Summary

A collection of articles "Shamanism and Early Religious Beliefs" (Ed. by D.Funk) opens a new series of publications "Ethnological Studies of Shamanism and Other Indigenous Spiritual Beliefs and Practices". Within the framework of this series some materials on shamanism, ethnological research on indigenous beliefs of "non-shamanist" societies, "classical" shamanism and "neo-shamanism", folk healing practices are planned to be published.

The first volume of this series is issued in honour of the famous specialist on the Altai shamanism, Doctor of History, professor Leonid Pavlovich Potapov. This fact, to a considerable extent, has defined the structure and the contents of this volume.

The initial, commemorative part of the book is represented by the letter of congratulations from the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology RAS addressed to L.P.Potapov as well as by the text of the interview of the director of the Institute Dr V.A.Tishkov on the problems of the ethnology in Russia, the history of Dr Potapov's research, his works in the field of shamanic studies etc. Within this part of the volume one may also find a list of Dr Potapov's works on the Altai shamanism and his first paper (1924) that contains description of his immpressions from the performance of the Altai shaman, Sapyr Tuianin.

In the second part of the book the articles devoted to the studies of shamanism and other indigenous religious beliefs. Most of articles, according to Dr Potapov's sphere of interest, is based upon the Sibirian-Asiatic materials.

In M.M.Balzer's paper "From Drums to Frying Pans: The Twists and Turns of shamanism in Sakha (Yakut) History", based on the many years of fieldwork, the process of survival of shamanism is analysed and some problems dealing with the struggle between the Soviet Regime and Yakut shamanist world-view (repressions against shamans) are tackled as well as reasons and possible consequences of the present revival of shamanism in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia).

V.N.Basilov in his article "Initiation in Sleep (Stroy of the Uzbek Musician" approaches the understanding of the link between the shamanism and the folk poetry and music on the Middle Asian material. Author demonstrates sheer shamanic character of the recorded story about the musician Alashukur's dream, that allows to illustrate psychological nature of the shamanic/story teller's illness. V.N.Basilov also shows the peculiarities of the beliefs connected with this kind of illness characteristic to the Middle Asia and influenced by Islamic religion as well as the cult of the saints.

E.P.Batianova in her work "Teleuts tell about shamans" offered some reconstructions of her field work recordings with stories about the Teleut shaman Markel, that illustrate the differences in the attitudes of the Teleut non-shamans towards their famous relatives and fellow villagers.

Ethnological analysis of the shamanism development, shaman's "vocation", effectiveness of the shamanic healing in undertaken in the article of S.I.Vainstein and N.P.Moskalenko, based upon the Tuva materials. Authors share the conception about the shaman's status as that of an "ill" person, considering shamans to be people with the specific hereditary changes in the brain structures. They suggest that during shamanizing there appears stabilization of certain activated dominant brain structures. In this work one may also find the characteristics of the contemporary "renaissance" of the Tuva shamanism.

N.L.Zhukovskaia in her article "On the Intersection of the Three Religions (history of the spiritual life in the Buriat settlement Tora)" brightly characterized some syncretic religious beliefs of the Buriats in which different elements of shamanism, Buddhism and Orthodox Chistianity form intricate patterns.

E.V.Revounenkova's article "Notes towards the modern terminology, connected to the Telengites shamanism" offers to readers' attention with the modern characteristics of the shamanizing persons as per beliefs of one of the Southern Altai ethnic groups. The author emphasises the fact of the preservation of shamanism till present in the Altai, inspite of the unfavourable conditions, namely in the XX century - life under the Soviet rule. Contrary to the opinion of the shamanism's decline, E.V.Revounenkova demonstrates the possibility of conducting research of some problems of shamanism on the basis of the present-day field materials.

Another work, based upon the Yakut culture - E.N.Romanov's article "Interpretation of the Yakut Shamanic Rites' symbolics (travel for the ill person's soul "Kut")". On the basis of analysis of seven recordings of shamanizing process and substantial field materials, the author offers some ideas so far as symbolic image of Chaos is concerned, as well as characteristics of some specimens of material culture, namely the Yakut shamanic drumstick.

In A.V.Smoliak's paper "Two Rites *Kasa*" the first ever detailed description of the unique Nanai's last commemotative feast is provided. The author's own field materials characterising the ritual process dated by the early XX centure are compared to the data in literature of that period and with the modern materials depicting modifications of this rite.

Z.P. Sokolova ("Pictures of the Dead among Khanty and Mansi") offers research findings based on the authors field material, analysis of the enormous amount of museums' exhibits and survey of substantial literature. This work contains excellent descriptions of the specimens and the pictures are typologically organised according to form and methods of keeping.

A small analitical paper by S.P.Tiukhteneva ("On Evoulution of the Cult of Mountains among Altai") returns readers back to the Altai materials. The author defines the basic stages of this cult's development. Her observations evidence a tendency of transformation of the mountains' cult to the cult of the spirit-owner of Altai and directed towards unification of religious beliefs connected with the process of further ethnic consolidation.

Previously unpublished recordings and pictures by the famous ethnologist of the early XX century A.V.Anokhin on shamanism, that were found in the Tomsk archive, are offered in D.A.Funk's paper "A.V.Anokhin's Materials on Shortzy shamanism". Publication contains translations and detailed comments on the micro-texts of the shamanizing processes. The article is accompanied by the drawings depicting the drums and drumsticks of shamans, picturing ways toward upper world. Isolated drawings were made by shamans themselves.

In V.I.Kharitonova's paper "Sexual-Erotic Element in the Magical-Mystical Practice (towards the problem of USC)" the author's concept of the basic principles defining paranormal capabilities of shamans, wizards, magicians and modern healers is introduced. The author distinguishes between the different stages of entering an unusual {altered} state of consciousness (USC) and compares these with the similar stages of the affected behaviour (shamanizing for instance), hypnosis, meditation, sexual-erotic acts etc. The resulting scheme correlates with different types of shamanizing, where some sexual-erotic elements take place. On this basis, the author demonstrates how the concrete stage of the shaman entering the USC affects the culturological aspect of the rite. The work is carried out in a complex manner with reference to folklore and ethnographic material, psychology, psychiatry as well as parapsychological knowledge. Experimental materials are also employed. In light of new data issues of different ecstatic states are analysed, as well as the issues of psychic health of shamans and extrasensory persons.

The last article of the volume "Traces of Shamanism in Hungarian Folk Beliefs" by M.Hoppal is devoted to the singling out some ancient shamanic traits in the Hungarian folk culture. On the basis of the materials used, the author reconstructs and describes a certain triade "drum-sieve-boat", each element of which presents an object utilised as a shaman's means of transportation during the symbolic journey of a shaman.

We hope that this collection would be useful for all those who are interested in the studies of shamanism and indiginous spiritual beliefs. It would be appreciated if readers would advise about their opinion and, possibly, some sources of funding for future work. Contributions in the form of papers and monographs are welcomed. Please send your requests for publication (with enclosed annotations) to the following address: 117334 Russia, Moscow, Leninsky prospect 32-a, Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology. Editorial Committee. Series "Ethnological Studies of Shamanism and Other Indigenous Spiritual Beliefs and Practices". (Пер. на англ. - А.М. Иванов).