Kara-Khol Region]. In *Trudy Tuvinskoi kompleksnoi arkheologo-etnograficheskoi ekspeditsii (1957–1958)* [Proceedings of the Tuva Integrated Archaeological and Ethnographic Expedition (1957–1958)], ed. by L. P. Potapov. Moscow, Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, Leningradskoe otdelenie. Vol. 1. 159–182.
- Potapov, L. P. 1969. *Ocherki narodnogo byta tuvintsev* [Essays on the Folk Life of Tuvans]. Moscow: Nauka. 402 p.
- Vainshtein, S. I. 1961. *Tuvintsy-todzhintsy: Istoriko-etnograficheskie ocherki* [Tuvinians-Todzha: Historical and Ethnographic Essays]. Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura. 218 p.
- Vainshtein, S. I. 1991. *Mir kochevnikov tsentra Azii* [The World of the Nomads of Central Asia]. Moscow: Nauka. 296 p.
- Vainshtein, S. I., and M. Kh. Mannaj-ool (eds.). 2007. *Istoriia Tuvy* [History of Tuva]. Novosibirsk: Nauka. Vol. 2. 430 p.
- Vainshtein, S. I., and N. P. Moskalenko. 1995. Problemy tuvinskogo shamanstva: genezis, izbrannichestvo, effektivnost' lechebnykh kamlanii, sovremennyi renessans [Problems of Tuvan Shamanism: Genesis, Chosenness, Effectiveness of Healing Rituals, Modern Renaissance]. In *Shamanizm i inye rannie*

- religioznye predstavleniia: K 90-letiiu doktora ist. nauk, professora L. P. Potapova* [Shamanism and Other Early Religious Conceptions: On the 90th Anniversary of Dr. of Historical Sciences, Professor L. P. Potapov], ed. by D. A. Funk. Moscow: IEA RAN. Vol. 1. 38–51.
- Yakovlev, E. K. 1900. *Etnograficheskii obzor inorodcheskogo naseleniia doliny Yuzhnogo Eniseia i ob'iasnitel'nyi katalog etnograficheskogo otdela muzeia* [Ethnographic Overview of the Non-Native Population of the Southern Yenisei Valley and Explanatory Catalog of the Ethnographic Department of the Museum]. Minusinsk: Izdatel'stvo V. A. Danilova. 212 p.
- Yusha, Zh. M. 2022a. Zhanrovaia spetsifika shamanskikh narrativov v fol'klornoii traditsii tuvintsev [Genre Specificity of Shamanic Narratives in the Folklore Tradition of Tuvans]. *Critique and Semiotics* 2: 258–274. <https://doi.org/10.25.205/2307-1737-2022-2-258-274>
- Yusha, Zh. M. 2022b. Ustnye rasskazy o shamanskom stanovlenii v fol'klornoii traditsii tuvintsev [Oral Stories about Shamanic Formation in the Folklore Tradition of Tuvans]. *Siberian Journal of Philology* 4: 21–33. <https://doi.org/10.17223/18137083/81/2>
- Yusha, Zh. M. 2024. Predstavleniia tuvintsev o golovnykh uborakh shamanov [The Tuvan Depictions of Shamanic Headdresses]. *Tomskii zhurnal lingvisticheskikh i antropologicheskikh issledovaniï* 3(45): 113–122.