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A History of Mongolian Shamanism

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Preface to the Second Edition

I have published the small book: *A Brief History of Mongolian Shamanism* just before the First International Conference on Mongolian Studies in 1959. Originally this work was issued in an abridged edition in Chinese, and I had planned to publish the book in its full-length version. A foreign citizen, whose name has been forgotten over the years, had taken it away in the early 1990s and for that reason the book has still not been located. Because of that, I changed my plan about correcting and revising the original text. Although there was a major obstacle for my plan to rewrite and publish the work, delivering to the scholar and reader, it is possible to complete the work of rewriting the book within the framework of the original edition. Since the first time, the history of Mongolian shamanism was published in condensed form in monograph. After my book was published, the orientation of my research continued to reach acceptable standards, which was clearly reflected in my research work on the history of the Great Mongol Empire and Yuan Dynasty. With the aim of meeting the needs of current readers, I consider that the time had come to include recently accumulated material in the book, making additions and corrections in this way, and to publish it.

Knowledge of Mongolian shamanism is closely related to what we have learned, on the basis of studying important materials about many thousands of years of history, of the spiritual and intellectual life of nomadic peoples, not only of Mongolian but also of Central Asia. For that reason I have based my writing on these resources.

1. Sources of historical writings are very important to this research, particularly the Mongolian sources. The *Secret History of the Mongols* is considered to be the most authoritative supporting document for the study of twelfth-century Mongolian shamanism. It is necessary to mention all kinds of shamanist records, manuscripts of songs, and texts on sacrifices and offerings. From the thirteenth century, Mongolian shaman's oral literature became linked to written documents, while in the Manchu period, shamanist written works began to appear. Twelfth- and thirteenth-century travelers' accounts of Mongolia contain original materials and must also be studied. In particular, Wilhelm Rubruk, Plano Carpini, and Marco Polo have left us numerous records that they wrote.

Our sources of knowledge about the shamanism of Mongolia's ancient people are meager. Related to that is the fact that it takes a long time to find and sift through materials in Chinese sources that are related to the history of the Mongolian people's shamanism.

2. For this research, Mongolian shamanism's oral literature and folk tales are of great importance. In the study of Mongolian shamanism, above all, it is important to explain the basic issues with the aid of local people who are well acquainted with the shamans' lives and traditions, having observed the character of shamanizing, the social code, and rituals. There are also all sorts of Mongolian oral literature, folk tales, and legends in which shamans and shamanesses are praised or criticized. It is important to go through all of these and investigate them thoroughly.
3. Archeological research materials play a major role in the study of Mongolian shamanism.

Apart from these conditions, we have encounter other problems, in particular the fact that the original power of most shamans and shamanesses has diminished significantly as a consequence of Yellow-Hat Lamaism's influence, and shamanism now is very much interwoven with Buddhist culture. Because of this, it is indispensable to clarify the roots of shamanism and to investigate in detail the boundaries between Buddhism and shamanism. Chinese sources have produced substantial information related to shamanism. It is important to read and study the collected texts, where they have related anything to shamanism. On the other hand, research on Mongolian shamanism is comparatively underdeveloped, so that useful research works are scarce.

In the thirteenth century, or after the establishment of the Great Mongolian Empire, shamanism was the Mongols' principal religion, as was the case in earlier times. Although such religions as Islam, Christianity, and Taoism had entered Mongolia, they were not widespread and were largely confined to the nobility. They could not become generally diffused among the broad mass of Mongols. Due to this, research on shamanism, which had become the chief religion of the general population, is a very important matter. Unfortunately, up until now, the overall phenomenon of Mongolian shamanism has not been fully investigated. Many people say that shamanism is obscure, antiquated, and backward, therefore it is a brutal, uncultured religious tendency. There could have been some things like that. However, if we speak of shamanism in the context of its environment, we see that it was able to harmonize with the thought and character of the general population and the social code, and seriously attracted people. Mongolian shamanism was like that. At the same time, shamanism had both positive and negative functions. One was the vicious and deceitful function of confusing people's thinking and inciting people to fight in wars. Nevertheless, shamanism played an important role in preserving Mongols' traditions. In particular, it developed the language, protected the natural environment, kept mountain waters pure, and in certain ways protected the people and their herds of livestock from disease, danger, and accidents. This was in accord with ancient practice, as the nomads tended to adhere to the views of the leaders. Even apart from

that, from shamanist songs, we know something about the places where Mongols lived, their forbearers' history and biographies and the images of valiant warriors. Therefore, the study of shamanism becomes important material for research on the history of Mongols' beliefs.

Research on Mongolian shamanism began in the mid-nineteenth century. It has been observed that it spread outward from the northern area of Buryat Mongolian territory, through Outer Mongolia or the region of the Republic of Mongolia, to Inner Mongolia, changing its features in the process. The Russian scholar G. V. Miller participated in a Siberian expedition from 1733 to 1743 and wrote mainly about the conditions in eastern Siberia in the book *History of Siberia* /1/. He collected many materials about the Buryats' shamanism while he was writing his book. Also the Russian academician I. E. Fisher, in writing his work *History of the Siberian People* /2/, between 1734 and 1747, compared the traditions and shamanist religion of many ethnic groups (including Buryats) who were living in the Siberian area, with the Tungus-Manchu ethnic groups' "shaman", and gathered interesting materials. In fact, it can be said that research on Mongolian shamanism begins from this period. Since that time, more and more scholars have taken an interest in studying Buryat shamanism. In particular, I. Podgorbunskii wrote an article in 1894, "Tales and Legends of Buryat Mongol and Mongolian Shamanism", which was published in the journal *Sibir'/Siberia*. The celebrated mongolist Vladimirtsov published an article titled "The Shamanism of the Northwest Mongols" in 1916. Also in 1916, he wrote an article on "The Shamanism of Turkestan and Mongolia", which appeared in volumes 38 and 39 of the journal *Dornod Azi/East Asia*. N. Poppe published an article, "Concerning Mongolian Shamanist Manuscript Texts" in 1932, while A. K. Anokhin published *Material on the Shamanism of the Altai People* in 1925. I. Kosokov published his book *The Question of the Shamanism of Northern Asia* in 1930. I. M. Suslov published his 1921 article "Shamanism and the Struggle against It" in volumes 3 and 4 of the journal *Sovetskii sever/Soviet North*. In the anthology *Narody sibir'/Peoples of Siberia*, published in Leningrad in 1956, Buryat shamanism was mentioned briefly. Among writings relevant to the history of Mongolian shamanism, I will especially emphasize the most significant. These are the works of D. Banzarov /3/, M. N. Khangalov /4/, Ts. Jamsranov /5/, N. N. Poppe /6/, N. L. Jukovskaya /7/, and T. M. Mikhailov /8/.

During the socialist period, scholars such as B. Rinchen /9/, Ts. Damdinsuren /10/, S. Badamkhatan /11/, O. Purev /12/, J. Tsooloo /13/, and S. Dulam actively pursued research on shamanism in the area of the Mongolian People's Republic, meeting with the small numbers of shamans and shamanesses who had remained concealed, asking them to perform shamanist rituals, recording songs on tape, publishing collective works, collecting shamans' clothing and equipment, and writing articles and books. In particular, shamanist songs and similar materials were gathered by the MPR Academy of Sciences. The research on shamanism of modern times begins from this. B. Rinchen made collections of Mongolian shamans' songs and also wrote and published many different short works concerning non-Mongolian shamanism. These have become valuable research materials. In his book *History of Mongolian*

Literature, Ts. Damdinsuren wrote a special chapter on the topic of “Shamanist Poetry”.

However, shamanist written works are products of a later time. Kh. Perlee explained some shamanist terminology and arranged the shamans’ clothing and equipment which are in the National Museum. M. Sanjdorj, in his work *About Mongolian Shamanism*, wrote a brief introduction to the diffusion of Yellow-Hat Lamaism in Mongolia and wrote on the question of its forceful role. N. Ishjamts, in his work *Establishment of Unified State and Consisted Feudalism in Mongolia*, dealt quite exhaustively as well as with shamanism of the Great Mongolian Empire and he recorded his conclusions in the book. He makes very good use of the writings of Rashid-ad-Din, Marco Polo, and Plano Carpini and tries to show in comprehensive detail the beliefs of Mongolian shamanism.

Western scholars have contributed substantially to the study of Mongolian shamanism, but their specially written works about Mongolian shamanism are rarely available. Even so, I briefly became acquainted with G. M. Kaznovich’s book *The Shamanism of the Inhabitants in Siberia*, published Washington in 1925. The prominent German mongolist W. Heisig did research in the 1950s and 1960s /15/. With the help of a German researcher, Herbert Braeutigam, who had been doing research at Beijing University, I tried to locate Heisig’s works. I met and exchanged ideas with the Hungarian scholar V. Diosegi /16/ and with the Austrian diplomat-scholar Bischoff, who had traveled in Mongolia and was making a study of shamanism /17/.

Since the 1980s, research work closely related to shamanism has produced a considerable quantity of articles in Inner Mongolia, and books are being published. In general, shamanist beliefs have been preserved among Mongolian ethnic groups living in isolated environments in the borderland areas of the People’s Republic of China, and many relevant materials have survived. Based on these, Inner Mongolian scholars are conducting serious, accurate research on shamanism. In particular, the scholar Mansan wrote a work titled *Mongolian Shamanism* /18/ and recorded in full the 99 names of shaman tenger. Works have also been published such as Kh. Buyanbat’s *The Causes of Mongolian Shamanism* /19/, D. Khurtsbaatar’s *Khatgin’s Thirteen Offering Ceremonies to Ataa, the Red God* /20/, L. Khurtsbaatar and Ch. Uzmee’s *The Culture of Mongolian Shamanist Offerings and Rituals* /21/, and Yonsog’s *Survey of Mongolian Religious Ethics* /22/.

Japanese scholars have done voluminous research on Mongolian shamanism. The scholar Tory-I, who has conducted Oriental studies, wrote an article, “A Study of Shamanism”, which he published in 1937, combined with his book *Travels in Mongolia*. This was largely focused on Inner Mongolian shamanism. The famous author of early studies, the scholar Ekami Namio, wrote an article, “The Religion of the Hunnus”, which explained some place names that were in use at the time of the Hunnu dynasty, and was published in 1942 in issue 4 of the journal *Anthropology*. Murada published his article “The Shamanism of the Yuan Dynasty” in 1935 in issue 11 of the journal *Manchu-Mongol*. In 1938, Akamatsu published an article titled “The Nature of Mongolian Shamanism”, and in 1940, an article under the title “Mongolian Religion” in the journal *Research on Religion*. These articles clearly told about shamanist practices, based on the author’s own observations, which have

become valuable materials for contemporary research. The researcher Shiratori wrote a scholarly analytical article, “The Buddhist Elements Absorbed into the Shamanist Ideology”, which he published in combined form on pages 352 to 376 of *History of the East*. Gezuka published an article, “A Study of the Hu-U”, concerning shamanism among the nomadic tribes, in issue 11 of the journal *The Garden of History*. In 1916, Hata published his article “The Shamanism of the Northern Peoples” in the journal *Art*. These two articles are extremely important materials for the study of Mongolian shamanism and in particular, they are relevant for research on the nomads’ spiritual culture in the period before the thirteenth century. Toocho, in his article, “Manners and Morals of Mongolia’s National Religion”, endeavored to explain Mongolian shamans’ and shamanesses’ customs, regulations, and the origins of fortune telling. In his work *The Shamanism of Beijing*, Ishibashi touched on the topic of Mongolian shamanism at the time of the Yuan Dynasty. When Kamimaki wrote his work *The Society of the Solon People*, he brought together interesting materials about shamanism among the Solon and Barga people.

In these works we wrote three chapters, with 15 articles of Mongolian shamanist traditions and renewal, and attempted to show these in detail. Here, we are summarizing the contents of these chapters one by one, as following;

In Chap. 1, I briefly touched on the Mongolian people’s religions, totems and the qualities of Central Asia’s early nomadic people’s shamanism in ancient times. The first form of religion among the early inhabitants of Mongolian lands was the worship of ancestral spirits and arose from the practice of sacrificing to the ancestors. Mongolian shamanism originated with shamanesses (udgan), which was related to the strength of matriarchy among the Mongols. At the same time there is a short explanation of the origin of these words. Mongolian ethnic groups who resided for a long time in China’s northern regions—the Hunnu, Syanbi, Juan-Juan, Shivei and Kidan (Khitan), Turks, and Manchu tribes—all followed shamanism for this reason. I specifically and briefly explained the unique character each of them.

In Chap. 2, I mentioned some of the issues of the history of Mongolian shamanism beginning from the twelfth century, up to the time when Yellow-Hat Lamaism became preminent. In the period from the middle of the twelfth century until the beginning of the thirteenth century, Mongolian shamanism became the country’s main religion, with a centralized organization, and I especially emphasized the changes that occurred. On account of the outlook of the Yuan Dynasty khaans, Mongolian shamanism again declined, and the main religious authority passed into the hands of the Red-Hat Lamaist sect. But, that sect of Buddhism did not spread from the Mongol khaans’ palace through all over Mongolian lands. This was because here, even though the weakening of shamanism could be observed, the superior position was maintained.

After the Yuan Dynasty fell, shamanism again revived and rose to the rank of Mongolia’s main religion. Even so, this state of affairs did not continue for long and soon, along with the spread of Yellow-Hat Lamaism, shamanism entered a phase when it disappeared completely. At the same time that Yellow-Hat Lamaism was starting to expand throughout Mongolia, it was confronted with the firm resistance of shamanism, which people had handed down and believed in for some thousands

of years, but Yellow-Hat Lamaism was able to establish its hegemony within a short time. Among other reasons why Yellow-Hat Lamaism displaced shamanism, this was to a significant extent related to the fact that when the tribal social structure simultaneously deteriorated into class-based society and that ended its existing period. Above all, Mongolian shamanism had begun to lose its influence among the Western and Khalkh Mongols and was declining, but in some Buryat Mongol areas it was maintained. Among the Darkhad ethnic group of Northwest Mongolia and Kharchin, Barga, and Daguur people of Inner Mongolian, it had not been forgotten and, when it began to grow once more from the 1990s, those areas became the foundation for a revival of shamanism throughout Mongolia.

In Chap. 3, I briefly mentioned topics concerning the internal moral order of shamanism and included a short description of the ideology of shamanism.

My book titled *A Brief History of Mongolian Shamanism*, has been evaluated by my academic colleagues “as the commencement of scholarly research on Mongolian shamanism”, which was printed in 1959. Since then, it has passed 50 years already. With this book, I attempted to concern historical periods of the history of Mongolian shamanism. In order to explain clearly all kinds of specific features, I consulted Chinese, Mongolian, and Manchu historical sources and made use of research works in many Western and Eastern languages. In addition to that, there is an explanation of the 99 tenger (sky) and similar subjects, which I can say is a recent characteristic of my book.

My short book still exists as a reference work for scholars, readers, young students, who are interested in relating to Mongolian shamanism and culture; it has been cited at many levels of shamanism studies published in Mongolia and abroad. A Chinese version was issued in 1978 in Beijing and a Mongolian version published in Khokh Khot, Inner Mongolia in 1990. On the other hand, it has been familiar not only with Mongolian scholars, but also for those of China and other countries. For that reason, when I brought this book before the general public again I added new materials, and in order to make it accessible for common readers, I wrote in ordinary written language as much as possible, rather than in formal academic prose. Thus I rewrote and revised much of the text.

This Second edition of the book was also published to mark the 50th anniversary of the International Association for Mongolian Studies and I, as the author, consider this a very favorable sign. I offer this volume to friends of books, young scholars, with heartfelt thanks to the Mongolian studies field. Let us forever cherish works such as these, while we preserve the original history, language, and culture, not only for our own time, but for the future. So I present this book for the knowledge and inspiration of all my readers.

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
April 2009

Dalai Chuluunii
Academician

Preface to the First Edition

In our country we have freedom of religion, but many people's understanding is still evolving, therefore belief is still rudimentary. On the other hand, the use of science is rapidly progressing on a broad scale. Therefore, the developmental stage of religion has already ended.

However, our people's knowledge of the blind belief in religion is generally being abandoned. Comrade Yu. Tsedenbal, in his report to the 3rd Plenary session of the Party's Central Committee, gave a warning and cautioned, "*The opposite of blind faith or superstition—the transmission of scientific ideas—is continually being spread, more and more persistently and regularly, and this is important*".

For us, the aim of this task is to explain the toxic connections of religion. Many simplified and popularized works on science have been issued, which are urgently needed. It urges that a scientific study be conducted in order to determine how widespread religion is in our country, to what extent it attracts the minds of the masses, and to find out how much damage has been caused by religion going on the offensive. It also demands that similar books should be published on this issue.

For thousands of years, Mongols have continued to adhere to Mongolian shamanism. Research on the reason why this faith came to be long dominant among Mongols is closely connected to historical research on Mongols' customs and ideas.

First of all, when we study Mongolian shamanism now, on what do we base our investigations? Certainly, it is correct to direct our attention to this question.

One. When we study Mongolian shamanism, we must rely on written records. Above all, we will consider the documents and writings of Mongolia's own aristocratic class, to which we attach much importance. These include the *Secret History of the Mongols*. With reference to Mongolian shamanism of the twelfth century, it is the most essential supporting document.

There is abundant material about shamanism in the *Secret History*. There is also material on shamanism in the historical texts written by Mongolian scholars in ancient times. On the other hand, these include works of Mongolian shamans, written in Mongolian. Among them there are various types of collections of shamanist writings, manuscripts, songs, information on worship rituals, and scriptures. There is a substantial quantity of such materials in Mongolian. Ts. Damdinsuren, in his work *History*

of *Mongolian Literature*, referred to a significant portion of Mongolian shamanism's written works. However, these are shamanist written works and writings of a later date. In general, beginning from the thirteenth century, when the oral literature of Mongolian shamanism came to be connected to written works at the time of the Manchu Qing Dynasty, genuine shamanist handwritten works began to appear.

It is also very important to review ancient Chinese historical manuscripts relating to Mongolian shamanism. Without them, it is very problematic to investigate the ancient history of Mongolian shamanism.

It is also necessary to study the original materials in the records of foreign travelers who came to Mongolia in the 12th and 13th centuries. In particular, Wilhelm Rubruk, Plano Carpini, Marco Polo, and others left us a vast amount of material written at that time. There are research works about Mongolian shamanism written by both Mongolian and foreign scholars.

Two. When we investigate shamanism, Mongolian shamanist oral literature and folk tales are very important. If we say that we are going to study Mongolian shamanism in detail, first of all, we should try to have the shamans and shamanesses shamanize (i.e., practice shamanism) and observe them, we should talk to the old people of various regions, and listen to what they have to say. This is an appropriate approach to this work. Among Mongolian oral folk tales there are those which praise or criticize shamans and shamanesses. There are many tales and legends of all kinds in which they have been both extolled and condemned. It is proper to carefully comb through them and to study all of them.

Three. When we examine archeological material on Mongolian shamanism, we see how significant it is. If we attentively study these three kinds of materials mentioned above, we will be able to investigate correctly and single-mindedly and we will be able to write quite well.

However, when we study Mongolian shamanism, we will encounter various factors that present difficulties. Above all, the shamans and shamanesses who are working now have abandoned a significant portion of their traditional customs and status. Also, since Buddhism (Yellow-Hat Lamaism) has had a broad impact, its religious practice has become thoroughly intermingled with shamanism. Therefore, it will definitely be necessary to conduct our examinations of shamanism carefully in order to differentiate between Yellow-Hat Lamaist and shamanist practices.

In China's ancient history books there is some material about shamanism, particularly materials written and compiled collectively. Due to that, we should read carefully everything that was written about the Mongolian ethnic groups. It becomes a study of collected materials related to shamanism. On the other hand, research work relating to Mongolian shamanism is little developed. Because of that, we will seldom come across works that make use of existing material. Now I want to demonstrate the brief history of studying Mongolian shamanism. Research on shamanism has for a long time continued to attract the attention of many of the world's scientists and people of letters. Even now, people continue to take an interest in researching it. However, studies specifically about Mongolian shamanism are scarce. In particular, even the total number of works written by Mongolians themselves are much smaller.

When we mention work on Mongolian shamanism done by writers, and speak of research on Mongolian shamanism by Mongolian writers, before anything else, we should note the substantial work done by the Mongolian People's Republic's Academy of Sciences, which gathered shamanist songs and similar material and organized it. Dr. B. Rinchen has been writing and publishing concise works that focus on the collections of Mongolian shamanist songs and other small works relating to Mongolian shamanism. This material is valuable for the study of Mongolian shamanism.

Professor Ts. Damdinsuren, in his book *History of Mongolian Literature*, wrote a chapter titled "Shamanist Poetry". Historian Kh. Perlee has explained some shamanist terminology and arranged the National Museum's collection of shamanist clothing and implements, at the same time basing himself on relevant research works.

Researcher M. Sanjdorj, in his booklet "*On the issue of Buddhism Expansion in Mongolian and Its Cuel Role*", included some brief references to shamanism. The author was commended for trying to include a short introduction to Mongolia's "black religion" (shamanism) in his text titled *Shamanist Faith*. But the Buddhist term for "Burkhan" is mixed in with shamanism, and this situation needs to be rectified. Buryat Mongols have done some substantial works like writing articles and collecting some material on that, which has attracted the attention of scholars in foreign countries. Also, currently Inner Mongolian scholars are paying attention to this.

Russian and Soviet researchers have made great contributions to the study of Mongolian shamanism. In 1894, the scholar I. Podgorbunskii wrote an article, "*Buryat Mongolian Tales and Legends and Mongolian Shamanism*", which was published in the journal *Sibir'/Siberia*. In 1916, the renowned mongolist Vladimirtsov wrote and published an article titled "*The Shamanism of the Northwest Mongols*". He also wrote an article on "*The Shamanism of Turkestan and Mongolia*", which appeared in volumes 38-39 of the journal *Dornod Azi/East Asia* in 1916. Scholar N. Poppe wrote an article titled "*Concerning Mongolian Shamanist Manuscript Texts*" that was published in 1932. A. V. Anokhin published a book in 1925 with the title *Material on the Shamanism of the Altai People*. The most famous of these works is the research of the scholar Banzaryn Dorj (D. Banzarov), *The Black Faith: Mongolian Shamanism*, published in 1846. This was reprinted in Moscow in 1955. Banzaryn Dorj's work also was the first really good book written about Mongolian shamanism. However, some of his conclusions are questionable from a theoretical standpoint. N. Pozdneevev, when compiling his text book of Mongolian material, included a text titled *The Causes of Shamanism*, which is valuable for the study of the continuing tradition of shamanizing and inheriting among Mongolian shamans.

In 1930, I. Kosokov published his work *The Issue of the Shamanism of Northern Asia*. I. M. Suslov wrote an article titled "*Shamanism and the Struggle against It*", which was printed in volumes 3 and 4 of the journal *Sovetskii sever/Soviet North*. In the book *Narody sibir'/Peoples of Siberia*, which appeared in Leningrad in 1956, there is substantial material about the shamanism of the Siberian inhabitants. On pages 240-241 of the book, there is a little information about shamanism among the Buryats. Volume I of Buryat scholar M. N. Khangalov's collected works was issued

in Ulaan-Ude in 1958. In this work about Buryat shamanism there is some quite interesting material about Buryat Mongolian shamanism.

The Chinese scholars have not carried out especially extensive research and have not written at great length, but they have done quite significant work. In a book titled *A Short History of the Kholon Buir*, there is excellent material on shamanism among the Barga, Daguur, and Solon people. In some volumes of the journal *Problems of Religion* they published Mongolian shaman's songs by traditional Mongolian script. In this journal there are also photographs of shamans' clothing and equipment. Yao Tsun-yui wrote an article "*Shamanism in the Time of Chinggis Khaan*", which was printed in the volume 1 of the journal *Historical Research*. When Chinese scholars write about Mongolian religion, they also deal with shamanism briefly. There are many books and articles that make cursory mention of shamanism. Chinese researchers have recorded significant original material about Mongolian shamanism in their studies of ancient history, which is of the greatest importance.

Japanese scholars have done a great deal of research work on Mongolian shamanism. The Orientalist researcher Torii published an article titled "A Study of Shamanism" together with his 1937 book, *Travels in Mongolia*. This is principally concerned with Inner Mongolian shamanism. A prominent scholar who did research on the ancient period, Ekami Namio, wrote an article in 1942 titled "*The worship of the Hunnus*" which appeared in volume 4 of the journal *Anthropology*. This article explains some Hunnu geographical names, which relating to some places for worship. The historian Murada wrote an article "*The Shamanism of the Yuan Dynasty*", which was published in 1935 in volume 11 of the journal *Manchu-Mongol*. This is a quite well-written work about Mongolian shamanism.

Akamatsu wrote an article "*Mongolian Religion*", published in 1940 in the journal *Research on Religion*, and in 1938 also published an article titled "Characteristics of Mongolian Shamanism". He collected only a small amount of material about the practice of shamans and shamanesses. The scholar Shiratori wrote a scientific article about "*The Buddhist elements in Ideology of Shamanism*", which was printed on pages 352–376 of the book *History of the East*.

Gezuka wrote a scholarly article titled "*A Study of the Hu-U*", about the shamanism of the nomadic tribes, which was published in 1944 in the volume 11 of the journal *The Garden of History*. The renowned mongolist Hata wrote an article with the title "*The Shamanism of the Northern Peoples*" which appeared in 1916 in the journal *Art*. For the study of Mongolian shamanism, these two articles offer very valuable material; they are especially useful for the study of the early phases of shamanism.

Toochu wrote an article titled "*Religional Morals of the Mongolian Nation*". In this article he shows in detail the customs and practices of shamans and shamanesses and the origins of fortune telling or divination. Ishibashi wrote a book with the title *The Shamanism of Beijing*, which contains a substantial amount of material written about Mongolian shamanism in the era of the Yuan Dynasty. In the book *The Society of the Solon Ethnic Group* the author Kamimaki included abundant new material about the shamans of the Solon Barga people.

European scholars have produced a significant number of works about Mongolian shamanism. However, their specialized books and texts about Mongolian shamanism

are rare. Among them are G. M. Kaznovich's *The Shamanism of the Inhabitants of Siberia*, published in Washington in 1925, which is really indispensable for the study of Mongolian shamanism. However, with the aid of Herbert Braeutigam, a German scholar who was carrying out research at Beijing University, I found one or two works on Mongolian shamanism, written in German.

I personally participated in the compilation of a brief history of Mongolian shamanism and wrote 15 articles placed in three sections.

In the first section of the book was included a concise explanation of shamanism, the early forms of religion among the ancient Mongolian peoples, the Mongols' totems, and the shamanism of the ancient Mongols. The first form of the ancient Mongols' religion was making offerings and sacrificing to ancestral spirits, from which early religion originated. The beginning of Mongolian shamanism is related to the matriarchal powers of Mongolian women, a new and noteworthy phenomenon. I attempted to write about that, while explaining the origin of the words such as shaman and shamaness.

From ancient times, Mongol ethnic groups resided in the northern regions of China—such as the Hunnu, Syanbi, Juan-Juan, and Shiver's, as well as the Kidan (Khitans) and Turkic Manchu tribes were shamanists, and I describe their shaman briefly one by one in my texts.

The second section of the book concerns the time period beginning from the twelfth century, when Mongolian shamanism's power and authority collapsed completely, until the time when Yellow-Hat Lamaism became predominant. From the mid-twelfth century until the beginning of the thirteenth century, Mongolian shamanism had a centralized organizational structure, became the country's principal religion, and underwent a change in specific features. However, under the emperors of the Yuan Dynasty, shamanism again became disunited and the chief religious power of the empire passed into the hands of the Red-Hat Lamaist sect. However, during the Yuan Dynasty, the Red-Hat Lamaist sect did not spread out from Mongolian emperors' palace and could not expand throughout Mongolian territory. For that reason, Mongolian shamanism became fragmented and splintered in character, but even so, in the prevailing conditions it retained power in Mongolian lands. However, in comparison with earlier times, Mongolian shamanism experienced a short-term, temporary decline during the Yuan Dynasty. Subsequently, because of the demands of social developments, shamanism could not thrive for long.

After the downfall of the Yuan Dynasty, Mongolian shamanism revived once more and it appeared to enjoy again the authority of being Mongolia's main faith. However, afterward it came close to vanishing completely. When Yellow-Hat Lamaism was first propagated in Mongolia, it was confronted with the violent resistance from shamanism, but the traditions of Yellow-Hat Lamaism overcame among the Mongolian shamanism which had some thousands of years (of influence). It became a popular faith and was able to extend its own influence in areas where shamanism had been found. There were many reasons for Yellow-Hat Lamaism's victory over shamanism. Among these causes was the fact that shamanism, which had become the religion of the period when the clan or tribal system prevailed, automatically broke down when the class-based society took shape. It was closely related to the

sudden end of the social system that had existed until then. Above all, Mongolian shamanism faded out among the Western and Khalkh Mongols, but in some Buryat Mongolian areas it was preserved over the long term. Up until the present, among the Darkhad ethnic group in the northwest of the Mongolian People's Republic and the Kharchin Barga, Daguur tribal group of Inner Mongolia, the remnants of shamanism still exist.

The third section: Mongolian shamanism's interior features, customs, and regulations were alluded to briefly, and I also wrote about the ideology of Mongolian shamanism.

When writing this book, in the summer of 1956, I found ample material about shamans and shamanesses in the western provinces, and I wrote down what I heard about the ancient sayings of the old people who knew about these matters.

Chinese teachers, particularly Professor Shao Shen-zhen of Beijing University, offered guidance and instruction for my work again and again, and Inner Mongolian friends were also very helpful. Numerous friends gave me valuable materials on Inner Mongolian shamanism. I would like to express my gratitude to those friends. At this time I was involved in writing a short history of Mongolian shamanism, but of course I was quite unable to meet all the requirements of this. In particular, there were missing many issues relating to topics such as shamaness trees, Mongolian shamans' curses or evil spells, shamans' magical conjuring methods, and so on. At the time, I did not write about these; instead I intend to write more about them at a later date.

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The Author

Contents

1	The Shamanism of Ancient Dynasties	1
1.1	A Concise Definition of Shamanism	1
1.2	Some Peculiarities of Mongolian Customs and Traditions	3
1.3	Totems of the Nomads of Ancient Time	6
1.4	The First Form of the Faith that Prays to Ghosts or Spirits and Worships Ancestors	10
1.5	An Abbreviated Analysis of the Words “Shamaness (Udgan)” and “Shaman (Boo)”	12
1.6	The Shamanism of the Ancient Mongolian People	15
2	Medieval Mongolian Shamanism	19
2.1	Shamanism in the Twelfth Century, When the United Mongolian State Was Established	19
2.2	Mongolian Shamanism During the Yuan Dynasty	26
2.3	Shamanism of the Manchu Period, The Spread of Yellow-Hat Lamaism in Mongolia	29
2.4	The Causes of the Downfall of Mongolian Shamanism	31
3	The Ceremonies and Internal Essence of Mongolian Shamanism	35
3.1	The Shamanizing Procedure of the Shamans and Shamanesses	35
3.2	The Mongolian Shamanist Offering Ceremony	38
3.3	One Generation of Shaman Succeeds Another, The Funeral of a Shaman	48
3.4	The Essence and Ideology of Mongolian Shamanism	51
3.5	Shamanism’s Influence on Mongolian Culture and Literature	54
	Bibliography	57

Chapter 1

The Shamanism of Ancient Dynasties



1.1 A Concise Definition of Shamanism

It can be seen that the belief originated among indigenous peoples from the time when they used words and thoughts with magic to master all kinds of natural phenomena or occurrences. Any type of religion is nothing other than a reflection of any natural force that determines everyday life, which is taken into account in people's knowledge and thinking /24/. This theoretical description was the main definition of religion of the twentieth century's atheist outlook, but the real essence of this question is to a great extent the materialist scientific explanation.

In the history of the human race, even though worship has appeared for a very long time, authentic organized religion has a history reaching back only a few thousands of years. For that reason, worship and people's intellectual life became independent of each other. We see two phases of development and explain them as something separate. In particular, if religion arose at a very early date, shamanism was established much later than worship. However, if we clearly speak about the worship of shamanism, it is somewhat inaccurate to call it the Mongolian religion of shamanism, and it is rather erroneous to regard it as similar to the world's other religions. Therefore for the moment, without probing more deeply into the original question, it seems acceptable to employ the term "shamanism". In my book I wrote, "For a long time, people explained history in terms of religion, while now we explain religion in terms of history". That was the way I saw it and I dealt with the issue of the history of Mongolian shamanism in a simple way.

Simple worship, as well as any kind of religious form came about at the lowest stage of humankind's social development, emerged at the time of the greatest weakness in the development of productive (manufacturing) power. For that reason, at the highest point of social development and productive power, the concept of "religion" was destined to be erased completely from people's minds. As a result, religion is something that deals with origins and endings. Religious concepts come to have a procedure, an order, and when these develop, they follow the origin and life of a particular ethnic group, and constantly undergo metamorphosis following

social transformations. “Shamanism is a specific form of religion and before class society existed, it was among the special features of the ethnic identity of the ‘classless society’. In particular, at the time when classless society collapsed, it was very widespread. The developments of these ethnic groups on quite a high level became a sort of remnant of one type religion and were preserved” /26/ as Marxist scholars still consider.

When social systems were based on kinship structures, forms of worship similar to shamanism were commonplace. This fact has been deemphasized not only by Mongols in their research on Mongolian shamanism, but this was associated in the same way with religions found among the inhabitants of nearby territories extending from North Asia to Central Asia, as far as Manchuria. For that reason, among ancient Eurasian nomads’ everyday customs and traditions, there are many similar regulations and laws. Apart from these nomads, among the inhabitants of areas near to Korea, Taiwan, and Hokkaido Island in the Japanese archipelago, religions resembling shamanism were widespread. Parallel to that, among indigenous peoples of South America, forms of worship quite like shamanism have been preserved up until today.

However, before the diffusion of Buddhism and Islam in China, what is known as the Wūjiào faith actually was shamanism. Even now, among tribal peoples such as the Miao and Yao, that reside in the South of China, some of the local inhabitants practice a variety of ancestor worship calls as “Master of Ghost”, which is very close to shamanism. In the book *Manners and Morals of Japanese Religions*, it is written that some people in Hokkaido island of Japan, have beliefs which are very similar to shamanism. Although it is impossible to identify with the shamanism of Asia’s nomadic tribes there are many differences between the shamanism of many nomad tribes.

In China’s ancient historical sources, there are references to “Wu-xian”, “Wu”, “Wu-Xi”, etc., and the one called Wu-xian is possibly the most ancient legend of shamanism.

Until the time of the former Han Dynasty (208 BC), shamanesses were referred to as “Wu”; male shamans were called “Shi”. However, after the Han Dynasty, the “Wu”/ “Shi” distinction almost ceased to exist and a general term came to be used that indicated a shamanist practitioner. Due to this, in the Chinese history books written after the Han Dynasty, “Wu” and “Shi” were written to designate the concept “shamanism”. But in most cases, these are related to a relief that is close to ancient Chinese shamanism, while the shamanism of nomadic tribes was referred to as “Hu-Wu”. The term “Hu” was a name that had come to refer to nomadic tribes that had resided in the north of China since ancient times, and “Wu” designated their religion. Thus “Hu-Wu” is a word meaning shamanism.

In Chinese, shamanism is called “Saman jiao” (shaman’s religion). This is a modern term, specifically of Manchu origin word. In Chinese history books produced after the twelfth century, the words “samao”, “samo”, “shanman”, and so on began to come into use. In the *History of the Jin Dynasty*, it was written that, on “Kui wei” day, in November 1149, a queen named Fei Man /27/ was murdered and Zo wan’s queen had admitted a samao into the palace. In the *Word explanation of the Jin*

Dynasty, “samao” is corrected to read “saman” and later it is defined as a shamaness. In chapter 63 of the *History of the Jin Dynasty*, there is a similar notation about that. In the *History of the Jin Dynasty*, it is also written that, in 1206 the people of the Sung Dynasty have started to believe ‘samo khondon’ /28/. “Samo khond”, in the *Word Explanation of Jin Dynasty* is corrected to (saman) “khond” and later, it is defined as a shamaness.

In the mid-twelfth century, a Sung Dynasty writer, Shu Men-hua, in his book *Anthology of the Junction of the Three Northern States*, he wrote the word “Shan’man”, the Manchu word meaning a shamaness /29/. Since that time, Chinese history books have referred to the shaman’s religion.

However, every later Chinese author arbitrarily recorded the word “saman”, therefore there are all kinds of forms: “jaman”, “sama”, “sha man”, “samo”, and so on, pronounced in a similar way. Also, in Chinese, shamanism was written as “Gayao shen jiao” which means “jumping religion”.

1.2 Some Peculiarities of Mongolian Customs and Traditions

The internal characteristics of any kind of religion are tightly intertwined with the specifics of the ethnic group’s traditions and customs. Due to this, in studying Mongolian shamanism, above all, certainly it is legitimate to synthesize the connections between ancient Mongols’ customs and traditions and shamanism. However, since the history of the people’s customs and traditions is like a large frame, it is entirely improper to connect all of them to religion.

From the ancient past, for some thousands of years, the Mongolian people have been nomadic, living by raising and herding livestock. They have developed a form of worship with special features that corresponded to their way of life. Because of this, shamanism also, in some of its aspects, has peculiarities that are appropriate to the nomadic tribes’ living conditions. It would be particularly erroneous to see these as related to religion. Since ancient times, Mongols settled in forests, mountains, deserts, and steppes—environments that are mutually dissimilar. As a result, their customs, traditions, and worship also have their different features.

The Mongols’ burial ceremonies were very widely practiced from an early period. The Hunnu practiced burial, as can be seen from the mention of it in the ancient Chinese source known as the *Shiji/Records of the Historian*, by Sima Qian. In particular, when the Wuhuan, Xianbei, and Juan-Juan people held funeral services for their dead, they made an offering. This was written in the *History of the later Han Dynasty*. “The Wuhuan and the Xianbei, when a beloved person dies, go up beside the coffin and weep and mourn, and when the body is interred, they perform a ceremony, singing and dancing, as a kind of leave-taking ritual. The horse that the person rode, and possessions which he or she used, are all taken away and burned” /30/.

Undoubtedly, it refers to some information about shamanist customs and traditions for burial.

There are many records about a custom in which, Uighur and Turkic peoples scratched their faces and drew blood when they mourned for the dead. It is also known that when the Manchus held a funeral for the deceased, they hung the corpse on a tree and guarded it for a certain number of days or even months, before they buried the dead person. These rites are altogether different from Mongols' original burial practices (editor's note).

Since ancient times, by tradition, Mongols have usually buried kings, nobles, and the most beloved people in secret places. According to above-mentioned historical notes in records of the Hunnu, the grave sites of officials and virtuous people were concealed. It could be explained, this tradition was clear throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—the burial sites for lords and nobles of the Mongols have not been discovered yet. Historical documents affirm that when Mongol khaans' bodies were taken to be buried, anyone encountered by chance on the way to the burial site was killed.

The Mongols' have various kinds of funeral practices included cremation, burial, exposure on the open steppe, and so on. Certainly leaving their dead on the open steppe was not the Mongols' ancient custom. There was no established procedure for that, but possibly there were Buddhist teachings about it. In some of our tribes, the custom was that when a parent died, the deceased was buried and several days later, the bereaved relatives went to the site, grieved and wept, then took some piece of soil from the grave site, wrapped it up, and took it away to keep it.

In general, the Mongols have the way of bury their dead is a very curious topic and I could write very much about this. Here, I have devoted a few words to it only.

I think that Mongols have favored the color blue and thought that there is a connection with the worship of the "Blue Sky" since early times. The color of the sky is a light yellowish blue, so it seems, they have come to venerate the blue color. There is also one more proof for that, nobles of Mongols are using blue colored notes/papers for their historical records. Mongols also esteem the color white. Dating from the time of the Hunnu dynasty, kings and aristocrats have traditionally worn white clothes at the time of celebrations and have ridden white horses. MoDun, the king of Hunnu, had offer sacrifice of a white horse for the sky while giving a military oath.

In early times, when the Kidan people made white-colored clothes into ceremonial dress, they prohibited the wearing of red clothing, but when they buried the dead, they wore green garments. In the issue #2 of the Chinese journal *Ethnic Studies* it has been written that descendants of the Kidan who live in a village named Kidan, not far from Samarkand, and have not lost this custom up to the present time.

When Chinggis Khaan went out to pray on the mountain, he rode a white horse, as recounted in the *Secret History*. According to the *Secret History*, when Chinggis Khaan paid homage to Old Usun to proclaim as Bekhi, and it said "He shall wear a white dress and ride a white gelding; He shall sit on a high seat And be waited upon". The Kirghiz princes also brought white falcons and white horses and met with Zuch, also noted in the *Secret History*. At the time of Khubilai Khaan's celebrations,

when ceremonial gifts were brought from many places and presented, white-colored objects predominated and almost all of the horses that were presented were white. Marco Polo noted in his record of travels the following, the second month of every year was changed to the first month of the year, as the custom among the Tatar peoples, and according to regulations all the people both high officials and common citizens wore white coats.

In this way the Mongols showed high esteem for the color white, which was related to the color of milk, the source of the herders' main food, "white food" or milk products. For this reason, there was a strong tradition that all white things were regarded as pure and holy. The special forms of the Mongols' customs and traditions in relation to this came to be written about and White Month became the New Year holiday. In his writings, Banzaryn Dorj has explained celebrations and customs of Mongols during White Month.

Because Mongolia is a livestock-breeding country, they have chosen one month of all four seasons as "milk month" and there are many ceremonies relating to the time for preparing and producing dairy products, and traditions which calls these "infant month", "milk month", or White Month. It seems that, Mongols may have celebrated White Month at the end of the first month of autumn up until the twelfth and thirteenth century AD. In general, they viewed it as the time when the long summer days were ending, the old year was departing, and the new year was beginning.

Every year, on the 28th day of the eighth month, Mongols held a great offering ritual, which came to be called the "white moon sacrifice". In the twelfth century, travelers to Mongolia wrote about this. Since the time of the Hunnu, all the Mongol tribes carried out offering ceremonies in the autumn months, as was recorded in ancient Chinese writings. Shamanism put special emphasis on the colors white and blue, which was related to the Mongols' customs and traditions.

Mongols have a special regard for the number 9. There are many documents that testify to this. Khubilai Khaan grouped the presents that came from all places in sets of 9 or $9 \times 9 = 81$ and received them that way. As presents were handed to Tomor Khaan, he invariably arranged and received them in sets of 9 as Pen Chek-jun quotes many examples from the *Biography of Tomor* [32]. In general, esteem for the number 9 is common among many nomadic tribes living in Asia, which is related inseparably to shamanism's ideology. In particular, the nine heavens are the main object of religious veneration in shamanism. Up until now, there has been no specific documentation that clarifies the reason for this emphasis on the number 9, but the Japanese scholar Miki Miyoshi wrote an article to explain about "9", which was printed in the *East Asian Journal*. According to him, in works dating from before the Sung Dynasty, there was no clear documentation concerning the number 9. This point was emphasized in a Japanese book, *Kou-yui*, where the first recorded mention of "9, 9" was to be seen. The reason why the number 9 was particularly respected was not clearly explained.

Mongols esteem their horses more than their other herds of livestock. In oral literature such as folk tales, thoroughbred, beautiful riding horses are acclaimed horses. We have noted before, from the time of the Hunnu dynasty, nobles would make offerings of their favorite horses while warriors made vows. As mentioned

above, the horse was regarded as an especially beloved animal, which obviously originated in close relationship with the Mongols' way of life. The action to entitle a horse had begun at an early time and it became as main feature of shamanism.

Mongols differentiate directions as good and bad, positive and negative. For example, the sun rises from the south, therefore it is considered to be the best direction. The door of the ger (yurt) is oriented to face toward the south. It is an ancient tradition that every morning, people face to the south, pray, and make offerings of tea and milk. Mongols say that the east is the worst direction of all. They use their right hand when giving or receiving objects to each other; and person who sets on right side counts most respectful among them. When a person visits a Mongol family in the countryside, he must kneel down on the right (west) side of the ger. It is not customary to dismount from horse on the left (east) side of ger while visiting that family. This is related to the sun too. In shamanism, a shaman who studied in the eastern sky was considered blackside, or specialized shaman for curse. A shaman who studied in the western sky would be considered as a white shaman or one who served all for good. These are all characteristic aspects of Mongolian customs and traditions. I have alluded briefly to them because of their relation to shamanism.

1.3 Totems of the Nomads of Ancient Time

From early times, people have chosen some special animal or plant as totems for worship. In those days, hunting was the principal means of subsistence. For that reason, above all, hunters admired previously unseen creatures and interesting species when they encountered them; they feared some of the animals. In particular, when they returned empty-handed from hunting, they considered that there was reason or connection with the unseen animal. Thus they made images of them of grass, wood, or stones; and placed them in their gers and worshiped them for good hunting. So, it became a traditional way to pray to objects and phenomena that were held sacred. This was the origin of the use of totems/sacred objects. At that time, when Mongols were making the transition from hunting as a way of life to livestock-breeding, and even after the change had been made, they continued to worship totems or sacred objects. During the period when the tribal system was in effect, totem worship was the most universal belief, which played a principal role as an integrator in ancient society.

As noted by F. Engels' conclusions "There are eight unions of tribes within the Seneca tribe, which are titled the wolf, bear, frog, otter, dragon, fish, bird, seagull, kite etc." /33/ it is evident that in locals where the tribal structural system had been preserved longer than others, the remnants of ancestor worship were also maintained over quite a wide area. In early times people traditionally referred to the other tribes by the name of objects sacred to them. It is of considerable interest whether or not there were Mongol totems in ancient times, some scholars such as B. Ya. Vladimirtsov, wrote that "currently, we have not seen any proof of whether Mongols have or not

had any kind of totems". Although, it is certain that Mongols did have totems and so it requires more extensive research work on it.

For the study of the Mongols' totems, apart from relying on archeological materials, first of all, it is necessary to accurately study Chinese sources and Mongolian oral literature such as *folk tales*. *There is much evidence that the nomadic tribes that inhabited the north of China* in ancient times worshipped dragons. In particular the Xia state, which existed during Chinese Yin state (1760–1122 BC), were based on nomadic tribes of that period. In Chinese history it is recorded that the Xia were mentioned as the descendants of the Hunnu dynasty /34/. When we study the history of Mongols' totems, it is appropriate to take an interest in the history beginning from this time.

There are many tales and legends about dragons or snakes which are sacred objects for the Chinese people. There are some legends which are recorded in ancient books such as, on Huan-di (the yellow king) came down riding a dragon from heaven and established the Chinese state, the emperor Liu Bang who founded the Han Dynasty was an incarnated spirit of the dragon. Furthermore, Chinese people worshipping also dates from an early time. In general, the practice of worshipping dragons and snakes has been known from humankind's very ancient past. In particular, it may have begun from the time when the natural world was formerly covered by green woods and the water of marshes. There are numerous sources referring to this in ancient Chinese texts. For example, in the section ZhengYu (鄭語) of the book known as *Guo Yu* (國語 or *The Book of Countries*) has noted that "The Xia state has perished and a man was transformed into two dragons". In the section Zhoubenji (周本紀) of *Shi Ji* (史記 or *Records of the Historian*), it is written that "At an early time, after two dragons entered the Xia state's royal palace the Xia state vanished". In the explanation of the record of the Hunnu dynasty of the *Shi Ji*, Tsuei-hao wrote, "The nomadic tribes of the western part all worship dragons. Because of this, places where offerings are made were given the name of 'Dragon city'" /35/. In the *Book of the Northern Han State*, it was mentioned that "The Hunnu people made sacrifices in the temple of the three dragons", etc.

To conclude from the above-mentioned sources, the Xia state and Hunnu dynasty made the dragon the main object of worship, in the same way in which they made dragons into the sacred objects as totems of their own clans. This is definitely related to the Mongols' sacred objects in earliest times. Among the Mongols there are many stories and myths that speak of "dragons" as magical creatures. Thus the dragon was possibly the Mongols' ancient "totem".

The Mongols revered animals such as deer and wolves. Ts. Damdinsuren wrote, "Borte-chono (wolf) and Gua-maral (hind), ancestors of Chinggis Khaan, were not a king and queen, but ancestral spirits, objects of worship with wild animals' names" /36/. In this way, he explained that "Gua-maral" was a word meaning a "khoo (reddish) deer" (beige hind). Up to the present, western Mongols speak of "khoo" horses, "khoo" cattle, so this might refer to the same kind of usage. Then, I think "Gua-maral" doesn't seem to be a "khoo deer" but rather a "goo (gua or beautiful) deer". Western Mongols still speak of beautiful things, "gua uzesgelentei" as "goo (beautiful)". There are many references as "goo horse (slim horse)", "goo diva (pretty

diva)", "goo hero (gorgeous hero)", etc., in the folk tales. The word "Alungua" means entirely or perfectly beautiful. That is because "alun-alan" means complete, perfect and full. The Mongolian Olot and Zakhchin people still say "alan yav" and "alan av" which means going and getting entirely or completely. So "Gua goo" also means "slim or beautiful". Then, it is impossible to explain that queen's "Alun gua (alan goo)" with the word "hoo (reddish)". Consequently "gua goo" is not a word that describes the coloring of a deer; it seems correct that it is a word that describes beauty or slim.

Japan's scholar Uchida wrote, "When excavating a grave of Noyon Mountain, there were found a carpet with figure of Gua-maral, and it seems that, Mongols worshipped the deer, thus they have inscribed its image on their furniture in these early times". Engravings of the figures of deer on rocks (petroglyphs) are scattered all around our country. In particular we encounter them in Khangai and Gobi regions. In this way, images of deer were carved on rocks everywhere, and it is regarded as one of our ancestors' objects of worship or totems.

Even today, some shamans or shamanesses of the Darkhad people of Mongolia, and Barga, Tsakhar, and Kharchin people of the Inner Mongolian, make deer antlers of metal and attach these to their hats, and pictures of deer are engraved on bronze mirrors. From all this, it can be seen that the deer was an object of veneration among the early Mongols.

If that is the case, possibly "Borte-chono" is also one of the Mongols' objects for worship. It also may be used as the name of a clan. It may say that, the wolf is a very dangerous enemy for ancient nomadic herders. Consequently, from being afraid of the wolf, then it seems that people came to worship it. Usually, Mongols do not use the word "wolf" (chono). Instead of speaking the name they make it taboo and use a term such as "benevolent animal", "mountain animal", "bookhoi" (wolf), "modgo", and so on. However, we have not yet found important evidence that the wolf was an object of worship among the Mongols.

However, it should be mentioned here, that some clans of ancient Turks claimed that they originated from the female wolf. In an article about the Turks, in the 99th chapter of the *Bei shi* (北史 or *History of the Northern States*) it reads, "The forbearers of the Turks who inhabited the west side of the Western sea and another branch of Hunnu ethnicity. In early times the ancestors of the Ashina clan were conquered and exterminated by the neighbor clans and only one 15-year-old youth remained. The enemy soldiers thought of killing the boy, but instead they broke his legs and arms and threw him into a bog because they considered him too young. However, a female wolf came along, fed the orphan boy with milk from her teats, and raised him. The boy grew up and married that female wolf. The enemies heard about this and a lot of them came to hunt the wolf, but a magical animal descended from the sky, took her to the eastern side of the Western sea, and carried her to a high mountain in Tibet. Within the mountain, apart from a large cave, there was a steppe, grass, and plants, several hundred li (traditional Chinese unit of distance) wide. There the wolf gave birth to ten boys. The ten boys took ten wives from outside and lived as ten households for a long time, and became ten clans. The 'Ashina' clan is one group and became the ancestors of the Turks". /37/ So Ma Zhanshou summed up as "the Turks

were union of clans within matriarchy which made the wolf an object of worship as a totem". /38/

The Khirgiz tribe is also descended from a wolf ancestor. In the 98th chapter of the *Bei shi* it says, "The Gao Che (of Kirghiz lineage) clan is a relative of the Hunnu people and their languages are very similar to each other. Mao Dun, the khaan of the Hunnu dynasty, had two daughters, who were thought to be of incomparable beauty. Local people thought that the two girls were celestial deities. Tsan Yui (*Shanyu Z.D*) Khaan thought that, there was no man in the country who would agree to marry his two daughters. So there was nothing else to do but to send them to heaven. Then, he built a high dagt (a type of accommodation) in the far off northern part of the country with a message "Tenger (sky), please come and take them" and left the girls there. After four years had passed, an old wolf came along with low sound and taking care of the dagt. The younger girl saw the wolf and said, 'Our father placed us here, with the intention of marrying with the children of heaven. It was thought that at some time, someone would have descended from heaven and take us, but more than three years have passed and nothing has happened, no one has seen us, but this old wolf has come. I will come down there and will marry this old wolf'. The older sister shouted that 'marrying with animals would disgrace the honor of their father khaan', and forbade it. But the younger sister did not heed what her older sister said, and went down to become the bride of the wolf. In this way, the couple gave birth to a son and their descendants gradually increased, became numerous, and grew into a nation" /39/.

The books, *Shi ji* and the *History of the Northern Han State*, relate that Mu Wan of the Zhou state (947–928 BC) attacked the Chuan Zhong tribe and totally exterminated it because it did not render service to him for several months. He captured five wan (princes), four white dragons, and four white wolves, and returned. /40/ However, these four white dragons and four white wolves in actuality were not dragons and wolves, but rather people of the clans connected with these names. It seems to mean that Mu Wan captured members of eight clans which were titled dragon and wolf, along with five wans, and came back. There are many examples like this.

In some text books of Mongolian history, it is written that a clan named "Borte" inhabited the northern part of Mongolia. Therefore this could be an instance of making the wolf into an object of worship. There were many such instances among ancient nomadic tribes. Also Ts. Damdinsuren explained that, the name Borte is a word that means "wolf" in Turkish. Usually the words "borte" and "chono" were combined and used to mean a multiplicity of wolves. Phrases such as "Let's hunt wolves", "Let's kill some wolves", and so on are quoted repeatedly in literary works with the ancient meaning of the words. In shamans' songs also, there is a passage relating to the wolf, such as "Is it for lama with a bald head and crooked collar, is it for three hundred sheep, is it for a guldgar (big) blue burte wolf?" /41/. However that may be, it is a fact that Gua-maral and Borte-chino were the Mongols' ancient objects of worship, not the special names of people who became royalties.

The Mongols' ancestors also worshipped various types of birds such as eagles, crows, magpies, and so on. In particular, they lauded the eagle as a powerful animal and sang songs of praise about it. There are many instances of this. Mongols say,

“The eagle is a magnificent bird, one must not kill it”, and prohibit the killing of eagles. Ancient Mongols had a saying that showed reverence for the ancestors: “Lord phoenix, eagle, my father, queen garuda, my mother”. It was the custom for shamans to make eagle claws out of metal and fasten them to their hats. This is evidence that animals were worshipped from ancient times. Owls were also spoken of as magical animals, the servants of evil spirits, the ghosts of dead people, and so on. It has left deep traces in the practices of shamanism.

Likewise, there are also myths saying that the Khureid tribe’s ancestor was a crow, and the Buryat Mongols are descended from a swan. On the whole, there are many clans and tribes that made the magpie and crow their object of worship. Some of the Manchu clans that have the magpie as their ancestor speak of the “revered magpie”, “learned magpie”. In the sources it was recorded that many speak that way. The Manchus, in their religious rituals, placed meat outside to be pecked by black crows for cleansing and purifying it, then use it for offerings. Mongols called the magpie the bird “with a fine tongue/language”. This is related to all objects of worship. In general I will just present a summary where I must point out one or two of the animals mentioned by the Mongols as objects of worship.

1.4 The First Form of the Faith that Prays to Ghosts or Spirits and Worships Ancestors

It can be briefly noted that the first form of humankind’s faith is praying to animals and natural phenomena. Veneration of ghosts or spirits automatically emerged from worship of totems. For that reason, the first forms of shamanism were ways of making offerings to totems, sacred objects and the faith of worshipping their ancestor’s spirits.

In ancient societies, lacking an of understanding of what “death” was, people realized that any animal’s or person’s appearance changed at death, and it was understood that the animal or person was going away for a short time. However, religion developed in a regular process and people arrived at the idea that when animals and humans died, the spirit went and wandered astray. After that time, the ancient people began to believe in spirits to an even greater extent, in order for religion to comprehend the natural world. The shamanist concept of spirits (ghosts) in fact began from what the ancient people understood to be the reality of spirits. Since the idea of spirits is the first form of faith, like shamanism, all other beliefs also had a similar concept. Shamanism thinks that there are three kinds of spirits. These include:

1. Spirits that remain alive or existing. The owner died, but the spirit lives with people, in the home that was left behind, and confers benefits. However, it must not be offended, therefore it is important to continue worshipping and to present food offerings or drinks to it.
2. Spirits of thought or temporary spirits. These are not entirely detached from the organism and they move about. If a person sleeps, it is like dying for a short time and the spirit leaves the body, so temporarily it becomes empty. The spirit

does its work and returns and in order for it to enter the body, the person must regain consciousness and wake up, so shamans believe.

3. Spirits of reincarnation. It describes a spirit which is going to reincarnate after the death of a living body and when completely free of the organism, then transfers into another person or animal's body.

In this manner, in the very early stages of faith, it dealt with the belief in the existence of spirits. The concepts "spirit" and "soul" are closely related to each other. The soul is like an owner for sustaining the person's life which is named the "life's soul (or Amin suld)" by the Mongols. They believe that, every person necessarily has an animal that holds his soul, if that "life's soul" would be killed, the person would inadvertently die. If the soul dies, the person would die and turned into a spirit. For this reason, it is necessary not to confuse these two concepts.

From an early time, beliefs about the spirit and the soul were transmitted to Mongols by way of shamanism. After the spread of Yellow-Hat Lamaism, the concepts of spirits and souls developed, becoming increasingly complex, and the lamas used it as a tool to keep people in ignorance. Many kinds of practices such as "summoning the spirit", "beckoning the spirit", "expelling sorcery", "driving away demons", and so on, sprang up or were passed down from concepts of soul and spirit. The same element was present in the processes of "summoning the spirit" and "beckoning the spirit": if a person's soul escaped, the person would face death, but if the soul was summoned brought back, the idea was that the person would be temporarily be separated from death. In Mongolian shamanism, the practice of "summoning the soul" or "beckoning the soul" was preserved from ancient times and was part of shamanist ritual and one of the main methods of deceiving the people. In particular, the "soul beckoning" ceremony was widely practiced. According to shamanism, if a soul escapes, a person must untie his sash and the shaman must beckon, strike fire using his flint and steel, and perform shamanistic rituals in order to bring the soul back. Yellow-Hat lamas have further developed the "soul beckoning" and "soul summoning" ceremonies, which are widely practiced among our people at present.

The essence of "expelling sorcery" is to chase away a demon or evil spirit. It was one of the rituals of shamanism and Yellow-Hat lamas also performed in larger-scale magical ceremonies aimed at "expelling sorcery". If someone's ghost does not get out normally even if his body died, it must be tarrying for some of his personal possessions. Consequently those personal possessions should be found and driven out as way of an "expelling sorcery" ritual.

However, it is accurate to relate the concepts of "ghosts (suns)" and "spirits (on god)". According to shamanism, if a person, who has some kind of magical force, had died, his or her ghost becomes a spirit. The land of Mongolia has many spirits, but there is much evidence that the most powerful or savage one belongs to Chinggis Khaan.

The ancient people raised livestock, and in connection with that, prayed to features of the natural world and worshiped local places, which were universal practices. They prayed to nature's myriad objects, and from this stage developed into making sacrificial offerings to their ancestor's spirits which is later forms of faith. It originated

from the worship of some kinds of animals. The reason for this is related to the fact that the people by themselves understood that there was something magical in the metamorphosis of animals, and they came to believe that their own ancestors were the sacred objects that they worshipped.

But at the time when the clan-based system of social organization was disintegrating, class-based relations came into being and people naturally had some faith in social phenomena, apart from all the powers of the natural world. In this way, in addition to worshipping ancestors and some kinds of animals, people thought it important that there are “persons” who had been magically transformed. Most of those magical people were the shamans and shamanesses themselves.

The worshipping of ancestral spirits originated from the time of matriarchy and the practice of venerating women, from the concept that all lands were under the authority of mothers. The origins of this can be traced back to the veneration of mothers, in the practice of worshipping them as magical persons as ancestors. Until the third–fourth century AD this kind of faith form was preserved among the ancient nomads in Mongolian territory. After the coming of the second great changes in labor system in human history, women lost their right to the position of leadership, and men’s responsibilities for ancestral worship were greatly expanded. The worship of ancestors became basically one form of showing respect to their parents.

1.5 An Abbreviated Analysis of the Words “Shamaness (Udgan)” and “Shaman (Boo)”

The word for shaman is used in two senses. Mongols do not speak of “shamanism/udgany morgol”. They speak of “boo morgol/(male) shamanism”. The reason is that it became a general term and apart from that, they refer to shamans by the male term (boo) or the word “zairan” (an honorific term for a shaman). In all the world’s languages, people call shamanism the “religion of the shaman” and refer to both male and female shamans (boo and udgan) as shamans. Banzaryn Dorj and other scholars explained the derivation of the word “shaman”, saying that it comes from the Manchu word “saman” which means “diviner, fortune-teller”. However, some people support the explanation that it comes from the Hindu word “sarman”, a theory which has been successfully refuted by numerous foreign scholars. There is no need to connect the meaning of the word with that. It is accurate to view the word “shaman” as the Manchu word “saman” which has undergone a change.

Chinese sources from the twelfth century noted the word “shaman” and Manchus referred to shamans as “saman”, as I mentioned above with reference to writings from the time of the Song state of the 1st AD. From an early date, many nomadic tribes that resided in the north of China referred to their shamanesses (udgan) by different names. Not only that, modern Mongols occasionally refer to shamans by other terms, but call them shaman or shamaness (boo or udgan) generally.

In the historical source of the Chinese Tang Dynasty it is written, “In ancient times the Khirgis (Kirghiz) called their shamans as ‘Gan’” /42/. The Persian historian Rashid-ad-Din said that “kam” was a shaman of that period, and this was also the head or most senior person of a clan. Today, there is an ethnic group in Siberia that calls their shamans as “kam” too. There are different pronunciations of the word, which has one meaning, such as “kam”, “kyan”, “gan”, in Mongolian, it may be the word that means “khaan” (king).

Any clan’s chief, along with being the leader of the clan, was the shaman too. This occurs frequently in social history. Ancient nomadic tribes’ clan leaders were shamans and possibly there was a tradition of calling them as “khaan”. However, at this point I will not elaborate on the derivation of the multiple names for shamans, I will only attempt to explain the derivation of the Mongol word udgan/shamaness and boo/shaman. I think, the word udgan/shamaness may have emerged at the time of matriarchy. Perhaps there were shamanesses before shamans.

Plano Carpini, Wilhelm Rubruk, and Marco Polo could not accurately record the words boo and udgan in the real pronunciation of that time and recorded in different ways. But the *Secret History* the word has been recorded as the word “boos”, which is actually the correct pronunciation. The “s” being a Mongolian suffix indicating a plural form. For this reason, “boos” meant “shamans”. Therefore in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Mongols undoubtedly pronounced the word as “boo”. For that reason, at that time the original form of this word became the main term for the faith in its original form.

However, in the old Mongolian script, the words “boo” (shaman) and “bokh” (wrestler) are written in the same way: “buge” (as a homograph). Owing to that, it is hard to distinguish the meaning (shaman/wrestler) of the word “buge” that appears in historical works, but the early beginnings of shamanism are associated with shamanesses.

The derivation of the words shamaness/shaman (udgan/boo) is an interesting question, entirely related to matriarchy and patriarchy. Not only Mongols call female shamans “udgan” (shamaness), Manchu people also call their shamaness as “idakon”. The ancient pronunciation of the word “udgan” was “etuugen”.

This is a word which means “origin, beginning, ancestor” and “female shaped spirit”. But Banzaryn Dorj alone has explained that it means the ancient guardian spirit of a place. The historian Perlee has correctly noted that this explanation is erroneous. He examined the word’s derivation in detail for the first time. He concluded, “In Mongolian, the root of the word ‘edu’ means to originate, to come out. For example, in the old written language, it means the beginning of something, its origin such as “hereg eduuhu”, eduguulehu (to start or begin case)”. “The suffix ‘gen’ in Mongolian is a suffix that creates nouns or nominal forms. Consequently, ‘etuugen’ is a word denoting origin, derivation” /43/. The word “Etugen” of the matriarchy period became “udgan” is almost the same way of explanation that “idugan” in written Mongolian has the pronunciation of “etuugen”. It seems correct that the origin of the word “udgan” arose from the word for beginning and source.

Some foreign scholars have attempted to explain the word “boo/shaman”, but they have not provided clear evidence for their theories. Kozin, in his translation of the

Secret History, was of the opinion that it derived from the Turkish word “bugu”, while the Czech mongolist Poukh stated that “boo” derived from the Turkish word “bu-gu”, meaning sage, learned, shaman (an honorific term). In Turkish, there actually is a word “bugu” that expresses the meaning of “wise shaman” (mergen zairan). We may suppose that the reason is that up until now, in Turkish the word “bugu” also is used with a similar meaning in other contexts.

In general, in Turkish and Mongolian there are many words with similar meanings and they have exchanged their words. At one time the two words “bugu” and “boo” emerged from the same word, with the same meaning and pronunciation. However, we should not take the view that it must have passed from Turkish into Mongolian, it may have been that either side borrowed from each other.

In Chinese there is a word pronounced “bu or pu”, which means to predict, divine or tell fortunes. The word has a very ancient ancestry; in particular, it is traced back to the eighth to tenth centuries BC. The Mongolian word “bogo” and the Turkish “bugu” both may split off from that word into their own dialects. However, it would be appropriate to investigate this word more thoroughly.

There is much evidence that shamaness (udgan) is the origin of the word shamanism. In the history of human society, at a time when a matriarchal period was in force, women played a major role and bore much responsibility, arising from the work of producing and distributing food. In this situation, it was unavoidable that men would be dependent on women, and men’s status was secondary to that of women. As a consequence of this special aspect of matriarchy, shamanesses undoubtedly occupied a dominant position.

Matriarchy is related to a very early stage of human society, but it was maintained for a comparatively long time among the Mongols. As clearly evidenced by Ts. Dorjsuren’s conclusion, “Figures of women which were carved out of wood and bone have been obtained from the Northern area of Mongolia, near Lake Baikal. Those spirits would be associated with the matriarchal period in Mongolia” /44/.

Mongolian expressions such as “motherland, homeland (eh oron or eh nutag)” show greater respect for the mother than any other people; and this may have originated from the concept that all land and the whole clan belong to maternal authority. From an early time, whenever Mongols venerated any type of natural phenomena, they worshipped mother’s spirit totems. Even now this tradition is still maintained in some parts of Mongolia where people venerate udgan trees. Because of this, there is no reason to doubt that shamanism firstly emerged from the shamaness, the udgan.

In China’s ancient historical sources, it has been recorded that, when the Yin state waged war with the Xia state, which descended from the Hunnu dynasty, many people were taken prisoner, most of whom were women. Also the Hunnu, Xianbi, and Juan-Juan nations had many shamanesses, who were given the responsibility for carrying out religious ceremonies, presenting offerings and sacrifices. We encounter this written in many texts.

It is noted in the book *The Shamanism of Beijing*, “Until most recent times, Manchu rulers had shamanist religious ceremonies carried out within their royal palace, chiefly by shamaness. Most of these were above the age of 30, and had to be from the ‘Jue-le’ ethnic group” /45/.

There were numerous instances of shamans being born to shamaness mothers, but there is very little evidence of shamanesses whose fathers were shamans, according to a Japanese work, *History of the World's Religions*. It also says, “Among Yakut clans in the Siberian region, when a shaman was going to shamanize, invariably he dressed in women’s clothing and braided his hair as women did”. In some Siberian clans, there was a system whereby shamans and shamanesses first of all learned to sew and do other kinds of women’s work, and were then examined by an elderly shamaness. In some areas of Mongolia also, shamanesses had greater authority than others.

There is this description: “While many shamanesses and shamans assembled and participated in great ceremonies in the royal palace of the Manchu dynasty; at that time, there was hung up cloth with the image of a female spirit on the west side of the main spirit of Manchu people, which was referred to as Mongolian spirit” /46/. In general it has quite often been observed that the shamanesses occupied positions of leadership. The Japanese mongolist Shiratori wrote that in some areas of Inner Mongolia, shamanesses possessed greater authority than shamans. “In this region it is primarily the shamanesses who have the right to act as leaders and within a household where there are both a shaman and a shamaness, the shamaness has the prerogative of leadership. In this area, we were shamanized by 67-year-old shamaness who had an apprentice, a 43-year-old shaman. The shamaness’ husband, who had also been a shaman, had died some years earlier”.

In Northwestern Mongolia, among the dark had ethnic group of Khovsgol aimag, throughout a strict ideal (political) system the shamanesses had kept their own culture and did not relinquish it to meet modern times.

The patriarchy gained ascendancy when class relations became more complex in human society, and shamans increased their authority and grew more numerous. For many millennia the shamanesses’ function had been to exercise great leadership powers, however, when patriarchy was coming into effect, this system was not simply destroyed and lost. Not only that, but when there was conflict between Yellow-Hat Lamaism and shamanism, the shamanesses defended their tradition still more resolutely and there is a history of competition with Yellow-Hat Lamaism. As we see from what was said above, it is accurate to believe that the shamanesses (udgan) were the ones who brought shamanism into being.

1.6 The Shamanism of the Ancient Mongolian People

There are traces of the Mongols’ shamanist culture from very early on, and its peculiar characteristics have been preserved without change, which provides us with valuable materials for research. The Japanese scholar Tezuka wrote in his article “A Study of Shamanism” that shamanism among the nomads was mentioned in Chinese sources, beginning from the time of King Gao-zu of the Han kingdom, which is the earliest written information about shamanism /47/.

The *History of the Southern Han State* mentions an official named Jan-chun, who entered into a conspiracy with some shamans and presented false reports to the king about some planned legal actions. The king believed this false information and ordered his son to be decapitated. In the *History of the Han State* it was noted that the Hunnu dynasty was seriously weakened when Modun, the Emperor of Hunnu empire, was deceived by the predictions of a shamaness and; offered sacrifices after killing General Ar-shi, who had been of great help to him by coming in advance of Chinese troops. At the time of Emperor Wudi of the Han dynasty, an attack by the Hunnu was totally defeated and the Hunnu dynasty was split into two parts. One part of the Hunnu moved toward to the west and others formed a dependency of China. At this point many of the Hunnu people were captured, among them numerous shamanesses, noted the *History of the Han dynasty* /48/.

Not only that, the emperor Wudi of the Han dynasty perhaps believed that shamanesses and shamans connected to the Hunnu army made it powerful. He tried by every possible means to attract them to his side. He had them scattered around the Chinese interior regions and obliged them to settle there. As recorded in *History of the Han dynasty*, Emperor Wudi dreamed that several thousand wooden people had destroyed his nation. We know that Hunnu shamanesses and shamans made wooden figures of their objects of worship, guardian spirits, and wrapped them in felt, then used them in their religious rituals, which is in full conformity with this story.

From ancient times, nomads living in all parts of the Mongolian homeland adhered to shamanism. In particular:

1. Before the Hunnu dynasty began in waging war, shamanesses and shamans were supposed to engage in divination according to the prescribed procedure. Numerous examples of this have been cited. Consequently, there is no doubt that during the Hunnu time, shamanism was widespread and expanding. The Hunnu kingdom's shamanism was closely related to Mongolian shamanism, because most of the Hunnu people were members of the Mongolian ethnic group. There are many proofs of this.
2. Many scholars agree that after the Hunnu, the Xianbi and Juan-Juan people who inhabited the Mongolian heartland also followed shamanism. In particular, a Japanese scholar Hata wrote, based on a Chinese historical source that, "King Tai Zu of the Xianbi performed ceremonies in more than 40 locations, assembled shamanesses, and had them perform shamanist rites. The Juan-Juan dynasty also had many shamanesses. In 508 AD, King Kyei-nu had shamanesses perform ceremonies on a very grand scale" /49/.
3. The Kidan dynasty had large numbers of shamanesses and shamans and called them together on the occasions of ceremonies and celebrations, and had them engage in divination in war time. Many Chinese historical texts about the Kidan devote some chapters to this.
4. An early Uighur state which flourished in Mongolian territory between the eighth and ninth century AD was also shamanist. In his book, *A Brief History of the Uighurs*, Ramstedt wrote, "Among the Uighurs and Turks, they do not have the tradition of putting the body in the open steppe when someone has

died. So they scout out a suitable place by a shaman, a location far from human habitation, to prepare a bed for the burial of the body, then make a pile of stones over it, and have to shamanise on it”. In early times, the nations of the Uighurs, Turks, and Mongols were all of the shamanist faith and shamans used one-sided drums, /50/ he concluded.

5. Since ancient times the Manchus were shamanists. I will mention this in the next section, therefore I did not write about it at length here also.

It is clear that the Mongols embraced shamanism from an early date. It has been shown that beginning from the time of the Hunnu kingdom until the Uighur state in the eighth and ninth centuries AD, the many clans and tribes that resided in Mongolian areas were all shamanist. The shamanesses and shamans of that period were in the position of the ruling class, and some of them were also the senior members and leaders of the tribes. This is mentioned in passing when there is discussion of the shamanism of the ancient Mongols.

Chapter 2

Medieval Mongolian Shamanism



2.1 Shamanism in the Twelfth Century, When the United Mongolian State Was Established

The *Secret History of the Mongols* is the principal source for the study of shamanism of the Great Mongolian Empire. Evidence relating to shamanism appears in 51 of the 282 sections of the *Secret History of the Mongols* /51/. 32 of these 51 sections reflect evidence relating to Chinggis Khaan's religious beliefs. In general, there are very many places, mountains, and waters that are associated with the name of Chinggis in Mongolian territory. During the period of the Great Mongolian Empire, the Mongol khans patronized Buddhism for political purposes and aimed to make it the state's official religion. However, among the general population of Mongolia, shamanism was widespread and could not be eliminated.

Arising from their political policies, the khans of the Great Mongolian Empire gave precedence to shamanism and followed it. For a given time, there was no other way but to forsake shamanism, for which there were specific reasons. It was acceptable only to employ shamans and shamanesses to enhance the emperor's reputation, to keep the hearth pure and clean, to revere the state banner and emblem, to praise acumen, to respect mountains, rivers, and stone cairns, and to practice divination. Any other religion could not carry out these functions or activities according to Mongolian tradition. Also, because the Mongol khans understand that, if several other religions had some influence in Mongolia, they could not benefit the unification of the Mongolian nation, thus they were wary of these religions and treated them with circumspection as much as possible. However, led by Chinggis khan and others, the Mongol khans understood that shamanism could not be the state's main religion any further and in due course, it suffered some setbacks. There is evidence that the khans began to be guided by the importance attached to Buddhism.

While the rulers took shamanism throughout the empire and it prevailed in the thirteenth-century Mongolia and people believed in it, it could not entirely satisfy the requirements of the khans' political doctrines. For that reason, the shamans and shamanesses refined the capabilities of their religion and made it meet the new

requirements in the new circumstances. They especially made heaven most prominent and ascribed features to it that made it resemble all the deities. In other words, Mongols' births and deaths, joy and sorrow, prosperity and misfortune, victory and defeat, all fate was determined solely by the "Eternal Sky". People were taught to believe that magical shamans and shamanesses could have a relationship with it. Recently there has been a great amount of research on the "Eternal Sky", which on the whole is a positive development. In general, the doctrine of the Eternal Sky conferred many benefits, when human beings cherish nature or mother earth and protect it people can live happily and peacefully. In the pages of historical sources it is clearly written that, if our Mongols would ignore the power of the Eternal Sky then they would only see punishment. This is just the same as the teaching of Mother Alungoo. Whether the light messenger from Sky to Mother Alungoo is it true or not, it helps us to study or understand about the Eternal Sky more.

Usually, at any time in the history of humankind, people have continued to establish a relationship with the eternal heaven. Wherever we go in the world, the eternal heaven is there also. Whether it is by turns bright, sunny, dark, or cloudy, only the eternal heaven is associated with every place. Due to this, the people of the world have their own beliefs about the eternal sky and explain it in many various ways.

Mongols also explain the eternal sky in their own way. Our nomadic Mongols have a history of that. According to the color of the eternal sky people's activities were harmonized. In particular, a herder gets up in the morning and offers up food and drink to the eternal sky. Mongols call heaven by such names as "high sky", "blue sky", "almighty sky" (erht tenger), "continental sky" (tiv tenger), "heaven-father", and soon worshipped the sky, calling it "high heaven", but the expression the "eternal sky" has been confirmed since Chinggis' time and has become the standard phrase. In other words, it comes out from the understanding that, if Mongols believe in the power of the eternal sky and show their respect for the state, then not any kind of power could stop them.

It becomes evident that what the Mongols called sky was, in their concept, the highest eternal realm, where the ruler of the universe resided. Specifically, when Temujin became khaan and prayed to the power of eternal sky: "Whether or not I became ruler by courage and virtue, I became ruler through love for the almighty heaven-father". The Eternal sky was the only deity for Mongols and Chinggis Khaan was the angelic son which held the strength of the eternal sky. Chinggis Khaan taught: "Pray to the eternal sky and let myriad citizens be involved". In the seal of Chinggis Khaan's son, were written these words: "Under the power of the eternal sky". In this way, the concept of "the eternal sky" formed in the time of Chinggis khaan and became the idol of the Mongols.

In the same way, in shamanism, the sun and moon, stars and planets, the lords of the mountains, the deity of bodies of water, ancestral spirits and so on were made into seriously important guardian spirits. Also people worshipped shamaness trees on the summits of majestic mountains and piled up stone cairns. In hollows and valleys, with wood and stone, they created the clear forms of mountains, waters, and steppes, all the features necessary for performing religious ceremonies. With felt, wood, and cloth, they created images of guardian spirits and put them in their homes and

prayed to them. In particular they worshipped fire, a tradition which they supported actively. There were all kinds of household guardian spirits. In some wealthy families there were very many guardian spirits. Some very good studies have been done on guardian spirits in Buryat. /53/ Also there have been many cases of using some kind thing that they had got others to believe was some kind of magical item. Shamans and shamanesses wore different clothing and used different sorts of objects than ordinary people, but most of these were traditional materials from earlier, older shamanism. When shamans communicated with sky, guardian spirits, and protective deities, they were not in a normal, ordinary state. In each case, the guardian spirit was summoned, caused to enter the shaman's body, and the spirit and shaman would speak with each other. In this way the message of sky or the spirit world was transmitted, with an effort to employ as much extraordinary magic as possible. When shamans or shamanesses used that kind of unusual so-called magic, they went into a trance and the spirit became free of the body. The shaman or shamaness might seem to be in a frenzy, when the spirit controlled the shaman's mind. /54/

When the Great Mongol Empire was established, a famous shaman named Khokhchu gave Temujin a great deal of help. The shaman had the title of Teb Tenger (sky) and glorified himself giving that he could communicate directly with sky and guardian spirits, and made himself famous. People were talking about him like he does not heat in summer, does not freeze in winter, and never gets hungry and thirsty. Chinggis Khaan also granted him great power and privileges and made him the leader of the state religion. But shaman Khokhchu succumbed to the effect of fame. He became too arrogant and presumptuous. Ultimately, he was very conceited and proud of himself and even demanded that Chinggis' siblings and children should bow down and worship him. He had all kinds of rivals and disputed even with him.

For this reason, one day, Chinggis Khaan quietly summoned him to his palace and secretly accused him of committing crimes and dragged him out by his youngest brother Otchigin and several wrestlers instantly attacked him, broke his back, and killed him /56/. Then a special ger for hiding his body inside was built and the door and smoke-hole cover were sealed shut, and it was left that way. At night, very secretly, the corpse was removed, taken far away, and buried without leaving any trace /57/. In the morning, when Chinggis informed the people of the shaman's death, he announced, "Because Teb Tenger had hit my younger brothers, even heaven did not fancy him and took away his life-spirit and body" /58/.

Chinggis Khaan could not endure shaman Khokhchu's treacherous, evil action and forcibly pushed him out of his way. But shaman Khokhchu had a great reputation among the people. Therefore when it was openly announced that he had been killed in secret, it was felt that a sin had been committed against the heaven-father and it was decided the body was tabu to the heaven-father and even the corpse was taken away. Chinggis had announced the reason for doing that.

At the time of the Great Mongolian Empire, guardian spirits were very widely worshipped. The khaans, princes, and officials placed guardian spirits and protective deities in their palace-gers and prayed to them. Shamaness trees, or the spirits of trees with dense leaves, were worshipped, as mentioned by the *Secret History*, the travel notes of Marco Polo and Wilhelm Rubruk, and similar sources.

Chinggis Khaan had great faith in the worship of shamaness trees, which had been passed down from the ancestors, and he supported this. On Mount Burkhan Khaldun there were several shamaness trees which Chinggis' mother had worshipped. Every year Chinggis Khaan sent shamans and shamanesses there to secretly worship those shamaness trees. Folk oral mythology and other sources reflect the names of places such as "Tuul (River)'s Shamaness Tree", "Khaldun's Mother Tree", "Magic Three Birch Trees", "Shamaness Tree with the Owl or owl Spirit", "Nartuu Shrine", "Khustuu Shrine", etc. In Chinggis' time, all were associated with the guardian spirits of shamaness trees and the expressions derived from those names.

A shamaness tree's guardian spirit was summoned in a shamanist song or chant: "With the tree's mother, with the owl's father", or "all tree are *bumbal*, and every branch there is a guardian spirit" and so on. Artificial guardian spirits arose from all this. They were made of felt, woolen cloth, etc. and portrayed in their gers as the guardian deities of shamans and shamanesses, who prayed to them. Marco Polo wrote about this, "there is guardian spirit or idol which is called 'nachigai' for watching over and protecting their children and livestock in Mongolia" /59/. Polo also noted that herders "venerate them very much, they pray to them, and every family has its guardian spirit. They make them of felt or wool and put them in the ger. They are regarded as a god, his wife, and children. The wife is placed on the left side and the son in front, separately. Then they also pray to them. When they have food and drink they take the fat meat and touch it to the mouths of the god, his wife, and children, they rub oil on them, they take some of the soup and pour it outside the ger, and after doing that they say, 'The god/idol already ate with us' and then they begin to eat and drink" /60/.

Thus at a given time it was mainly the khaans and princes who mounted guardian spirits on the doors of their palace. Shamans and shamanesses were responsible for those idol—carriages only, not for every family generally, they necessarily took responsibility for their own shrines themselves. Plano Carpini also saw carriage "zayach" guardian spirits on the doors of the khaans' palace. They made considerable offerings to that, he observed. Also he wrote "They tie ribbons to a horse consecrated to a deity and offer it to that zayach, and no one may ride the horse ever again" /61/. In that way horses are dedicated to a deity and became shrines, and the riding animals for other guardian spirits and protective deities. Therefore people must not use or harm them, it was believed. At that time, such a shamanist law or custom was widespread. During the time of the Great Mongol Empire, consecrating livestock to deities was common. Even today, it is not known exactly when it first appeared. When the khaans and princes of the Great Mongolian Empire moved to a new place and settled, the shamans and shamanesses follow without separating. At the start of the moving, they went in front, dismantled their gers, and prior to the removal, they went out ahead and guided the others. They went before the rest and decided on the place for the encampment, which they pointed out to the others.

In thirteenth-century Mongolia, in the front of the palace and in families' gers, there were separate shamanist shrines. In addition, there were temporary and long-term special worshipping gers, so shamanism had already been in a centralized form in that time. In one part of his book, Rubruk wrote about the shrines of the guardian

spirits in front of the khaan's palace. He recorded, "Then also on the 1st day of every festival month, when something new happens, they (shamans and shamanesses) expose the aforementioned images of the guardian spirits, the interior of the ger is put in order, and the images are placed around the interior. Afterward the Mongols come by themselves, they enter that ger, and pray to the images and worship them" /62/. Foreigners were not allowed to enter that ger. At one point, Rubruk attempted to enter by himself but this was not permitted and was considered wrong; he was scolded and cursed, so he went back. Shamans and shamanesses temporarily put many images of guardian spirits and protective deities in a ger and held worship ceremonies. This practice is seen as the origin of the special centers of worship, in the form of temples, which was suitable in the powerful state at the time of the Great Mongolian Empire.

Throughout Mongolia and alongside the khaan's palace, shamans and shamanesses thronged and one of them acted as the leader of the others, assuming responsibility for all of the khaan's guardian spirits and shrines, the offerings, and matters of worship. Rubruk noticed that, this role was somewhat like that of the Roman Catholic Pope. In Chinggis' time Teb Tenger Khokhchu occupied the position of senior shaman. After him, senior shamans were highly respected and acquired even greater authority. The country's chief shaman's ger was erected in front of the khaan's palace-yurt. The gers of other shamans and shamanesses were set up in a specially designated residential area behind the palace. People came from many different countries to pay their respects, as Rubruk noted /63/.

Some of these shamans, especially the senior one, were literate, took an interest in astrology, observed solar and lunar eclipses, and advised the khaan of when these would occur /64/. The sources of that time, however, wrote that most of the shamans and shamanesses lacked any title or rank, were uneducated, and sly and dissolute by temperament.

At the same time, belief in magic, divination, and horoscopes were very widespread. Certain natural phenomena were believed to be governed by supernatural forces, and human life was supposed to be influenced by ancestral or guardian spirits and protective deities.

People were very much afraid of curses or evil spells cast by shamans. After the death of Ogedei, when Queen Turakina was in charge of the government, rumors circulated saying that Fatima, a Muslim woman who was an intimate friend of the queen, had cast a spell on Godan /65/. Godan, who was seriously ill, was also convinced of this, and sent a messenger to Guyug to tell him, "If I would die, you should take revenge for me on her". As soon as Guyug ascended the throne as the Mongol khaan, the Muslim woman was arrested and "beaten and thrashed and interrogated by means of torture". She was found guilty and punished by being wrapped in felt and thrown into the water, where she drowned.

Mongolian khans, aristocrats and others greatly feared having a curse on them and were very cautious about this. After Guyug's death, Ali-Hodja, a Muslim official in the Mongol khaan's palace, reported that Ali-Shira another Muslim official, was suspected of casting spells on Mongolian princes. Mongolian authorities arrested

Ali-Shira, imprisoned him, and tortured him brutally during interrogation. As a consequence of the unendurable pressure, he made a false confession /66/ and was also executed by drowning. His wife and children were also killed.

Again, Ali-Hodja was suspected of casting spells after Monkha became Khaan. Monkha khaan had his body beaten until becomes a pile of meat. In this way he died, then his wives and children were enslaved and disgraced /67/. Considering this, not all khaans, princes, and legal officials of the Mongolian Empire put their minds to finding out the facts of the matter like Shikhikhutag and a few others. Foreigners especially were handled very brutally and foreigners and citizens alike were indiscriminately subjected to severe punishment. In addition, when Monkha Khaan's great queen gave birth to a boy, shamans were summoned, who all predicted that the boy would become the great khaan and would enjoy a long, happy life. Soon, though, the boy died, which enraged the mother. She called the same shamans and demanded of them, "was this what you all meant by a long life?" They replied to her, "Your Majesty, we have seen the old woman Khirin, nurse of Monkha's daughter, casting spells and then she murdered your boy and took him with her" /68/ and they acted as if they had seen ghosts. With blind faith in what the shamans had said, the queen ordered that old woman be killed and that her son and daughter be executed too. Monkha Khaan heard of this and disliked, but the affair was already over, so he was unable to do anything about it.

People associated climate phenomena, such as cold weather in winter, with benevolent guardian spirits that belonged to good directions and local deities were connected with negative portents. The human body, as a living ghost, was related to evil directions and could cause weather to turn cold, so it was thought. Extreme cold could not be due to natural causes, so people looked for whom or what might be guilty of bringing on the cold weather. Several people were singled out as the culprits and many were killed. However, the discovering and slaughtering of the "chief criminals" of the cold were not efforts that were made as a way to warm up the weather. This was not a practice of human and animal sacrifice to cajole heaven or ingratiate themselves with the spirits. It seems that at the time of the Great Mongolian Empire, human sacrifice was not practiced /69/.

There were instances when, if the son and daughter of two families living near each other died at the same time, a wedding ceremony was held after they were buried. People believed that a person's spirit, or ghost, went to another world and was still living. For that reason, after the son of one family and the daughter of another family died, in the next life they were joined in marriage. The families drew up an agreement bringing the boy and girl together, then burned the document. As soon as the smoke from the burning document rose into the air, it was taken to signify that the children had followed their parents' advice, the marriage agreement came into effect, and was regarded as valid. It was thought that the two families were now joined, and the wedding ceremony was held. After that, the relationship was as close as it would have been if the young people were alive and had actually been married /70/.

People had blind faith in the customs of shamanism, and believed in magic. Broken bones or pain in the joints were treated by use of poultices made from the

hot contents of a butchered animal's intestines. The head was operated on to treat cataracts. Dreams were interpreted so as to treat illnesses. Such forms of medical science were very influential. The aforementioned types of folk medicine developed at the same time that shamans and shamanesses employed unhealthy methods such as casting spells and working magic, which were widely practiced.

Mongolia's khans and princes understood how to take advantage of people's blind faith for their own benefit. Parallel to that, they had some similar beliefs. The reason for this was that sometimes those with treacherous intentions came from a different direction and made use of religion and provoked the powerless to use superstition to victimize the powerful. For example, in 1231, when Ogedei and Tului launched a military campaign in order to conquer the Altan (Jin) dynasty, Ogedei suddenly fell ill as he was starting out. Then shamans said that the khaan's close relatives shall be sacrifice for him. Therefore Tului believed their words, and swallowed prepared poison by them, and died. Then, Ogedei took some medicine and recovered, so he believed that Tului had given his life as ransom. No one knew the idea was to kill the khaan in such a way. In that time blind faith totally dominated people's minds /71/.

In the era of the Great Mongolian Empire, no wonder that divination was extremely widespread, from the khaans down to the servants and slaves, all believed in divination. The most practiced divination was with the scapula bone which was practiced from the time of the Hunnu or earlier dynasties. There were two types of divination by using shoulder blades or oracle bones—white shoulder blade divination and burned shoulder blade divination. The shoulder blades of cattle, sheep, and goats were all used. Folk magic remedies deemed goats' shoulder blades as the wisest. When the cattle, sheep or goat's shoulder blade was burned and cracks and splits appeared in it, people examined the cracks, and depending on what kind they were, people predicted what the heavens' will was regarding actions that should or should not be carried out. It was rare for people to undertake any activities, either great or small, without divination by means of scapulimancy. Teb Tenger also made predictions based on oracle bones. Chinggis did this as well, and Monkha was no different. As written by Sui Tin in his diary, when he came to Mongolia, negotiations were held and the visitors returned to their homeland. The cause may be that Ogedei used shoulder blade divination to find out about him and the signs turned out auspiciously. The reason was that it would have been unreasonable to dispute the issue. /72/.

Rubruk had an audience with Monkha Khaan, about which he wrote, "When we entered, there were only a few servants present. Also he had dispelled his anger and had become alert. He sat there drinking meat broth. Some burned sheep's shoulder blades were lying in front of him" /73/. Further he wrote, "Monkha Khaan undertakes no kind of action without first consulting the shoulder blades" /74/. At that time there were also "mane divination" and "coin divination".

Rubruk was also of the opinion that the Mongol khaans had often contemplated launching another attack on Europe, but the shamans and shamanesses did not approve, therefore military campaigns in that direction were not renewed. Rubruk stated, "They (shamans) have omens regarding everything that they may do or not do, auspicious and inauspicious days. They predict the future and because of this kind of thing the Tatars are indecisive and have never raised an army or started a war.

They had opportunity to come back to Hungary, but the shamans did not let them do that" /75/.

During the time of the Great Mongolian Empire, Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism appeared and began to spread. The Mongol khaans treated these religions with tolerance. There were many Mongol adherents of all kinds of those faiths. Only Chinese teachings such as Confucian doctrine and Taoist customs found no support at all.

The reason is that shamanism was the main pillar of ideology in Mongolian society, during the Great Mongolian Empire, as before. Other religions penetrated the country to a considerable extent but even so, they did not become especially popular. Shamanism, as well as all other religions, promised benefits to the Mongol khaans, princes, and aristocrats and the imperial administrative authority derived advantages from this and protected the religions /76/. There was no single, unified religion in the Great Mongolian Empire, so the Mongols did not assimilate the countries they ruled but rather faced issues of being absorbed and dispersed into the country that country. In general, we could easily observe a historical lesson of the Great Mongolian Empire that, a country especially with a small population, usually faces the risk of losing their independence if not united by one main religion.

2.2 Mongolian Shamanism During the Yuan Dynasty

In the time of the Yuan dynasty, apart from shamanism, the influences of Buddhism, Islam, Taoist and Christian religions flowed into Mongolia. We will even concern ourselves with how shamanism flourished at this time, but at this point I will clarify the issues with relation to the other religions. Specifically, Khubilai Khaan sent a letter to the Pope, asking for hundreds of Roman Catholic priests to be sent from the distant West. First of all, it had the aim of making use of the Catholic priests in political affairs, for them to dominate in China. It was also his intention to make use of the priests' knowledge and skills. In accordance with Khubilai Khaan's decree, The Catholic priests came from the West and were asked to work with astrologers from Muslim countries to compile books of calendars and to assist establishing an Astrological center. In 1289, in obedience to Khubilai Khaan's command, the first Western religious temples, chiefly Catholic, were established. Generally speaking, the Christian religion began to grow significantly from early times in Mongol territory. It was particularly prevalent among the Naiman, Khereid, and Ongud tribes, as written in the historical sources. At that time, however, Western religion could not exert great influence in Mongolia.

In the period of the Yuan dynasty, many Mongol khaans who adhered to Islam served in the government and had great power, but Islam could not win very wide acceptance among the general population of Mongols. The Yuan dynasty's Mongol khaans made use of Muslims and mostly were guided by such policies in governing China. At a certain time, the Mongol khaans also did not prohibit Confucian ethics and Taoist customs that were spread throughout China, while treating all religions

equally. With regard to this cautious, complex policy, above all they were guided by the strength of the Chinese population's respect for Confucius and Taoism. The khans set themselves the goal of attracting to their side the educated Confucian public servants and the Taoist monks. In particular, Taoist monks were exempted from paying taxes and the building of Confucian temples was widely encouraged. Simultaneously, they implemented a policy strictly disallowing the spread of Confucian doctrine and Taoism's influence in true Mongolian territory. The Mongols did not make Confucian doctrine and Taoist teachings the dynasty's main religions. It seems that in order to restrict their powerful influence, Buddhism was accepted from Tibet and protected from becoming sinified.

In the days of the Yuan dynasty, the principal religion of state was Buddhism. The Mongol khans made Buddhism the nation's chief religion, although they were careful not to allow assimilation and absorption into Chinese culture. Also this caution arose from the government's policy of uniting the country and keeping under control a country with a variety of faiths and cultures and numerous languages. In 1260, as soon as Khubilai Khan ascended the throne, he bestowed on lama Pagva /77/ of Tibet the title and rank of "educator of the nation". He had already decided to make Buddhism the principal religion of the Mongol state. The khan, queen and officials started to receive religious instruction from lama Pagva and become disciples of Buddhism. When Khubilai Khan was in the city of Xanadu in 1264 he wrote the so-called Pearl Decree /78/ which explicitly stated the policy of the Mongol khan with regards to Buddhism.

Throughout the Yuan dynasty, especially in Mongolia, in order to propagate Buddhism, lama Pagva wrote numerous instructional texts and books, all of which are kept together in his collected works. When lama Pagva met Khubilai Khan, he said, "If you would employ anyone, choose them yourself. All soldiers and the citizens should unite the yellow and black in this way". In this way lama Pagva actually played an important role in carrying out a policy of uniting the "two custodies of the political and the religious" and held them together as state and religion since Khubilai Khan's reign. In order to protect the Mongol khans' religious interests, various rigorously enforced regulations were issued. For example, in one of Khubilai's decrees, savage laws were established. If anyone attempted to hit a Tibetan lama or novice, that person's arm would be cut off. If someone humiliated a lama in a dispute, that person's tongue would be pulled out. The lamas' inviolable rights were defended by law. Khubilai Khan implemented policies relating to religion and his successors continued to enforce them. In the dynasty's capital, the character of the hamba of the Saj monastery's was regulated and was scrutinized each time a new hamba succeeded the previous one. Offering ceremonies were held on each occasion. The assigning of functions and granting of titles was combined in all respects. This was reflected in the decrees issued by the Mongol khans on behalf of Buddhism.

In this way, during the time of the Yuan dynasty, Buddhism was propagated extensively and became the state's dominant religion. Even so, shamanism in its domestic form was followed by the majority of the population in the original territory of Mongolia. Led by Khubilai, the Yuan state's khans held Buddhism in high regard and carried out the work of spreading it. However, they could not entirely

liberate themselves from shamanism's influence. Not only that, to a great extent they continued to have faith in shamanism.

Mongolia's khans personally participated in this and carried out offering ceremonies, as described in the *Book of the Yuan Dynasty*. Every year, when the "Taimiao" ceremony was carried out four times in Khaan Balgasun (Beijing), the shamans came out and summoned the guardian spirits and made offerings /79/. On the 24th day of the 8th month of each year, the Mongol khans conducted a large-scale offering ceremony. Mongolian shamans assembled to pray in the capital Xanadu /80/. In the 9th month of every year or after the 26th day of the 12th month, one horse and three sheep were slaughtered in the Shataalgan Temple (Shao-fan-yuan). Mare's fermented milk; milk liquor, silver coins, and articles of silk cloth were accumulated. It was said that when the ceremony was carried out, many shamans and shamanesses gathered and in the national language (Mongolian) they sang songs and shamanized /81/. Also the Yuan dynasty's khans and princes buried their dead and 49 days after the burial, they went to a cemetery, and held a ceremony in which shamans shamanized according to an established procedure. As may be seen from this, in the days of the Yuan Dynasty shamans and shamanesses held ceremonies, which were important affairs. There were some large ceremonies in temples which shamans and shamanesses did not take part; only lamas performed these rituals. At this time the main religion in the royal palace was not shamanism, rather it was the Red-Hat lamaist faith. The lamas gained great power in political matters and to the greatest extent possible they took actions against shamanism. Khubilai Khan embraced Lamaism and made it the palace's central religion. The intention was not just to strike a blow against shamanism and to make Red-Hat Lamaism the chief religion, but rather to disseminate the faith throughout China by means of employing the lamas and to maintain control in that way.

From the time of the Yuan Dynasty, Buddhism's great and growing influence was visible and the lamas, in comparison with the shamans and shamanesses, were very influential in politics. Owing to this, the rivalry between shamanism and Buddhism become ever more acute. Khubilai Khan made Buddhism the chief religion of the state, but in the native Mongolian heartland, he propagated it without issuing any decrees to prohibit or abolish shamanism.

When Mongolia's Altan Khan agreed with the Tibetan Dalai Lama Sodnomjamts, to ban and abandon shamanism, it was for spreading Yellow-Hat Lamaism into Mongolia in the fourteenth century. But in an agreement between Khubilai Khan and lama Pagva it was agreed to evangelize only on behalf of the Buddhist religion. However, no action was taken to prohibit shamanism.

Buddhism became strong throughout Mongolia in the thirteenth and fourteenth century and as a result, new elements entered shamanist rituals. Shamanist equipment and clothing significantly improved, in comparison with that of ancient times, and became more cultivated and sophisticated /83/. In earlier times, shamans and shamanesses created the images of their guardian spirits from stone and wood, while in the time of the empire, "silver guardian spirits" and "iron guardian spirits" came into use among shamans and shamanesses /84/.

In this way, although it lost the authority of being a central religion, and even though Red-Hat Lamaism was the main religion in the palace, Mongolian shamanism was undergoing a new development. Mongolian shamans' and shamanesses' clothing and the instruments of shamanizing became more elaborate and shamanism became more refined than in ancient times. At that time, a few distinctive features of Red-Hat Lamaism influenced Mongolian shamans and shamanesses to some extent. However, it could not become the Yuan Dynasty's universal religion even though it apparently spread quite widely in Chinese territory. In these circumstances, the majority of the Mongolian people relied as usual on the shamanism of ancient times, even though shamanism begins to lose its influence again.

Even though shamanism was strong at the beginning of the Yuan Dynasty, it changed as Mongols who settled down in the Chinese area gradually came to accept different kinds of religions and the Mongols of the Golden Horde's state came under the influence of Catholic Christianity. Tsagaadai's descendants variously converted to Buddhism or Islam and rejected shamanism entirely. Only Mongols who resided in native Mongolia preserved their shamanism for a long time. When the Yuan dynasty was overthrown and the Mongols were expelled from Chinese territory, the palace's Red-Hat Lamaism lost any sort of influence in Mongolia and shamanism again revived.

While Yellow-Hat Lamaism expanded in Mongolia (1368–1576) Mongolian shamanism was in its last period of strength. This period for shamanism coincided in part with the time of the Ming Dynasty's ascendancy. It is permissible to see historical periodization in that way, but materials are meager. For that reason, it is impossible to write anything specific about it.

2.3 Shamanism of the Manchu Period, The Spread of Yellow-Hat Lamaism in Mongolia

Before writing about some of the peculiar aspects of shamanism in this period, it is appropriate to briefly examine the spread of that religion in Manchuria. From the end of the sixteenth century, with the establishment of the Manchu state and before Yellow-Hat Lamaism spread widely, shamanism was the basic faith for a long time. Although Buddhism was influential over a considerable area, the Manchus had their own shamanism and preserved it. In particular, in Manchuria's eight banners *khoshuu* (military-administrative units), the shamanist tradition was maintained until recently, but there were many peculiarities. It came under the influence of Buddhism and acquired something of the appearance of shamanist temple ceremonies. Apart from that, practicing shamanism in households was forbidden and faced really different conditions.

Chinese sources about Manchuria remark that "In the early phase of the Manchu *khaanate*, intelligent individuals became the palace's shamans and shamanesses,

mainly the Jue-le (members of the Manchu royal family) people. The shamans read and shamanized in the Manchu language in the khaan's many state ceremonies" /85/.

On the occasion of shamanist ceremonies, Manchus followed the distinctive custom of using spring water instead of airag (fermented mare's milk) or vodka. When ceremonies that venerated the Manchu shrines were mentioned in books, it was said that "In the early times alcohol was not used, and ritual ceremonies were conducted using pure spring water. The Manchus are guided by this ancient tradition. When a shaman performs a ceremony, alcoholic drink is not used, but rather spring water. They call this their ancestors' alcohol" /86/. The most commonly used animal was the boar and its meat was used in conducting offering ceremonies, as noted in the sources referred to above. In fact, it is shown that this kind of tradition has its own unique details and differs significantly from Mongolian shamanism. The distinctive characteristics of every nation's way of life are manifested in its religion. In particular, most Manchu clans raised pigs. Most of the people's nutritional requirements were met with pork, therefore it played a part in the offerings of religious ceremonies. In Manchuria there were many famous shamans and shamanesses with names denoting pigs. Not only that, quite recently there were shamans in Mongolia with names associated with boar who was wisest and most capable shaman. But most parts of Manchurian shamanism are similar to Mongolian.

Much information about Manchu shamanism is recorded in Chinese historical sources, but even so, much of what was written was mixed with Buddhism. This creates obstacles for research about the main features of shamanism. When one knows Manchu shamanism's customs and ritual, it is a great help in studying Mongolian shamanism.

Mongolian shamanism of the Manchu period also has its particular characteristics because that was the time of increasing violence in the struggle between shamanism and Yellow-Hat Lamaism in Mongolian territory. In other words, the decline of Mongolian shamanism began from this time. However, shamanism acquired literacy during the Manchu period, which allowed it to advance to a considerable degree. Collections of shamanist works written in Mongolian in that period are quite numerous.

While the Manchu khaans had a reliable method to make the Mongols become peaceful and passive, it was not shamanism which the passage of time, but rather Yellow-Hat Lamaism, that already had been energetically propagated in Mongolia. Because of this, first of all, Mongolia's khaans and princes were attracted to Lamaism and in order to strengthen Yellow-Hat Lamaism in Mongolia, they spent large sums and began to build Yellow-Hat lamaist monasteries everywhere in Mongolia. In this way, Yellow-Hat Lamaism obtained political and economic support and expanded rapidly in Mongolia.

Under the Yuan Dynasty, "Red-Hat" Lamaism served only in the Mongol khaan's palace. It could not become truly prevalent in Mongolia over the long term and with the fall of the Yuan state, the influence of Red-Hat Lamaism also came to an end. For that reason, shamanism again had a chance to become dominant in the Mongolian region. However that may have been, by the end of the sixteenth century, this kind of "Yellow-Hat" Lamaism actually began to spread.

When Yellow-Hat Lamaism again expanded in Mongolia, Altan Khan of Tumed promoted it and played a special part in the difficult struggle against shamanism. In particular, during the warm season, he invited the 3rd Dalai Lama, Sodnomjamts, to Blue Lake area and a vow was made to the princes of Mongolia. In this way, at the end of the sixteenth century, Yellow-Hat Lamaism passed beyond Blue Lake and spread. Soon, in 1587, Ligden Khaan of Tsakhar and the Avtai Setsen khan of Khalkh, together with their many princes, made a vow to the Dalai Lama, and converted to Yellow-Hat Lamaism. Thereafter, Yellow-Hat Lamaism enlarged its territory robustly throughout the whole of Mongolia and genuinely prospered. In 1583 Avtai Khan established the Erdene Zuu Monastery, which was to be the center of Khalkh Yellow-Hat Lamaism. In this way, the Mongols' main religion became Yellow-Hat Lamaism, or Tibetan Buddhism, the yellow religion, and Mongolia's shamanism entered a period of deterioration.

In this way, after the Yuan Dynasty fell, the Mongolian state revived and reestablished (1368–1577) in their native land. At that time, Buddhism's influence diminished, and shamanism again regained its superior position. Soon, though, in the second half of the sixteenth century, Buddhism's Red-Hat faction in Mongolia was overthrown and when the Yellow-Hat sect expanded energetically, shamanism started on the path to disintegration.

This time, Yellow-Hat Lamaism defeated shamanism within a short period, but we can hardly explain this by saying that Lamaism expanded by means of force only. That would be erroneous. Yellow-Hat lamaist ceremonies were visually impressive. It was more refined and developed than shamanism. The lamas prohibited bloodshed and preached a doctrine of peaceful tolerance and patience. The Mongolian people, who had suffered through long years of the disasters of war and hardship, were easily attracted to Buddhism. From an early time, shamanism, with its simple social code, had won the Mongols' hearts and minds. In this way it was put under pressure and obstructed during the sixteenth century and completely displaced in the second half of the century.

2.4 The Causes of the Downfall of Mongolian Shamanism

When Yellow-Hat Lamaism began to extend its sway in Mongolia, it encountered a very determined resistance from shamanism. Initially there was an intense competition and struggle. Yellow-Hat Lamaism was energetically promoted in Mongolia by the aforementioned Altan Khan and Avtai Khan. According to the decree of the 3rd Dalai Lama, figures of guardian spirits that were venerated by Mongolian families were confiscated and burned. In their place the lamas mounted Buddhist images. From this we can see how harsh the struggle with shamanism was early on. Also, special articles were written and inserted into the law which outlawed shamanism. In his book *"The Laws of Mongolia"* Ryazanovskii wrote, "Among the Mongols, if someone summoned shamans and made them shamanize in their home, depending

on the numbers, the people involved would have to pay a fine of a horse. If high-ranking princes or officials brought shamans and shamanesses to their homes and had them shamanize, they were fined five horses. If they were low-ranking people, they were fined two horses and other goods” /87/.

When lamas fought against shamanism, they chose the method of drawing local princes to their side personally and making use of them. In the time of the Nama Khan of Oirat, many shamans were burned together. An Altai legend says that a shaman named Tostogosh used his magic and escaped without being harmed in any way. In his book *Materials on Altai Shamanism*, Pogapov mentions Anokhin’s reference to this story /88/. Western Mongols possess much information and many stories of this kind about the bitter conflict with shamanism.

In 1904–1905, among the Oirat Mongols, the “white faith”—as the Buddhist movement was called—dealt a final blow to the followers of shamanism, on behalf of Yellow-Hat Lamaism. In this way, on account of the hard fight against shamanism from every side, its influence was ended. In particular, in the regions around Blue Lake, western Altai, and Khalkh, it was far from easy. Yellow-Hat Lamaism expanded in Mongolia and in the struggle, the shamans were defeated by Yellow-Hat Lamaism. They were divided into two factions, those who sought conciliation and surrendered to Yellow-Hat Lamaism, and those who, like the Khorchin, Barga and Daguur shamans, battled against the adoption of Yellow-Hat Lamaism, adhered resolutely to their tradition, and preserved shamanism.

Yellow-Hat shamanism was triumphant everywhere in Mongolia at that point. The ferocious clash with shamanism was suspended and there was cooperation between the two adversaries. The lamas adapted some traditional better ritual to their purposes and started to make use of them. In particular, even though the practice of venerating sacred cairns on top of hill or mount was shamanism’s primary ceremony, the lamas appropriated it into their praising and added some words such as “Pray to Burkhan” or “May Buddhism flourish” at the beginning and the end of the rituals. Not only did this help to propagate their religion, different words were inserted and added to the rituals, which changed the traditional manner of conducting ceremonies. The lamas’ practices of “choijin buukh”, “zod tavikh”, and “gurem dorom” rituals all originated from shamanism and the objects known as “choijin” and “gurten” by the lamas were used by shamans. After Yellow-Hat Lamaism was brought to every part of Mongolia, the shamanist rituals became quite mixed, while they acquired different features from origin Buddhist customs.

In the words of Ts. Damdinsuren, “Yellow-Hat Lamaism, which spread across Mongolia, acquired a unique character and the composite of Buddhism and shamanism turned to concord and evolved” /89/.

Most recently, there have been many instances of shamanism being more directly affected by Yellow-Hat Lamaism. For this reason, when we read recent texts in the range of shamanist literature, it is essential to analyze and study them thoroughly to detect where Yellow-Hat lamaist influence have entered. Since the time when Yellow-Hat Lamaism spread in Mongolia, shamanism has been called the “black religion”, which comes from the distinction between it and Yellow-Hat Lamaism. Lamaism is called the “white religion”, or the pure religion, whereas shamanism, as the black

religion, is primitive. In this way, shamanism found itself in a situation of defeat, from which it did not recover until the 1990s.

However, in locations where Yellow-Hat Lamaism had little influence; shamanism was preserved for many years. In such places as the Barga, Duguur, and Khorchin areas of Inner Mongolia, shamanism was maintained over the long term, and until today there are still shamanesses and shamans in these regions. Since Yellow-Hat Lamaism spread later to Buryat Mongolia, shamanism was quite strong there until modern times. In our country's northwestern section, in Khovsgol and Bulgan Provinces, especially in Darkhad areas, until recently, shamanism retained its ancient forms and even now there are shamans and shamanesses here and there.

However, among all of Mongolia's ethnic groups, shamanism not only lost its leading position but before the 1990s, hardly any vestiges of it were left. In this way, shamanism, with its thousands of years of history, had been the prevailing ideology among the Mongolians, yet it was defeated by Yellow-Hat Lamaism. It is all the more necessary to clarify the main reasons why it was easy for Lamaism to establish itself. It is an intriguing question as to why Yellow-Hat Lamaism readily replaced shamanism, which the Mongols had followed for several millennia. It appears that there are several factors that can account for this.

1. The Mongol aristocracy, the princes, converted to Yellow-Hat Lamaism, firmly supported its further expansion, and made a major effort to bring this about. To reinforce their position of superior power, necessarily they made much use of religion. They understood that these two issues were connected, and that shamanism could not meet their requirements. Therefore, they propagated Yellow-Hat Lamaism and people began to think in different ways. On the other hand, the lamas are praising the princes and khans as untutored by heaven for succeeding previous generations. The rulers were aware of the possibility of making Yellow-Hat Lamaism into an instrument of ideology, which could be employed to strengthen their hold on power, apart from making the people feel grateful to them. They also had long been aware that shamanism was extremely backward and rough. For example, there was the instance when a son was born to the queen of prince, who was a close associate of Altan Khan of Tumed, but then the boy died. However, the queen decided to order the death of 100 children of the common people, with the aid of shamans, in order to avenge the death of her son. By the time more than 40 children had been killed, Altan Khan heard about it and put a stop to it. There were many such cases everywhere in Mongolia. That was one important reason for some khans' and princes' to dislike shamans.
2. In order to make the frontier areas more secure, Emperor of The Ming Dynasty promoted the spread of Yellow-Hat Lamaism in Mongolia. Afterward, since this work was supported still more by the Manchu Dynasty, Yellow-Hat Lamaism was promoted energetically, and the struggle continued. This provided a powerful outside stimulus for the propagation of Yellow-Hat Lamaism in Mongolia.

3. The lamas of the Yellow-Hat sect were agreeable to exploiting shamanism's backward and uncivilized side. Shamanism opposed such teachings as the "respect the rule of having compassion on people", "oppose shedding the blood of living creatures", "oppose the sin of anger", "oppose killing in war", and so on. The Mongolian population had faced many long years of war and yearned for peace. It was easy to persuade them to follow Buddhism.
4. The Yellow-Hat Lamaism of that period was much more highly developed than shamanism. Apart from that, the implements and arts of Buddhism were more refined. It was known and seen that lamas were literate, far in advance of the shamans and shamanesses in terms of education, and they had more sophisticated methods and techniques. In these circumstances, the Yellow-Hat lamas, who were more cultivated and better trained than the practitioners of fundamentally backward shamanism, faced a struggle with the shamans, but in the end the shamans were sure to be defeated.
5. Shamanism prospered in the period when the clan organization system was in effect, but in the time of a class-based society, it was unavoidably outdated. According to the laws of history it had already entered a period of decline.

It is correct to see that all these factors differentiated shamanism from Yellow-Hat Lamaism and were the main reasons why Lamaism could easily expand its influence.

Chapter 3

The Ceremonies and Internal Essence of Mongolian Shamanism



3.1 The Shamanizing Procedure of the Shamans and Shamanesses

It is interesting to observe what kind of clothing and implements Mongolian shamans and shamanesses included in their shamanizing on the occasion of offering ceremonies. The shamanizing routine was firmly established, and the sequence was strictly followed. Mongolian shamans and shamanesses also had the functions of treating illnesses, telling fortunes, casting spells, performing offering ceremonies, and so on.

When shamans and shamanesses shamanize, they put on specially prepared clothes. In general, the form of clothing worn by Mongolian shamans is similar, but it is distinguished by being shabby and worn out. The clothes and the conditions are mutually different.

Mongolian shamans' clothing accords with special aspects of local ethnic groups, and in order to harmonize with these, the forms vary among themselves. In particular, most western Mongolian shamans and shamanesses wear hats with rather low crowns. Some of them wrap scarves around their heads, but they turn up the brims of the hats and wear some fabric hanging down from them, which gives the shamans quite a striking appearance. Khalkh shamans' hats, however, are indeed impressive, particularly the shamanesses' hats which are distinctive for their very high crowns. Darkhad shamans' clothing is also peculiar.

During the shamanizing ritual, shamans and shamanesses wear long coats assembled from all kinds of multicolored cotton fabric. They trim the edges of the coats by sewing on long, snakelike strips of cotton cloth, cut in the forms of all sorts of animals. These are called "wings". They make a kind of ornament of metal formed to resemble an eagle's talons or a deer's antlers, or a plume of peacock's feathers, which they fasten to a horned metal hat or "helmet". From the back of the hat hang 6 or 9 strips of different colored cloth called "maikhuuch" or "maikhavch". Some of them have nine-jointed metal chains hanging from the back of their hats. Bits of metal, "rings or tsagirag", in groups of three, are fastened onto the front side of the

hat. Above these they sew a piece of leather or cloth that hangs down like a veil to screen the face. This is called a “protective garment” or *brat*.

9 bronze mirrors are hung from the sash, but apprentice shamans hang only 8 of them. The reason for this is that until someone became a real shaman or shamaness, they were not authorized to wear 9 mirrors. The figures of zodiac animals of the 12-year cycle and dragons were carved on the bronze mirrors. These became the shaman's or shamaness' most cherished possessions, especially the older ones, which were handed down from one shaman or shamaness to another, generation after generation. When their bronze mirrors are fastened to the sash, they are deliberately arranged and hung down so that they swing back and forth and strike against each other, in order to produce an unusual noise. Manchurian and Siberia shamans usually wear bells hung from their sashes, but most Mongolian shamans and shamanesses have mirrors.

In their hands the shamans hold a bundle of thin sticks of wood, called a “scar” (*sorvi*). All of them who hold a metal “*tsagirag*” call it a “whip”. The shaman also holds a tambourine or “*khes*”, a one-sided drum. The teacher shaman's or shamaness' tambourine is white, while the apprentice shaman's tambourine is red, because according to shamanist tradition, white is the most highly valued color. During a shaman's offering ceremony, first of all, the figure of a guardian spirit, made of silver or iron, was put up in its place. In ancient times, some Mongol families would take along the guardian spirit's figure in the few wagons when they migrated. This is an interesting point: when Mongolian families have shamanized, necessarily there was a connection with making the figures of guardian spirits. It was not allowed to discard these images; they must be carefully preserved and venerated. For this reason, they should keep these sacred objects for long periods of time in their families, through many generations. Some of them had many guardian spirits.

Shamanist guardian spirits had profound meaning. Every shaman or shamaness always invited the guardian spirits into his or her home and venerated them. Apart from that, in the place of worship, before shamanizing, it was obligatory to make a guardian spirit's figure and set it up in its place. As they believed, according to shamanist teachings, the guardian spirit was also a local deity that could save them and protect them from every kind of danger.

The question of why this belief in guardian spirits actually originated has not been definitely answered. In the view of some scholars, in early, primitive society, people venerated all natural phenomena. At that time, people worshipped all the elements of the natural world, which of themselves seemed imposing. People made figures of wood or stone; outside they formed bundles of grass or wool felt and hung them up and worshipped them, which became the origin of guardian spirits. Some scholars explain that there is a closer relationship with reverence for ancestors. That is because in ancient times, people believed that their deceased relatives were not fully dead. They made images of the dead and honored these to show respect to the ancestors, and these became guardian spirits. People offered food and drink to the images and that was the beginning of the custom of honoring guardian spirits, so say the scholars. Each of these two explanations is basically accurate. We wrote clearly about this earlier. While the figures of guardian images were made of wood or stone

in the beginning, more recently Mongolian shamans and shamanesses mostly made them from silver or iron. Wealthy shamans and shamanesses or well-to-do families made their guardian spirits' images of silver. For that reason, people are calling them "shamans" with silver guardian spirits.

During a shamanizing ceremony, first of all, the guardian spirit's figure was set on a carpet made of several layers of silk or cotton cloth, sewn together and trimmed along the edges with thin strips of fur. The guardian spirit was summoned, then the work of reawakening the spirit began. For this ceremony, a live sheep or goat was cut under the foreleg. The guardian spirit's figure was inserted part of the way into the incision and then removed. After that a finger-length strip of flesh was cut from the center of the sheep's or goat's body and hung on the back of the guardian spirit's figure. Following this, the shaman took his wooden "scar" (sorvi) and poked the guardian spirit with it two or three times, and then fell in a faint. A moment later, he regained consciousness, and it was believed that this guardian spirit had come to life. In this manner the guardian spirit was revived and the shamanizing activity would start.

When Mongolian shamans are starting to shamanize in public area, in a pasture or in a household, they have different summoning songs. Before shamanizing in the household, first of all, the shaman should quickly become familiar with that family's situation and would sing a song that was appropriate to the family's condition. When shamans are shamanizing, before anything else, they sing a preliminary song to introduce themselves. For example:

From my home among the crags I was called
 You invited me to your ger from my the walls
 From my home among the hills I was called
 You invited me to your ger within cabers
 You, children,
 I came and saw you
 I, who became a father, an object of veneration,
 You, orphaned children,
 May this year be without misfortune
 May next year be without danger
 I turn around and leave /90/
 Something of this kind should be sung at the start.

In order to shamanize, the shaman or shamaness had to tell the reason why he or she had been summoned to the family. Apart from that, there had to be a way to convince the people attending the ceremony that he or she was the representative of the heavenly king, serving as a protector.

After this, the host or head of the household should hand the shaman a glass of vodka. Just when the shaman accepted this vodka, the shamanizing is commencing. The glass of vodka was called a "circular vodka". The shaman held it while shamanizing, after blowing on the glass of vodka, he then threw it in the direction of the household owner. When the glass was thrown, depending on whether it landed upright

or on its side, there was a special reason for it. If the glass remained upright, the shaman recited:

Your golden circle was not lost
 Throughout your life, you will suffer no misfortune
 Your silver circle was not broken
 Your livestock herds will not suffer loss /91/.

If the glass fell on its side, or in an uneven position, head of the household would believe that to meet with some sort of unavoidable mishap or would encounter some difficulty. Generous presents were promised to the shamans. The family asked them to purify the conditions, after vodka was given again, the shaman should sing his or her “circular song”, beginning the shamanizing in this way. How long this continued depended on the inclination of each individual shaman.

A shaman would tell all kinds of stories and history in the form of poetry, they would read as a chanter, and finally there were occasions when they told about their own sufferings and hardships and their fate, how they had been oppressed by Yellow-Hat Lamaism. As a conclusion of the ceremony, he would chant like this:

A fortunate person's children
 Will see the sun of Indra
 I, unfortunate, evil,
 I observe the barren steppe
 A fortunate person's children
 Will see the sun of the universe
 I, unfortunate, evil,
 Will observe the head of ravine” then the shaman would recite in this way, weep, and grieve.

The meaning of this poetry is describing the process of the power of shamanism diminishing, its influence decreasing, and it faced defeat by Yellow-Hat Lamaism. This kind of poetry expressed their hostility to Yellow-Hat Lamaism. It was a matter of employing all kinds of magical devices when shamanizing, and those who demonstrated greater skills were successful and became increasingly famous.

It seemed that when shamans and shamanesses were shamanizing, they genuinely perceived all that people were thinking. A shaman called this “going down”, shamanizing. Shamanizing had many facets. When shamans and shamanesses went to the homes of khaans, princes, and rich families and shamanized, they put forth all their strength. After they finished shamanizing, they received a considerable quantity of gifts, then they returned home. In brief, that was the order of shamanizing.

3.2 The Mongolian Shamanist Offering Ceremony

Mongolian shamanism have such custody as honoring their ancestors /92/, venerating ovoos /93/ or worshipping fire /94/ the fire lit by Esukhei the master) summoning

wealth /95/, interpreting a dream /96/, summoning spirits and souls, and defining severe weather disasters such as drought /97/. During all of which shamans would participate in such ceremonies as these, shamanize, repeat prayers to idols, and sing songs. Since the time of the Great Mongolian Empire, shamanism had acquired special sites for worship and ceremonies. It appears that at a very early time they were called “Shituen” /98/. As we see from what was written in the *Secret History*, when Temujin became khaan, Khorchi aided him by the use of magical methods. The story is that at the time, Khorchi was a shaman /99/. The *Secret History* records the information that Chinggis Khaan had faith in shamanism. Before going to war, he went up to Mount Burkhan Khaldun and untied his sash and hung it around his neck, repeated some kind of reading, knelt, and prayed /100/. The conferring of the name “Chinggis” on Temujin was related to a shaman who was his close associate. In an ancient Mongolian shamanist song, it says, “A fire blown by Chinggis udgan”. Whenever Chinggis was displeased about something, he was not afraid of any powerful shaman and was capable of inflicting punishment on them /101/.

In this way, from an early time, Mongolian shamanism initiated many kinds of offering ceremonies. Here is a short explanation of each one:

1. Mongols’ veneration for their ancestors originated in very ancient times and had a dominant position. Not only did Mongols revere their ancestors, from early times they performed ceremonies that honored the entire human race. There was an early tradition of shamans carrying out ceremonies in honor of ancestors. Since the time of the Great Mongolian Empire, the ceremonies became very large scale, and from the time of the Yuan Dynasty, they referred to the ritual as “summoning Chinggis’ soul”. This is clearly described in the *Book of the Yuan Dynasty*. In particular, some important elements of the *thirteenth* century Mongolian religion were thus preserved. Chinggis’ remains were kept at the palace, referred to as “Ezen Khoroo” (the lord’s enclosure), as was reflected at considerable length in the text of the *Golden Book*.

When S. D. Dylykov wrote about the “Ezen Khoroo”, he mentioned the *Golden Book* in passing. The *Golden Book* is a book using a lunar calendar method to determine the date for summoning Chinggis’ soul, during the “Great Offering Ceremony” on the 2nd day of the 3rd month of each year. It basically reflects the custody for peacefully summoning the sky and earth, the sun and moon, and Chinggis’ soul. In the very beginning, that ritual, particularly as related to Chinggis Khaan, conferred power to control everything. The ceremony revolved around raising the “satsal” or “tsatsal”, a ritual implement with nine indentations, in order to sprinkle milk to Eternal Blue Lord Heaven—the milk of 99 white mares—nine by nine to eighty one satsal. Afterward they summoned Chinggis’ own “genius” or soul into the guardian spirit and raised the satsal to sprinkle milk twice ten times, or twenty times. After that, they lifted the tsatsal to sprinkle milk ten times to the golden sun and ten times to the silver moon. Finally, in some periods, in high-ranking Mongolian shamanist ceremonies they sprinkled milk ten times each to honor a mountain such as Burkhan Khaldun or the Great Khentii Mountain, or to rivers such as the Onon,

Kherlen, and Tuul Rivers /102/. In recent years, Inner Mongolian scholars have exhaustively researched the Ezen Khoroo offering ritual and wrote extensively in many articles about the *Golden Book*.

When we look at ceremony of the Ezen Khoroo offering ceremony, the main, eternal master, Lord Heaven, was Mongolian shamanism's supreme ornament of the sky. All equally became rectified after death and after summoning Chinggis' soul, there were a few more sprinklings of milk to show respect. Meanwhile "Blue Eternal Heaven" or "Khan Hurmast (Lord Indra)" was not the ordinary blue sky or the atmosphere. It had dominion over everything. Only the greatest shamans occasionally could summon the guardian spirit or protective deity, through the representative image, which might appear and make known its intention, and demonstrate its grandeur and might in this secret way.

Heaven or sky is the highest religious power for Mongolian shamanism. At the time of the Great Mongolian Empire, this was related to the emperor Chinggis, who was the focus of worship. This belief in Chinggis was actively propagated. The Mongols' heaven/sky is the principal object of veneration. The concept of heaven/sky was refined and altered with the passage of time and many "heavens" or "sky" appeared. In particular, according to a shamanist song, there are 99 skies in the universe. There are 55 benevolent ones, worthy of honor and respect, in the west; and 44 evil gods, who committed harmful actions, in the east. Each one was separate. Lord Indra was the leader of the gods of the west. Ataa, the red god, was the leader of the east.

In some shamanist songs, Khan Khurmast was called "the Father Khurmast Sky", "The High Khurmast Sky", "Erkht Khurmast Sky" and so on. Among the 55 skies of the west, in addition to the Khan Khurmast Sky, who was the senior deity, there were the sky of war, the "Warrior Sky"; the sky of horses, the "Fate Sky"; the sky of thunder and lightning, the "Lightning Sky"; the sky of medicine, the "Khan Black Sky"; the shamanist messenger's "Zaarin Sky"; the sky of wealth, the "Rich White Sky"; the sky who brought peace to the people, the "White Sky"; the sky who knew the fate of souls, the "Warm Sky of the Sun"; the sky who ruled over truth, the "Truthful White Sky"; the sky who pointed out the path of the soul, the "White Sky of Fate"; the sky who eliminated illness and drove out demons, the "Sky of the Earth and Fate"; etc. Each one was individually responsible for carrying out a specific function and was given a special name. Apart from these, there were many ferocious skies who acted in destructive ways, such as the "Khan Earth Sky", "Hazy Black Sky", "Blood River Sky", "Wind Sky", "Monster Sky", "Thunder Sky", "Black Balai Sky", "Burd Black Sky", and others.

In the very ancient past, the Mongols had the custom of assigning male and female sexual attributes to the sun and moon and worshipping them. According to Mongolian shamanist belief, the sun and moon were the two offspring of heaven. From Chinggis' time, the sun and moon were revered as the Mongols' original ancestors. In particular, the Borjigon clan's males were venerated and sung about. In the age of the Great Mongolian Empire, the sun and moon were called the "ancestor of the Bogd suld" and "Suld ug light". There were rituals

which made offerings to the soul of the banner. When worshipping the sun and moon in early morning, this was done according to the beginning, middle, and last periods of the month. People arose early to hold an offering ceremony, and when the light of the sun was high in the sky, honored the heavenly ancestors. Chinggis was born by sunlight, as a shamanist song said, which was sung during the shamanizing ritual /103/. Mongols associated the constellation of the Pleiades to heaven; it was venerated as part of eternal heaven. It is clear that the offering ritual to honor the “seven old men” (Ursa Major/the Great Bear), became the main ceremony. Mongols had faith in the stars of the “seven old men”/Ursa Major. According to shamanist belief, the 99 high skies were “stars”. It was believed that every person had a star. If the star fell, the person would die. Stars and planets gave them good health and taught them to be wise.

When Khubilai Khaan ruled China and established the Yuan Dynasty, and ascended the throne (1263), a large-scale offering ceremony was held in Beijing for the “fate and souls of the ancestors”. In this way, they venerated the ancestors, who occupied a central position in Mongolian shamanist ceremonies.

2. Ovoo or Cairn worship is widespread among the Mongols, which has attracted the attention of foreign travelers and writers. This is one of the main forms of worship in shamanism, and has existed since ancient times. In shamanism, there are special guardian spirits, “cairn guardian spirits”, revered by all shamans and shamanesses. When worshipping these, first of all, the spirit is gently summoned. It is believed that the guardian spirits of cairns have the highest rank of all such spirits. In every corner of Mongolia one encounters ceremonial cairns where worship ceremonies are held: in the mountains and on cliffs, where they are made of stones; in places with few stones, where they are made of sand and soil; and in forested areas, where they are made of wood. A Mongol will not pass directly by a cairn. He or she will dismount from the horse, make an offering of coins, liquor, the best of food, or hairs trimmed from the horse’s mane and tail. These are placed on the cairn. The custom is that one should go up beside the cairn and pray. This shows that reverence for cairns is one of the Mongols’ most cherished customs.

To write a few words about the origin of the practice of setting up cairn offerings: Mongols believed that when human beings were completely controlled by the power of the natural world, it was thought that every natural phenomenon was controlled by magic, and religious ceremonies started to come into existence. In particular, Mongols thought that all events such as the occurrence of drought, the death of livestock herds, or the onset of illness was related to the fury of the skies of land and water in the nearby environment. People set up cairns in impressive natural settings and held ceremonies there. In early times, only dairy, the best of milk products, were offered to the cairn that was venerated and shamans and shamanesses shamanized there.

Later on, apart from the cairn worship ceremony, it became like festivals; people had wrestling matches, archery contests and horse races for the public. Lamas respected cairn worship ceremonies highly and helped to expand them. They supported the ceremonies in every way and read sutras at the time of the

ceremony itself. This was connected to the fact that they benefitted by receiving generous donations from people. In this way, when cairn ceremonies have been held in recent years, most of the time there are lamas reading sutras there, and shamanizing by shamans and shamanesses has become much more seldom.

When cairn rituals were carried out, they followed an established order. At the beginning, they set up a branch, with a khadag (a ceremonial scarf) tied to it. On four sides, stone mountings and stands, or low tables, were prepared. The chief guest went to the northwest side of the cairn and sat down. People who participated in the cairn ceremony brought the meat of a whole boiled sheep, liquor, cheese, dried curds, and other food. Afterward they lit a fire next to the cairn and presented the broth from the meat together with dairy and liquor and had to smear the cairn with airag. On all four sides, branches of juniper in jars were burned, to make smoke. On one side of the stone tables or stands there were nine stones. Afterward, shamans or shamanesses would shamanize, or lamas read sutras. When the shamanizing and reading had been completed, people attending the ceremony partook of the meat and food that had been presented.

In shamanism, cairns have special guardian spirits. When shamans or shamanesses conduct a cairn ceremony, they gently call the spirit. As mentioned earlier, the cairns' guardian spirits are thought to be superior to all others. Therefore, as we will show, this type of cairn ceremony was the most central one for shamanism. In reality, the cairn ceremonies became the vital, fundamental occasions for appeasing the world and expressing religious feelings. This came to be considered the principal function of the ceremony. In Mongolian shamanist belief, native land is the most important part next to Eternal Sky.

Some other groups in Asia and Europe have beliefs and practices similar to those of the Mongols. Heaven is the father, earth is the mother, it was believed. From these have come expressions such as "heavenly father", "mother earth", which have been passed down through the ages. Heaven, with the sun, moon, stars, and planets, was venerated, as well as the earth, with the mountains and waters, cliffs and rocks, plants and animals, and other life forms. When people worshipped Eternal Blue Heaven, they had individual categories for the sun, moon, stars, and planets and worshipped them. In the same way they individually venerated mother earth, mountains and bodies of water, cliffs and rocks, plants and animals. As an example of respecting sky and land in a high position, Khorchi noyon, the shaman of heaven, came and said, "Heaven and earth are in agreement. May Temujin be lord of the State". So, it was made clear.

In mountain ranges such as the Khentii, Khangai, and Altai, the great peaks and other large mountains, all were said to be ruled by shamanist guardian spirits and protective deities and were revered. In rough terrain, on the summits which were clearly visible, on rocks and by woods, "Ongon Burkhan", or shamanism's high shrines, cairns were erected and from generation to generation people worshipped there.

Since ancient times, Burkhan Khaldun Mount of Khentii Range, has been one of the sacred Places for the Uriankhai people of Mongolia and one of the

main objects of worship, where offering ceremonies have been held. Burkhan Khaldun was also the main shrine, a mountain to be venerated by all Mongolians /104/. Scholars explain that the name of Mount Burkhan Khaldun refers to the divinities' dwelling place. It means something like the shrine of Khaldun, shamanism's guardian spirit and protective deity.

But "Burkhan", on the summit of Burkhan Khaldun, is not the name that means the "god" or "Buddha" of Buddhism. Rather it was related to the name of the guardian spirit or protective deity of (pure) shamanism's shrine. But "Khaldun" means the master of the hearth, the ruling mountain, and derives from the words "galdan", meaning to burn, as N. Ishjams explained /105/. In other words, among the ancient Mongolians it meant the hearth-shrine, the "Burning Lord", god of the fire. When Temujin was young, he was captured by the enemy. When he escaped from enemies, he was always hidden by Burkhan Khaldun and survived. It was his belief that the mountain was his guardian spirit or protective deity, with its majestic high cliffs and precipices, mire and mud, and many forests. They were not the most important conditions. He believed that it was related to the fact that this was the abode of the deity.

Chinggis faced Mount Burkhan Khaldun and addressed it as "Thanks for helping my small body like kidney to survive", as is recorded in the *Secret History*. It relates how he escaped from the Taichuud, and how Oelun Ujin concealed her orphans on the mountain. Because of that, Chinggis prayed to Mount Burkhan Khaldun, "Burkhan Khaldun, monument of our orphans, every morning I will anoint you". In this way the "prayer" of Burkhan Khaldun which originated, as "hymn of praise", "benediction", "confession", "offering of ritual sprinkling" arose. At that time Chinggis Khaan was also at war with the Khorezm. He untied his sash, hung it around his neck, held his hat folded in his hand, and pressed it against his chest. Facing toward the sun, he knelt and prayed nine times to Burkhan Khaldun, made his confession, and offered a ritual satsal sprinkling. Thus, Chinggis Khaan performed a special ceremony of worship of Mount Burkhan Khaldun.

In the Tsagaan Uur soum of Khovsgol aimag, "Dayan Deerkhi" has been shamanism's most important sacred place of worship since the age of Chinggis Khaan. There are many folk legends that bear witness to the relationship between Dayan Deerkhi and the life and career of Chinggis.

The worship of mountain streams and building of cairns originated in the very ancient past. By the thirteenth century, these practices were increasingly common, and had become almost daily, normal events. In this period large-scale ceremonies were held to honor "Burkhan Khaldun's Lord Protective Deity", "Deluun Boldog's Lord Protective Deity", "Dayan Deerkhi's Lord Sky", "Khaan Mountain's Sacred Lord", "Khentii Mountain's Lord Protective Deity", "Altai Sacred Mountain's Protective Deity", "Altai Red Mountain Pass' Protective Deity", "Snow-Covered Sacred Mountain's Local Deity", "Five Khurmast Protective Deity", "13 Altai Sacred Mountain Cairns' Lords", "Kherlen, Tuul, Orkhon Rivers' Skies of Land and Water", "Balj River's Shores' Autumn Mountain's Protective Deity", "Tsambagarab's Heavenly Lord", "Kharkhiraa's

Lord Deity”, “Altan Ovoo’s Protective Deity”, “Eternal Sacred Mountain’s Lord Protective Deity”, etc. in which shamans and shamanesses regularly participated.

Not every cairn, though, had shamanist offering ceremonies. Cairns’ ceremonies were directly connected to the so-called local deities, shamanist spirits of land and water. In the days of the Great Mongolian Empire, there were elaborate ceremonies in enclosures near bodies of water in the mountains, in which khans participated. All the people in attendance looked up toward the sun, untied their sashes, hung them around their necks, removed their hats, and held them in both hands next to their chests, and bowed three times three, or nine times. The man’s sash (or belt) is a very important article. If it comes loose and someone notices it, he will warn the man, “Your sash is loose”. This is why Mongols refer a term to a man as someone with a sash and a woman as “someone without a sash”. Not only did Mongols set up cairns on mountain tops and passes when at homeland in their own country, they also did so during military campaigns, in foreign lands, and never delayed or forgot to offer ritual. Rashid-ad-Din wrote that, Mongol prince Gazan (1295–1304), descendant of Khulagu, in Iran, named a plateau with a tapering summit a “Mongolian cairn” and ordered that a cairn be built.

3. In shamanism, it was very important to carry out the banner ceremony and the suld ceremony. This is a term that seems to be identical with the order of the khiimori ceremony. The banner that was connected with the khiimori and the suld ceremony originated in Mongolia more than 2000 years ago. At the time of the Great Mongolian Empire, it had reached the dimension of a large-scale ceremony. In particular, there were banner and emblem offerings such as the “Large Vision Black Banner’s Offering”, “Nine-Branched White Banner Offering”, “Multicolored Suld Offering”, held in large enclosures. A Mongol man’s fortune remains his horse.

The fortune of the Great Mongolian Empire remained in the suld banner, soldier and horse. It was believed that if the great khan who led the state had fortune, the nation had fortune. The reason of offering the “Large Vision Black Offering” is as a dedication for unification. Chinggis’ Mongolia was unified, his enemies had been conquered, and his kingdom had been established. The offering was referred to by all kinds of names such as the “Four-Branched Black Suld Offering” and “Chinggis Khaan’s Shrine’s Gold Suld Offering”. In 1206 Chinggis Khaan held a large-scale offering of the Large Vision Black Suld. For the Black Suld Offering ceremony, there were a large offering, a small offering, a summer offering, a violent offering, a “sushiglen” prayer special offering, and so on, in all kinds of settings and as time passed, it became a famous offering ceremony.

Chinggis’ Black Suld Offerings were usually violent. Because of this, it was customary to call it the Black Emblem’s Banner Offering. When he had to fight with his moral enemy, or if there were evil, vicious customs that must be abolished, or there was theft and robbery, suddenly the Black Banner Offering was carried out and everyone was pacified. Women did not participate in the

violent Black Suld Offering. In normal times, on 3rd, 8th or 15th day of every month in lunar calendar; or the 15th day of spring season; 22nd day of the month of winter; or 23rd day of the middle month of winter in lunar calendar, Chinggis' Black Suld Offering ceremony was conducted separately on each day /107/. On the occasion of the Black Emblem Offering, cairns were erected with thousands of logs; five strong animals were slaughtered such as male camels, bulls, stallions, rams and male goats; weapons such as bows and arrows, swords, and spears were hung on the logs, making an impressive spectacle.

The Nine-Branched White Banner Offering was one of the main offering ceremonies of the Great Mongolian Empire. The Nine-Branched White Banner, made on the model of the Golden "Uragtan" emblem, was not nine separate banners, but rather a single large banner, made of nine bundles of the hair from horses' manes and tails, as the scholar Sharaldain wrote in a very precise description. The Great Mongolian Empire's Nine-Branched White Banner Offering was divided into two types, the small offering and the great offering. The small offering ceremony was carried out once a year, the great offering was held three times per year.

Special shamanist poetry was composed and recited for the White Banner Offering. In 1206, Chinggis' nine paladins raised up the Nine-Branched Great White Banner and brought it in front of the state palace and conducted the first great offering. Also, from the time of the Great Mongolian Empire, the Multicolored Suld Offering has remained a tradition. It came to be called the "Warrior Baarin's Multicolored Suld". Khasar's Emblem Offering, as it was called, was carried out in the territory of the Ordu tribe. The Khasar's Suld Banner Offering has now begun to be revived and performed in Inner Mongolia. When the Multicolored Suld Offering is being performed, women are not allowed to enter within 100 ald's (traditional length measurement) and Chinese people were also not allowed to participate. Someone who had participated in a funeral ceremony within the last 100 days, was also not allowed to enter either, although girls under the age of 13 were allowed to participate.

It is recorded that Chinggis' Eight White Palaces Offering was held from 1227, but after Ogedei Khaan ascended the throne, people began to conduct officially ordered offerings and this offering appeared. This offering became prominent from the time of the Yuan Dynasty or the time of Khubilai Khaan. As described in the *Book of the Yuan Dynasty*, the Eight White Palaces were the gers of the Master Esugei and Oelun the mother, Chinggis Khaan and Borte Ujin, Ogedei Khaan and Queen Turakina, Zuchi and Queen Badapumish, Tsagaadai and Queen Esulen, Tului and Sorkhagtun bekhi, Guyug khaan and Queen Kaimish, Monkha Khaan and Queen Khutagt. But the Eight White Gers Offering ultimately was reformed. Perhaps it may have been changed by Khubilai Khaan.

There was also the Four White Great Weddings celebration, called Chinggis' Guardian Spirits' Four Seasons' Great Offering. At this time, many shamans arrived from various places and shamanized. The song called "12 Songs" which was performed during Chinggis' guardian spirit ceremony, is a very interesting subject to be studied in further. Up until the present, the old version of the song

is still performed or recited as poetry and hummed during the annual “Chinggis’ Offering” ceremony in Taiwan. In the period of the Great Mongolian Empire, it was called the ancestors’ offering and was traditionally said to be an offering to people’s forebearers. In Chinggis’ day an offering was made to the hero Esukhei, while in Ogedei’s time offerings were made to Chinggis.

4. The fire offering is one of the shamanist ceremonies. After the Great Mongolian Empire, a large ceremony was presented for an heirloom, which was created by the 99 skies, of Esuheï master who was asked to worship the hearth and revive the fire. The fire khaan of Mongolia was described as “a true Mongolian, high, perfect, blazing fire khaan who was worshipped”. During the time of the Great Mongolian Empire, they had the tradition of worshipping fire and sacrificing a white mare and the breastbone of a white sheep for it. There are texts and manuscripts such as the *Fire Offering Sutra* and the *Fire Benediction*, which give clear information about the fire offering ceremony, and they are still preserved at the National Central Library of Mongolia. Some researchers are concerned that these do not relate to shamanist teachings but to Yellow-Hat Lamaism only.

Some foreign scholars seem to think that earlier Mongols did not use fire and ate meat almost raw. They also write that the use of fire in Mongolia spread very late, and particularly that it was taken from Persia. In reality it was not like that. Mongols discovered fire long ago and had used it for some thousands of years. At a very early date, they knew how to strike two stones together to make fire, gathered horses’ dung to use as fuel, and covered the fire.

But fire worship spread from the peoples of Central Asia, especially originating from Persia. This idea is supported by Banzaryn Dorj /108/. There are few materials that give evidence about how and in what circumstances Mongols worshipped fire. Many rituals connected with fire have been preserved. One of them is the custom of newly wed couples kneeling and praying to the fire after they get married. Another tradition is that the youngest son of the family inherited the hearth and fire. From an early period, Mongols had the custom of burying their dead. When they took leave of the deceased, they purified their hearth, offered milk and liquor to the fire, built a large fire, and purified all of their possessions. When people attended a funeral ceremony, they kindled two fires and rode their horses between them. In their travel records, Rubruk, Carpini, and Marco Polo wrote clearly about the Mongols’ fire worship.

However, there is a connection between the Mongols’ fire offering ceremony and reverence for ancestors. It became every married Mongol’s regular custom to pray to the fire, speaking to the “benevolent four fathers and mothers, protective deities of fate”. When a Mongol had a fire offering ceremony, shamans or shamanesses would shamanize. Later mainly lamas were called to the ceremony. Consequently many Yellow-Hat lamaist elements are mingled with Mongolian fire offering ceremonies, in particular with the origins of these customs.

In Mongolian families, if someone met with misfortune, before anything else, the custom was to hold a fire offering ceremony, so this was a very popular practice. In recent times, fire offering ceremonies were dominated by lamas,

which led to great differences between rituals where shamans sang songs and those where lamas read from sutras. When conducting a fire offering ceremony, the shamans and shamanesses sang:

The hearth-fire created by the 99 skies
 The hearth-fire struck by Lord Esugei
 Struck by the khaan father
 Blown by the queen mother
 To the black rock's mother
 To the queen iron father
 The khaan father's hearth-fire /109/

and shamanized. The idea was to personify the hearth and fire as though they were parents. But when the lamas read:

The hearth created by 99 skies
 The hearth-fire struck by Lord Esugei
 The hearth-fire struck by the khan father
 Created by Burkhan sky
 It brings all things meritorious
 The hearth-fire that cleanses all impure things /110/

It can be seen clearly that when the lamas made use of melodious, fine poetry, they used certain parts for themselves, adapted it, and inserted words that praised the Buddha.

For a fire offering ceremony, every family had its own hearth and fire master and other people also had their own fire master or fire khaan. It was called the "true, Mongolian, national offering, the high, perfect, blazing khaan, the auspicious holy one", "hermit sky" /111/. But in another sutra, the Sky of fire /112/ was written as the "the fire khaan that became the mother of all creatures", "Meregzhen as Fire sky". Consequently, according to the custom of Mongolian shamanism, the concept was that a khaan or sky created fire and for this reason there had to be a special fire master who became a khaan or sky.

When they performed the ceremony, they recited to the khaan of the fire:

A food like Sumber Mount
 A Drink like as an ocean of milk
 I offer to you, majestic khaan of the fire /113/.

The khaan or sky of shamanism and the Buddha of Yellow-Hat Lamaism have some similar characteristics, but Buddhism differs in one significant way. In the fire offering ceremony, different readings and songs were presented to khaans, princes, wealthy families, and ordinary families. For example, they chant:

May you acquire more livestock than stars
 May you acquire a white ger bigger a than mountain
 May you forever be happy in this body

May you have a boy to serve the state
May you live long like the sun
May you flourish like the leaves and flowers
May you be as meritorious as the Buddha
May you acquire livestock as numerous as stalks of grain.

and so on /114/. This section was read from a text for a rich family's fire offering ceremony. The influence of Buddhism entered into the last part. For that reason, the words "May you be as meritorious as the Buddha" was an element that propagated the religion. But when a shaman came and shamanized for an ordinary family, he said:

May you acquire many horses standing in a lake.
May you have a boy that follow a princely man
May you acquire many sheep in the open steppe
May you have good-natured daughters and so on /115/.

There is a "Saddle Strings Offering" ritual in the shamanist offering ceremony, which is closely associated with hunting. For the benefit of a hunter who fails to find any game, a shaman or shamaness is invited in to increase his good luck, and they hold a "saddle strings song" ceremony. The shaman colors the hunter's saddle strings with the blood of any kind of animal. They sing, "Guardian spirit, saddle strings, help us to find game" and so on. There are two pairs of saddle strings on a Mongolian saddle. Four saddle strings are longer than others and are made of strong leather straps. This originated from the hunter's intention to carry his catch. A Mongolian man's saddle strings inevitably were stained with blood. When the hunter does not shoot much game, the shaman or shamaness says, "The saddle strings were stained". By this method they hope to work a cure. In this ceremony they smear the blood of a domestic animal on the saddle strings. There are traces of this ritual from a very early time. It was one form of a shamanist offering ceremony.

3.3 One Generation of Shaman Succeeds Another, The Funeral of a Shaman

According to shamanist thought, to decide to become a shaman is not something that one does altogether independently. To a significant degree one is prepared for this at an early age. One must undergo an examination by a senior shaman or shamaness and depending on the approval of the senior, he or she confers the name of shaman or shamaness. Becoming a shaman is "the younger generation to inherit the older generation" and is decided by "choosing and clarifying". Particularly among Buryat shamans, there is a system of rules for clarifying the main pattern of conduct of a shaman or shamaness. But in Western and inner Mongolia, the main model of a

shaman or shamaness has a tradition that has been passed on through many generations. Every time someone becomes a shaman or shamaness, the process is watched over painstakingly according to the regulations. There have also been instances where someone pays a bribe to a senior shaman and easily becomes a shaman himself.

When one becomes a shaman, however, there are some elaborately devised features to consider and before anything else can be done, one faces all the required preparations. It was traditional for the shaman or shamaness-to-be to go pray in the place of the guardian spirit who was the master of that location. For example, it is told that in early times, the shamans of the Zakhchin prince's khoshuu (military district) in Western Mongolia went to the summit "Tsast khairkhan" (perpetually snow-covered sacred mountain) of the Altai, to a tree that had been placed in mercury, and prayed. Then one became a shaman. A shaman-to-be of the "Dayan Deerghi" in the Khovsgol region went to an immense rock that resembled a human figure and spent a long time praying in order to become a shaman. From ancient times, shamans visited Mount Burkhan Khaldun, the guardian spirit mountain, to pray and worship. B. Rinchen has written briefly about Mongolia's four mountain lords /117/.

According to Mongolian shamanist tradition, there is a master shaman in every place where there are bodies of water in the mountains. In particular, in the area around Lake Baikal, Delbertel, the master of animals, summoned the great god, who made ninety people into shamans, and Delbertel summoned the god who created eighty senior shamans. The one called Shaman Tongoo /118/ was in the rainbow guardian spirit and as citizens of the region say, "The state did not become stabilized before history; no one became a shaman before Tongoo". There are many master shamans in Mongolian areas, and they exercised authority over the whole procedure of becoming a shaman or shamaness.

Mongolian shamanism is divided into two classes such as public and private (domestic). Shamans who work for social level shall be outstanding by a clear system of principles. When one becomes a shaman or shamaness, first of all he or she must meet all of the requirements and demonstrate that he or she will be faithful to its teachings and will carefully guard the secrets of shamanism. A person above the age of 20, who is in good health and highly intelligent, may be accepted as an apprentice or pupil for shaman. When one becomes a genuine shaman or shamaness, one must have mastered the skillful magic tricks of shamanism, and must have memorized all the poetry, all the written songs, and melodies. This requires a considerable length of time, much effort, and concentration. For example, as talking with Mongolian shamans, it requires about 1 or 2 years to learn to beat the "getsee" drum correctly. Some, when they become shamans or shamanesses, engage in actions such as spending several nights reading texts, or going up to the mountains, in order to strengthen themselves physically and mentally.

Someone who aspired to become a shaman or shamaness first of all presented his or her request to a teacher shaman or shamaness. If the teacher consented, the aspiring shaman or shamaness returned home and carried out a ceremony preparatory to becoming a shaman or shamaness. This ceremony was performed in the space in front of the ger. The aspirant took two perfect lengths of birch wood, two cubits long (approximately equivalent to two meters), with 3 times nine—27 birch wood with

leaves. The birches were placed facing toward the south and by 9 by 9 of them. Then two birch trees, each 7 cubits tall, were placed exactly between the two branches. The tree furthest to the north was called the “mother tree”. Strips of silk cloth were tied to the top. Small pieces of silk were shaped to resemble a bird’s nest. Inside this bird’s nest were placed 9 eggs that were made from cotton or soft white sheep’s wool. The aspirant also made the image of the moon and placed it beside the eggs. The tree furthest on the south side was called the “father tree”. A figure of the sun was placed at the top of this tree. All kinds of animal skins were tied onto the smaller branches. 3 red-hot stones, called “*bartag*”, were tied onto one tree branch. The small pieces of wood from within the mother tree’s white wood were placed by themselves, separately.

Inside his or her ger, the candidate set a high table and placed 9 lamps on it. Next to them were set nine wooden bowls which were filled with milk, liquor and tea. Behind these were placed wooden dishes containing dried curds and cream. An elegant ceremonial scarf, called a “*khavchuulga*”, was tied to the posts that held up the ger’s roof. Another large birch branch was tied to the roof ring, and many different cloth strips were hung from it. That was the way the basic ritual was prepared and carried out. The senior shaman or shamaness and many other shamans and shamanesses were invited to come.

The newly initiated shaman was required to invite an elderly man and woman, make them his or her parents, and have them stay in his or her yurt. Food and drink were all prepared and 9 stones were heated until they were red-hot. The mother tree was colored with goat’s blood, and meat was boiled. Afterward the new shaman dressed in shamanizing clothing and hung his or her mirrors on the sash, held the whip in one hand, and started the shamanizing ritual under the guidance of the great shaman or shamaness. The following day, a sheep would be slaughtered, all the meat boiled, then arranged and put on a platter. In this way, he or she shamanized inside and outside the ger. When the shamanizing was completed, the meat would be shared out and eaten. This ceremony was called the “night of vigor (ид, идлэг pg96)”. The following night, the new shaman shall shamanize by the best of his ability until sunrise. As soon as the sun rose, meat, tea, cream, butter, and other foods were set next to the new shaman or shamaness. The senior shaman or shamaness untied the cord to which the mirrors were fastened, and after sitting for a short time they all held a ceremony called the “*taillaga* or untying”. In that way the ritual of becoming a shaman or shamaness came to an end. This ceremony was called “great shamanizing”. On this day, the great shaman or shamaness was given offerings and led to his or her ger. The new shaman gave as many presents as possible to the other shamans and shamanesses and to the elderly man and woman who became his parents.

On the 29th day of every month of the great shamanizing ceremony, the new shaman must shamanize, this is called the ritual of “inserting the shrine”. After 3 years of this action, a major ceremony of quality shall be held. After 6 or 8 years, the new shaman would gather together all his or her equipment, and, traveling on horseback, went around with other shamans, and then, having received many presents and rewards, returned home. This was called “*untying bituuleg*” which allowed the new shaman to acquire the name of being a real shaman. After 6 to 9 years after the

great shamanizing, he had become a real shaman. It was uncommon, however, for a Mongolian shaman to go through all these many years of training and ritual. A child who was well qualified and came from a family line of shamans and shamanesses, thus inheriting the position, might be adopted at an early age by a shamanist family and taught shamanist songs and then could be made the successor to the older generation. This is a short description of the process of becoming a shaman or shamaness.

Burying a deceased shaman also had quite distinctive features. In particular, when a renowned shaman or shamaness died, it was customary for the whole body to be dried and kept in his ger. Among Darkhad ethnic group of our country, according to a tradition that had been established in ancient times, the remains of a renowned shaman were dried and kept in his ger. However, in most recent times, when a shaman died, generally the burial took place in the open steppe. When a shaman dies, the body shall be dressed in all of his clothes and would be buried in a position facing forward. Afterward, a shaman shamanizes, chants words, then facing the deceased, says, "When you are leaving your people, how quickly will you return? Have a safe journey. Please turn around your orphaned people and remain", then sings a song, and shamanizes. There was a teaching that became ever more firmly established, that the shaman did not die, but became heaven or sky's representative.

In the book *The Society of the Solon People*, as cited above, the insignia and prerogatives of the Barga and Solon shamans were exactly alike. When they died, however, comparatively different practices were evident. After a Barga shaman die, he is still highly respected, whereas a Solon shaman, while honored by the people during his or her lifetime, was almost entirely ignored after death. They were buried in just the same way as an ordinary commoner. Evidently it was not the custom, though, for lamas to come to the burial to worship over the remains of the shaman, which was different from the funeral of an ordinary person. Since the time when Yellow-Hat Lamaism spread in Mongolia, the authority and influence of the shamans was reduced. A clear example of this was seen on the occasion of a shaman's burial.

3.4 The Essence and Ideology of Mongolian Shamanism

The ideology of Shamanism being complex, careful study is required in order to understand it. We have briefly touched on some of its aspects. The characteristics of shamanistic ideology also are present in the belief that nature's myriad elements all have owners or masters. Whatever religion it might be, it could not accurately explain the causes of what was present in nature and the world. It was in the interests of religion to make its ideas compatible with those of the general population, to persuade people to believe in them, and to educate people to follow those beliefs. There is a history of that. Shamanism is the most ancient religion. In particular, at the times of family based society, it was the dominant religious form. Because of that, people believed that every element in nature had a master or a guardian spirit, which they worshipped and for which offering ceremonies were held. These comprise the main content of shamanist literature /119/.

In shamanism it was believed that each of the natural world's phenomena had a master and was controlled by heaven or sky. In particular, in shamanist songs, there are many names of sky such as red sky of stars, the white sky of lightning, the Fate Sky of stars, the blue mankhan sky, the khoton red sky, and so on. In Mongolian shamanism, there are 55 skies of the west and 44 skies of the east, or 99 skies in all. It was believed that one sky was responsible over one special thing only, all phenomena, and in this manner, responsibilities were apportioned to each. That was the main component of the shamanist concept.

In general, believing in the skies and praying to them was a Mongolian tradition in early times. Sky, or heaven, was the lord that ruled everything. Shamans and shamanesses were connected with the skies and controlled all the living creatures of the world. For a long time, people were persuaded to believe that sky or heaven ruled everything. In Mongolian shamanism the lord of humans and animals was a god, a father-prince. Later it was taught that it was a khaan, a shaman-prince, who had acquired a dominant position in society. For Mongols, many meanings are contained in the concept of god or heaven. The concept of the upper world, the sky, apart from its principal sense of being the sky or shrine, also might be used in an abstract sense of sky or heaven, who was the lord of all natural phenomena and who controlled them. Mongolian shamanism's 99 skies were also lords who controlled 99 kinds of phenomena. Consequently, the entity that was called god or heaven, along with acquiring the abstract sense of "Lord Khaan", also express the notion of "good fortune" or "khiimori", which was a good luck symbol. In particular, people might say, "God/heaven cast it away", meaning that someone had bad luck and that the wind-horse "khiimori" (good luck) was abandoned. For this reason, it is correct to understand, in the sense of "lord/master", the shamanist notion of sky or heaven. Banzaryn Dorj has done essential research about shamanism's many skies /120/.

The shamanist concept of the three worlds also is one component of its philosophy. These are the beliefs that explain the world's three levels, upper, middle, and lower.

1. The upper level was the pure, beautiful, compassionate world, which protected the middle level from all disasters and suffering. It was believed that war was waged repeatedly in the lower world.
2. Humans and animals lived in the middle world. Between the middle and lower worlds, however, there was an unknown realm and when human beings died, they usually went to this world.
3. In the lower world, the evil spirits of the dead came together and lived and spread every illness. It can be seen that this level is also called hell.

In Mongolian shamanism sky belongs to father, land belongs to mother, and the mother of the earth. Researchers have mentioned this many times. Marco Polo mentioned a local protective deity, "Etugen", in his book. It appears that the patriarchy appeared at the time when shamanism's three-world concept was being propagated. The reason is that sky rules the earth, therefore it is necessary for the man to rule the woman. It seems reasonable to suppose that the Mongols had this opinion from this time.

The origin of Mongolian shamanistic ideology is the aforementioned concept of the three worlds. It was believed that the lower world was the first of these to come into existence and the middle world and the human race appeared later. In shamanism, the upper world was represented as “khaikhan or holy” and the lower world was represented as “erleg or arrogant”.

In shamanism, “holy” and “arrogant” were defined. Consequently, there is a myth that a holy hero conquered an arrogant hero and created the earth. This mythology acquired qualities that are almost the same as the teaching that the Buddha of Yellow-Hat Lamaism create the world. The holy and the arrogant are the upper and lower worlds’ representatives and heroes. Owing to that, from ancient times, Mongols have very much revered the compassionate one who saved people from danger. They also acquired the tradition of praying to the “compassionate one”. In modern times, high, majestic mountains are called “khaikhan or holy”.

The Japanese scholar Hata, in his article on “The Yellow-Hat Lamaist Element in the Shamanist ideology”, compared it with Buddhist traditions. He wrote, “Khubilai Khaan brought religion from Tibet to Mongolia and propagated it, which was not a central principle in government policy, but rather central to psychology. Buddhism and shamanism have many features in common. Particularly with reference to the creation of the world, there are many similarities, which perhaps encouraged the harmony of the two religions at that time” /121/. I appreciate this evaluation, but I would direct some criticism to it. In particular, Khubilai Khaan himself personally adopted Buddhism, which kept the Tibetan people under control. It cannot be denied that this was a significant political objective. For this reason, it is incorrect to emphasize the psychological aspect. In doing so, Hata went so far as to discount the true nature of the ruler’s state policy. In general, Japanese scholars shower too much praise on the actions of Mongolian khaans and princes, draw certain conclusions, and show a strong tendency to write about them as progressive measures. Although there are some elements in shamanism that are similar to Buddhist philosophy, shamanism explains the world as being created by sky/heaven’s representative, a virtuous hero. This hero is not a shaman or shamaness but he is called his representative. Yellow-Hat Lamaism, however, believes that the Buddha created the world.

From an early date, Mongols worshipped the worlds of the sun, moon, and stars, which was also a universal practice. There is information that Mao Dun, the khaan of the Hunnu dynasty, faced toward the sun and prayed in the morning, while in the evening he faced toward the moon and prayed. The Mongols, in addition to venerating the “seven old men” and the Pole Star (the stars of Ursa Major and the North Star), and other stars, believed that each person had a star named after him or her. It was their understanding that if a meteor fell, someone would die because his or her star had fallen, which also appears in the shamanist worldview.

The idea of the skies of “*savdag or land*” and “*lus or waters*” is mentioned in shamanist songs: the fierce black *lus* of the seven-level earth, the eight-level *lus*, deep-blue *lus*, all the *lus* of the golden world, and so on. Thus there are many skies in the world—the skies of land and water, masters of the earth, and khaans of the land and *lus*, but there must be one lord or khaan over them. The term of “*lus*”, which could not be explained now, but we are looking at the word that means owner

of land and water, especially water world. In shamanism, though, the word “lus” sometimes was represented in the middle world. For this reason, the holy, the land and lus, and the arrogant are representatives and masters of the three worlds and each one has a master-khaan. There was a saying that “The lus of land and water are enraged”, meaning that it was stormy. The Mongols held large-scale offering ceremonies. The term “*savdag*” is one which means something like “master” of the earth. When Mongols sometimes rode rough, untamed horses, they said that such a horse had a temperament like a *savdag*. We see from this that the term “*savdag*” was used to mean violent or fierce.

In shamanism, it was taught that after someone died, that person’s spirit remained alive. Some scholars have mentioned that there were two kinds of spirits. The spirit of the dead person might either terrorize or aid people. It was thought that after a person’s death, his or her spirit wandered around in the realm of hell and caused harm people. Shamans and shamanesses tried to make people believe that only a shaman or shamaness could rescue and protect people from all this.

3.5 Shamanism’s Influence on Mongolian Culture and Literature

Whatever the religion might be, it has made a major contribution to the culture of humankind. When we study religious art, we need to view it critically, also with reference to shamanism. In shamanist literature we find hymns of praise to land and water deities, verses about joyful and beautiful life, stanzas expressing people’s yearnings. It is legitimate to make it part of our cultural heritage and make use of it in our people’s artistic works, as Ts. Damdinsuren wrote. When we study Mongolian language and literature, we find many topics that deserve our attention.

At a certain time, shamanism had a considerable influence on the development of the Mongolian language. Most shamanist songs have not been influenced at all by foreign languages, being composed originally in Mongolian. The majority of shamanist songs have a joyous, melodious beauty. They were versified and written as poetry, which provides valuable material for the study of Mongolian literary history. In particular, shamanist songs are fundamental resources when we study ancient Mongolian oral literature. Shamanism has both oral and written literary genres. When shamans and shamanesses shamanize, their spoken words and their songs constitute oral literature. Some songs were written down and copied, which we call written literature. I will mention some of the shamanist written literature that exists in Mongolian. There are the *Old Man’s San*, many treasuries of fire offering ceremonies, the *Ganzagiin san*, the *Khiimoriin San*, the Chinggis’ Spirit Offering ceremony, the Ures (offspring)-producing testimony, spirits’ songs, mountain waters’ offering ceremony, the *San of the Seven Old Men* (the stars of the Ursa Major constellation), the *San of the Five Human Stars*, and so on.

While most Buddhist literature was translated from the languages of India and Tibet, a major part of shamanist literature, apart from what has been written in Mongolian, is in versified, harmonious, mixed forms. Basically, it was of the nature of oral folk literature. The movement of shaman dance is closely related to ancient forms of Mongolian dances.

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10. Ts. Damdinsuren. *Mongolyn uran zokhiolyn tuukh/History of Mongolian Literature*. Ulaanbaatar, 1975.
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13. J. Tsooloo. He is a scholar with the most comprehensive and numerous materials about songs of shamans that were in Mongolia.
14. S. Dudam. He recently did praiseworthy research on topics related to the topic of shamanism, produced scholarly reports, and wrote articles.

15. V. Khaisag is a scholar well known in the field of Mongolian studies, an external member of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences. He collected and studied a great deal of material relating to Mongolian shamanism.
16. V. Diosegi. *Tofalaryn boo morgoliin garal undes/The Origin of Tofalar Shamanism*. Budapest, 1959. One year this scholar and I wrote a book about shamanism together.
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19. Kh. Buyanbat. *Mongolyn boogiin shashny uchir/The Causes of Mongolian Shamanist Religion*. Kholonbuir, 1982. This small book of 189 pages made an important contribution to research on Mongolian shamanism.
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45. Beginning from p. 312 in the work *History of the World's Religions*, published in Japan, he wrote quite extensively about shamanism.
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64. N. Ishjams. Work cited. p. 120.
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69. N. Ishjams. Work cited. p. 124.
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