

A woman in traditional Andean attire, including a red headscarf and a colorful, patterned shawl, stands in a grassy field. She has her eyes closed and her hands held out in a gesture of prayer or ritual. In the foreground, a fire burns brightly between two large rocks. The background shows a hazy, mountainous landscape under a blue sky.

An Encyclopedia of Shamanism

Volume One
A–M

Christina Pratt

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Christina Pratt



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Preface

An Encyclopedia of Shamanism is a two-volume reference work about shamanism in its many manifestations around the world. Shamanism refers to the activities and practices of the shaman, not to an ideology, religion, or formalized system of beliefs. Shamanism is a group of shared activities, practices, and experiences that link shamans and their unique understanding of the mechanics of our world.

This encyclopedia is composed of introductory essays that discuss ideas that are complex and fundamental to an understanding of shamanism, and entries that cover a range of topics that are relevant to shamanism in general or to shamanic cultures specifically. There are two types of entries: concept entries that provide a deeper understanding of concepts relative to shamanism cross-culturally and entries about peoples that provide a view into the way specific peoples practice shamanism.

All entries contain cross-references in bold to other entries for additional reading. Cross-references suggest further study for a broader understanding of concepts fundamental to the entry topic. They are also useful to expand one's investigation into the culture or practice described, as well as to compare and contrast practices around the world.

The essays and many entries conclude with a list of references. The list of references is limited to English language sources. These references serve two roles. First, they provide a guide for further reading and deeper investigation into the subject. Second, they represent the major works used as scholarly references for the entry itself. These same works are also included in the bibliography.

Acknowledgments

An Encyclopedia of Shamanism is the fruit of my training, experience, and research in the field, as well as the work of numerous scholars who have studied and written extensively on shamanism. I am indebted to those shamans and scholars whose activities have informed my research and I hope that I have represented their vision and ideas fully and accurately. Any shortcomings are my own. During the period of time that these volumes were written many excellent new sources were published in this field. Their exclusion as references in no way implies they were judged and found lacking. It was necessary as the sole author on a work of this scope to limit the times I could return to revise concepts already completed, no matter how superb the new resource.

I would like to acknowledge and thank my Ancestors and the helping spirits who stood behind me every day throughout the many years of this project. They were constant and inspiring, whether I could shape the words or not. I also want to acknowledge and offer a deep well of gratitude to the shamans themselves who held true to their practices through decades of persecution, ignorance, and poverty, preserving sacred ways and information for all of humanity with humor and without prejudice. I offer a special debt of gratitude to the Zulu *sangoma* women without whose talismanic blessing I would not have prevailed in this effort. Their shamanic gift, which I still wear today, enabled me to “to stand up in my place, be strong and forthright and speak these words in love and respect” and to connect with my Ancestors all the way back to the first people on earth.

I want to thank shaman, author, and teacher Malidoma Somé, the first initiated man and shaman I met in person, who taught me the true meaning of ritual and ceremony. I thank Michael Harner for founding the Foundation for Shamanic Studies, for the research and preservation of shamanism internationally supported by the Foundation, and for Harner's far-reaching introduction of shamanism to contem-

porary people before it was a fashionable or an acceptable course of study.

I thank Roger Rosen for the original idea of this book and for his unflagging support of this project. I am eternally grateful to Ann Hughes for the moral and spiritual support she offered every week like clockwork for the final two years of this project. Finally, I thank the talented staff at The Rosen Publishing Group for the painstaking work of bringing this book into manifestation in the world.

I send deep and heartfelt thanks to all of my students and clients who, through my work with them, have given me a deep and authentic understanding of shamanism. Without my experience with them this volume would be empty of the true spirit and practicality of shamanism. I send special gratitude for the blessing of my parents, Jim and Jacie Pratt, for their generous and ever-present support of this project and my work in the world. Finally, I give thanks to the rest of my family—Ian, Mary, Duncan, Olivia, Ed, and Dana—for their patience, support, and belief in this project over many years.

Christina Pratt
January 2007
Portland, Oregon

Introduction

“Non ideo negari quod est apertum; quia comprehendere non potest quod est occultum.”

Because the obscure cannot be understood,
does not mean the obvious should be denied.

— Latin proverb

A shaman is a healer who works in the invisible world through direct contact with “spirits.” The invisible world contains all aspects of our world that affect us but are invisible to us, including the spiritual, emotional, psychological, mythical, archetypal, and dream worlds. Shamans use an alternate state of consciousness to enter the invisible world to make changes in the energy found there in a way that directly affects specific changes needed here in the physical world. It is this direct contact with “spirits” through the use of altered states of consciousness and the movement of energy between the worlds that distinguishes the shaman from other practitioners.

The shaman’s power to help and to heal comes from the “spirits.” However, the word “spirit” is a misleading translation from the many words used by first peoples throughout the world to describe it. This sacred power/energy/spirit is called *mana* by the Maori and Melanesians, *orenda* or *oki* by the Iroquois, *wakan* by the Sioux, *coen* by the Athapaskan, *yok* by the Tlingit, and aspects of *manitou* by the Algonquian, to name a few. None of these words can be truly translated. This life-force-like power is inherent in all things. In the shaman’s world this power/energy/spirit is honored because it connects all things.

The shaman is concerned with the flow or pattern of energy and whether or not it is moving in a life-affirming direction. Energy itself is seen as neutral. It is not seen as good or evil. Energy can be patterned for a purpose and set in motion. The shaman is concerned with the intent behind the energy or the task on which the energy has been sent. The shaman discerns whether the intent is benevolent or malevolent. This will determine what the shaman must do. Shamans are looking for the root of fear, not evil. They look for the telltale disharmony or dissonance fear creates and act to bring the energies into harmony and balance, creating a harmonious connection between the visible and invisible worlds.

Shamans, both ancient and contemporary, are artists whose medium is the energy of the visible world. Ritual is their art. They draw on the energies of the universe and reweave them through trance, song, dance, and the power of intention to create unique healing rituals. Each shaman’s practice and methods for creating healing rituals is drawn from their mastery of altered states of consciousness, trance experiences, life experiences, their character, their temperament, and their own personal gifts and talents.

Shamanism is not a religion. The great religions of humankind are revealed religions. At their core are teachings that were revealed at some point in the past and are believed to be the word of whom or what that religion calls God. At the core of these religions is a book, such as the Bible or the Koran. An encyclopedia about any one of these great religions would explain or interpret the book. There is no book at the core of shamanism, no single revelation. There is no single belief system nor single god to describe. There is only the direct experience, again and again, between the shaman and the Great Mystery in the service of others.

Shamanism is a reality that is experienced. This means we cannot accurately say, “shamans believe this,” in the way we can say, “Zen Buddhists believe this.” We can only say shamans do *this* and in turn *that* happens. We cannot say shamans believe in doing *this*, and believe that *that* will happen. It may seem a subtle distinction but in that distinction lies the power of shamanism.

Shamanism is about direct personal experience and practical application. Shamans and the people in shamanic cultures do not *believe* in their practices and the

spirits. They experience them. That is the point of entering altered states of consciousness: to experience the world of spirit and the reality behind our world of physical form. It would be more accurate to call it a “lifeway” than a belief or faith. For example, you do not believe you are a man or a woman, you simply are and that shapes how you see the world. Similarly, a shaman does not believe he or she is a shaman. A shaman simply is a shaman, and that shapes how he or she sees the world.

The practice of shamanism is a living art. The forms change, evolve, and morph as is necessary to meet the needs of the people. Yet the functions within the forms have not changed over time or between cultures. It is precisely this consistency and adaptability that makes shamanism an effective healing practice today.

The challenge in explaining shamanism is much like the challenge in attempting to explain art. For example, were one to describe how a painter mixes his or her paints, the sequence of brush strokes, and the inspiration for the subject, the essence of the painting would still not necessarily be revealed. Describing disembodied details about shamanism does not capture the magic and the heartfelt power present in the experience of shamanic ritual.

There are many books available that gather facts, field research, and stories about shamans and effectively argue the existence and effectiveness of shamanism. This is not the aim of this encyclopedia. *An Encyclopedia of Shamanism* is based on the assumption that shamanism is a valid healing modality that is effectively practiced throughout the world. It is my aim to present information about shamans and their practices so that the reader is able to understand both through the eyes of the shaman. To this end, I will define shamanic concepts and concepts from other fields in this light. In doing so, I hope to provide a thorough and practical resource for contemporary people, contemporary shamanic healers, and practitioners of core shamanism.

Traditional shamanism in this book refers to shamanic practices before contact with the Western world. For some shamanic cultures contact with the Western world occurred thousands of years ago and for others it was only decades. Contemporary shamanism in this book includes the post-contact shamanic practices of indigenous and nonindigenous peoples today. Where possible the culture’s traditional word for shaman is used to remind us that all shamanic peoples have their own terms for shaman.

The spirits and the related shamanic practices are equally available to men and women, to all races, and without regard for sexual orientation. To stress this point I have used the cumbersome he/she pronouns throughout this encyclopedia except in those cultures where the shamans are traditionally of one or the other gender.

To understand shamanism through the eyes of the shaman, the reader must imagine what it would be like to live in a world where there is no separation between the physical and spiritual, no disconnection between humanity and God. The reader must imagine life before a concept of Ego. The mindset of the shaman is fundamentally different from that of a contemporary person. The introductory essays serve to assist readers in making the leap into another way of seeing the world. It will take some imagination for the reader to open his or her mind to other ways of knowing and to see as the shaman sees.

The entries provide specific information on particular concepts and the practices of shamanic peoples. It would be easy to oversimplify these foreign concepts and group shamanic concepts with somewhat related contemporary concepts to make the reader feel more comfortable with strange ideas. In doing so, however, we would lose the diversity of cultures, the complexity, and the uniqueness of shamans. Instead, I have defined concepts from the shamanic perspective in the hope that the reader will be able to see these shamans and their practices through new eyes.

Approximately fifty cultures are represented in detail in this encyclopedia. The same questions are discussed about each culture. What are the origin myths, the

essential shamanic cosmology, and the cultural symbols? What are the traditional mystical events or calling to a shamanic life, the rituals of initiation, and the training? What are the types or depth of trance used and who are the primary helping spirits that work with the shaman? What are the divination practices and tools? How is illness defined and what are the healing practices, rituals, and ceremonies? What is the role of storytelling, music, musicians, healing songs, instruments, dance, dancers, and art in healing? What are the uses and significance of the shaman's tools, paraphernalia, and costumes? Finally, what is unique about shamanism in this culture?

Shamanism is not routine. As soon as you touch it, even intellectually, the spirits touch you. Shamanism demands more of all of us, more humor, more imagination, more intelligence, and more room for the Trickster in all things.

“The shaman’s path is unending. I am an old, old man and still a nunutsi (baby) standing before the mystery of the world.”

— Don José Matsúwa, Huichol *mara’akame* (shaman)

SHAMANISM

“Because it is not an organized religion as such, but rather a spiritual practice, shamanism cuts across all faiths and creeds, reaching deep levels of ancestral memory. As a primal belief system, which preceded established religion, it has its own universal symbolism and cosmology, inhabited by beings, gods and totems, who display similar characteristics although they appear in various forms, depending on their places of origin.”

—John Matthews, *The Celtic Shaman*

The word “shamanism” does not express an ideology, like Communism or Buddhism, which are formalized systems of beliefs. Shamanism refers to the activities of the shaman and is used because these activities are found all over the world with a surprisingly high degree of similarity, given the normal variance over time expected in aspects of human culture and the natural variation among shamans. Anthropologist and author of *The Shaman*, Piers Vitebsky, who has over twenty years of field research with shamans, explains that the word “shamanism” is misleading because shamans and their communities do not isolate shamanic ideas and practices into an ideology or doctrine as is implied by the -ism suffix. Instead, the shaman’s beliefs and activities coexist freely with other more formalized systems of religion and government. The shaman’s worldview grows and changes to meet the community’s needs and adapts to the spirit energies available in the environment.

Shamanism is not a system of faith, either. Rather, it is a group of common activities and experiences that link shamans and their unique experience of the world. The shaman and the people they serve value shamanism because it works; it meets their needs in practical ways. What shamans experience in the ecstatic states of trance that are necessary for their work is as real to them and the people they serve as the houses they live in, the rivers they swim in, or the conversations they have with their spouses. These experiences reinforce and develop the shamans understanding of the universe as interrelated and interdependent energy vibrations and patterns. Their experience of life—both physical and spiritual—is also influenced and expanded by their experience in journeys and altered states of consciousness.

A System of Experience—The Elements of Shamanism

The shaman is distinguished from all other practitioners by his or her ability to enter into an ecstatic trance state, which frees the shaman’s soul to travel to realms of the invisible world. The shaman’s soul travel is referred to as journeying. Where shamans go in their journeys, and how they access their journey state, are important aspects of shamanism. It is also important to understand that where they go only matters because of the helping spirits the shaman meets there. It is the relationship with the helping spirits that gives the shaman access to the power necessary to create change in the physical world. Furthermore, it is not just the knowledge of how to access a powerful spirit that is important, but the ability to develop a long-term relationship with that power or spirit and to work with it again and again.

In *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, a classic study of shamanism, author Mircea Eliade describes five characteristics central to shamanism that are similar across cultures to a degree greater than can be explained by dissemination through human contact (see essay on page xvii: The Origins of Shamanism). First, shamans work in altered states in which they experience environments different than physical reality and interact with a vast array of beings who only have form in those environments. Shamans’ altered or trance states enable them to travel into the Upperworld of the spirit realm to work with the spirits of the Sky, the Celestial realm, and the Supreme Being. The metaphors used to describe these journeys in oral

traditions are flying with (or as) a bird, crossing a Rainbow Bridge, and climbing to the Upperworld on the branches of the Tree of Life or through the mountain at the center of the world.

Second, shamans' trance states also enable them to travel in the Lowerworld to work with the earth, animals, and other spirit beings found there and to visit the Land of the Dead. The metaphors used to describe these journeys in oral traditions are climbing down the roots of the Tree of Life, swimming down (or riding down) in a spirit boat, or entering through a cave or the base of the mountain at the center of the world.

Third, in these various realms shamans report the presence of helping spirits with whom they talk and interact. These helping spirits provide protection and guidance on the shamans' journeys and empower them in their ritual work.

Fourth, shamans often work with the spirits of their ancestors, honoring them for their wisdom and guidance. Shamans are distinguished from others of their communities by the depth and degree of their relationships with their ancestors. They often form working relationships with the spirits of a deceased ancestor as helping spirits in their shamanic practices.

Fifth, shamans' experiences with places and beings from non-ordinary reality help them to develop the understanding that the immaterial soul is found in all things in every material form of reality. This element of shamanism is called the immaterial soul. The immaterial soul is responsible for both conscious life and every organic development of life. The shaman enters into a working relationship with this immaterial soul in both ordinary and non-ordinary reality through his or her journey or trance. As a belief system this would be called animism; however, for shamans it is not simply what they believe, but the way they experience life. These five characteristics describe a coherent set of activities and an understanding of the nature of the Universe that are shared by shamans.

The Journey

The shaman is distinguished by his or her ability to journey. However, the capacity to journey, though the basic tool of the shaman, is not enough to explain the power in the art of shamanism. It is the capacity to act with intention while in the journey that makes shamanism effective and distinguishes the shaman's work from journeys of novices. Human beings, in general, are capable of reaching altered states of consciousness and of accessing many of the same realms of non-ordinary reality that the shaman does. Shamans, however, take action in these realms. The shaman creates change in the physical world by crafting a solution at the source of the problem in the spirit world. The shaman gives his or her experiences in the invisible realms meaning and shares them with others through metaphor, narration (storytelling), and ritual experiences.

What occurs in the journey, or trance state, is the essence of shamanism, and it is completely unchoreographed. However, the key elements—the shaman, the helping spirits, the patient, and the presenting problem—always appear as energies in the invisible world. During the journey in the invisible world, the shaman and his or her helping spirits must improvise to bring balance to the shifting dynamics of the patient's situation. Shamans learn to understand the invisible realm they are traveling in and develop the skills necessary to work within that realm. They often endure painful and frightening transformations, undergo arduous training, and make deep personal sacrifices to obtain this knowledge and to build long term relationships with helping spirits. The shamans' actions are inspired by their helping spirits which are made up on the spot and are never the same twice.

How the shaman enters his or her trance state depends on culture, geography, the actual needs of the session, and personal skill. Actions, such as drumming, singing, rattling, making offerings, and dancing, are tools for entering the trance state. They are the technology of the shamanic healing process and are repeated in every session.

The Shaman's Art

The invisible realm provides access to the sacred, to the Great Mystery, to the Unknown. These words are our human attempt to name our Kosmos (see entry on page 262), which is ever evolving and inherently creative. The technology of the journey gives the shaman the ability to act on the infinite, creative potential of the Kosmos. Each journey is an act of innovation, in which the shaman draws on the energies of the Kosmos to meet the needs of the patient. Whether the energy retrieved is information or a lost soul, each journey is an act of creativity, and often ecstasy.

What we see the shaman doing on a journey is not what the shaman is actually doing to bring about a change or cure. Even in community rituals, where much of what the shaman does is acted out in the physical world, the power of the ritual—the way it creates an opening for spirit to intervene in the lives of humans—occurs in the invisible world. How the shaman creates that opening is the art, and that is not found in his or her actions here, but in his or her actions in the invisible world.

The art of the shaman is in his or her ability to isolate the true source of the patient's problem, to innovate while in trance, and to give meaning to what he or she experiences in the invisible realm. Some shamans are more talented than others; some are simply better trained. As with all artists, the talented, but untrained, are occasionally brilliant and usually inconsistent and undependable. Conversely, the trained but untalented are consistent, though rarely inspired or innovative. The most powerful and effective shamans are those who have trained their natural talent. Shamanism is best understood as an evolving, esoteric art and the shaman's life as a path of mastery.

Ecstasy and Trance

In trance the shaman is connected to all things and in communication with spirit when he or she is working. Without that contact with the transcendental source, the event is not shamanic. Shamanism is often referred to as techniques of ecstasy. Ecstasy can be defined as the experience of Connectedness to All Things or Oneness. However, the techniques of the shaman are not so much techniques of ecstasy as they are techniques for working while in ecstasy. Ecstasy is not the end, but the means by which the shaman accomplishes the services provided to others. Shamanism is a practical application of the potential in mystical states of ecstasy.

Shamans utilize a range of altered states of consciousness to interact with the spirit world. Shamanic methods involve altered states ranging from the journey trance, during which the shaman's soul leaves the body and moves into the spirit world, to the embodiment trance, during which the shaman invokes a helping spirit within his or her own body, allowing the spirit to work on the patient through the shaman's physical form. The journey trance is often called "soul flight." It is used traditionally for divination (retrieving information from spirit), power retrieval (reestablishing the personal connection with spirit), soul retrieval (retrieving a lost part of the soul), and psychopomp work (escorting the souls of the deceased to the Land of the Dead). The embodiment trance is used traditionally for divination, cleansing (returning energy to the spirit world), and extractions (returning energetic intrusions to the spirit world). In practice, the shaman can move as is necessary between varying depths of these trance states, as well as between the two types of trance states.

Trance is the technology of shamanism. The type of trance—whether the shaman enters into a trance state of soul flight or spirit embodiment—and the depth of trance are determined by what the shaman needs to accomplish for the patient. What the

shaman does while in trance and where in non-ordinary reality the shaman goes to do it are also determined by need. Shamans do what is necessary and what works, always based on the guidance of helping spirits with whom they have developed a working relationship during their training and initiation.

When presented with a problem, the shaman enters a trance and asks for both a diagnosis of the true nature of the problem and a prescription for what actions need to be taken to restore balance to the situation. Diagnostic practices are highly individualized shaman to shaman and may change as a shaman matures in his or her practice. Most shamans use a trance state of some depth—either a soul journey to communicate with spirit in the spirit world or an embodiment trance—to invite a spirit to the physical world to communicate. Prescriptions may involve the shaman's actions in the trance state, as well as ordinary reality remedies like herbs, bodywork, or behaviors for the patient to engage in or abstain from and/or spiritual remedies such as rituals, offerings, and sacrifices. The shaman then carries out the prescribed actions and/or directs the individual or community to fulfill the prescribed treatment. At this stage the shaman may also direct the patient to seek remedies offered by other systems, such as Western medicine.

The trance portion of each shamanic healing ritual proceeds in a unique way based on the spirit's guidance. In some cultures, like the !Kung of Africa, the shaman experiences a relationship with a special energy, not special spirits. This energy and the energy of helping spirits function similarly, providing the guidance and power to innovate cures.

Each shamanic healing session involves several steps that are repeated session to session, which occur before and after the trance is induced. The actions that effect change occur in non-ordinary reality during the trance. The general structure of a shamanic healing ritual, or seance, begins with the shaman clarifying the intention of the ritual. Next, he or she creates the sacred space with blessings, prayers, or offerings. Finally, he or she opens the sacred space to spirit by invoking the trance state. The diagnosis, prescription, and healing work occur in trance. When the work in trance is finished, the shaman comes out of trance and completes the ritual by closing the ritual space. The shaman then clarifies any ordinary reality remedies that were prescribed in the diagnostic phase of the trance that remain to be carried out.

Individual Healing

The actions taken by the shaman while in trance involve either retrieving some form of energy from the spirit world to return to the patient or removing some form of energy from the patient and returning it to the spirit world. Many sessions involve some combination of both. The forms of energy retrieved for individuals are information, spirit help, or the patient's lost soul or soul part. The energies removed from individuals range from simple energies that need to be cleansed, to more coherent energy patterns, such as magical darts or obsessive emotions that need to be extracted. These energies could be highly complex patterns or spirit forms that must be exorcised, such as when the shaman acts as a psychopomp, conveying the soul of the deceased to the Land of the Dead. In this complex act, the shaman assures that the journey is safe and complete as he or she is returning the energy of the soul to the spirit world where it now belongs.

Community Healing

The forms of energy retrieved for communities through the preparation and execution of specific rituals are the spirit of places, such as a well or a rock formation, or the spirit of things, such as the crops or power objects. The purpose of community rituals may be to restore balance with an element, such as earth or fire. The ritual might be to find new resonance with the Ancestors or with some other being in the spirit world. The ritual might do so in order to honor with celebrations or ceremonies,

or to make an offering with the sacrifice of crops or animals (in some cultures), or to remedy transgressions against family, community, or the spirits. The energies removed from the community are most often the spirits of the dead who have not crossed over in due time, malevolent spirits who arrived of their own accord or were sent by sorcery, or the malevolent spirits found in places and things.

Traditional Shamanism

Traditionally shamanism was used to maintain a mutually healthy equilibrium between people and their environment, both physical and spiritual. The shaman met the needs of the community by escorting the souls of the dead on their return to the spirit world (psychopomp) because souls of the dead that linger are troublesome to the living. The shaman assured successful hunts by negotiating in non-ordinary reality with the Master or Mistress of the Beasts and conducting the prescribed rituals (hunting magic). The shaman guided the restoration of balance between the community and the animal world, spirit world, or the natural environment by creating the necessary rituals as guided by their helping spirits (divination). This task included determining if sacrifices were needed and of what type they should be. Community rituals sometimes focused on the healing of one individual when that individual's lack of balance led them to act in ways that disrupted the harmonious functioning of the community. The needs of the community varied continuously. Through the relationship with his or her helping spirits, the shaman was able to create new rituals to meet those changing needs.

Traditionally, the shaman was available to meet the healing needs of individuals as well. The shaman gained information from the spirit world through divination. He or she retrieved spirit help, good fortune, or *suerte* (luck) from the spirit world through power retrievals; retrieved soul parts when they were lost or stolen; cured illnesses caused by energetic intrusions with cleansings, sucking, or other forms of extraction; and recycled misplaced energy back into the spirit world through cleansings and rituals. Healing rituals often lasted throughout the night and the shaman was usually available at any time on any day.

Contemporary Shamanism

Shamanism has changed over time with the changing needs of communities and individuals. While in the past one of the shaman's primary roles was hunting magic, today shamans help people with professional concerns involving careers, success, and recognition. Career issues are perhaps a contemporary version of the ancient need to know "where to hunt" and "when to plant." These issues arise from the fundamental question, "How do I survive?" The need to survive has not changed, nor has the function of the shaman in answering the question of how to survive. What remains the same is the shaman's use of trance and the relationship with the helping spirits.

The outward forms of shamanic rituals have also changed over time, in response to changes in people's needs that are brought about by the influence of changing cultures, conquering governments, and dominant religious systems. Variation in ritual form is seen between cultures, primarily because shamanic work looks different with different spirits. Geography, mythology, indigenous flora and fauna, and dominant weather patterns are some of the many factors that influence the kinds of spirits with whom the shaman can work. Changes in ritual structure are also influenced by the shamans themselves, their particular gifts, and the practical fact that each journey is different from the last.

Contemporary people turn to shamans for essentially the same reasons their ancestors did, for practical and pragmatic solutions to the problems of everyday life. They believe that the solution lies beyond the ordinary physical-world dimensions of the problem. This belief may be culturally held or it may actually be contrary to the

individual's beliefs, but the shaman is sought out because all other conventional avenues of help have failed. Some people report an uncanny feeling or intuition that seeking a shaman is the right thing for them to do, though they know nothing of shamans or shamanism. How the shaman creates change is determined by need and varies case by case, as with traditional shamans. The result of shamanic healing rituals is to restore the integrity of the individual's soul (lifeforce), to restore the harmony and balance between the individual and the environment, or to restore the individual's energy (or power).

Contemporary shamans address a full range of health issues from the common cold to cancer, depression, fertility, and longevity; family problems, including issues that arise between spouses, parents and children, in-laws, and dead family members. Shamans can address the need for harmony between the individual and his or her social support system, both alive and dead; professional concerns; and the weather, though today the request for better weather may be out of concern for a sporting event as often as it is for the well-being of crops. Shamans also perform ceremonies of openings for new places or events such as roads, bridges, homes, maiden voyages of boats, as well as the closings of old spaces.

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THE ORIGINS OF SHAMANISM

The exact origin of shamanism is unknown. However, shamanlike figures appear in the art and stories of ancient peoples from all continents. The early presence of shamans may be depicted in the cave paintings at Lascaux, which carbon dating places between 14,000 and 12,600 B.C.E. We will never know for certain the intention of the artists at Lascaux. However, if we view the ancient walls with a knowledge of shamanism, we see a shaman lying in front of a wounded auroch (a wild ox, now extinct), an ancient symbol of the untamable creative power of the universe. The human figure is prone, a common body position for the shaman's trance. His penis is erect, indicating an ecstatic state and a bird perches on his staff, indicating a helping spirit, a messenger, or the shaman's soul in flight.

Similar images of male and female shamans, with the drums and rattles used to induce their trance states, are represented in petroglyphs (rock carvings) and pictographs (rock paintings and drawings) from the same time period. They are found in northern Spain (Altamira), southern France (Trois Freres, Teyat, Dordogne), the former Soviet Union (Lake Onega, eastern Siberia), Africa, and southern China. These images record a relationship between the life of ancient peoples and the use of ecstatic altered states. It was a relationship important enough to be preserved in stone.

These ancient people knew that Nature lives by her own will and that she continues to do so, cycle after cycle, with or without human beings. Human beings knew that if they wanted Nature to alter her course for their benefit—to sacrifice for them—they must be prepared to sacrifice in return. One of the shaman's original roles was to journey into the spirit world to speak with the Mistress or Master of the Beasts to negotiate the appropriate sacrifices with the spirits. This has been called hunting magic. Nature's sacrifice of the animals necessary for human survival was exchanged for human offerings and ceremonies that honored the departing animal spirits. These ceremonial observances allowed the humans to continue to live in a dynamic balance of mutual sacrifice with their environment, both physical, e.g., not overhunting a species, and spiritual, e.g., not offending the animal spirits whose help they needed. The success of the hunt was essential for survival, particularly in areas such as the Arctic where little else grows. Without the ongoing negotiations of the shaman's hunting magic, the oral traditions tell us that game grew scarce or the avenging spirits of the animals wreaked havoc on humans, creating illness and accidents.

The origins of shamanism exist in an extremely wide distribution—from Siberia to North America, South America, Australia, Asia, and Africa—and show remarkable similarities between cultures where there does not appear to be any direct human link. Scholars have struggled to account for these characteristics with the history of human migration and diffusion (the natural spread of linguistic or cultural elements from one area, tribe, or people to others through contact) from a common ancestor. For migration alone to explain shamanism, the diffusion of these skills would have had to begin at least 20,000 years ago. Within such a long period of time, language, social structure, and political regimes vary to significant degrees. Shamanic practices have varied much less than these other aspects of human culture over the same time period. It is difficult to explain why.

Simultaneous origin (the idea that different cultures on different continents developed similar practices without contact with each other) is considered by some scholars as a partial explanation for the wide distribution of shamans and the remarkable similarities in shamanic practices. Shamanism draws on innate human abilities to access altered states of consciousness and is therefore potentially accessible to all people. Roger Walsh, doctor, philosopher, and scholar of shamanism, suggests that shamanism was discovered and rediscovered at different times by different peoples when they came into similar times of extreme need. It is reasonable to

assume that humans with the same innate abilities to access the same source of information in the spirit world will return from trance states with similar answers for solving similar problems. Variations in form arise from interpretation (personal and cultural) and the spirits of the geography (the mountain spirits of the Andes versus the underwater spirits of the Arctic world). However the essence is the same. As the innate abilities of gifted individuals developed into the skills of a shaman, the shamanic role, rituals, and states of consciousness were then maintained in that culture. In this way different aspects of the shaman's practices were developed to different degrees within different individuals and societies.

Though human contact does not explain the degree of similarities in shamanism, it clearly affected the diffusion of shamanic practices and paraphernalia. Shamanic practices were essential to the survival and well-being of early humankind. It is safe to assume that in the uncertain and dangerous process of migration, people brought their shamanism with them. There is evidence in language, ritual structure, and the perceived structure (landscape and population) of the spirit world that suggests that people who came in contact with each other borrowed and shared these things between cultures.

The oral traditions of shamanic peoples offer another perspective on the origin of shamanism. In many diverse cultures there are stories of the heroic First Shaman, a being who existed on earth in a time when the animals and humans communicated in the same language and shamans could move between the physical and spiritual worlds in both body and spirit. The origin of the First Shaman's power was in the spirit world, though the specific source varied culture by culture, with some citing the Creator of All Things as the origin of shamanic power and others an animal messenger or the stars. Regardless of form, the spirit teacher, in an act of compassion inspired by humanity's need for healing, guidance, and survival, taught the First Shaman the trance techniques, songs, remedies, and dances used for healing and divination. In this way shamanism is believed to have come to humans from the spirit world.

Shamanism—what it is and how it is practiced—is defined by the helping spirits who work through the shaman and the needs of the people the shaman works for. Therefore, shamanism is defined by the earth, by the geography of the place where people are living. The reason for this is twofold. First, shamans work with the spirits of Nature, and the physical attributes of Nature—the flora, fauna, waterways, land formations, and weather patterns—indicate which spirits are found there. Second, the physical attributes of Nature greatly affect the survival needs of humans living in a place, which in turn determine the needs brought to the shaman. Shamanism arises out of the relationships of human beings to the land and the universe.

Geography influences how shamanism develops in a region for several reasons. All over the globe, geographic conditions affect how a culture changes or remains the same. They define the needs of the people, which define the questions they bring to the shaman. How people survive in their geography affects their beliefs about the structure of the spirit world and their needs for the shaman's intervention with that spirit world. For example, in areas where soil conditions and lack of water did not allow planting, cultures of nomadic pastoralists developed, such as the Evenki of north Siberia or the horsemen of Hungary. Nomadic life presents different survival issues than agricultural life.

Geography also defines the helping spirits available to a great degree. In part, the familiar geography supplies the metaphors that shamans use to describe and interpret the energy patterns they experience in the spirit world. However, this does not explain the power shamans draw from the presence of Mount Cotacachi in Ecuador, lightning in the canyonlands of North America, or Lake Baikal in southern Siberia.

Nor does it explain how shamans work with the spirits of animals that do not exist in their environment. It is not clear whether the appearance of these foreign animal spirits is due to diffusion or the introduction of these helping spirits by a culture that experienced that animal, or that the helping spirit is simply present in the spirit world.

Geography also influences how shamans enter their trance state. Shamans are practical; they use what works. Where hide drumheads can be kept tuned, drums are often used to induce trance. Where the climate is too humid for drums, click sticks and hollowed logs are used for percussion. Psychotropic plants are also often used to induce trance. In climates that are very cold, singing and dancing, which warm the body, are often used to induce trance. From a shaman's point of view, there is no reason to struggle with a form that is not suited to the geography when each geography provides at least one way to enter trance.

Human survival is intimately linked to our ability to maintain a balanced relationship with the environment. For shamanic peoples the environment is experienced simultaneously as material and immaterial, physical and spiritual. Shamanism arises from the shaman's mediations between the material and immaterial aspects of the environment to assure successful hunting, healing, safe passage in birth and death, and sound guidance in all other aspects of human life.

Humanity's needs range from the basics of physical survival and well-being to the existential needs of the soul. The shaman's ability to communicate and negotiate with the animals, the weather, and the land was essential to meet these needs. In each stage of human development some needs, such as locating water sources, healing, and community, have remained the same while others have evolved. Prehistoric man needed success in hunting and gathering. Nomadic cultures needed the location of good pastures and the knowledge of how not to overgraze. Farming cultures needed rainfall, sunshine, protection from floods, as well as information on how to rotate crops and when to leave fields fallow. As people's activities changed from hunting to herding and from gathering to horticulture (small-scale planting or gardening) to agriculture (large-scale farming), their needs changed and their shamanism changed in form. As humans change their way of life, they change their relationship with the natural world and their demands on it.

These changes are not simplistic because the relationship between things is both apparent and symbolic. For example, the body and spirit of a hunted animal had to be shown respect and honored as a being and as part of the wealth the universe offered. The spirits of hunted animals were often given offerings of food or alcohol or were escorted to the land of the dead as human souls were. In contrast, domesticated animals, though honored as beings, were considered an extension of a person's wealth. Domesticated animals were offered as sacrifices while one made sacrifices to hunted animals.

One aspect of shamanism remained consistent through all of these changes—the shaman continued to access altered states of consciousness to meet the needs of the people. As the community's needs changed, the shaman's questions changed and the guidance of the helping spirits changed accordingly. However, the technology of the shaman, the entry into altered states of consciousness to ask questions and receive answers, remained constant. For example, shamans continue to use trance to retrieve lost souls, though the reasons a person's soul leaves and the symptoms the loss creates have changed over time.

Human needs and corresponding forms of shamanism have changed since the cave walls of Lascaux were painted. However the shaman's use of trance states to meet peoples' needs has remained constant. There is a reason our ancestors bothered to paint and carve shamans into stone. Perhaps that reason was because shamanism works. It allowed our ancestors to survive, to adapt, and to thrive.

And maybe it was more than survival that inspired their art. Perhaps it was the artist's intention to record the techniques of ecstasy because humans have a basic need to come into the presence of the sacred. Perhaps the cave paintings were created to remind us how to get home.

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THE ORIGIN OF THE WORD “SHAMAN”

The word “shaman” (SHAH-mahn, pl. shamans) comes from an oral tradition. Therefore, the exact origin of the word is unknown. Anthropologists suggest that it comes from the peoples of northern Asia and is most closely related to *saman* of the Evenki (Tungus-speaking hunters and reindeer herders from the Altai Mountains of Siberian Russia). It is also related to *saman* of the Mongols and to the Turkish *kan* and *xam*. The Evenki word *saman* comes from the Tunguso-Manchurian verb *sa*, meaning “to know” or “to heat oneself.” It derives from the Vedic, *sram*, also meaning “to heat oneself” and *sramana*, meaning “ascetic.” *Saman* is most often translated as “one who is excited, moved, raised,” which refers to the shaking of the shaman’s body that occurs when he or she embodies spirits while in trance. As the term *saman* spread south to China and northeast to Japan it continued to be used to refer specifically to practitioners who utilize spirit embodiment, or intentional possession, to serve their clients and community.

Saman is also translated as “to burn up, to set on fire.” This is a reference to both the feverishness of inspiration from the trance state within which the shaman works and his or her mastery of inner fire. Mastery of inner fire is an essential part of the training of shamans in the northern Asiatic region. It involves the expert understanding, manipulation, and regulation of energies within the body.

Ake Hultkratz, an authority on native peoples of the northern hemisphere, believes that *saman* is related to another Tungus word, which stands for “a social functionary who, with the help of guardian spirits, attains ecstasy in order to create a rapport with the supernatural world on behalf of his group members.” These individuals, who served the community through controlled trance states, are found in many cultures and in the history of all cultures. Each culture has a word from its own language to denote the individual who, through ecstatic trance states, enters alternate states of consciousness (relative to the state in which he or she usually lives) and returns with information or energies from which the community can benefit.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Westerners began using “shaman” to describe not only the specialists described above, but also and inaccurately the medicine men, sorcerers, magicians, witch doctors, and anyone who appeared to be in contact with spirits. This general use of the word “shaman” dilutes the meaning of the word, which arose to describe a group of specialists who continue to practice among us today.

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THE SHAMAN

A shaman is a specific type of healer who uses a trance state, or alternate state of consciousness, to enter the invisible world. The invisible world a shaman enters is made up of all aspects of our world that affect us but which we cannot see, including the spiritual, emotional, mental, mythical, archetypal, and dream worlds. Once in the invisible world, the shaman makes a change in the energy found there so that it directly affects a need here in the physical world such as healing, hunting magic, weather. Furthermore, the shaman learns what energy to change, and how to change it in the invisible world through direct contact with spirits. Spirits are coherent energy patterns with presence found in the invisible world. They may have form—animal, plant, mountain, ancestor, deity, or element; they may be formless; or the spirit may be the presence of the universe as a being, often explained as That Which Created God. It is this direct contact with spirit and the use of the trance state that distinguishes the shaman from other practitioners.

Anthropologists and other scholars have not come to agreement on what criteria define the shaman, other than the mastery of altered states of consciousness. Broad, narrow, and mid-range definitions will be discussed below. They are presented with the understanding that listing criteria does not really explain how a shaman creates the powerful rituals that mend our souls. The definition of shaman that best serves the primary purpose of this book is a mid-range definition. Mid-range definitions attempt to differentiate shamans from practitioners who use altered states of consciousness but do not heal clients, and from other practitioners who heal clients but do not use altered states of consciousness to do so. Broad definitions often include those who use trance, but do not heal. Narrow definitions exclude many shamans and can be impractical when they obfuscate our ability to recognize the range of altered states of consciousness a shaman utilizes in a normal day of practice.

We will work from the following mid-range definition of shaman.

The shaman is a practitioner who has developed the mastery of:

1. accessing altered states of consciousness, controlling themselves while moving in those states, and returning to an ordinary state of consciousness at will;
2. mediating between the needs of the spirit world and those of the physical world in a way that can be understood by the community, and whose mastery of the above is used
3. to serve the needs of the community that cannot be met by practitioners of other disciplines such as physicians, psychiatrists, priests, and leaders.

This mid-range definition varies from the often-cited narrow definition of Eliade's *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Essential to Eliade's definition is distinguishing "spirit flight," the particular altered states of consciousness in which the shaman leaves his or her body and travels into the spirit world, as the only valid shamanic trance state. However, within a single healing session shamans often move between this type of journeying trance state and a possessionlike trance state in which, in contrast to spirit flight, they embody the helping spirits here in the physical world. Therefore, I have included altered states of consciousness within which the shaman embodies helping spirits as equally valid shamanic trance states. With this addition, the mid-range definition above is compatible with Eliade's definition.

Eliade further narrowed his definition of shaman by presenting other criteria which I have not included because these criteria apply in general to shamans of northern Asia and not to shamans of equal power and ability in other regions. The criteria in question state that shamans:

1. are masters of fire;
2. experience dismemberment and resurrection initiations;
3. have animal guardians.

For the following reasons the criteria listed above present a definition of shaman so narrow that it no longer supports the cross-cultural nature of this encyclopedia.

Mastery of fire, for example, is an essential step in training to become a shaman in some cultures, but not in all. It may be used to validate the depth of a shaman's trance state. Mastery of fire, however, is used in many cultures for reasons that have nothing to do with shamans. For example, in the traditional cultures of China, Sri Lanka, and India, non-shamans walk on fire in an act of faith or to demonstrate their integrity. Similarly, hundreds of contemporary Westerners walk on fire for personal empowerment in weekend workshops. Mastery of fire does not make any of these traditional or contemporary people shamans.

Another aspect of mastery of fire in the training of some shamans is developing magical inner heat from cold. This is an essential step in training Inuit or Japanese shamans. However, it is not necessary for the Midewiwin shamans of the Great Lakes region of North America or the Maori of New Zealand. In addition, there are other belief systems, such as those of Tibetan monks and Indian ascetics, that value developing magical inner heat (mystical heat) as part of their training processes. These practices do not necessarily develop shamans.

A dismemberment dream or vision in which the shaman is taken apart in some way by helping spirits is common in many shamanic traditions around the globe. However it is not essential to becoming a shaman in all cultures. For the Ammassalik Eskimos, the dismemberment occurs in a waking vision experience that is essential to becoming a shaman in that culture. Other cultures, such as the Yamana of South America, have highly involved initiations and training that do not directly involve dismemberment as the initiatory metaphor for death and rebirth. Dismemberment may not appear at all in cultures where the shamanic lineage is either inherited or the individual simply chooses to become an apprentice to an accomplished shaman. Dismemberment does not serve a defining role in the training of shamans in all cultures.

Shamans in many different cultures work with helping spirits in animal form. However, many cultures have developed intricate hierarchies of helping spirits in the forms of deities, ancestors, or other powerful human figures from their history. In these cultures the animals are often not considered by all shamans to be as reliable as those spirits from their hierarchies. Some shamans report that their helping spirits are their ancestors or simply elemental spirits, such as fire or water, or the spirits of nature, such as mountains or rivers. Although helping spirits in animal form are prevalent throughout shamanism globally, a relationship with them does not define the shaman, particularly in cultures, such as those native to North America, where gaining one's power animal during a vision quest is part of the initiation of every person into adulthood.

Broad definitions of shaman are too inclusive and thus do not serve the purpose of this encyclopedia. For example, anthropologist, psychologist, and initiated shaman Larry Peters presents a sound, broad definition, stating that the single defining attribute is that the shaman can control entrances into and exits out of his or her altered state of consciousness in service of his or her community. While this definition is compatible with the essence of the mid-range definition, it does not allow us to distinguish the shaman from other practitioners who use altered states of consciousness, but do not heal. The shaman is able to engage in the particular altered state necessary for soul recovery and to take action in that altered state to accomplish healing (the return of the soul). This distinguishes the shaman from other practitioners who use altered states of consciousness, but do not take action in those altered states (mediums) or who take action in altered states, but not necessarily to heal (sorcerers). The broad definitions, like the narrow definitions, are valid, but do not serve as well as the mid-range definition presented above.

Shamans have also inspired poetic definitions too numerous to include. However, in an introduction to *Shamans of the 20th Century* by Ruth-Inge Heinze, Stanley

Krippner is particularly eloquent and accurate when he states that shamans were the world's first physicians, first diagnosticians, first psychotherapists, first religious functionaries, first magicians, first performing artists, and first storytellers. They are "community-assigned magico-religious professionals who deliberately alter their consciousness in order to obtain information from the 'spirit world.' They use this knowledge and power to help and to heal members of their community, as well as the community as a whole."

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SHAMANS AND NON-SHAMANIC HEALERS

Shamans have been confused with medicine men, witch doctors, sorcerers, and healers who work in trance states. The shaman is distinguished by his or her ability to utilize a particular trance state in which the shaman's soul leaves the physical world and travels into the invisible world to make an experiential connection with spirit. Once that connection is established, the energies of the spirit world (helping spirits) aid the shaman in diagnosing what needs to be done and help in doing it, often right there in the invisible world. The shaman's soul then returns to the physical world and the shaman returns to the community to share the wisdom gained in that altered state. This movement between the physical world and the spirit world is an act of discipline. The shaman is in control of the trance state in all stages of the initiation, interpretation, actions, exit, and return.

The deep, ecstatic trance state, known as spirit flight, in which the shaman's soul leaves the body is not necessary in every shamanic healing session. The depth and type of trance necessary for a particular healing depend on where the source of the problem lies. The shaman clarifies both where the source of the problem lies and what is necessary to resolve the problem at the source through the diagnosis. Shamans tend to diagnose in uniquely personal ways that all involve contact with the spirit world. Regardless of the specific diagnosis, there are two aspects that are similar in all sessions. One, the shaman becomes an energetic bridge between the physical realm and the spirit world through trance. Two, the shaman takes action; he or she moves energy across that energetic bridge either by retrieving energy that belongs in the patient's body (e.g., returning with the lost soul part of the client in a soul retrieval) or by removing energy that is in the patient's body and should not be (e.g., removing the intrusion of a harmful spirit in an extraction).

To contemporary eyes the outward, physical action necessary to practice shamanism sometimes looks like performance or entertainment. This does not discount the healing work done by shamans. The amount of performance expected from the shaman is defined by the culture in which the shaman is practicing. In cultures such as that of Korea, the shaman is expected to act out the whole journey experience as he or she is experiencing it in the invisible world. In other cultures, such as Indonesia, evidence of possession is expected. Other shamans may simply prefer quiet, private places and work with little or no drama. Regardless of cultural expectation, it is never assumed that the drama or the performance is the healing. However, dramas may serve to focus the attention of the clients on the healing, and performance can transform the invisible energies of the ritual into a form the community recognizes.

Taking action in the unseen world is essential to the practice of shamanism; it is what sets the shaman apart from psychics, mediums, priests, and other energy healers. The shaman's actions may be taken on an individual level or on a communal level through ritual or ceremony, but always to restore harmony and serve others. In some cultures serving the needs of others means to defend and protect the community from its enemies. In these communities shamans may be expected to be sorcerers as well as shamans.

Magicians, Witches, and Sorcerers

Magicians and wizards explore the alchemical realms of magic. Witches and warlocks draw power from Nature to make magic. Sorcerers explore other realms to gather personal power for personal aims. Magicians, wizards, witches, and sorcerers are not shamans. However, shamans may perform magic in the service of their communities.

Magicians and wizards perform illusions, sleight of hand, and potentially real alchemical magic. They tend to draw their power from the spirits of the four

elements, earth, air, fire, water; from elemental spirits, such as caves, rocks, stars, or trees; from the forces of Nature; from totem spirits; and from deceased wizards. Magicians and wizards are the scholars of magic. They tend to serve the pursuit of learning and the power that comes from that information.

Witches and warlocks draw on the spirits of Nature and the energies of the universe to serve their own intentions, which may be benevolent or malevolent. Shamans do work with these same energies, but their intention is to surrender to the direction of spirit and the energies of the universe to serve the needs of others. Wiccan (contemporary witchcraft) practices emphasize the feminine and work with a traditional set of gods and goddesses. Unlike witches, shamans do not emphasize one type of energy over another because they work to balance all energies in dimensions where there really are no divisions into dualities such as male and female. Shamans may work, as witches do, with a traditional set of spirits recognized by their culture. However, they are usually not the gods and goddesses accessed through witchcraft.

Sorcerers work between the realms of the physical and spirit worlds as does the shaman, drawing on the help of the spirits and energies found there. Sorcerers however, explore other realms in the pursuit of personal power for personal aims. The shaman's intention is always to serve. The intention of a sorcerer's actions may be malevolent or benevolent. When shamans use their skills and their relationship with the helping spirits to malevolent ends, they have crossed the line into sorcery. Most shamans are aware of how dangerously easy it is to cross that line and do harm with any of their healing techniques. There were and are shamans who practiced sorcery. They may make this choice because serving the needs of their culture also means to defend and protect the community from its enemies or because they allow themselves to be seduced by the illusion of their own absolute power. Most shamans do not choose to become sorcerers, and the sorcerer's orientation toward gathering power for personal aims means the sorcerer cannot be considered a shaman.

Mediums and Psychics

Other practitioners have also been confused with shamans. They include mediums and psychics, who, through possession, allow spirits to utilize their bodies as vehicles to convey information; oracles, prophets, and diviners, who utilize trance states or other divinatory practices to access information from the spirit world; priests; and healers. Mediums, diviners, priests, and healers are not shamans. However, shamans may perform divination, guide the spiritual direction of the community, and perform acts of healing.

Shamans and mediums are experts in spirit possession. This means that they control their own entry into and exit from the possession-trance state. They can both be distinguished from the mentally ill who may slip, unintentionally and uncontrollably, into possession states, and from the novice who intentionally invites the possession, but cannot yet control the resulting trance state. Furthermore, skill and discipline are necessary to utilize the presence of spirit gained from the possession state. It is this opportunity to utilize the presence of spirit that is the purpose of the intentional possession for both the medium and the shaman.

Shamans use intentional possession trances to embody helping spirits. This allows them to remain in ordinary reality to perform the traditional services of extraction (removing spirit intrusions from the body), cleansing (removing harmful energies from the body), and divination (the art of seeking information from supernatural sources). For example, the Nepalese *tumung* (shaman) embodies the tiger spirit to perform extraction healings. The *houngan* (shaman) of Haiti is open to be "mounted (possessed)" by the "*loa* (spirits)" to do his or her work. Scandinavian shamans are provided access to the wisdom of their goddess Freiya by entering trance, traveling to her home in the spirit realm, embodying her there, and returning to ordinary reality as

the goddess who enables members of the community to ask Freiya questions. These are just a few examples of how shamans use intentional possession to serve their community.

There is a clear distinction between shamans and mediums who both use possession states as a means to connect with spirit to gain information for others. The primary distinction is action. Both have developed the discipline necessary to utilize the presence of spirit for divination. However, the shaman also takes action in the altered state to move energies from the physical realm into the spirit realm toward a particular end, such as removing a harmful spirit in an exorcism or removing the blocked energy of a tumor in an extraction. In contrast, mediums are conscious or unconscious channels for spirit to speak through and they do not take action in the altered state. Shamans enter a wide range of alternate states of consciousness throughout any one session. It would not be unusual for a shaman to embody a helping spirit for extraction work and then journey into the spirit realms to find a lost soul part in a single session. Therefore it is important to understand that although shamans function as mediums at times, this does not preclude them from being considered shamans. However, mediumship alone does not make an individual a shaman. Shamans are potentially mediums; however, all mediums are not shamans.

Oracles, Prophets, Diviners

A similar explanation can be made for divination techniques that do not involve possession trance states. In many traditionally shamanic cultures the shaman divines information through some process that does not involve possession states or deep trance states. He or she may use a light trance, such as scrying (reading the ordinary, such as a bowl of water or tea leaves), casting bones (Africa), casting coins (China), or reading the intestines of guinea pigs (South America). As with mediumship, there are individuals who have developed their innate psychic talent for divination and may utilize any of these same divination tools. This alone does not make them shamans. Shamans do divine information from the spirit world. However not all who divine information are shamans.

Priests

Shamans are often called the earliest priests, and they may be the precursors to today's religious functionaries. However, there are two distinct differences between priests and shamans. Priests teach a particular doctrine, and they usually have little or no experience in altered states. It is not necessary for a priest to have had a mystical experience to perform a social role. For a shaman the experience of the mystical is essential. It is also the role of the priest as the religious functionary to express the doctrine of a church as the God-given truth. Although the shaman uses his or her contact with the mystical to rebalance and sustain the moral conduct of the community, the shaman does not teach a particular belief system or doctrine. It is interesting to note that there are priest exorcists in the Roman Catholic Church who exorcise harmful spirits by following a procedure described in the *Rituale Romanum* of 1614. Their exorcism procedure is quite similar to the exorcism ritual used by shamans. Nonetheless, the ability to exorcise malevolent spirits alone does not make one a shaman.

Healers

In many shamanic cultures there are healers who practice the arts of physical healing with methods such as herbal medicines, massage, or acupuncture. These healers are not shamans, but practitioners who traditionally practice in conjunction with the shaman in the community. Any number of these healing arts may be practiced by particular shamans. For example, most Amazonian shamans have a vast knowledge of the medicinal and hallucinogenic uses of rain forest plants. However, the practice

of these arts does not make one a shaman, because this healing does not require mastery of trance states.

For the shaman the authority is the helping spirit(s)—not belief, tradition, dogma, or the particular way a healing worked yesterday. The shaman is not involved in maintaining the status quo. The shaman's task is twofold—first, the accurate diagnosis of the seen and unseen energies at the root of the problem, and second, carrying out the specific choreography of energies needed to resolve the problem. The shaman knows that similar symptoms do not necessarily imply the same root problem. Therefore, the shaman consults the spirit realm first and proceeds as directed by his or her helping spirits. What works is all that matters. Shamans work in complete trust that the helping spirits know what will work and what won't. Through their practice, shamans bridge the perceived gap between the physical and spiritual realms in order to restore harmony within the individual, between the individual and the community, and between the community and the spirit world.

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CONTEMPORARY SHAMANS

Contemporary shamans are found in three general categories. First, there are shamans who come from an unbroken shamanic tradition and continue to practice within that tradition today. Second, there are those who come from a shamanic tradition and see themselves as a bridge between their world and the Western world. These shamans have added ceremonies and rituals to their traditional practice that enable them to fulfill their additional role as a bridge between cultures. Lastly, there are those who come from cultures long separated from their shamanic roots, but who are nonetheless called by the spirits to serve the needs of their communities as shamans today.

The ability to adapt and change is inherent in any shaman's practice. A shaman must continually respond to new information from the spirit world as the seen and unseen environments change over time. Although the form of specific practices may change in response to changes in the environment, the function of the shaman's work has not. Evidence of shamans is found in hunter and gatherer societies or fishing societies across every continent around the world. Contemporary Westerners feel most comfortable seeing shamans in that early image. However, shamans can be recognized in agricultural, industrial, technological, and urban settings when we look with a deeper understanding of how they practice. Today's shamans may come from shamanic traditions, but practice in cities, requiring adaptation of traditional techniques to heal the wounds of contemporary urban life. Or they may be born in cities or into cultures with long-dead shamanic traditions and feel the call nonetheless, leaving them to find their way through the teachings of the helping spirits, without the guidance of elders or apprenticeship.

In traditional cultures that have converted to organized religion the call to shamanism can create great internal conflict between one's desire to live by new beliefs and the need to respond to the call. These individuals must struggle to return to their traditional awareness that they are of spirit and connected to all things—not fallen from God and needing to return to him. Contemporary shamans can lose power and efficacy from the belief that they are separate from God. Shamans draw their power to heal and the ability to sustain their own health in the process of healing others from their experiential connection to all things.

Worldwide, missionaries have been effective in convincing indigenous families that it is in their children's best interests to allow the children to be taken from the native culture and raised by Western standards with organized religion. Max Beauvoir (Haiti), Malidoma Somé (Dagara, West Africa) and Akuete Durchback (Togo, West Africa) are three examples of contemporary people who were taken from their families as children, yet were called by the spirits of their birth culture to become shamans. This type of contemporary shaman is exposed to Western ideas, technology, and organized religion and then chooses to return to their culture's traditional ways. They respond to spirit's call and learn the ways of shamans of their native cultures, yet they do not forget what they learned from the West. This allows them to serve as a bridge between the traditional and modern cultures while they serve the shaman's traditional role as a bridge between the spiritual and physical worlds.

Because the ability to adapt and change is both inherent and necessary in shamanism, we can expect the emergence of the third type of contemporary shaman whenever people in an environment feel the need for the care and healing of their souls. As these contemporary shamans are called into service they will translate the information from the spirit world into the day to day language of that community.

Shamans can rise up out of any society to fulfill peoples' needs for healing the wounds of their souls and to connect with the Divine. Though the way these needs are expressed has changed over time, particularly due to the demands of contemporary

life, the existential needs remain the same. People want to come into the presence of the sacred. We are still humans in an infinite and inscrutable universe. Without belief in their own ability to connect with spirit, people turn to shamans to help them in connecting deeply with the Divine and returning safely to the physical world.

The following are examples of shamans emerging in urban environments to serve the needs of culturally diverse communities. In Singapore, an Indian dockworker began to see an altar in his dreams and, after finding the altar, Hindu gods and goddesses began to manifest in his body. This shaman's training came directly from the spirits who worked through him. When embodying the deities, the shaman performed exorcisms, healings, blessings, and offered solutions to alleviate the personal problems of clients from diverse Asian cultures. On the days the shaman did not go into full possession trance, he moved in and out of lighter trance states to communicate with spirit as necessary to counsel his clients.

In another example, a shaman of Chinese descent, in Jurong outside Singapore, cultivated his facility for shamanic healing through study with a Taoist priest and Buddhist monks and through direct revelation while in meditation. In his practice, he divines the source of his clients issues, cures spirit-related illnesses, exorcises cases of "mass hysteria," and works in the Singapore Mental Hospital. He also teaches what he has learned in his years as a shaman to students who are called to become shamans.

Contemporary shamans often hold positions of power in urban social structures. In Bangkok, sixty to seventy shamans hold high positions in the Ministry of Education and other positions of official power. Upon deciding to become a shaman, they may seek out the appropriate training to learn divination and the trance techniques necessary to intervene on behalf of their clients in the spirit world. While in trance these shamans are as likely to embody Indian deities as they are to embody Buddhist monks or high spiritual teachers.

Contemporary shamans are actively and successfully working in the modern world, as well as in traditionally shamanic cultures. Shamanic practices can flourish in all cultures, and shamans may hold Ph.D. degrees and other positions of official power.

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RITUAL AND CEREMONY

Ritual and ceremony are tools used by shamans to engage the powers of the invisible world to effect specific changes in the physical world. They are two unique tools and are not interchangeable. Ritual is used to change the status quo, upset the order of things, and to create chaos where necessary. Ceremony is used to restore or reinforce the status quo, grounding people in the right order of things (natural laws) and strengthening the community. Ritual is the domain of the shaman, magician, and sorcerer. Ceremony can be used by any leader or religious functionary who has the skills to connect with and engage the unseen energies. This is common in indigenous North American cultures, where spiritual leaders conduct powerful ceremonies, such as the sweat lodge ceremony, but do not consider themselves shamans.

Both ritual and ceremony are designed to engage the spirit world in helping human beings. The essential distinction between the two tools is the intended outcome. The outcome of ceremony is known and predictable, while the outcome of ritual is unknown and unpredictable. Without the connection to the powers of the spirit world, neither is an effective tool for creating change. Any ritual or ceremonial form can be practiced by rote in a way that does not engage spirit, either because the form is not appropriate for the current situation to which it is applied, or the individual officiating is not able to open an authentic connection with spirit and engage the help of the spirit world. When spirit is not engaged, the ritual and ceremony are both empty and powerless as tools for change. In this case ritual and ceremony are no longer distinctly different and the words could be used interchangeably. These empty rituals and ceremonies cannot be compared to shamanic ritual and ceremony. In this book, ritual and ceremony refer to shamanic ritual and shamanic ceremony unless specifically defined otherwise.

The structures of ritual and ceremony have similar functional elements. First, the intention is clarified so that when humans call on the spirits, they do so with a specific purpose. Next, the sacred space for the conversation with spirit is created by cleansing and preparing both the physical space and human beings who will be present in that space. After the sacred space is created, it is opened in a way that honors the spirit powers being called upon so that the shaman can initiate the conversation with them. At this point, the process becomes either a ritual or ceremony depending on the intention. Either way, when the work with spirit is complete, the sacred space is closed, the completion of the dialogue is acknowledged, and gratitude is offered for spirit's intervention in human concerns.

It is essential that each of these functions occurs. How they occur—the actions taken or the form used—varies among cultures, tribes, and practitioners. The form used is influenced by a multitude of variables, including, but not limited to, where, why, and when the event is happening, and who (human and nonhuman) will participate. As these variables change, new ways open for humans to accomplish these functions, and some old ways lose their efficacy. The perfect performance of an old ritual or ceremonial form does not assure that an authentic connection with spirit will be created today. Conversely, the fact that the form does not work today is not proof that it did not work in the past. What is perhaps more surprising, given all of the variables involved, is how much of the old ritual and ceremonial forms are still potent and powerfully effective today.

The primary difference between ritual and ceremony occurs after the sacred space has been opened and a connection with spirit has been established. In ritual, no one—including the shaman—knows exactly what will happen or how the effect of the ritual will play out in the lives of the participants. Ritual always involves this risk. For peoples living with a shamanic worldview, facing this risk is fundamental to all initiations, child to adult, individual to shaman, and for the ongoing health of the

individual and community. It is the shaman's responsibility to guide the energetic flow of the ritual, which the shaman does through the interaction with spirit in an altered state. The shaman aims to keep the flow within the bounds of the intention and the general safety of the humans involved. However, complete safety is not always possible in ritual, and the very real result can be illness, insanity, or death. This element that produces risk, the connection with spirit, is the same element that makes ritual a powerful healing form. The healing effects of ritual can be as complete a positive transformation as death or insanity are a negative, undesired outcome.

In contrast to creating change, ceremony reaffirms the natural order. After the sacred space is opened in ceremony, the shaman and any participants familiar with the ceremony know exactly what will happen and what the effect will be in their lives. That is the power of ceremony. The ceremonial conversation with spirit is scripted and familiar, as in weddings and baptisms. The Maya state shamans developed this ceremonial form to its extreme, using ceremony not only to affirm the natural order in present-day events, but also to connect those events with historical events to draw power from the past. In this way ceremony was used to reaffirm the status quo and to affirm its repetition as a reoccurring pattern over time.

Shamans use ceremonies to restore balance. Ceremony offers the opportunity to release energies, like secrets or transgressions against others, enabling the confessor to return to balance with the community or the spirit world and to ground the participants as they participate in familiar songs, dances, and prayers. The tools the shaman uses to carry out the ceremony, such as songs and sacrifices, are chosen to accomplish the intention of the ceremony. The results of ceremony are often communal. For example, a ceremony to celebrate a successful harvest may involve the sacrifice of a portion of the harvest in gratitude for spirit's part in that success. It is a way of giving back to Nature in gratitude for the fact that Nature has bent her will to favor the humans and expressing hope that she will do so again next year. Without ceremonies of celebration and gratitude, humans slip into energetic debt with the natural order of things, which creates a need for deeper healing through ritual. Thus ceremony can be seen as preventative medicine and ritual as acute care.

The tools a shaman uses to engage spirit in ritual, such as drumming or chanting, should not be confused with the actions the shaman takes once in trance. For example, a shaman usually enters trance the same way—using the same songs or chants—or performs the same technique, such as a sucking extraction or depossession. However, what the shaman finds while in trance is unique to each situation and what he or she extracts is also particular to the situation. The actions the shaman takes while in trance are improvised based on what the shaman finds through the connection with spirit—the diagnosis. The form is never the same twice. However, the tools the shaman uses to open the ritual space and to enter trance are the same ritual to ritual because they work.

The results of ritual are unique for each participant. The desired outcome of healing rituals is to restore balance in ordinary reality either by bringing energies back from the spirit world, as in soul retrievals or divinations, or by returning energies to the spirit world, as in extractions, depossessions, cleansings, and escorting spirits to the Land of the Dead. Ritual is used for purposes such as initiation and healing, as well as communal healing. The function and effect of the ritual are unique for each participant. For example, the same physical symptoms may have different diagnoses in the spirit world, which result in different treatments. Similarly, the same healing ritual may produce different effects in each patient.

The function of ceremony is the same for each participant, though experience of the effects may vary. For example, the sweat lodge ceremonial form is repeated to create a known outcome—purification that clears and reinforces the individual's connection with self and spirit. However, the personal experience of purification is

largely dependent on what toxins are being cleansed and released. Thus, each individual's experience of the sweat lodge ceremony may be quite different, though the function—to purify—is the same.

The distinction between ritual and ceremony is understood by the keeper of the ritual or the leader of the ceremony. The keeper/leader holds the knowledge of the forms. They are engaged on a plane very different than the participants; they are engaged in the direct conversation with spirit, while the participants are experiencing the results of that conversation.

Shamans use ceremony and ritual when necessary. However, the healing work of a true shaman is not ceremonial. Every time a shaman enters trance, he or she engages spirit in ritual. What happens in the shaman's journey or embodiment trance is not known until it is complete. The shaman's sessions are unique, though the same tools or processes may be repeated. Each shamanic healing session (or seance) involves risk. This is the reason shamanic healing sessions are powerful tools for healing. It is the risk inherent in ritual that allows it to be truly transformational, and the ability to manage risk that allows the shaman to be a powerful agent of change.

THE SHAMAN'S TRANCE

The shaman uses specific practices or sacred technologies to enter into a narrow range of altered states of consciousness. This particular range has certain qualities that allow the shaman to work in partnership with his or her helping spirits. These trance states are essential and fundamental for shamanic work. They enable the shaman to forge, maintain, and utilize the working relationship with spirit. The partnership between the shaman and the spirits, whether in the physical or spiritual realm, generates the power for shamanic healing and ritual.

The shaman's trance is not one state, but a range of states between embodiment and journeying. For some tasks the shaman undertakes, it is most effective for the shaman to go into the spirit world to work with the spirits there. When the shaman travels into the spirit realm, the trance state being utilized is referred to as journeying or spirit flight. For other tasks, it is most effective for the spirit to come into the physical world through the shaman's body to work here in the human realm. This trance state is referred to in this encyclopedia as embodiment to clearly distinguish it from possession, which is an illness. Journeying and embodiment are the trance states at opposite ends of the narrow range of altered states that together compose shamanic states of consciousness.

In *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus* (1935), one of the most authoritative ethnographic studies of Siberian shamanism, author Shirokogoroff posits that the most basic attribute of the shaman's trance is the mastery of spirits, or embodiment of the helping spirit. The Tungus distinguish between an involuntary possession trance, which is an illness, and the voluntary embodiment trance of the shaman. The shaman intentionally possesses spirits as a part of curing the possession illnesses in others. This type of embodiment trance is reported in the shamanism of a wide range of cultures.

In contrast, other scholars, most prominently Eliade in 1964 in *Shamanism: Techniques of Ecstasy*, contend that the true shaman's trance is the visionary ecstasy of spirit flight, or the shamanic journey. In this trance state, the shaman's soul journeys into the spirit realm and the shaman sees or has visions of ascending and descending to other worlds. Eliade, also looking at Siberian shamanism, notes that embodiment is a later degenerate form of spirit flight, in spite of his observation that the shaman's embodiment trance was an effective, universally distributed phenomenon. The journeying trance, or spirit flight, is also reported in the shamanism of a wide range of cultures.

The issue is not the type of trance state, but mastery of the art of shamanic trance states. The embodiment state is not found only in shamanism, nor is spirit flight. However, this does not preclude the fact that they can and often do relate to shamanism. Not all possessions are shamanic embodiments because possession alone does not fulfill the criteria for a shamanic trance state. Not every journey is a shamanic journey, again because entering into a journey does not fulfill the criteria for a shamanic trance state. Human beings enter trance, have deep lucid dreams, and experience other unexplained spontaneous events. It is their nature. What distinguishes someone as a shaman is whether the individual can do anything with the trance state and, more important, whether or not he or she can do anything for others.

Any theory of whether embodiment or soul flight is the original or classical form of the shaman's trance is conjecture. These theories often reflect more of a cultural bias than any facts. Both types of trance state are widespread in shamanism. Furthermore, in his work with LSD in the 1970s, Stanislav Grof determined that "both are primordial spiritual phenomena, belonging to not culture in particular but to humanity as a whole." Animal possession, spiritual mediumship, and visions of traveling through the universe all develop spontaneously during LSD-induced altered

states. Grof also found that, as in shamanic altered states, the person in trance was lucid, experienced controlled visualizations, and retained memory of the altered state experience after returning to ordinary consciousness.

Academics with years of field research with shamans as well as shamans themselves caution against viewing the shaman's trance as exclusive to either embodiment or journeying. The type of trance used by a shaman is determined primarily by what the shaman is trying to accomplish through the trance and secondarily by cultural expectations. Any comprehensive definition of the shaman's trance must include spirit flight and spirit embodiment and the full range of altered states between. Furthermore, we must understand that in a shamanic healing ritual these trance states can exist separately or coexist to various degrees.

Trance is a term widely used, often with negative connotations, and imprecisely defined. In general use, trance implies unconsciousness and an inability to direct one's thoughts and actions with intention. Trance can mean a state of partly suspended animation or inability to function, such as a daze or stupor in which the individual is unaware of the environment and unable to respond to stimuli. In more extreme definitions, often associated with spiritual states or mental illness, trance is defined as a hypnotic, cataleptic, or somnolent state, characterized by limited sensory and motor contact with the environment and an inability to retain memory of the trance experience after returning to ordinary consciousness. Not one of these definitions of trance applies to shamanism.

The shaman's trance is an intentionally induced state of rapture. The shaman leaves ordinary consciousness and a primary awareness of the physical environment to focus attention and sensory awareness on the invisible spiritual environment. The shaman's trance is characterized by focused attention on task (the healing at hand) with reduced awareness of objects, stimuli, or the environment outside of the experiential context of the trance. Shamanic trance is characterized by its flexibility in the range from spirit flight to full spirit embodiment and the flexibility of the shaman while in the trance. Shamans use intention and discipline while in the trance state to adjust the type and depth of trance as is necessary for the healing to succeed. Contemporary scholars, especially those who do extensive fieldwork with shamans, consistently observe shamans using both spirit flight and spirit embodiment in their work.

The shamanic trance is a tool that is variable, ranging from a light diagnostic state, to a deep journey state, and to full embodiment by spirit. The shaman varies the altered state according to the needs of the healing. Shamans have control at all times over the nature, depth, and qualities of their trance states. In practice, shamans often pass through a series of alternate states or depths of trance during any one session until they reach the level at which they operate best or the level that is necessary for the different stages of the healing to occur.

The ability to enter an altered state of consciousness is a human ability. An altered state of consciousness is experienced as qualitatively different from the normal for the individual. Consciousness, in this context, is an individual's total pattern of thinking and feeling at any given time. Ordinary consciousness is an individual's day-to-day experience of thinking and feeling, being awake versus sleeping or dreaming. Ordinary consciousness serves as an individual's baseline. In non-ordinary consciousness, or altered states, the mind processes information and registers experiences differently. In altered states, mental functions operate that do not operate at all ordinarily, and perceptual qualities are spontaneously accessed that have no ordinary counterparts.

Renowned anthropologist Erika Bourguignon looked at the practices of culturally patterned forms of altered states of consciousness in all parts of the world. Gathering statistics from 488 societies (57 percent of the societies represented in the ethnographic atlas), she determined that 437, or 90 percent, of the societies have one or

more institutionalized, culturally patterned forms of altered states of consciousness. Bourguignon's conclusion was that the ability to enter altered states of consciousness is a psychobiological capacity available to humans in all societies.

The capacity to experience a range of trance states is a basic human potential. Solid, scholarly research shows that it is statistically normal for humans to access altered states of consciousness. Scholar Barbara Lex states that trance "arises from manipulation of universal neurophysiological structures of the human body (and) lies within the potential behavior of all normal human beings."¹ Humans are physiologically designed to enter a wide variety of altered states. The capacity to enter altered states of consciousness makes us human, not shamans.

Different cultures recognize different types of consciousness. Some cultures have a highly refined awareness of different states of consciousness, while the awareness of consciousness in other cultures is quite limited. For example, the Buddhist *Abhidhamma*, the third great section of the Buddhist Scriptures thought to be the earliest product of Buddha's thought directly after Enlightenment, lists 108 different states of mental cultivation. In contrast, contemporary Western cultures recognize only three states: consciousness, sleeping, and dreaming. In cultures with an awareness of consciousness, it is believed that adults must cultivate the ability to enter specific altered states in order to maintain mental health. In contemporary Western cultures, the ability to enter altered states is believed to be a symptom of mental illness.

Meditation and yoga are examples of traditional disciplines designed to produce specific altered states of consciousness. Similarly there are traditional disciplines used in shamanic cultures that are designed to produce specific shamanic altered states. These shamanic altered states have different qualities than those entered through meditation and yoga. In shamanic altered states, there is a relatively high awareness of the non-ordinary environment, awareness of self in that environment, awareness of unseen beings and energies, and a very high goal orientation or focus on task. The shaman's capacity for trance is not unique; the shaman's training, discipline, and capacity to use the trance state are.

The shaman and the shaman's trance are distinguished from other humans and their innate capacity for trance states by the shaman's ability to control and use his or her trance states. In other words, the shaman is distinguished by his/her mastery over an otherwise normal human trait. Most people do not have, or make, the time to cultivate mastery of their innate ability to connect with spirit through altered states. Furthermore, when they do connect, they are often unable to reach the higher levels of mastery accessible only through initiation and discipline exercised over time. As with singing, dancing, and painting, trance work is an expressive art. We are all able to sing, dance, and enter trance. However, some of us are gifted. Some gifts can be transformed through training and experience to mastery. Shamans are masters of the ancient arts, the techniques of ecstasy used to induce and utilize the shamanic altered states.

The essential characteristics of shamanic altered states are voluntary control of entrance and duration of altered state, the ability to communicate with others during the altered state, and memory of the altered state experience after returning to ordinary consciousness. Shamanic altered states are also characterized by a type of self-awareness that allows for single-pointed task focus, direct relationship with the unseen world, and working relationships with specific helping spirits. When a plant hallucinogen is ingested to induce trance, there is also a working relationship between the shaman and the spirit of that plant.

There are shamans, particularly in African cultures, who attain full control and mastery of their trance states without any reference to spirit journeys or spirit embodiment. For these shamans the healing powers are non-ordinary in origin; however, they are believed to originate in an energy and magic inside the shaman, not from the

spirits. Even in these cultures, the trance state is acknowledged as a non-ordinary, altered state of consciousness. This trance state is necessary for these shamans to activate and utilize their healing powers, as with shamans in all other cultures.

The common element among all shamans is their mastery of shamanic altered states, regardless of the perceived origin of the non-ordinary energy utilized in the trance state. To display mastery the shaman must remain in control of his or her self whether in spirit flight or spirit embodiment. The shaman must be able to utilize the trance state for the specific reasons the shaman entered the trance to begin with. The shaman must be able to direct the powers available in the trance state to effect the change needed in the patient or community.

The shamanic trance is variable in quality and flexible in depth. For example, an experienced shaman of the Amazon rain forest will have a familiar and well-developed relationship with the spirits of the indigenous plants. The observer will barely notice this shaman slipping in and out of the light trance needed to receive or confirm his or her diagnosis and remedy for using plants to treat a particular illness. Apprentices of this shaman must journey deeply to communicate with these same plant spirits to get the same diagnosis and remedy. That same experienced shaman must also journey deeply when working in a new environment to speak to the spirits of the new plants to learn how to utilize the new plants in new remedies for the same illness.

For the shaman, trance states are tools. The type of trance used is determined primarily by what is necessary to do the work at hand. However, there are a variety of cultural expectations that may influence the shaman's trance states. For example, the Siberian peoples of Northeast Asia expect mastery of spirit flight from their shamans, while the peoples of Southeast Asia expect mastery of spirit embodiment states. Even with the cultural expectations, the shaman's trance is first and foremost adjusted to the task at hand. It is not simply a recital of old rituals, a dramatization of the audience expectations, or a conditioned reflex. The shamans' trance provides an opportunity for authentic connection with the spirit world. It is important for people to experience regular and literal contact with the Divine. For many in the audience, this contact is in itself the healing.

The symbols, spirits, and stories brought forth from the shaman's trance are unique and authentic to each healing ritual. While a practicing shaman must adapt his or her interpretations of the invisible world to the expectations of the community, those expectations do not define what the shaman finds in the invisible world. It is not enough that a shaman has visions and enters into controlled trance states. The shaman must be able to interpret the energy patterns found in the spirit world and give them form in a way that provides effective healing or service to the community.

The symbolic system used by the shaman to express the trance state experience is crucial for the contact with the divine to be translated to the audience. The symbols must have meaning and power in the context of the healing at hand, but they must also be accurate. The symbols, spirits, and stories that emerge from the shaman's trance are energy. They are coherent patterns of energy in the great sea of flux that is the invisible world. They are real energetic things that must be translated into meaning and power.

The shaman's trance allows these coherent energy patterns to be "seen" in the invisible world and interpreted with subtlety and accuracy. This process is very much like the way all people learn to identify the forms of things in the physical world. Physical reality is also composed of coherent energy patterns. Most people can tell a kidney from a tree. Most people can identify the energy of anger from that of compassion, or the energy of their mother from that of the postman. However, people trained in identifying trees can tell a sycamore from a maple. Similarly, shamans are trained in accurately distinguishing subtle differences in the energy patterns in the invisible world so that a helping spirit is clearly distinguished from an illness-inducing spirit or a random ghost wandering by.

Shamans in trance can distinguish between energy patterns of the invisible world with great detail. These energy patterns are what the shamans call spirits. The shaman's trance is the tool used to see the spirits, or energy patterns, whether they are in the invisible world generating disharmony in the physical world, or they have actually entered the physical world, causing illness and distress.

The shaman's trance is the essential characteristic of shamanism. The shaman's work with the spirits in trance defines shamanic healing and shamanic healers relative to all other types of traditional healers. The shaman's experience in trance is conceived of as real, though of a realm other than the physical. In the shaman's trance the invisible world of spirit becomes visible. The problems of humanity can then be clearly defined and the solutions to those problems can flow to us through the shaman from the Divine.

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SHAMANS AND SPIRITS

The shaman's power to help and to heal comes from the spirits. This life-force-like power is inherent in all things. In the shaman's world, where the manifestations of this energy can be frightening and the related dangers grave, it is always honored for it connects all things.

The idea that a human being could control a power so vast and diverse is absurd. However, some humans can master the art of being in relationship with this sacred power. The shaman is this type of human. In this relationship the sacred power provides the energy and awareness while the shaman guides this energy and awareness into the physical realm in a way that helps those of us in physical form.

This relationship between the shaman and the spirits is often misunderstood. This misunderstanding arises in part because we don't have the words to accurately describe the relationship and in part because we don't have the experience to understand it easily. Nonetheless, understanding the true nature of the relationship between the shaman and the spirits is essential to understanding shamanism. Simply put, the relationship between the shaman and the spirits is a practical, working relationship.

As with all effective working relationships, each party brings something unique to the relationship and derives something from it. The spirits bring the guidance and the power the shaman needs to do the work. The shaman brings the ability to translate and focus these energies from the invisible world into the physical world to accomplish the specific tasks. The shaman gains the ability to be a shaman, to work with powerful forces to create healings and what looks from the human perspective to be miracles. What the spirits gain is a mystery. Perhaps it is the opportunity to express their own essence in the world. Whatever it is, they do gain something for they reach out to humans again and again. They initiate us and make some of us shamans as if it is important for them to do so. In this mysterious way, the relationship between the shaman and the spirits is interdependent.

The most common misunderstanding of this relationship is the idea that the shaman controls the spirits, that he is the master of spirits. It is easy to understand how people looking through the lens of Western culture, a culture that defines power in patterns of dominance, would interpret the relationship in terms of control. Yet we know from the words of the shamans that the spirits give everything that makes a human a shaman and that they take it all away just as easily. Shamans claim no control over this aspect of the relationship. In fact, they explain that around these issues the shaman must remain truly humble. What the shamans do claim is success in the struggle to gain control of his or her personal state while existing in the extreme altered states necessary to work with the powers of the invisible world. In other words, the shaman becomes the master of relationship with spirit, not of spirit.

This mastery of oneself while in relationship with spirit is the defining difference between the shaman and a mentally impaired person. The shaman's ability to control his or her altered state of consciousness without physical illness, mental instability, or death is essential. So is the shaman's ability to make sense out of the experience in a way that heals and does not harm the intended recipient.

A shaman is able to control him- or herself in a range of altered states, to enter and exit these states at will, and to interpret accurately these states in a way that is effective for others. The shaman uses this range of altered states as tools, selecting the correct altered state necessary to accomplish the task at hand. In contrast, a mentally ill person unintentionally enters altered states and is usually inaccurate or unclear in naming the invisible beings to whom he or she is speaking. There is no accuracy, self-control, precision, or efficacy in the altered state experience of the mentally ill.

The misunderstanding about the shaman's working relationship with spirit is further confused by the assumption that possession, an illness, is the same state of

consciousness as embodiment, a trance state employed by shamans. A shaman uses embodiment to bring a known helping spirit into his or her physical body to allow that spirit to work through the body to heal other people. Mastery of this trance state is essential for extractions and other cleansing work. The entry of the spirit into the body of the shaman is intentional and focused by the shaman. The shaman directs the power of the spirit toward a defined goal, such as removing a source of illness from a patient's body or giving guidance to a community. In contrast, the entry of a possessing spirit into the body of the victim is unintentional. The power of the possessing spirit overpowers the intention of the victim, thwarting the victim's control over his or her own personal state. One cannot work in a state of possession. Any shaman said to be in a state of possession is actually working in an embodiment trance.

When a shaman "goes to work," he or she enters an altered state in the way that you enter the office or retail shop. Shamans meet the helping spirits in the altered state in the way that you meet your coworkers at the office or meet salespeople behind the counter. The shaman goes about performing the tasks with the spirits in the way that you work with your coworkers. It is not necessary for you to control or possess your coworkers, nor they you, to get the job done. The best results come when all workers communicate accurately, respect each other, and do their best to perform their part of the job. The same is true for the shaman and the spirits. It is a working relationship of communication and mutual respect in which each party does its unique part to get the overall job done.

Shamans are in relationship with the spirits in a very deep, at times complex, and always very real way. The relationship is always experiential; it is not faith based. Shamans do not believe in spirits; they experience them. Shamans work with the power that flows to them while in relationship with spirit. This power is complex to define. It is in part the raw power of nature that is in form all around us and in part the power of the Unknown that is not yet manifest in form.

There are three defining characteristics in the working relationship forged between the spirits and shamans. First, a non-ordinary energy of sacred origin enables the shaman to heal others. Even the few peoples, such as the !Kung, who conceive of the shaman as the origin of the healing energy, also emphasize that it is a non-ordinary energy of sacred origin. A shaman must make a direct connection to a sacred source of non-ordinary energy to perform the acts of shamanism. Second, a shaman must cultivate his or her working relationship spirit personally. Each individual must survive meeting spirit, being tested by spirit, and being trained by spirit to forge successfully a working relationship. Finally, the spirits choose the shaman. Shamans do not choose to be shamans. All the shaman can do is attempt to forge a working relationship with the spirit who chooses him or her.

These three characteristics are powerfully and clearly illuminated in the words of an Eskimo *angakok* (shaman) below.

*It is not enough for a shaman to be able to escape both from himself and from his surroundings. It is not enough that, having the soul removed from his eyes, brain, and entrails, he is able also to withdraw the spirit from his body and thus undertake the great "spirit flights" through space and through the sea; nor is it enough that by means of his powers (qaumanEq) he abolishes all distance, and can see things, however far away. For he will be incapable of maintaining these faculties unless he has the support of helping and answering spirits. . . . he must procure these helping spirits for himself; he must meet them in person. He cannot even choose for himself what sort he will have. They come to him of their own accord, strong and powerful.*¹

The relationship with spirit is fundamental in the beginning, middle, and end of a shaman's career. The daily practices of the shaman are primarily to maintain good relationship with the spirits. The shaman develops this relationship through communication and supplication and strengthens it through offerings and other practices of gratitude. If the spirits choose to leave, and they do so in response to arrogance or disrespect, the shaman is left without the power to function as a shaman. The shaman's humility and knowledge that the power is extended to him or her from spirit is reflected in the words of power songs, sung by shamans around the world as they prepare to work. Loosely translated the words are, "Please come help me. I am just a human. Please give me the power to do what needs to be done." In the power songs where the shaman appears to be bragging, it is the spirit speaking through the shaman, naming and claiming its power. Maintaining empowered humility is essential in the cultivation of the shaman's working relationship with spirit.

The working relationship between shaman and spirit is not general or random. It is a very specific partnership forged over time. Below, a Goldi shaman describes his experience of being chosen by his helping spirit, or *ayami*. Note the distinctions made between the initiating/teaching *ayami*, her various forms, and the assistant spirits the shaman acquires from the *ayami* over time.

Once I was asleep on my sick bed, when a spirit approached me. It was a very beautiful woman . . . She said, "I am the ayami of your ancestors, the shamans, I taught them shamaning. Now I am going to teach you." . . . She has been coming to me ever since, and I sleep with her as with my own wife, but we have no children. . . . Sometimes she comes under the aspect of an old woman, and sometimes under that of a wolf. Sometimes she comes as a winged tiger. I mount it and she takes me to show me different countries. . . . She has given me three assistants—the jarga (panther), the doonto (bear), and the amba (tiger). They come to me in my dreams and appear whenever I summon them while shamaning. When I am shamaning, the ayami and the assistant spirits are possessing me, whether big or small, they penetrate me as smoke or vapor would be.²

Not every helping spirit is the same, nor do they each bring the same energy and teachings to the shaman with which to work. The qualities of a particular working relationship are defined by who the spirit is, what is necessary for the shaman to do to remain in connection with the spirit, and how the energy can be used to benefit people. Shamans must create different types of working relationships with different types of spirits. The hierarchy of the spirits themselves often defines these relationships, as with the Goldi shaman's *ayami* above. Generally, a shaman has a primary partner, usually the spirit who initiated and trained the shaman in the first place. Then, with time and experience, the shaman acquires additional relationships with spirits who bring additional power, unique teachings, or perform specific tasks. These spirits do not always have a relationship to each other. Often they are connected only through the circumstance of working with the same shaman.

All working relationships are experiential. However, they are not all the same quality of experience. Some are quite adversarial, with the shaman gaining the spirit's help only through clever trickery, bargaining, or all-out battle. Others can be quite erotic and sexual, often resulting in spirit children in the spirit world. Most working relationships fall somewhere between these two extremes. Only one quality is consistent among all the relationships forged between shamans and spirits. They are all ecstatic; they engage the universal power of the heart to connect to all things in a state of Oneness.

The fact that these working relationships are partnerships forged over time allows the shaman to distinguish between helpful spirit energies and misplaced spirit energies that cause disease and disharmony. The shaman always knows with whom he or

she is in relationship even when he or she takes on a disease-causing energy in the course of a healing. The issue of healing is not seen as one of good and evil. It is seen as the challenge to identify accurately the problematic energy, determine its right placement, and get it to that place. With the clarity and guidance of the spirits the shaman is able to replace misplaced energies, return wandering spirits to their homes, and guide the lost souls of the dead along their journey to the Land of the Dead. Even in a battle to the death for a patient's soul, the adversary is honored, not villainized, for it is a source of great power.

This is not to say that everything is nice in the shaman's world. The evil intent of others is clearly identified where it is present. However, at the core of shamanic healing is balance and restoring the right relationship of all things. The shaman understands that it is wise and practical for a human working between the realms of matter and spirit to proceed with humility and respect. It is even wiser when one understands that all things are literally connected to work together with the powers who are willing to help restore that life-sustaining balance.

This connection of all things, which is the root of our need to restore balance, may be the only explanation for why the spirits help us. Whatever their reasons, they do. The spirits contact us. They choose, initiate, and train the shamans so that the shamans can help us. When contemporary shamans re-create ancient shamanic practices that have lain dormant for centuries the first words from the spirits are, "Where have you been?" It is as if we have missed an appointment and kept them from a very important engagement. We see that we do matter to the spirits. This interdependence lies at the core of the working relationship between shamans and spirits.

The relationship between shaman and spirit is not idealized. The relationship is not established in a search for enlightenment or personal ascension. It is a practical relationship that must work here in the realm of the living. The shaman must have the ability to enter the type of relationship needed to get the job done and possess the personal power necessary to hold his or her own in that relationship. The shaman must have great courage of heart to sustain action within the relationship and the clarity of vision to understand when the task is accomplished. If the shaman has all of this then his or her relationship with spirit enables the shaman to do for humans what can't be done without the intervention of spirit. It is through this practical working relationship with spirit that shamans perform everyday miracles.

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2 Grim, John A. *The Shaman*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

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THE SHAMAN'S UNIVERSE

We live in interesting times. Our foremost scientists, to whom we have given the task of explaining the material nature of our universe, are now describing a universe that the shamans have been describing for thousands of years. The scientists have arrived there through fact and experimentation and the shamans through their experiences in altered states of consciousness. We are coming full circle. It is as if the shamans have stood still and the developed world has gone around the circle the long way, through rigorous scientific exploration, and arrived where humanity started, in the shaman's universe. The purpose of this essay is to describe the shaman's universe in a way that we, as contemporary people, can reenter it. We will try to do so by starting with what we understand—science—and move through science to spirit, which we understand less well but know in our soul. This place in time and space where science and spirit merge is the revelation of the shaman's universe.

As scientists describe the physical nature of the universe, they describe a universe made up of energetic elements: electrons, protons, photons, and neutrons that break down further into subatomic particles. Nonetheless, all of these energetic elements are connected, atom to atom, in a very real energetic way. Shamans use altered states of consciousness to see the true nature of the universe, which is energy. Shamans see that the universe is made of vibrational energy; that it is one continuous, multidimensional fabric of vibration. The quantum physicists agree. Their theories indicate that the universe is made from energy vibrations and those vibrations connect everything.

Connection and Vibration

Vibrations, as they are understood in physics, are repetitive patterns in physical systems. Examples of vibrational movement are sound moving through air as well as light moving through the universe. The theories of quantum physics explain vibrations on subatomic and atomic levels. Vibrations, or quantum waves, are called probability waves because they have a vibrational pattern that is relatively stable and more probable than other possibilities. That pattern determines how probable physical events are on the atomic level, which eventually determines physical events on the human level. According to quantum physics, everything in the universe has an inherent probability-vibrational pattern.

Shamans believe in a similar vibrational understructure of the universe. They deal with a world of vibrations, cycles, and circles. The key to understanding the shaman's world is to realize that it is a vibrational world and that a vibrational world can be affected by the vibrations of sacred songs, chants, and rhythmic drumming. All the tools of the shaman's trade are designed to alter the vibrational state of the shaman and/or the patient or a particular situation in the community.

Probability and Spirits

It can be challenging to understand that the solid reality we call home is really only a probable reality. While we live in the most probable physical state, simultaneously there are an infinite number of possible states. This is one of the oddest characteristics of our physical world, and it is precisely this characteristic that allows shamans to work in alternate states. Principles of quantum physics explain that, if no observation is made of an evolving system, then all possible states will evolve together. For example, an unobserved atom in motion does not occupy a single position in space until that position is actually observed. This means that until an observer "sees" the atom, the atom occupies an infinite number of possible positions simultaneously. This characteristic of our universe is known as the observer effect—wherein the choice of an observer to measure a particular property of a system forces the system

to emerge from a probable state into an actual one. This means that the observer of the quantum system disturbs the system by observing it.

We cannot escape the observer effect, and the shaman uses it. By entering an alternate state of consciousness, the shaman enters other possible realities and, utilizing his or her observational power in that reality, the shaman makes new possibilities emerge. This is the importance of the shaman's interpretation of the spirit realms and of their narration of their experiences there during the healing ritual. By making new possibilities emerge, the shaman causes the physical world to adapt to include that reality. The shaman uses these other possibilities to create change in the physical world, such as healing or bringing rain.

The observer effect of quantum physics is one primary connection between science and the shaman's universe. Both quantum physicists and shamans alter reality, though in different ways and from different points of view. An important point to make here is that there can be no objective reality in the scientific or spiritual realms of our universe. The observer always affects that which is observed. Both scientists and shamans interpret their experiences subjectively; there is no other way any of us can view things.

Quantum waves exist for the physicist in the same way that spirits exist for the shaman. Quantum waves are invisible; they are constructs of human thought necessary for us to understand atomic and subatomic matter, the building blocks of our world. Even though we have never actually observed them, we believe in them. Quantum waves are theorized to be coherent energy patterns in a greater field of energy. They are invisible and vital for us to understand our universe. Spirits are invisible and vital for shamans to interpret their universe. The spirits the shaman "sees" are also coherent energy patterns within a greater field of energy. However, unlike the physicist who believes in his or her theories of the invisible world, the shaman experiences the invisible world. They do not need to believe in spirits any more than they believe in the home they live in or the children they play with.

Quantum physics asks us to accept theoretically what the shamans know from their experiences in altered states of consciousness. Shamans know our world is actually a composite of many other realities. Some of them are very probable, so much so that we do not notice the differences from one to the other. These nondiffering realities form what we call simply physical reality—the world as we see it. However, there are always the other realities that are not so probable. They are off the beaten path. These are the other realities the shaman travels through to bring healing and change into the present reality.

Simultaneous Possibilities, Simultaneous Worlds, and the Kosmos

Physical reality is a very convincing illusion. Our waking experience is that of being in just one world, the most probable, when in fact quantum physics tells us that we are in an infinite number of worlds all the time. A possible world in quantum physics is physical; it is a set of experiences that take place within a region of space and over a period of time. Shamans are aware of living simultaneously in parallel worlds. Mastering this ability is an important element of their training. These simultaneous worlds are constantly interacting, coming together and flying apart in dimensions we normally do not experience. By entering an altered state of consciousness, shamans move from one world to another.

How did the ancient shamans come to understand the universe in ways so similar to our modern scientists? They did it by experiencing the universe while in altered states of consciousness. Through repeated visits to other realms, shamans learn the terrain of the vibrational fabric of the universe. The shaman's universe, like scientists', is one of connections and vibrations, probabilities and spirits, simultaneous possibilities and simultaneous worlds. The shaman moves through the many realms of this universe, traveling effortlessly between the vibrational realms of matter, the pulsing

realm of life, the resonant realm of the mind, and the harmony of the spirit realm. The shaman embodies not only the true nature of the universe, but of the complete Kosmos in the Greek sense of the word.

Pythagoras, the Greek philosopher and mathematician from the sixth century B.C.E., explained the Kosmos as “the patterned nature or process of all domains of existence, from matter to mind to God.” Ken Wilber, a writer on psychology, religion, and philosophy, explains that ordinarily we experience the cosmos—the physical universe—as the boundaries of our consciousness. However, the Kosmos is actually the whole that contains the cosmos (matter, physiosphere), the bios (life, biosphere), the nous (psyche, noosphere), and the theos (divine domain, theosphere). The shaman gains a working knowledge of the Kosmos, as Pythagoras intended the term to be used, from training and initiation.

Wilber explains that the Kosmos has direction; it is evolving, pushed by its own inherent nature which is creativity. Both Wilber and the shamans refer to this creative force as Emptiness or the Unknown. Shamans often call it the Void. It is the potential energy of the Kosmos that does not yet have form. Even though it is unqualifiable, it is not inert and unyielding. The direction of the Kosmos gives rise to a manifestation of itself; new forms emerge, and that creativity is ultimate. This is the shaman's Universe.

Shamans must sacrifice and work for their understanding of the Universe, and for the ability to use it. Through long and arduous training, shamans gain knowledge of the Universe. As they master the ability to intentionally enter and exit altered states of consciousness, they begin to experience other possible realities and the infinite nature of space and time. Though the metaphors they use to communicate these experiences are drawn from the ordinary world, the experiences themselves are quite extraordinary. These experiences often demand great sacrifices, culminating in the self-sacrifice of the initiation. It is through the ego death, essential to initiation, that the shaman surrenders to spirit and finally gains the power to apply their new knowledge and skills.

The Call

Shamans are called into service; they are chosen by spirit. The nature of the call may be severe, like a seven-year illness, or as simple as a dream. Whatever the nature of the call, the novice often goes with great reluctance, knowing that the training is often frightening, always intense, and that the personal sacrifice will be great. Training helps the novice to understand the experiences from a context that includes other possible worlds. It culminates in an initiation, during which the novice's ego identification is stripped away or released. This transformation aligns the shaman's will with service to the community.

Training

Through training the shaman develops the ability to enter into a relationship with reality that transcends the apparent separation between people, things, and their environment. Training may follow a set tradition or proceed on a spontaneous path guided by the shaman's helping spirits. As the shaman learns to move from physical reality into other possible realities, he or she learns to perceive the pulse of the universe in all things. The shaman does not seek to influence or change that pulse, but to make changes in vibrations of the people and things, to bring them into resonance and harmony with that pulse. The shaman's approach is based on unity with the life-force inherent in all things and on empathy for the fear and pain others experience when they fall out of harmony with that universal life-force.

Although the shaman must experience unity with spirit to work, he or she must also remain detached, emotionally and mentally, from the spirit world. The discipline of detachment is one of the most important distinctions learned in the shaman's training. Until the shaman's death, he or she is only a temporary, though frequent,

visitor in the spirit realms. The shaman must move as carefully as a tightrope walker in the spirit realms, in full control of his or her emotional state, remaining unattached to what he or she sees and does. Developing this detachment of consciousness in all realms of the spirit world demands the ability to transcend personal self, or ego, and to view their experience through the eyes of the universe. They must proceed without judgment, which would lead to attachment, and with the ability to discern the flow of the universe and determine what is necessary to bring dissonant vibrations into harmony with that universal flow. To do this shamans draw heavily on their relationship with their helping spirits.

Mastering detachment is essential before the shaman can serve others. Thus shamans are rarely allowed to practice before puberty and their initiation into adulthood. In some cultures every boy and girl is expected to transcend their ego self in their initiation into adulthood. In other cultures, only the shaman excels in this transformation.

When working with illness, the shaman enters the patient's vibrational state with the same complete presence and conscious detachment that he or she enters the spirit world. This enables the shaman to experience the symptoms and pains, to diagnose the true source of the illness, and to determine the appropriate course of action without getting attached to the illness itself or the patient. This ability to fully experience different vibrational states with detachment is essential to the shaman's safety and efficacy. Mastering that ability is a primary purpose of training. Practitioners experience this detachment, in part, through following direction from the helping spirits or by succeeding in allowing the spirits to act through them.

Degree of Power

It is the shaman's capacity to function with intention within the trance state that determines the degree of power of the shaman. Any one shaman's capacity to act is affected by a multitude of variables. However, these variables are mostly related to the shaman's ability to grasp the limitless, infinitely powerful reality of the universe and to work with that potential power. The shaman's ability to act in the spirit world is bound by his or her capacity to reach beyond his or her own human limits and grasp the vast implications of the true nature of reality, what the true source of the problem is, and how the prescribed actions will actually restore balance. This dictates the need for initiation.

Initiation

Though the initiation occurs in an altered state, it is not a hallucinatory vision of death. Initiation strips the shaman of all his or her social and mental habits, religious and philosophical ideas, and prior roles in the community. This transcendence of self calls for a willingness to suffer a genuine death of ego and not merely a mytho-poetic imagination of death in the form of allegories and archetypes. The shaman's ego death experience may resolve just short of real death or permanent insanity. However, without it, the shaman cannot freely serve the will of spirit.

The function of initiation is to free the novice's soul from their ego. Only those who transcend their ego-bound motivations can interpret the experiences in altered states through the eyes of the Universe or spirit. Personal attachments to the past, impurities, fears, and expectations of the future are recognized as illusions and no longer color the experiences of the spirit world or the altered states. The psychic transformation that results from initiation creates a clear mind, enhanced perception, greater capacity for compassion, and true gentleness.

The shamanic apprentice gains his or her true power—the relationship with spirit—only after initiation. Once the ego identity has collapsed the shaman's soul can experience true Oneness with nature, animals, plants, and the world. This experience of a transpersonal self is the reward for all the sacrifices of the shaman's training, initiation, and the life of service to come. The initiated shaman represents the bridge between the probable world of physical reality and all the possible worlds of our infinite universe.

Interpreting the Invisible World of Spirit

It is the shaman's responsibility to communicate his or her altered state experiences to others, thereby giving these formless possibilities image and meaning. The shaman narrates or describes his or her experience in the altered state and the actual energetic (psychospiritual) transformation that occurs using concepts and images taken from the physical world. The actual transformation cannot be conveyed by language alone, so it is understood that the physical world images used by the shaman are only metaphors for the larger experience. The power of metaphor allows the shaman to use this kind of language shorthand, borrowing concepts from the everyday world, instead of constructing new and complicated psychological terminology for each experience. After giving the experience form through images the shaman gives them meaning through interpretation. This is all part of the shaman's process of bringing possible realities into manifestation (such as traveling out of time to retrieve a lost soul part) and effecting change in the physical world (such as changing the weather or numbers of game animals).

Many shamanic cultures view the universe as a continuous whole where the physical and spiritual worlds are distinct but contiguous. Others see the physical and spiritual worlds as day and night mirror images of each other that invert with each sunset and switch again with the sunrise. The majority of cultures see the spirit world divided into three realms which expand infinitely up, down, and outward while containing the physical world. Recent findings in the field of consciousness research make it apparent that we can no longer argue that these descriptions of the spirit world are merely unconscious productions, archetypes, or symbols without any real and practical consequences. They are places humans are able to travel to and return to in altered states of consciousness, including those induced by general anesthesia and near-death experiences. The shaman's view of the Kosmos transcends thought or belief; it is the result of his or her experiences in alternate realms of reality. Furthermore, the ability of shamans to take action in their journeys into the spirit world allows them to effect real change in the physical world.

Symbols of the Shaman's Universe

The following are the images shamans around the globe use to communicate the true nature of the Kosmos as they experience it: the Tree of Life, or World Tree; the Spiral; and the Circled Cross. The images are ordinary, such as a tree, but the interpretation gives them extraordinary meaning. Though visually simple, each image conveys multilayered meanings and true insight into the nature of the Kosmos.

Tree of Life

The Tree of Life is a cross-culturally recurrent symbol for the connection between the three realms of the spirit world: Upperworld, Middleworld, and Lowerworld. The Tree of Life is simultaneously the center, the balance, the axis, and the Whole of the shaman's universe. The tree is used by shamans as an entry into non-ordinary reality, the branches providing a means to go to the Upperworld and the roots providing access to the Lowerworld. By merging with the Tree of Life, the shaman stands in the center of the Kosmos, connected to the Whole, and able to travel to any corner of it. Mountains and pillars are cross-culturally recurrent images that bear the same meaning and function as the Tree of Life. They represent the mythical mountain at the Center of the Earth and the pillar that holds up the sky, respectively.

The three realms of the spirit world extend out in all directions from the center as we perceive it in physical reality. The way these realms are accessed varies culture to culture as do the spirit inhabitants of each realm encountered by the shaman. Generally speaking, the Upperworld is accessed from the branches of the Tree of Life, mountaintops, rainbows, smoke, and mist. It is the place of the stars (in a vast, spiritual sense), as well as the sun, the moon, the spirit of the sky, other heavenly bodies, gods, goddesses, the

Divine, and many helping spirits in other forms. The shaman can view the entire Kosmos from the Upperworld and move out into it for teaching and inspiration.

The Lowerworld is accessed from the roots of the Great Tree, through caves, wells, or holes in the ground. In the Lowerworld the shaman can enter the Land of the Dead, the realm of the ancestors, and meet spirits of the earth, fire, animals, and the spirit of the earth as a being. In seafaring cultures, the Lowerworld also involves an underwater realm where the Mistress of the Sea Animals lives, caring for her animal children and releasing them to be killed only by those who demonstrate through appropriate sacrifice that they are worthy of the lives of the animals.

The Middleworld stretches out from the trunk of the Great Tree in all eight cardinal directions. The Middleworld is inhabited by the spirit of everything that exists physically—weather, landscapes, animals, people, plants, air, and water. The shaman also encounters many of the animal totem spirits that are passed on within families or clans here. The Middleworld contains both the physical world that we inhabit and its otherworldly dimensions, which exist out of ordinary time and space. The physical and spiritual planes of existence overlap here and interrelate in such a way that portals are created, allowing access between the worlds. The connection is multidimensional, which the Celts interpreted poetically as ribbons of energy which encircle and entwine all three realms of the shaman's Universe. A change in one part affects every other part.

In many cultures the spirit world is not simply one Upperworld and one Lowerworld, but each world containing a number of levels, typically three, seven, nine, twelve, or infinitely unfolding levels. Though the levels do not represent a hierarchy of value, a soul traveling in these realms must move through the levels in succession. They correspond to stages of personal development, or insight, development of psychic skills, or mastery that enables the shaman to adjust his or her energy to resonate with the energetic vibration of that level. Movement between levels can be instantaneous for those who have met the challenges of a level in a prior visit or who have mastered multiple levels of psychic development. Others may remain in a level until they evolve some aspect of their being, or fail to, and return to ordinary reality, unable to pass beyond that level. For those who have mastered their personal state, like the initiated shaman, movement between the levels is an endless journey of evolving consciousness, containing brilliant moments of revelation and ecstasy.

Spiral of Creation

The Spiral of Creation is recorded in the stone and clay remnants of the symbolic languages of people on every continent. It results from the interrelationship of space and time seen through the shaman's unique understanding of both.

Space

For the shaman the spirit world is where possibilities exist; space (the physical world) is where the most probable possibility is already manifest. Shamans understand space as the place where the dream (the possibility we and our ancestors see for the future) continually manifests in physical reality. Therefore, for the shaman, the most efficient way to change physical reality is to travel outside of it to change the dream from whence it came. When the shaman creates a ritual for personal or communal healing a portal is created between the worlds. In every ritual the shaman establishes a sacred space in ordinary reality, containing the portal that allows passage into the spirit world and the Dream.

Time

Time is represented in shamanic societies with the circle, whose deceptive simplicity is symbolic of a much more complex relationship with time. Some shamanic cultures have no concept for time at all. The Dagara of West Africa, for example, do not even

have a word for time. They are aware of linear time as an illusion we accept because we do not know time as it really exists. They have learned to live outside of linear time and are concerned only with timing. Timing a ritual with the phase of the moon or a festival with the summer solstice is valuable, while time is not. In the shaman's view of timing, every event affects the Whole, therefore the mechanical notion of one to one, cause and effect is irrelevant. The shaman uses timing to move in harmony with the Whole and in synch with the rhythms of Nature and the Universe.

Scientists tell us that the shape of time is not a straight line reaching into infinity at both ends, but an irregular fabric, full of inconsistencies, that loops back on itself. Shamans have developed a relationship with this irregular, polychronic nature of time. As the quantum physicist who sees a universe composed of waves of energy vibrations within which time cycles back on itself in the vibration's periodicity (movement that comes back to itself in harmony over and over again), the shaman experiences time as the simultaneous, creative expression of all that is, that was, and all that will be.

The Spiral of Creation is woven of space and time and winds simultaneously upward and downwards. The Spiral exists in such a way that any one point can touch any other point at any time. In terms of quantum physics, the Spiral represents the infinite, simultaneous possibilities within the Kosmos. Likewise, for the shaman, the Spiral of Creation represents the Void, or the as yet unknown potential, alive and pulsing between occurring and reoccurring.

The Circled Cross

The basic pattern of two crossed lines enclosed in a circle appears carved on stones, worked into jewelry, and painted on cave walls throughout the world. The Circled Cross is a shorthand symbol of the shaman's universe and is found in cultures as distant and unrelated as the Celts of the British Isles and the Mapuche of Chile, South America. The circle aspect represents both the circle of time and a foreshortened view of the Spiral of Creation. The crossed lines represent both the four directions of the physical world, space, as well as the movement of the shaman out into the other dimensions of the spirit realm. The center where the lines cross is the Tree of Life, the balance, the center, the axis, and the understanding that from the center point the shaman can move in all directions in an infinite universe. The Circle Cross is the Kosmos, symbolic of the shaman's Universe.

Shamanic Ritual

The shaman accesses the Universe through the creation of each shamanic ritual. The shaman opens the center point of the Circled Cross, the Tree of Life, and moves between the worlds in an altered state of consciousness. Thus ritual, which is vital and created anew in each session, is the way the shaman accesses the Unknown. The shaman's ritual is always unpredictable. To engage the power of ritual, the shaman must disengage from time and enter the cyclical, mythical nature of the Universe's timing. As the shaman alters his or her state of consciousness while in trance, the shaman's soul moves out of physical space and into other possible realms. When the purpose of the ritual is completed in the spirit realms, the shaman returns to ordinary space and time and the ritual is closed.

Shamans are more than visionaries for they are able to apply their knowledge of the Universe, through ritual, in the service of their community. They are able to do so by entering altered states that give them a connection with spirit that empowers their actions. In these states, shamans see the true causes of illness and threatening events in the lives of their people, diagnose cures, and carry them out. Not all shamans are great visionaries; not all understand the universe at the same depth. However, they all apply the knowledge they have. The more powerful the shaman, the greater his or her insight into the true nature of the shaman's Universe.

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A

Aboriginal

Aboriginal, from the Latin phrase *ab origine* meaning *from the beginning*, refers to the **first people**. When capitalized, Aboriginal refers to the first people of **Australia**. Otherwise, aboriginal refers to the first people of a particular land or region. For example, many Indians or Native Americans prefer to be called the “First People” of the land of their **ancestors**.

Achnucek

The *achnucek* is a **transformed shaman** of the Aleut and Kodiak peoples of the southern **Alaskan** regions. Their gender variance was recognized when they were children, sometimes infants. These boys were raised as girls, wearing feminine clothing and hair styles and plucking their facial hair. After adolescence their *achnucek* **training** began as with all other Aleut *angakok*.

Mature *achnucek* were highly respected *angakut*. As boys between the ages of ten to fifteen the *achnucek* were often wed to older men during their training. The Aleut considered it lucky to have a *achnucek* as a partner. See also **gender variant** and *shopan*.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Achuar

The Achuar are an indigenous people living deep in the Ecuadorian rain forest. Their total population ranges somewhere between 6,000 to 8,000 people, and, when maintained at this population, they can live sustainably in the rain forest. They were contacted only recently, within the last thirty years, by Western civilization. As a result of the impact of contemporary forces, the Achuar run the risk of losing their traditions and **culture** within the next generation.

The Achuar, in partnership with Ecuadorian Daniel Koupermann, have built an ecotourist lodge in the community of Kapawi. The intention of the lodge is to give people from other countries a place to come and visit, to learn about the wonders of the rain forest, and the Achuar culture. The highest dream of the Achuar is that these visitors will then take their experience home and pass it on to others and from that will be generated a means for preservation of the Achuar traditions, their sustainable way of life, and the rain forest they live in.

Africa

A continent of geographical contrasts, incorporating desert and scrub, rolling savanna, and dense tropical rain forest. The contemporary states are primarily products of colonization, first by the Arabs (7th–8th century) and then by the Europeans (19th–20th century). These states are not defined by natural geographic borders or traditional ethnic **domains**. The exceptions are Morocco, Egypt, and Ethiopia.

The Arab invasion and settlement of North Africa have made that region essentially part of the Middle East and

Mediterranean Europe. As Islam spread south and black slaves were taken north, indigenous African spiritual practices, like the Hausa bori and the Ethiopian zar, spread north. Traditional African spirituality and **shamanism** are thoroughly integrated with **healing, medicine,** and agriculture. One cannot think of one without thinking of the others and their interrelationships. The **shamans** of the various African tribes perform their healing rituals and ceremonies in this context. This “wholism” is the defining awareness from which concepts of reality arise. Though each tribe has its own view of wholism, it is the heart of traditional village life. See also **Bwiti; Dagara; Ju!’hoansi; Zulu.**

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Aghula

The *aghula* is a traditional **dance** of the **Eskimo**. It provides preventative **medicine** for the community and an inner **journey** for the dancers back to the roots of the people’s origin and memory of the **time** before time when the **spirit** and human worlds were one.

The Eskimo live simultaneously in the world of daily tasks and hunting and the world of spirit power and magic. These worlds are distinct but equally real, intimately interconnected, and each profoundly affected by the other. The Eskimo move easily between these worlds in the *aghula*. The dancer’s movements, the beat of the heart, and

the **sound** of the **drum** together create a passage for the dancer to move between the worlds.

The drummers, all men, are the caretakers of the past. They keep separate from the participants, avoiding conversation and direct contact before the **ritual**. They begin the *aghula*, playing the one-two *kallengneq* beat in unison in a steady **rhythm**. The *saguyak* drums are made from the stomach of the walrus, the giver of life. Each drum has a power of its own. It is a valued **possession** and a **sacred** tool.

Some dancers dance *sayugh*, ancient ritualized patterns involving complex sets of movements and nuance. The women tend to dance from direct inspiration and spontaneous trance states. In contrast the men often dance the story of their hunting exploits and village life. Older men dance the teaching stories from the **shaman’s visions** and journeys recounting how the animals taught the humans to survive.

One by one, the dancers enter an **altered state of consciousness**, allowing their consciousness to enter the spirit world under and around the sea. The dances begin to dance the dancers. The spirits enter and the dancers become beings of mythical times. The *aghula* is much more than ritualized drama or creative release. It is a sacred gathering of **power**, invoked by the chanting and drumming and made manifest in the dancer through the dance. See also **Yup’ik**.

Air

Air, one of the elemental **powers**, can be used for **healing** in both its physical form and in its energetic form, as when the **shaman** works with the element in the invisible world during his or her **journeys**. Air is considered to be **spirit** and breathing in is to draw **spirit** into one’s body. Shamans use this “breath of spirit” in their healing, particularly blowing “the breath of life” into the patient.

The role of the element air in **shamanic healing** rituals is to provide

the ease of swift change and to inspire creativity, illumination, and vision. The **energy** of air may be used directly by blowing air, alcohol, or ignited alcohol on the patient with the intention of infusing him or her with a connection to all things. The shamans of many **cultures** use the energy of the air directly from specific sites by conducting their healings or **vision quests** on mountainsides or vistas where the open **sky** and view inspires vision, revelation, and communication with spirit. Shamans also retreat alone into such sites to restore their own vision and connection with their spirit guidance.

Shamans use the energy of air in their journeys in similar ways—for example, breathing life into a dead or dying **soul** part, or filling the patient's spirit body with the breath of life.

The role of air and its priority as a spirit **teacher** vary and are defined specifically culture by culture. See also **elements; helping spirits; ritual**.

Aka

According to Hawaiian shamans, the stuff of which everything in the Universe is created and connected. A vast web of *aka* threads connects all things.

These connections can be created with thoughts or intention. *Aka* threads are receptacles and/or conductors for **mana**. They can be activated with attention and sustained concentration. The Hawaiian **kahuna (shaman)** manifests change and affects the desired outcome by establishing *aka* threads and working through those connections.

The Hawaiians perceived of a level of action where everything is connected through *aka* threads. This is a second level of existence beyond physical reality, that includes the subjective level of thoughts, emotions, and psychic phenomena. See also **Hawaii**.

King, Seide K. *Kahuna Healing: Holistic Health and Healing Practices of Polynesia*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1983.

Alaskan

The Alaskan region is comprised of the various Alaskan **Eskimo** groups and the people of the Aleutian and Kodiak islands. The main linguistic and political groups are the Inupiat and **Yup'ik**. The traditional life in this region revolved around hunting whales, seals, and walrus in the winter and spring and, for those on the mainland, living off caribou in the summer and fall. Within the communities people strive to live according to a system of **taboos** that kept them in good relationship with the **spirit** beings in their environment. The **tungralik** (shaman) was called on for crises, famine, and **illness**.

The winter season is a time of *tcauyavik*, **dance** festivals involving **masks**, songs, and celebrations designed to connect the people with the spirit world. Some dances are focused **healing** rituals, like the masked dancing **ritual** *agayuliyararput*, which means "our way of making **prayer**." The focus of some dances like *aghula* is more diffuse, functioning as preventative medicine for the community. Whatever the focus, drumming plays an important role in these sacred rituals and **ceremonies**.

Many rituals involving the *tungralik* take place in a semisubterranean men's ceremonial house called *kashim* or *kazigis*. The *kashim* is used publicly as the community dance house and privately for secret men's rituals. The *kashim* is designed to serve as a dry-heat **sweat house** for **purification** purposes.

The First Shaman

All *tungralik* learn the **art** of the shaman in a spiritual lineage from the first brother shamans. The **myth** describes why there are two kinds of *tungralik* in many regions, those who communicate with the spirits in **journeys** of spirit flight and those who communicate through the use of **divination** tools.

Two spirit brothers lived in the **Upperworld** and desired to be reborn. One brother found a gleaming woman who had nothing dark about her. He

crawled into her and was born remembering his brother. He grew quickly and was soon recognized as a great shaman because he could fly through the air to consult with the spirits. Meanwhile, the other brother found a nearly gleaming woman. He crawled into her and was born forgetting all about his brother. This brother too became a shaman, but having forgotten his origin as spirit, he was never able to fly. He consulted the spirits through divination tools, a spirit wand, and **amulets**.

Helping Spirits

There is a great variety of spirits and **helping spirits** in this region of the world. The most important are the **animal** spirits; however nearly all spirits are able to assume a human form. **Tunax** is a general term for any kind of spirit on the islands, while *kala* is the general term used on the mainland. The **tunghât** is a helping spirit that takes human form with a grotesque face and has the ability to take the form of an animal or monster at will.

Also called *tungat*, among many other variations, the *tungai* (pl) can be spirits of the **air** or the **earth** or the spirits of deceased animals or **ancestors**. The *tungralik* makes a mask of each *tungat* in his service. The masks are usually grotesque human faces, though the *tungat* can take many other forms. These helping spirits are distinguished from *inyusuaq*, the **soul** of a dead person, and *ilitkosaq*, the soul of the *tungralik* while it journeys in the spirit world.

Initiation

The *tungralik*'s **initiation** experience often involves a spontaneous intervention by the spirits, who haul the unsuspecting individual's soul into the spirit world and teach it the techniques of the *tungralik*. The individual has little choice in the matter, particularly if he or she wants to recover from the strange unexplained illnesses that often accompany this type of initiation experience.

For example, a man was walking along the shore when a boatload of

spirits stole his soul away to the land of the whales. His body was found and brought to his home where he lay unconscious for eight winter months. In the spring, after his soul had learned all those spirits had to teach he returned as a whale and allowed the men of his village to harpoon him. In that way his soul returned home, his body regained consciousness, and he became a *tungralik*. He retained the special skill of communicating with whales, calling them to the boats of his village and sending them away from the boats of others.

In another initiation, a young man is running along when he receives a powerful **vision**. The spirit of an old shaman comes to him in a boat from the **moon** to talk. Then a spirit helper, in the form of a man with one eye, wearing fine clothes and mittens with pieces of **metal** that rattle, dances for him. Then come the **power animals**, ermines, one white and one brown.

In spite of its power, the young man forgot the vision. For four days he wandered about doing strange things in the temporary madness of an initiation crisis. Eventually he recovers his consciousness enough to enter the men's ceremonial house. There he drummed and entered a trance in which the helping spirit in the fancy clothes with the rattle mittens was able to take full **possession** of him and teach. In this way he learned eight songs for healing and the spirit's name with which to call on him. Over time with the assistance of the rattle-mittened spirit and the ermines, he became a great shaman.

Drum

The *tungralik*'s drum is the **sauyit** or *iputar*. It is the core of the *tungralik*'s practice and of the sacred rituals and ceremonies of the people. The *tungralik* plays the *sauyit* to induce trance or the assistant plays while the *tungralik* sings and beats a **rhythm** on the floor with a small baton.

The *sauyit* is an 18-inch, circular, wooden frame with a walrus or seal bladder stretched over it and held in

place with a hide cord, or *oklinok*. The *sauyit* is held aloft when played beaten near the rim. The beater, or *mumwa*, is a small stick adorned with a piece of white ermine or a fox tail.

Masks

Masks, or *kinaroq*, are important **power objects** for the *tungralik*. Each *kinaroq* houses a helping spirit and, when worn during the dance rituals, the *kinaroq* allows the *tungralik* to draw the spirit of the mask into his body and enter a full embodiment trance.

These masks are carved secretly, exactly as they are seen in the *tungralik's dream* or journey. When completed the *tungralik* conducts the necessary rituals to invoke the spirit in the *kinaroq*. Once housed in the mask, the spirit must be "fed" *yutir (mana)* on a regular basis.

Some *kinaroq* created by the North Alaska Eskimo are so large that they have to be suspended by a rawhide cord from the ceiling of the *kashim*. The dancer performs behind the *kinaroq*. Once a *kinaroq* is put on and danced, the spirit associated with it will enter the body of the dancer or shaman.

Tools

In addition to the drum and masks, the shamans of this region create **charms**, amulets, and **fetishes** to serve various functions in their rituals and ceremonies. The *pogok* is a fetish, carved from wood and created to embody a spirit or **energy**, like the masks. The *pogok* is usually burned after being used in a ceremony to release the spirit or energy within it. The *qologogoloq* is a charm whose **power** is inherent in it. It is carved from wood and can be an animal figure or a mask. The *qologogoloq* is used and reused in a variety of ceremonial ways.

Illness

Illness is believed to be caused by **soul loss** or **sorcery**. Soul loss is considered the cause of most illness, particularly when the illness manifests as general

debility or malaise. The soul has been either stolen, frightened, or wandered and become lost in the spirit world. The *tungralik* drums and **chants** to enter a trance and **diagnose** the cause of the soul loss and then proceeds into the spirit world to recover the lost soul for the patient. When the soul has been restored to the body the patient will recover.

Sorcery is suspected when the illness manifests primarily as a localized pain. In such a case the sorcerer has created an **energy intrusion** and succeeded in sending it into the body of the patient. The *tungralik* drums and chants to enter an embodiment trance and proceeds to drive out the energy, possibly sucking and/or pulling the energy out. See also *angakok; torngraq*.

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Algonquian

The Algonquian **language** family in Canada is the most diffuse, reaching across northeastern **North America** from the Eastern woodlands to the subarctic and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Rocky Mountains. The Algonquian language family includes: the Blackfoot, Cree, **Ojibwa**, Ottawa, Algonkin, Naskapi, Montagnais, Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, and the now extinct Beothuk of Newfoundland.

McMillan, A. D. *Native Peoples and Cultures of Canada*. Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1995.

Altai

Shamanic people of the Altai Mountains in Central Asia, including the **Yakut**, Buryat, and Tatar peoples.

The general patterns found in the **shamanism** of this region are those of **Siberian shamans**.

In the important divination rituals of Altai shamans the soul of a sacrificial horse is ridden by the shaman's soul to the ninth level of the **Upperworld**. There the horse's soul is given as an **offering** to the supreme **sky** deity, *Bai Ulgen*. If the offering is received, *Bai Ulgen* gives the shaman the answers to his or her questions.

The Altai recognize three types of shamans. There are shaman-**priests** who work only with the **spirit** and deities of the Upperworld and who do not necessarily work in trance. There are shamans who work in trance and specialize in working with the spirits of the **Lowerworld**. The majority of Altai shamans do not specialize; they work in trance with the spirits of all the realms of the Otherworld. See also **Buryuat (Buriat)**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Altar

An altar is a physical home for **spirit** here in the physical world. An altar may be permanent, as with the altar in a **shaman's** workspace, or impermanent as with altars created for specific rituals or gatherings. Altars can also be portable, as with the *mesa* used in small personal and large group rituals of **Q'ero** shamans, high in the Andean mountains of Peru.

An altar is composed of **power objects** placed with the intention to create a home for the energies in these objects on the altar. Some altars look like a pile of rocks, while others are laid out in recognizable patterns like a medicine wheel or other symbol of a shaman's cosmology. The structure is determined by how the altar will be

used, tradition, and personal preference. When a shaman creates an altar it is a threshold between the worlds.

Altars also serve to ground spirit **energy** in the **space** in which they are created. This is particularly important when created as the focal point or center of a **ritual**. As the shaman invokes the spirits to open the ritual space, the spirits enter and take their place in the altar and its objects.

Like a **shrine**, an altar is a place to be in communication with the spirits of the altar. It is a place to leave fresh **offerings** and make requests of the spirits. It is a place to exercise and strengthen the working relationship between the shaman and the spirits.

Altered States of Consciousness

Altered states of consciousness are mental states that can be subjectively recognized as representing a difference in psychological functioning from the individual's day-to-day, alert waking state. Altered states of consciousness are fundamental to **shamanism**.

An altered state of consciousness has been entered into when the individual feels, or is observed to display, signs of a clear qualitative shift in his or her mental functioning. The individual in an altered state not only feels a qualitative shift of consciousness, but also a difference in the quality or qualities of how his or her mind is processing information and experiences. In an altered state mental functions operate that do not operate at all ordinarily and perceptual qualities are spontaneously accessed that have no ordinary counterpart.

Altered states of consciousness are accessed by manipulating universal neurophysiological structures of the human body. This ability lies within the potential behavior of all normal human beings. Many indigenous peoples assume that a normal adult has the ability to go into a trance state and connect with the spirit world. The adult who cannot do this is considered a psychological cripple.

Scholar Erika Bourguignon gathered statistics from 488 societies, which comprise 57% of the societies represented in the ethnographic atlas. She looked at the use of altered states in all parts of the world and determined that 90% (437 societies) have one or more institutionalized, culturally patterned forms of altered states of consciousness. She concluded that the ability to access altered states is a psychobiological capacity available to all societies.

Any discrete state of consciousness is a system. This system has two basic components, structures and energies. Structures are the various human potentials which are expressed, suppressed, tapped, or untapped. Energies are the energetic flow routes of awareness, attention (partially directable awareness), and biological and psychic energies that keep the structures connected and interacting with one another in a relatively stable and habitual pattern.

This system also involves three potential components. They are the input from the environment filtered through the individual's selective attention, untapped structures which remain available though not connected, and other possible **energy** routes for connecting the structures. Using new energy routes creates a system with a different configuration. This allows the individual to experience a radically altered state of consciousness.

An altered state is more than a change of awareness or mood. A discrete altered state involves a change in the system, in how the structures are connected, and what structures are connected. This is an important distinction relative to shamanism in which discrete altered states of consciousness are intentionally invoked for the purpose of **healing** or rebalancing the human relationship with Nature, crops, or game.

A discrete altered state of consciousness results when energy routes not normally used are used to connect the structures and/or to connect different structures. This rerouting creates a

system with a different configuration. A new configuration results in a radical reorganization of the selection of structures making up the consciousness and/or the pattern of energetic and informational flow between structures.

Ordinary consciousness is a relatively stable and habitual pattern. When the stabilization of that baseline state of consciousness is disrupted, a radical rerouting can occur. This allows a transition from the patterned state into an unpatterned, chaotic state. If repatterning forces are able to establish a new pattern, an altered state of consciousness stabilizes for a time. In this way the disrupted system reshapes into a new system, potentially, the desired altered state of consciousness. It is the ability to do just this, to control the destabilization and restabilization of states of consciousness, that makes the shaman a master of altered states.

When this process is well learned, the shaman is able to destabilize his or her baseline state of consciousness, get to the desired, discrete, altered state of consciousness, to stabilize that desired altered state, and to destabilize that desired altered state and return to his or her baseline state of consciousness. The intentional control of this entire process for a variety of altered states is mastery of **trance**.

The human being is capable of entering a vast array of different altered states of consciousness. In mapping the different qualities of altered states it is apparent that shamanic trance states, shamanic **initiation** crisis states, yogic states, and meditative states are all distinct states of consciousness. It is also apparent that none of these states are pathological. Though altered states have functional and experiential commonalities, they are not the same. There is a broad range of healthy altered states of consciousness.

For the shaman the importance of the altered state is its function, not the form or the techniques used to enter the state. Each of these altered states is invoked intentionally to serve a specific

purpose. Their functions are different and the states are unique. See also **alternate states of consciousness**.

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———. "The Basic Nature of Altered States of Consciousness: A Systems Approach." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 8, no. 1 (1976): 45–64.

Walsh, R. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. Palo Alto, California: Transpersonal Institute 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Alternate States of Consciousness

Alternate has been suggested to replace the term *altered* when discussing states of consciousness. Alternate does not carry the pejorative connotations of altered states which suggests that these states are a deviation from the way consciousness ought to be. Furthermore, alternate is a plural, all-inclusive term, unlike *usual*, which is merely one specific state of many useful **altered states of consciousness**.

Altered is employed here because it is in standard usage. However, the author agrees that different states of consciousness prevail at different times

for different reasons for all human beings, particularly in **shamanism**. Please note that altered is not meant to carry pejorative connotations and means simply changed, different, or adjusted for a better fit.

Zinberg, Norman E. "The Study of Consciousness States: Problems and Progress." In *Alternate States of Consciousness*. Edited by Norman E. Zinberg. New York: Free Press, 1977.

Alto Mesayoq

The *alto mesayoq* is a high level of *paq'o*, a **shaman** of the **Q'ero** in the **Andes**. There are three levels of *alto mesayoq*. They all specialize in the cultivation of a relationship with the *apu*, the **spirits** of the mountains. They are consecrated to the service of a mountain and are responsible for listening to and speaking to that *apu*. Each *alto mesayoq* is also consecrated into the service of a star that serves as the *alto mesayoq's* guide, with the *apu*.

Alyha

The **gender-variant** spiritual functionary of the Mohave people of the **North American** southwest. The **shaman** and *alyha* had unique and related roles in Mohave **culture**.

The Mohave valued bravery above most other virtues in men. However, **power** obtained in a **dream** was even more highly prized. Thus the *alyha*, though known as a peaceful person, was highly respected by men and women because of the special powers he received in his dreams from the **spirits**.

The *alyha* is not called to his unique vocation so much as his special relationship with spirit is recognized by his relatives in childhood. All Mohave children between the ages of nine to twelve are initiated into "the functions of their gender," or adulthood, before puberty. At this time the relatives of a boy who

has expressed behavior considered odd for Mohave boys will discuss his tendencies and potential as an *alyha*. In secret, the relatives prepare for an **initiation ritual** that is meant to take the boy by surprise and test his true inclinations.

The initiation ritual is an open, public event. Without being told the purpose, the boy is led into a **circle** of tribespeople and guests. His willingness to stay in the circle, exposed, indicates his willingness to go through the ritual.

A singer, positioned out of sight of the boy, begins to **sing** a series of four particular songs. If the boy does not **dance** then he is not inclined to become an *alyha* and he will be initiated as are other boys. However, if his spirit is *alyha* the **song** will go straight to his heart and he will be unable to stop dancing. As the four songs progress the intensity of the boy's dance increases. After the fourth dance his role and status of *alyha* is confirmed.

In completion of the ritual the novice *alyha* is bathed, presented with a woman's skirt, and dressed as a traditional *alyha*. He then returns to the dance ground and in a **naming ceremony** he publicly receives his new feminine name. His male name will no longer be used. See also *berdache*.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Amanita Muscaria

The *amanita muscaria* **mushroom** is possibly the oldest recorded **entheogen**. It was used primarily by **shamans** across Eurasia and in **North America**. The **Koryak** name is *wapaq*, the universal Russian name is *mukhomor*, and it is also referred to as **fly agaric**. It is the most prominent **plant hallucinogen** used in the Asiatic region of the world and has been identified, potentially, as the god-narcotic, **Soma**, of ancient India.

For Finno-Ugrian shamans of eastern and western **Siberia**, *A. muscaria* was

consumed to induce trance states that enabled shamans to leave their bodies and fly into the spirit realms. It was known in that region as the "Mainstay of the Heavens." Different preparations of *A. muscaria* are also used to treat a variety of **illness** and health problems. *A. muscaria* is used in North America by several groups of Athabaskan peoples of northwestern Canada.

A. muscaria grows in thin forests under trees, usually birches. A mature *A. muscaria* may grow to 8–9 in. (20–23 cm) high and its cap 3–8 in. (8–20 cm) across. There are several varieties, found in both hemispheres, which vary in the color of the cap. The variety with a blood-red cap sprinkled with white warts is found in Asia, eastern and western Siberia, **Africa**, India, and in northwestern North America. The variety with a yellow to orange cap sprinkled with yellowish warts is found in eastern and central North America.

There is evidence of the use of sacred mushrooms in ancient Sweden, Denmark, and Finland. *A. muscaria* is thought to be the plant used by the Aryans in the sacred hallucinogenic drink central to their magico-religious rituals, **ritual** practices now called the cult of Soma, recorded in the *Rig veda*. These Aryans invaded the Indus Valley from the north in 1500 B.C.E., bringing *A. muscaria* and its ritual use as a sacred mediator with the gods.

The Indians adopted the practices of the cult of Soma, revering the sacred hallucinogen not just as a mediator, but as a god itself, fathered by Parjanya, the god of thunder. Though the name of the sacred plant was lost after the original cult died out, Soma ceremonies are still practiced today using surrogate plants. Given new evidence from diverse fields, the original Soma plant is believed to be *Amanita muscaria*.

In **Mesoamerica**, the **Maya** of Guatemala call *A. muscaria*, *Kakuljá-ikox*, the "lightning mushroom," a name which connects the mushroom's hallucinogenic powers to Rajaw Kakuljá, the Lord of Lightning. Similarly, the

Quiche-Maya name, *Kaquijá*, refers to the mushroom's origin in thunder and lightning. *Amanita muscaria* is associated with thunder and lightning in both hemispheres and it has the ability to induce trance states that transport the soul into supernatural realms.

In North America the Dogrib Athabaskan people of northwestern Canada use *A. muscaria* in their shamanic practices. Initiates ingest preparations of the mushroom during **training** to induce journeying trance states. The initiate's first journeys induced by *A. muscaria* are often characterized by sudden and disturbing lack of control as the soul leaves the body. Descriptions of journeys from later in their training show increased control and understanding of the induced experience and the meaning of the spirit realm experiences.

A. muscaria is also used by the **Ojibwa** (Anishinabeg) people living on Lake Superior in Michigan (USA). *A. muscaria* is known there as *Oshtimisk Wajashkwedo*, the "red-top mushroom," and is used as a sacred hallucinogen in an ancient, annual Ojibwa **ceremony**.

Use

The primary **aboriginal** use of *A. muscaria* among Siberian shamans is to induce the ecstatic states necessary for **healing** journeys, in which the shaman's soul travels into the spirit realms. The shaman's purpose for entering the spirit realm via *A. muscaria* is four-fold: **soul retrieval, divination, diagnosis, or psychopomp** (guiding the souls of the dead through their death transition).

Preparation

The mushroom is harvested by hand with cap and stem intact and the dirt that clings to the base. The remaining hole is filled with dirt. Trading the mushroom is believed to displease the *A. muscaria* spirit, weakening its **power** and prohibiting future growth in that area. The Koryak perform a **dance**, while beating the drum before harvesting the mushroom.

Traditionally, shamans harvest only the stronger, smaller mushrooms and only those that grow singly. They dry the mushrooms in the shade with the cap up. After they are dry the mushrooms are ingested only in odd numbers, like three or five, and with **water**. They use *A. muscaria* to induce trance and medicinally in preparations for topical and internal use.

After harvest, *A. muscaria* are sun-dried or toasted over a **fire**. The drying process induces the chemical transformation of ibotenic acid into muscimole, the active principle. The mushrooms are eaten by first moistening their dried flesh before swallowing. In some accounts, the women take the dried mushroom flesh into their mouths and then roll the moistened mushroom flesh into pellets for the men to swallow.

The dried mushrooms are also prepared as an extract or liquor. The extract is added to one of the following liquids and drunk: water, reindeer milk, or the juice of sweet plants like *Vaccinium oliginorum* or *Epilobium angustifolium*.

Because the active compound in *A. muscaria* is not metabolized, the urine of intoxicated individuals is also hallucinogenic. **Ritual** urine drinking is an additional means of ingesting the hallucinogen and is found in accounts of both the Siberian peoples and in the Indian Soma rituals.

Active Principle

Muscimole, the most active principle, results from the chemical transformation of ibotenic acid during the drying process. Muscazone, another active principle, has also been isolated. Muscarine, isolated from *A. muscaria* a century ago, is no longer considered the active constituent.

Muscimole is a unique hallucinogenic compound in that it is excreted unmetabolized in the urine. Most other hallucinogenic compounds are broken down or chemically transformed through the body's metabolism. Drinking one's own urine after ingesting and metabolizing *A. muscaria* increases

the effects of the mushroom for up to five hours.

Ritual of Receiving the Plant Spirit, or Plant Medicine

Details for the ritual use of *A. muscaria* are scarce due to the **persecution of shamans** in the regions in which they traditionally use *A. muscaria*.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

In general, *A. muscaria* intoxication is characterized by feelings of euphoria, the experience of colored visions, and macropsia (objects appearing larger than their actual physical size). Light intoxication is characterized by a heightened degree of animation and spontaneous movements. Strong intoxication is characterized by a shift of the senses causing surrounding objects to appear smaller or larger than life size, powerful hallucinations, spontaneous movements, and, occasionally, convulsions.

Strong intoxication also induces periods of **song**, dance, and heightened animation. During this phase of deep trance the shaman is observed to gesture and converse with the spirit beings encountered in the journey into the spirit realms. These periods of sacred activity alternate with periods of withdrawal from the spirit world, rocking side to side, or conversations with family members. Note that the above are primarily observations. They are not accounts made by shamans and therefore do not express the full range of this **altered state of consciousness** experience.

Songs and Dances

The spontaneous expression of **singing**, dancing, and drumming is characteristic of *A. muscaria* use, even when used recreationally. The spirit of the mushroom is known to inspire people to compose songs and **power songs** and to participate in long sessions of drumming, dancing, and singing. The shamans of peoples, like the Koryak who traditionally used *A. muscaria*, are known for the vast array of songs used in their shamanic work. Contemporary

shamans in these regions are believed to be less powerful in part because they have fewer songs. It is important to note that *A. muscaria* use has also decreased, thus removing the primary source of the powerful spirit songs of their **ancestors**.

Use in Western Medicine

Preparations of dried *A. muscaria* continue to be used to treat common health problems in Siberia. However there is no known use in Western **medicine** at this time. The mushroom is commonly treated as poisonous throughout North America and Europe. Eating the mushroom raw is quite toxic and induces harsh and unpleasant symptoms. See also **entheogen**.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Salzman, E., ed. *Shaman's Drum*. Vol. 41, 1996.

Amazonia

The Amazon basin—the area drained by the tributaries of the Amazon River. These river systems drain areas in six countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and a small part of Venezuela. Amazonia is the source of one fifth of the world's freshwater and the most diverse flora on the globe. Amazonia is the home of several hundred tribes of indigenous **South American** peoples.

The indigenous peoples of the Amazonia traditionally fell by hand only enough rain forest to clear the area for homes and the cultivation of plants for a family's food and medicinal use. These clearings are abandoned after eight to ten years allowing the forest to recover the land within 75 to 100 years.

When large areas are cleared, the rain forest is unable to reclaim the land and reestablish any forest, and certainly not a climax rain forest full of medicinal plants. When a million acres are felled, burned, and used as pasture for a few

years, then abandoned, the whole area will be no more than scrub desert or weedy growth for billions of years.

Simply raiding the rain forest for its medicinal information will not bring the amazing **powers** of the *payé's* **healing** out of the rain forest. As ethno-botanist and author Mark Plotkin states, "The secret of healing does not lie only in the biochemical weaponry of the plants themselves. The healing of serious ailments in indigenous Amazonian societies almost always involves ritual." The *payé*, or **shaman**, conducts these rituals. There are a few useful generalities that can be made about the *payés* in this region of the world with the reservation that there will always be individuals for whom these generalities do not apply.

The role of *payé* is not necessarily hereditary, although it is often passed down from father to son, or grandson, and mother to daughter, or granddaughter. More important are certain psychological and intellectual qualities and abilities recognized in childhood. These psychological characteristics must include a deep interest in **myth** and tribal tradition and an ability to communicate with the spirit world. The intellectual qualities include an educational aptitude for memorizing songs, **chants**, ceremonies, and the vast array of medicinal and hallucinogenic plants and their preparation. The individual must also possess a good **singing** voice and the physical well-being to endure sleep deprivation and the toxicity of the hallucinogenic plant sacraments.

Even more essential than all of these qualities is a willingness to serve and the ability to make repeated personal **sacrifice**. The *payé* must be available in constant service of the tribe and in that service be willing to fast often, pass many sleepless nights, abstain from sex for extended periods of time, take hallucinogenic plant preparations, and intervene on behalf of the community with powerful beings of the spirit world.

In addition to all of the above, the *payé's* soul should shine with a strong, inner light. This light must radiate from

the *payé*, when he or she sings, communicates with the spirit world, or shares the messages of the spirit world.

The following are beliefs or practices that generally apply to the peoples of Amazonia: The powerful *payés* can **shapeshift**, transforming themselves into jaguars, anacondas, or bubbles of air, which enable them to negotiate for days, underwater, with the **Master of the Fish**. The *payé* also negotiates with the **master of animals** for permission to hunt and kill game.

The *payé's* negotiation with both of these Master Spirits is essential for the humans to remain in right relationship with their physical and spiritual ecosystem. Killing game without permission is an offense that the animal's spirit has a right to avenge. The Master Spirits avenge the wrongful deaths of those in their care by sending **illness**, poisonous snakes, or severe **weather** like tornadoes to destroy homes and crops.

The Master of animals, *Vai-mahsë*, lives in the cliffs and dark recesses of the flat, sandstone mountains covered with the tangled, shrubby plants and close growing vegetation. *Vai-mahsë*, a *payé* himself, is usually seen as a red **dwarf** dressed as hunter with bow and arrow.

Master of the Fish lives in the rivers with many spirit beings. The Master of the Fish is the intermediary between the *payé* and these water spirit beings, who are particularly active in rapids and falls. They are all consulted, appeased, and pacified by the *payé* to secure safe passage, food, and numerous water-related needs for his or her people.

For the peoples of Amazonia, the rivers are snakes, undulating through the rain forest. The river is the home of the anaconda, who is symbolic of the celestial anaconda who brought the first man and woman from the Milky Way in a canoe with the *yuca*, **Coca**, and *yajé*, all that they needed to start a new life.

Dance, **music**, songs, and chants are universally important. Panpipes, flutes, and bows are common musical instruments. The music and dances are

taught to the young and the boys learn early how to accompany the dances on their panpipes. The *payé* often uses the songs and dances to teach the mythological history of the people. The *payé* teaches the creation of the world and the origin of his people.

Music is an essential tool in the *payé's* ritual and healing work. The *icaros*, chants or songs of the *payé*, communicate directly with the spirits of the sacred hallucinogenic plants used in the *epená* and *ayahuasca* and help to guide the healing **journey** of the patient. The accompaniment on the panpipe or bow is played before and during the rituals to please the spirits and engender their power and guidance.

Generally, Amazonian cosmology recognizes the underwater, forest, and **sky** realms while simultaneously conceiving of the spirit world as one large realm. Illness is attributed to **soul loss**, contamination, or **sorcery** caused by humans or the spirits of the plants, animals, or natural phenomena. The *payé* uses medicinal and hallucinogenic plants, *icaros*, *tsentsaks* (**magical darts**), and phlegm to heal these illnesses and do battle with sorcerers. See also **Shuar**.

Plotkin, M. J. *Tales of a Shaman's Apprentice: An Ethnologist Searches for New Medicines in the Amazon Rain Forest*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1993.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Ambil

Ambil is **tobacco** syrup made by the Witoto of **South America** for medicinal use. The Witoto boil tobacco leaves down to a molasseslike consistency. In a separate step water is leached through the alkaline *ashes* of various burned forest trees. The **water** is allowed to evaporate, leaving a "salt." This salt is added to the syrup to release its bioactive compounds, making *ambil*, which is

applied to the gums or tongue, licked, or used as an enema.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Ametra

Ametra is a project in Peru founded by a Shipibo **shaman** to teach health care workers to use plant remedies alongside pharmaceutical drugs. The use of plant remedies is based on **knowledge** of the spiritual **powers** of the plant as well as the physical properties. See also **plant medicines**.

Amulet

In **North America** an amulet is a **charm** worn by its owner for protection. For example, "**witch doctors**," or **shamans**, create amulets for patients to wear to protect them from witchcraft. In other parts of the world there is no distinction between **talisman** and amulet. See also **charm; fetish; medicine**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO Inc., 1996.

Anakua

Anakua is the **spirit** given an ability to "see" beyond the physical realm in the shamanic traditions of the people of the American Arctic regions. *Anakua* manifests within the novice *angakok* (**shaman**) as a light felt within the body and head that allows him or her to see in the dark, literally seeing spirits in the dark and metaphorically seeing into other realms.

The *anakua* experience is induced by extended hours of meditation and calling on the **helping spirits**. When *anakua* manifests the *angakok* can see at a distance, into the future, into all the different spirit realms, and into the

spirit substance of what is going locally, for example, locating lost souls. See also *qaumanEq*.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio Inc., 1996.

Ancestors

The **soul** of a deceased ancestor returns to the physical world in **spirit** form to aid living family members. This spirit may be the soul, or one aspect of the multiple soul, that has crossed over to the **Land of the Dead** and returned to offer wise counsel and protection. Ancestor spirits function as **helping spirits**.

Ancestors often present themselves as helping spirits for **apprentice shamans**, particularly if the ancestor was a shaman himself or herself. For example, the **Sora shamans** of India enter a **trance** state in which their soul departs for the **Lowerworld** while the spirit of the ancestor, often a shaman, speaks through the living shaman's mouth and leads the **healing** session.

In **Nepal** the *yidam* (heart soul) of an ancestor shaman becomes the guru, or **teacher**, of the living shaman. Three days after the death of the shaman, his or her shamanic gear, **drum**, and **power objects** are laid out with an effigy of the deceased shaman. As the **ceremony** proceeds a rainbow light, the *yidam*, enters the effigy and it begins to shake. Enlivened by the shaman's *yidam*, the effigy will then speak to answer questions, often clarifying to whom in the family lineage the *yidam* will pass and why. Once the *yidam* has entered the descendant, it will teach that shaman **mantras** to call the *yidam* forth and to use in healing.

It is the responsibility of the ancestors to hold the memories and the wisdom gained from the past back to the dawn of humankind. It is the responsibility of the living to heal the past, to learn from the Ancestors' mistakes, and create change. Through the Ancestors,

the shaman draws on the collective wisdom of humankind, recalls the teachings of the past, and translates these **visions** of what has gone before into appropriate **rituals**, ceremonies, and healings for the present situation.

Ancestor spirits are the spirits of dead family members who are not only dead, but who have successfully completed their transition into the spirit world where they now belong. Ancestor spirits are also called the Ancient Ones, the Old Ones, and Grandmothers or Grandfathers, depending on the culture.

Ancestor spirits should not be confused with ghosts, spirits of dead family members who have not completed their death transition and are lingering in the realm of the living where they no longer belong. This may occur when the newly dead are unresolved about their life or when the death is sudden and they do not understand that they are dead. These **spirits of the dead** may possess a relative or otherwise cause disharmony, **illness**, accidents, or bad luck for the living.

How a culture attends to the souls of the newly dead affects how they relate to their ancestor spirits. Generally, in cultures where care is taken to be certain that all who die are crossed over (**psychopomp**) to the spirit realm, all ancestors are considered helping spirits. In cultures where the souls of the dead are not attended to and the safe completion of their death transition is uncertain, ancestor spirits are not necessarily helping spirits. See also **multiple soul belief; possession; ritual**.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Peters, L. G. Personal Communication, 1998.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Ancient China

Ancient China was shamanic, pantheistic, and matrifocal in character. The spiritual functionaries were predominantly female, the *wu*. Males, the *xi* or *hsi*, served traditional roles within the spiritual service, some as **shamans** and some as **transformed shamans**. In practice the shamans were called *wu*, regardless of **gender**.

The *wu* communicated with the **spirits** and deities in **trance** states induced with drumming, dancing, meditation, and **song** to perform **divination**, diagnose and heal **illness**, guide the souls of the deceased to the next life (**psychopomp**), foretell the future, and perform magic, particularly to control the **weather**. In early Chinese traditions rituals were conducted to honor the **Ancestors**, offer **sacrifices**, and maintain harmony between Heaven and **Earth**. Some *wu* performed these functions on a familial level, while others performed them for the court as **state shamans**.

The ancient Chinese believed that all the wisdom affecting human affairs lay in the **Upperworld** and that access to that wisdom was necessary for political authority. The *wu* were responsible for communication between Earth and deities of the Upperworld. Therefore the *wu* were a crucial part of every state court.

Women and **shamanism** in China were seriously harmed by the widespread acceptance of Confucianism as the organizing cultural belief system in approximately 100 B.C.E. Women lost not only spiritual, but political and economic **power**. Today approximately one quarter of ethnic Chinese shamans are women, indicating that Confucian influence pushed women from their prominent role as shamans, as well as their traditional roles in the rest of Chinese society.

Training

The means of selection in ancient China is unclear. There is reference to *wu chia*, "shaman family," which is interpreted

by some to mean that the role was inherited. However, among the common people in northern China, every family had a shaman to attend to their shamanic needs. The eldest daughter was designated the *wu-êrh*, "shaman child." She was trained to perform the family rituals and remained unmarried.

Wu rarely joined in traditional marriages. They were believed to be married to the deities and spirits who aided them in their shamanic practice. In ancient songs used to call on the spirits in **ritual**, the *wu*'s relationship with the deities and spirits is represented as a kind of divine love affair. The *wu* were, however, free to engage in intimate sexual unions, as was common in that time.

Novices train in apprenticeship to an elder, practicing *wu*. The **apprentice** learns the methods necessary to divine by reading bones and summon particular spirits. Then the apprentice can learn the techniques to master the trance states necessary to exorcise malevolent spirits and perform **healings**, **soul retrievals**, telekinesis, and weather magic.

Part of the ancient **training** involved ingesting unusual foods and drink, thought to alter the body in ways that would aid in the ability to enter **altered states of consciousness**. These foods included herbs (angelica, sedge, melilotus, asarum, valerian, castor, cinnamon), flowers (chrysanthemum, magnolias, orchids), **mushrooms**, lichens, and gem elixirs (jade and jasper). These substances were believed to provide a rich supply of vital **energy** (ch'i) when ingested and to satiate the body in a way that ended cravings for mundane foods. Eating these substances was believed to lighten and energize the physical body in a way that enabled the *wu* to fly through the air, literally.

The Divine Feminine

In ancient China there were many manifestations of the Divine Feminine. The *wu* prepared to meet a manifestation of the Divine Feminine by bathing in purified **water** scented with iris and orchid

and dressing in the garments of the manifestation of the deity she intended to invoke. During the ritual, which often involved drumming and **singing**, the *wu* danced into a trance state, holding a bouquet of herbs and flowers or other **offering** preferred by the deity. Once in trance the *wu*'s soul traveled through the spirit world to the home of the deity.

Many deities are associated with aspects of ancient Chinese shamanism. For example, Fu Fei, Goddess of the Luo River, is associated with the invention of the drum used to aid the *wu* in entering altered states. Fu Fei manifests as a male/female being in a serpent, dragon, whale, or swan form. Another goddess associated with ancient shamanism is the bear goddess, Lady of Tu Shuan Mountain. She invented the style of singing used by the Chu *wu* to invoke the spirits and deities.

The Divine Feminine was believed to dwell in water in its many forms. The *wu* worked with water and entities and objects associated with water, e.g., the **moon**, rainbows, water dragons, serpents, carp, and crabs in their rituals. Seas, lakes, rivers, springs, and pools were the common sites for offerings, rituals, or **initiations**.

An offering of sacrifice to an aquatic goddess was often dropped into the water as part of a ritual. The *wu* used a special boat painted with floral designs or decorated with fresh or dried flowers and embellished with figures of phoenixes and dragons, symbolic of the sacred feminine and masculine energies. The *wu* sailed the boat to the middle of the body of water, a shoreline **shrine**, or island and showered the water with offerings.

Transformed Shamans

Trance states were considered by the ancient Chinese to be a yin activity, used by all women as part of their personal spiritual practice. Because it was a yin practice, any boy who demonstrated shamanic potential as a child was given a female name and dressed as a woman all his life. These boys became transformed

shamans, called **shih-niang**, meaning "master girl."

The *shih-niang* were described as "not male and not female," referring to their **gender-variant** nature, and "not dreaming and not awake," referring to their ability to move between the physical and spiritual worlds in trance. The *shih-niang* dressed in a fusion of feminine, masculine, and sacred dress. They were employed by various cults, including Pan Hu of the canine warrior deity and Ta Wang Shen of the serpent king.

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Ancient Maya

A people who lived in independent states covering more than 100,000 square miles of forest and plain in what is now Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador. The history of the Maya is to Central America what the history of the Egyptians is to Europe and that of the Chinese is to Asia.

The Maya inherited their worldview from the Olmec, the **first people** of this region. The Maya transformed themselves from agricultural villagers to people of a great civilization of high **religion**, extraordinary statecraft, epic battles, and refined **arts**. The remains of Maya sites show that in one thousand years of development (200 B.C.E.–C.E. 900), they spread south to the Pacific Ocean, west along the Usumacinta River in the Mexican states of Chiapas and Tabasco, north to the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean coastline,

and east to the Ulua and Lempa basins in the Honduran highlands.

Unique and enigmatic, the Ancient Maya ruled over an area about the size of modern Italy that was very rich in art and architectural treasures. The ceremonial cities used for the performances of the **state shaman** *ahau* (ruler) numbered well over 100. This high period of Mayan rule lasted longer than the Roman Empire.

The ancient Maya are noted for inventing ideas that harnessed social energy, allowing them to transform the old ideas of village life, the extended family, the shaman, and the patriarch, into highly organized, civilized life. Through the creation of new visions of **power** arising from the interrelationship of the physical and spiritual worlds, the Maya invented a hierarchy to solve the social and cultural problems of that time.

For the egalitarian Maya the equal flow of wealth was one of the highest values and it was carefully maintained. Historically, social tensions converged and threatened that carefully maintained balance. The wealth and status of a few Maya grew due to trade with non-Mayan neighbors, the new technologies of raised-field agriculture and **water**-management were developed, and labor pools were organized.

The hierarchy and the ruler's role as a state shaman were developed to address this problem of growing inequality, a state illness, and to maintain the flow of wealth. The ruler wielded his social influence and spirit-given **knowledge** to create advantages for his people. The people reaped the benefits of well-being and social balance from the ruler's intervention on their behalf in the spirit world. They all shared the material wealth his successful ritual performance brought to the community.

Worldview

The Maya worldview is similar to that of shamanic peoples around the world. The physical world and the spiritual world were seen as two planes of existence,

inextricably locked together, in which everything is alive and sacred. The physical world was the material manifestation of spirit forces and the spirit was the essence of all things material. Objects, people, and places in the physical world acquired dangerous power when the connection between the two worlds was made manifest through ritual and trance.

The actions of the spirits affected prosperity, misfortune, health, illness, victory, disaster, life, and death of the living, while the actions of the living provided the only nourishment for the inhabitants of the spirit world. In the exchange of energies between the worlds, the spirit world influenced the overall well-being of human life while the human world influenced the well-being of the Spirits. At its essence the Mayan worldview is this: the waking **dream** of the inhabitants of one plane creates the plane of existence of the other. And the waking dream of the other creates the plane of existence of the original dreamer, again and again, cycling through Eternity.

This reciprocal relationship is expressed in Maya art. For example, the Acasaguastlan pot shows the Sun God in the midst of a vision, a waking dream of the humans and the world in which they live. The waking dream of the humans, expressed in the state shaman's ecstatic trance, gave birth to the gods and the world in which they live. Through the ritual actions of the state shaman *ahau*, the beings of *Xibalba* (the spirit world) materialized in the ritual objects, features of the landscape, and the shaman himself.

The *ahau*, meaning "living god," or ruler, were shamans for the state, performing shamanic community **healing** rituals on a vast, enormous scale. The *ahau's* authority to rule was assured by his ability to operate in both planes of existence in rituals designed to exchange the energies between the worlds that were necessary to keep both planes in balance and bring prosperity to the lives of the people.

Time and Space

For the Maya time was not linear, but cyclical. Time plays out in repeating patterns woven directly into the **space/time** fabric of the Universe. The Maya not only saw the past returning in endless cycles of historical symmetry, but they chose to act on particular dates to replay that symmetry and use that symmetry to draw power from the past into the present time.

For the Maya to remember a date is not to recall a single event from the past, but to reiterate the essential things that happened, continue to happen, and will always happen. On any given day the shape of space and time was affected and was effected by the patterns of actions and interactions of hundreds of gods. History was not simply the past, it was living and it affected time. Through ritual, both time and space (matter) were directly affected because they were all interrelated.

To use contemporary terms, one could say that the Maya saw time and space as a matrix of energy fields. These fields of energy affect the beings within them, both human and spirit. Simultaneously, the actions of the beings in the field affect the patterns of the matrix. For the Maya, this relationship of inextricable interaction was obvious and they exploited it to their advantage, as all shamanic peoples do to greater and lesser degrees.

Cosmology

The Mayan world is made up of three interrelated **domains** which are each alive and imbued with sacred power. The **Upperworld** is the **sky**, the starry arch that is represented by the great crocodilian Kosmic monster. The **Middeworld** is the **earth**, the human world that floats on the **primordial sea**. The **Lowerworld** is the dark, watery world of *Xibalba*, filled like **ordinary reality** with animals, plants, beings, landscapes, and structures. *Xibalba* rotates above the earth at sundown, becoming the night sky and returns below the earth at dawn, becoming a

mirror image of the earth and its beings.

The *wacah chan*, or **Tree of Life**, creates an axis through all three realms, coexisting in and connecting them. The branches of *wacah chan* reached to the highest layers of the Upperworld and the roots touched the deepest layer of the Lowerworld, providing a means by which the shaman traveled between the worlds. *Wacah chan* is represented by the color blue-green and is associated with specific **birds**, gods, and rituals.

The four cardinal directions provided the grid for the Middeworld and Maya community. The Maya utilized the matrix of power points in the land, particularly mountains and **caves**, which were created by the gods when the gods created the cosmos. Exercising their reciprocal relationship with the spirit world, the Maya built their own mountain-like temples and cave-like inner sanctuaries, creating a human-made matrix to merge with and complement the god-created matrix.

The Ahau, Ecstasy, and Bloodletting

The function of the *ahau* as state shaman was extremely important to the Maya social structure. In Maya writing and symbolism the kingship is represented as the Double-headed Serpent Bar or the Vision Serpent, both symbols of the act of communication with the spirit world. The Double-headed Serpent Bar is found entwined in the branches of *wacah chan*. The Vision Serpent, who is embodied during ecstatic trance states, is symbolic of communion with the **ancestors** and gods.

The **state shaman** *ahau* was central to the bloodletting vision ritual. Bloodletting served two primary purposes: the **blood offering** gave food to the gods and the act of bloodletting (with dancing) was a means of inducing trance and communicating with the spirit world. Through this trance state the *ahau* became the *wacah chan*, the central axis connecting all realms of the world. Through the ecstatic *ahau*, the ancestors were spoken to and the gods

were made manifest in the physical world.

The practice of bloodletting was an act of piety carried out by royalty and villagers alike for **rituals** of all kinds. The Maya saw their relationship with the cosmos in the life cycle of maize, the staple of Mayan life. The maize cannot renew its life cycle without human hands to plant the seeds. The Maya believed that the Universe could not renew itself without the **sacrifice** of human **blood**. For the Maya, ritual sacrifice was the highest act of spiritual devotion.

Representation of bloodletting on stelae show the participant drawing a finger-thick paper rope through the wound to guide the blood onto the paper, which was then given in **offering** within the ritual. The act could be a simple offering from any body part of a few drops or an act of mutilation, releasing a large flow of precious fluid. All important dynastic and calendric rituals required blood sanctification and the important rites required the blood of the penis or tongue.

The Ancient Maya Shaman

The glyph of the ancient shaman is composed of an *ahau* face half covered with a jaguar pelt. This glyph is interpreted to mean “way,” “to sleep” or “to dream,” “to metamorphose or transform,” and “animal spirit companion.” These are easily recognized as elements of the shaman in an ecstatic **trance** state moving in the spirit world with his or her **helping spirit**.

From ancient Mayan art, glyphs, and archaeological remains of ritual practices, it is apparent that the Maya had both shamans, in the traditional sense of shamanic healer, and rulers who had to possess shamanic skills. The presence of obsidian artifacts found throughout the Maya social structure shows that shamans performed rituals and assisted their community at every level of the social structure.

The Maya shaman healer performed **divinations** by casting obsidian flakes

or pieces of jade smeared in blue bituman and human blood. The shaman worked in trance states to serve as mediator with the gods, ancestors, and supernatural beings. The shaman performed **blessings** of temples, *ahau*, and **power objects**. The shaman as **psychopomp** sang to souls of dead along their **journey** to Xibalba. When an *ahau* died without an heir, the shaman contained the ruler’s energy and power until a successor was found.

The shamans who served the royalty created and conducted the rituals within which the *ahau* danced into his vision trance. In the course of conducting the ritual with its drumming, dancing, chanting, and bloodletting, the shaman oversaw the offerings: the correct kind, amount, and placement. The shaman also oversaw any building necessary in the creation of a new place of power.

Rituals of the Ancient Maya Shaman

The Maya used ritual to control the dangerous and powerful energies they released by exploiting the patterns of power in time and space. The Maya worked with their interrelationship with the spirit world through rituals of Dedication (opening), Containment, Termination (closure or **cleansing**), and Burial and Ascension

Termination rituals were used to terminate an older version of a temple, place, or power object. Objects that contained power were broken, effaced, or opened by drilling or pounding a hole. Portraits of humans and gods were effaced often by destroying the nose and left eye. Color was removed or whitewashed. Sculptures were broken, burned, or carefully sealed with plaster. Jade artifacts, particularly earflares, were smashed and often ground into powder and left as an offering. For example, remains of charcoal and stingray spines used in termination rituals imply that there was an earlier version of a temple at Copan, and the careful burial of the old facade at Cerros is evidence of its ritual termination.

Termination in temples often involved complex, symbolic, and abundant offerings and bloodletting which was added to whatever part of the old temple was being sealed. The termination was only part of the greater ritual in which the termination was followed by an ecstatic trance, communications with the spirit world took place, and the ritual to open or dedicate the temple to its new purpose or ruler transpired.

Containment rituals were necessary because the objects, people, and places in which the energies of the spirit world manifested during the bloodletting rituals accumulated power with each successive use. In some situations it was not safe to simply terminate the object of power. Instead, that energy was contained in a ritual to carefully seal it. Through containment the accumulated power in the person, place, or **power object** was added to the growing **power place** and available to support the new purpose, not freed or lost.

Burial rituals assured the safe travel of the dead in their passage down the *wacah chan*. Appropriate blood **sacrifices** were made so that the dead would have company on the journey and symbolic food and objects were included with the body to support the journey and enable the soul to outwit the Lords of Death. In this way a soul called to Xibalba in death will become venerated as an ancestor.

Ascension rituals marked the coming to power of a new *ahau* and displayed his power as the new **state shaman**. They were timed to replicate another ascension in history. In this way, the ascending *ahau* redefined the bloodline succession as a supernatural rite of ecstatic communion between the new ruler and the dead ruler now in Xibalba. Maya history and its replication affected the structure of time, just as ritual affected the nature and power of matter.

Rituals did not always take place in the temples or with the performance of the state shaman. There were natural sites of ritual and social gathering in

deep natural wells in the northern regions called *cenotes*. Much of the underground water supply ran in limestone **caves** under the soil. When the water dissolved the ceilings of these limestone caves, they could be entered using wooden ladders or stone steps carved into the limestone walls. The *cenotes* were entrances to the Otherworld, naturally present in the geography of the Maya land.

The height of the ancient Maya **culture** can be seen in the royal iconography of the major ceremonial sites, such as Uaxactún, Tikal, Palenque, or Uxmal of the Maya Classic period (C.E. 199–900). From that peak it appears that the power of the ancient Maya system began to dissipate, finally trickling to a close in 1697 when the last independent Maya kingdom fell to the Spanish.

The Maya saw the end of their time in a prophecy very like the **Inka** and Hopi prophecies. The Maya saw their culture's life span as seven "heavens" of decreasing choice and nine "hells" of increasing doom, after which the "Lord of the Dawn" would return. Each "heaven" or "hell" is a cycle of fifty-two years. At the end of the fifty-two year cycle of the seventh "heaven," the Spaniards arrived and began the conquest of Mexico.

Paraphernalia

Obsidian was prized for its ability to make clean, quick cuts. Though obsidian was used for a variety of cutting tasks, its main function was bloodletting in ritual. Obsidian was believed to be the fingernails of the Lightning Bolt or the remains of Chac-Xib-Chac striking the rock of the earth.

Psilocybe Mushroom

Archaeologists have long been uncovering curious stone figures with an umbrella-like top in the remains of Highland Maya culture. The majority date from 1000 B.C.E.–500 C.E. These figures vary in size, but are usually about a foot in height. Recent studies support

the contention that they represent **mushrooms** and imply a relationship between **psilocybe mushrooms** and Mayan shamans.

The dome-shaped top on these figures is often a very realistic depiction of a mushroom. The figure includes a human or an animal on the stipe (stem) of the mushroom or directly under the cap. Most of the animal figures represented on the stones are associated with **shamanism**: the jaguar, bird, monkey, hare, and coati. The human figures are rendered in positions and with facial expressions that imply the contemplation or ecstasy characteristic of the shaman's **altered state of consciousness**. See also **Hopi Prophecy** and **Mesoamerica**.

Hammond, N. *Ancient Maya Civilization*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1982.

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Andes, South America

The indigenous peoples of the Andes region in **South America** were influenced by **Inka** thought and practices, making their original shamanic practices hard to distinguish, particularly in regions that became part of the **Inka** Empire. Shamanic practices and traditions vary in specifics **culture** to culture along this vast mountainscape. However, they all work with the powerful spirit energies of that region, the mountains and the **earth** herself, *Pachamama*, and therefore shared patterns do emerge.

The indigenous people of the Andes explain that there are two realities: **ordinary reality**, or all that we associate

with the world, and **non-ordinary reality**, or all that we associate with the spirit world. The **shamans** or *yachaqs* of the Andes connect with the unfolding of unknown energies that are ever-present in all things through this spirit world. And, essential to Andean philosophy is the understanding that everything in these two realities is connected to everything else. Therefore, humans are One with all things and everything that humans say or do affects everything else.

The spirit world is believed to be the real world from which everything in the physical world is the result. Therefore, the cause of **illness** is an imbalance in the patient's relationship with the energies of the spirit world. This disequilibrium is attributed to several causes, for example, *susto* (fright), *brujería* (**sorcery**), and the malevolent influence of **ancestor** spirits, the earth, and God or to more basic energies like *frio* or *caliente* (cold or hot) foods or *wayra* or *mal aire* (draft).

In the traditional Andean health system there is an array of medical practitioners who are distinguished from one another by methods, level of **training** in a particular area, and the extent to which they engage the spirit world in their curing. A list of Andean practitioners includes, but is not limited to, **curanderos** (folk doctors), *parteras* (midwives), *herbalistas* (herbalists), *entendidos* or *curioso* ("those who understand" or "who are skilled"), **alto mesayocs**, *yachaqs*, *llatiris* (sages), *pusangeros*, and *ayahuasceros*.

Aneglakya

The **plant hallucinogen**, *Datura innoxia*, is used medicinally by the Zuñi people of the **North American** southwest. *Aneglakya* (*datura*) has trumpet-shaped, white-tinged flowers in a range from pink to violet. The fresh roots are chewed as an analgesic or put into a poultice used to heal wounds and bruises. A powder from the roots was also used to heal eye injuries.

Zuñi legend tells of the origins of *Aneglakya*, their most sacred plant. A'neglakaya and A'neglakyatsi'tsa, brother and sister from the interior of the **earth** world, often came to the surface and walked about the outer world. They always wore flowers on each side of their heads as they walked and observed everything, remembering every detail to tell in the stories of the outer world they shared with their mother.

The twin sons of the **Sun**, the Divine Ones, heard these stories and decided that A'neglakaya and A'neglakyatsi'tsa knew too much of the outer world. They banished A'neglakaya and A'neglakyatsi'tsa for all time and the brother and sister disappeared into the earth forever. However, in the spot where they descended, *Datura* grew, blossoming in many **colors** exactly like the flowers worn by A'neglakaya and A'neglakyatsi'tsa. Now *Datura's* children have scattered all over the earth, blossoming in the colors of the four cardinal directions—yellow, blue, red, or simply white.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Angakok

A term for **shaman** that is used by the peoples of the American Arctic Coast, meaning one who has a **spirit**, or **torngraq**, a **helping spirit**. There are many variations of the word; *angakut* is the plural form.

The *torngraq* are the *angakok's* primary **teachers** and the source of the *angakok's* **power**. To acquire *torngraq* the novice must spend time alone in the vast **emptiness** of the Arctic and pray for one or more of the powerful **animal spirits** to come to his or her aid. As with all shamans, the spirits choose the shaman. The novice has no choice in the *torngraq* who comes, or whether one comes at all.

Eskimo peoples of the **east** and the **west** expect an **initiation** crisis during

which the candidate is being chosen by spirit. In the east, candidates can deliberately seek power by fasting and staying alone in the wilderness for long periods of time. In the west, candidates are spontaneously chosen by spirit.

The *angakok* gains his or her main body of **knowledge** in training directly from the spirit world. In both the east and the west this training is augmented by training with elder *angakoks*, often with several elders since each one is a specialist in a particular technique.

Death is the central theme in *angakok's* initiation. Death by drowning is common, as are rituals in which the candidate is shot dead and later revived by the power of his or her *torngraq*. A preliminary *qaumanEq*, or *anakua*, initiation may occur spontaneously, or the novice can ask an older *angakok* to perform the transmission. Any power derived with the assistance of older *angakok* can only be maintained through the novice's acquisition and relationship with his or her own *torngraq*.

Training continues for years with the *torngraq*, often in secret. The new *angakok* must also master the ability to use drumming and dancing to intentionally enter the journeying **trance**. In most shamanic rituals there is an intense, prolonged period of dancing, drumming, and chanting to the point of frenzy, before the *angakok* enters trance. During the dancing the *angakok* often contorts and cries out in the way of his animal *torngraq* or speaks in the unintelligible shamanic **language**.

Once the *torngraq* are summoned in the **dance** the *angakok* is tied, hands behind the back and a leather thong around the knees and neck. The *angakok* sits behind hanging skins or at the back of the hut with all lights extinguished. The *angakok* journeys with the help of the *torngraq* into the spirit world to discover the reason for a scarcity of game or a patient's **illness**, among other things. When the *angakok's* soul returns from the **journey**, he or she is magically now free of the bonds. The lamps are lit

and the *angakok* recounts the adventures of the journey.

The *angakok*'s first priority is helping to provide food for the community and the next is to cure illness. Both of these functions often involve the **taboo** system and the need to make amends for violations. The *angakok* is also called upon to change the **weather**, prevent or repair injuries, battle the harmful effects of **sorcery**, divine the source of issues in the present or future, and to enhance personal success in a variety of areas.

The *angakok*'s primary **power object** is the **drum**, which is constructed as directed by the *torngraq* during the *angakok*'s training. Other power objects include the *kikituk*, a wooden or ivory figure created by the *angakok* and animated with his or her helping spirit for use in healing. The *angakok* also create a *tupilak* for **healing**, made from bones and animal parts and empowered with a spirit. **Amulets**, made of teeth, claws, shells, **feathers**, or other animal parts, are created for protection for the patient of the *angakok*.

The *angakok*'s skills were highly valued across the Arctic. **Inuit** *angakut* were traditionally women. Men who were called to become *angakut* transformed their **gender** as part of their training. The male *angakut* were generally **transformed shamans** who comprised a special class of shamans. They practiced **divination** and healing, as well as training young women in the observation of social customs and dancing.

As boys these *angakut* showed an inclination toward the feminine gender role. Parents noticed these characteristics and dedicated their boys to this valuable vocation in early childhood. The boys were dressed as girls in clothing and haircut and taught the skills necessary to fulfill the female gender role of their culture, including the tools, language, walk, and entry into the home.

At fifteen a boy whose gifts had been noticed early was given to an elder

angakok to focus on the process of becoming an *angakok*. At this age a boy whose aptitude had not been noticed often experienced a spontaneous calling by a *ke'let* spirit in a **dream** or trance state. At this point his training and gender transformation would begin.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Angakoq

A term for **shaman** used in the Arctic Coast, *angakut* (pl) means those who have a spirit, or **helping spirit**. Also used by the Iglulik, inland North **Alaskan**, Baffin Island, Labrador, Polar, West **Greenland** and East Greenland Inuit. Also *angatkoq*, *angutkok*, *ahngutkok*, *angalsqoq*. Others used *tunghak*, *tunghalik*, *tunralik*, *tunerak*, *tonngag*, or *torngevok*. See also **angakok**.

Angaqoq

See **angakok**.

Anglo-Saxon

This is one of the two major cultural groupings in early western Europe. While it is clear that the early peoples of western Europe were shamanic in ideology and practice, details about their practices are relatively uncertain compared to those of Siberians or South Americans who are still practicing today. The shamanic practices of the Anglo-Saxons and Celts were driven underground many hundreds of years ago. The traditions and creation mythology of the Anglo-Saxon people is perhaps best preserved in Germanic and Norse myths and stories.

The early Anglo-Saxon **shamans** served as healers, diviners, and spell-casters, particularly through the use of the magical languages of **runes**. They

led sacred **rituals** and celebrations, were the custodians of tribal wisdom, and were advisors to warriors and chieftains.

Male and female practitioners were equally prominent and status was based on the **power**, accuracy, and efficacy of one's performance. Men and women followed different paths of **initiation** and **training**; however these paths were accorded equal status. Entering the shamanic world of the other **gender** was considered the most advanced shamanic training, which could only be undertaken after the full mastery of one's own course of study. The shamans held in highest regard were those who were able to gain the wisdom, insights, and techniques of the other gender.

Many shamanic functions were performed equally by men and women, like healings and conducting rituals. Female shamans were also specialists in **divination** and reading the future of individuals, communities, and the land. Female shamans and **medicine** women had authority over all rituals dealing with conception and childbirth.

Helping Spirits

Dwarves, the **embodiment** of the powers to transform the **elements**, featured significantly in the initiatory visions of Anglo-Saxon shamans. Dwarves are particularly prominent in Norse stories of shamanic **vision quests**. **Giants**, the embodiment of the **earth**, were cultivated as **helping spirits** for the power to influence or direct the elemental forces of Nature. **Animals spirits** and a wide variety of other types of spirits were also cultivated as helping spirits to acquire shamanic powers and specific skills.

Divination

Runes, used as a divination tool, were an important form of sacred communication with the spirit world. The process of carving runes was a way of centering, meditating, and communicating with the Earth. Carving a runic message to the spirit world was an integral part of most healing and divining rituals.

Runes were traditionally carved into wood, rock, and occasionally bone. They were also worked into **metal** jewelry and weaponry to transform these ordinary objects into **power objects** through the power of the **wyrd**, the mysterious force of the supernatural.

Seeing stones, another divination tool, were actual stones, usually marked with a shape resembling an eye. The seeing stones were used during healings and initiations. They allowed the shaman to gaze into the spirit world and accurately assess the state of another's spirit.

Healing Rituals

Anglo-Saxon rituals begin by creating a **circle** to contain and concentrate the flow of life force, believed to be made up of physical, psychological, and psychic energy. The shaman continues with a **diagnosis** either through the use of the seeing stone or a drum-induced **journey**. This divination reveals the true nature of the **illness** and the remedy necessary for healing.

The healing itself often involved using an **incantation** to create a healing web of energy for the patient, called "**singing** the patient better." The incantation was usually created specifically for the patient to weave together the patient's own ability to heal, the powers of the helping spirits, and the healing powers of the web of **wyrd**.

If the diagnosis revealed that the patient was possessed by harmful spirits, the shaman would extract the spirit or drive it away. If the diagnosis revealed that the patient's soul had been lost or stolen, the shaman performed a **soul retrieval**, journeying into the spirit world to recover the lost soul and return it to the patient.

Paraphernalia

The most important tool of the Anglo-Saxon shaman was his or her staff. These staffs were carved with runic inscriptions and decorated with metalwork and objects of power. Norse sagas describe the **volvas** carrying staffs decorated with

ornate stonework. These power objects had a variety of uses and were believed to aid the shaman in his or her ability to enter trance.

The **costumes** of Anglo-Saxon shaman often contained the **energy** of his or her helping spirits. These energies were often embodied in the costume through the application of **feathers**, stones, and other magical objects, which contained the energy of the helping spirits. To don the costume was to engage the process of embodying one's helping spirit, and thus gain its powers.

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Animal Spirits

Animal spirits are **helping spirits** in animal form who are able to transcend the abilities of that animal in its ordinary existence, e.g., anacondas flying without wings or fish swimming through mountains. Though they express their **power** through their extraordinary abilities, they are most easily understood as the **spirit** of the entire species of that animal. In practice this means that while many **shamans** may work with Bear spirits, there are not many different bear spirits that work with different shamans. Animal spirits are also called guardian spirits, spirit allies, spirit helpers, **power animals**, totem animals, and **tutelary spirits**.

Animal spirits may appear in human form or part animal-part human forms. For some peoples of **North America** and **South America** it is traditional for animal spirits to appear in **dreams** in human form while they appear in **journeys** or **visions (waking-dreams)** in animal forms. Just as animal spirits can shift into human form, shamans are believed to be able to transform into their power animal's form. This practice of **shapeshifting** is ancient and global.

Animal spirits can be further categorized by the function they play in the shaman's work. There are power animals

who help the shaman in general in the healing work, **totem spirits** who are inherited through the family line by all members of the family and may help the shaman in healing, and tutelary spirits who represent the shaman's identity in the spirit world and often become the form the shaman takes in the **non-ordinary reality** healing work.

The fact that an individual has a relationship with a power animal does not make them a shaman. Most children have guardian spirits and, in many **cultures**, all adults must connect with a helping spirit as an aspect of their initiation into adulthood. The desire to connect as an adult with one's animal spirit is one aspect of the **vision quest** practiced by many tribes and cultures.

The shaman is empowered by his or her relationship with the power animals and other helping spirits. Shamans believe that the animals are manifestations of a natural power that is stronger and wiser than human beings. However, shamans do not lift animal spirits up to the status of deities, nor do they lower them to the status of a mere psychological metaphor. The shaman knows that there could be no power for healing without the spirits of animals, plants, Nature, and the **Ancestors**.

Helping spirits do not belong to the shaman nor are they controlled by the shaman in any contemporary sense of the word. The relationship is a partnership, one forged in large part on the **sacrifice** of the shaman and his or her ability to communicate with the helping spirits and surrender to their wisdom. In return the shaman receives the power and **knowledge** to help others to heal. This relationship is often honored by the shaman through animal-like dancing that occurs when the shaman merges with the spirit of the animal and allows that animal to **dance** through his or her body.

One theory suggests that animal helping spirits appear predominantly in the earliest stage of **shamanism** when the people are hunters and gatherers. Then, when people began to cultivate

gardens, a shift to regarding the spirits of nature, e.g., Sun, **Moon, Sky**, Wind, Mountains, etc., as **teachers** occurred, as with the Shinto of **Japan**, the **Huichols** of Mexico, and most of the peoples of **Southeast Asia**. However, in the practices of contemporary shamans around the world animal spirits are still regarded as teachers and power animals, as are the spirits of Nature, the Ancestors, and a vast array of gods and goddesses.

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Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Anishinabe

Anishinabe, a term meaning “person” or “first man,” is preferred by many **Ojibwa** people. In contemporary times the concept of an Anishinabe Nation has emerged to link the widespread speakers of the Ojibwa **language**; the Saulteaux, Ottawa, Nipissing, Mississauga, and Algonkin.

Anukite ihanblapi

A **Lakota** society of **transformed shamans**. *Anukite ihanblapi* means “they who **dream** of face-on-both-sides” and refers to Double Woman, the **helping spirit** who calls the boys to their vocation and is necessary for **gender** transformation. The *anukite ihanblapi* dress and wear their hair in the tradition of females of their tribe and serve the community at large as shamans.

Lakota boys receive their call from Double Woman, a goddess who visits them in a **dream**. She is a **shapeshifting** helping spirit and **teacher**. She appears as twins, a female warrior, a beautiful maiden, a buffalo calf of both genders, or a deer who drinks blood.

To complete his transformation, the male initiate must begin to function sexually as the receptive partner with other men. The fully initiated *anukite ihanblapi* is considered a unique, third gender. The marriage of an *anukite ihanblapi* to a heterosexual, traditional male was common and sanctioned within the community.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Apprentice

Long apprenticeship periods are the norm in traditional **training**. The length of training varies culture to culture, but all shamans endure training at the hand of **spirit** teachers. Some will apprentice with human teachers as well. In all cultures, even the initiated shaman's training continues over his or her entire lifetime. Much of what a shaman learns over a lifetime can be codified and taught to an apprentice: ceremonies, dances, **healing** songs, and plant remedies and preparation. While learning these things may make one a healer, it is the mastery of **trance** states that makes one a shaman. An individual with the **knowledge** of traditions, but without the ability to access the spirit world for new information to keep those traditions alive, is not a shaman.

Apprentices must learn to alter their consciousness and control their trance states so that they can intentionally connect with the **helping spirits**, work with their **power**, and effectively mediate between the humans and the invisible world. The effectiveness of ceremonies, dances, songs, and remedies will diminish over time without new information from spirit to rejuvenate the magic and the power of the shaman's work.

Shamanic practices gather and focus great power. For that reason, **humility** is essential in a practitioner. Therefore the character of the apprentice must be

assessed before power is placed in their hands through training.

In many cultures, like the **Zulu** of **Africa** or the **Ojibwa** of **North America**, an apprentice may live with his or her teacher, spending the first year working at menial tasks, without any formal instruction, or **cleansing** himself or herself. The student's worthiness for real training is assessed at this time. There are many tests along the way, from both the spirit and human teachers. The majority of apprentices do not make it through training to **initiation**.

Araucanians

See **Mapuche**.

Arctic Shamanism

Arctic shamanism and general **shamanism** are the two prominent forms of **North American** shamanism as defined by scholar and authority on shamanism, Åke Hultkrantz. In the Arctic form of shamanism the dominant form of **trance** is the ecstatic **journey**. The **shaman** and his or her **helping spirits** often merge in the journey to accomplish the purpose of the trance state.

The journey trance is used in the recovery of lost souls when the patient is in a state of **soul loss**. It is used for **divination**, **healings**, to discover information about future events, and to observe individuals at a great distance. When the shaman performs an **extraction** healing to remove an energetic intrusion he or she works with the helping spirits in a trance state in which the shaman's awareness is present, but deeply connected to the **altered state of consciousness**.

Whether classified as general or Arctic, North American shamans use the depth and type of trance state necessary to accomplish a variety of tasks. How a shaman determines the trance state necessary depends on many variables including cultural expectations, type of helping spirit used, the **diagnosis**, and personal preference or specialty.

Hultkrantz, A. "Spirit Lodge, a North American Shamanistic Séance." In *Studies in Shamanism*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962.

Art

Art is used in **shamanic healing** to contain, connect, and protect **energy**. Visual arts like a **sand painting** or **Peyote** bead work create a container for new energy that the patient can not yet hold in his or her body. By stepping into the sand painting, for example, the patient enters the vessel containing the healthy energy, merges with it, and allows unhealthy energy to be transformed into a healthy state.

This type of sacred art can also serve as a bridge, or connection, between the worlds. Whether it's visual, like paintings, or a **dance** or **song**, the act of creation creates a bridge to the spirit world. **Shamans** all over the world used dance as a means to **embody** spirit energies. Visual arts are also used to invite **spirit** into the physical realm. For example, **Zulu** shamans begin work with a community that is in trouble by creating something large and beautiful and placing it in the center of the community. This act creates a bridge to the spirits from whom they are asking for help.

Art is also used to employ spirit in the protection of a shaman or patient. Often called a **talisman**, art created for protection is made as a home for the protecting spirit. Ritual is used to bring the spirit into the object after which the object's presence in the home or with the wearer provides protection.

Art used in this way, as a living container for spirit, is also called a **power object**. Power objects are anything found or created that embody spirit power. The artistic process of creation is often used by shamans to create power objects, which are secondarily objects of artistic merit.

In some cultures the artist and the shaman work together in **healing**. For example, in Ethiopia the *dabtaras*,

artists who create traditional talismanic art, work closely with *zar-tanguay*, shamanic healers. The *zar-tanguay* enters a **possession trance** during which the *zar* (spirit) diagnoses the client's problems. The *dabtara* then prescribes a cure that usually involves exorcising *ganén* (malevolent spirits) and making a magical scroll to protect the client from *ganén* intrusion in the future.

Arunta (Aranda)

A tribe of **Aboriginal** people of central **Australia**, near Alice Springs. There are three methods in the traditional "**making**," or **initiation**, of a **shaman**. While all three types of practitioners will practice together, those initiated spontaneously by the *Iruntarinia* or the Oruncha **spirits** are more powerful than those initiated by other shamans.

The most powerful shamans, both male and female, are initiated by the *Iruntarinia* spirits of the *Altjiringa* or **Dreamtime**. The candidate sleeps at the mouth of the *Iruntarinia's* **cave**. At daybreak the *Iruntarinia* discover him, piercing him with a lance through his tongue that comes out his mouth. The first lance makes a large hole in the tongue that remains throughout the life of the shaman. The hole is the only outward sign of the *Iruntarinia's* initiation and is present in all genuine Arunta shamans. A second lance pierces the candidate from ear to ear and he falls into a deep **trance**, believing himself to be dead.

The *Iruntarinia* take him into the depths of their cave where they open him up, removing his internal organs, inserting *atnongara* (magical quartz stones) and a new set of internal organs. The *Iruntarinia* **sing** him back to life and lead him back to his people where he will be a bit insane for a few days. When his spirit returns fully from his initiation trance, he begins **training** with other shamans to learn to use the power of his *atnongara* stones.

During this **time** the newly initiated man is forbidden to practice. He trains

for at least twelve months. If during that time the hole in his tongue closes, it is taken as a sign that his powers have left and he returns to normal life. If the hole remains and he becomes proficient in the craft he is recognized as a shaman.

The second initiation process is the same; however the Oruncha are the initiating spirits. Like the *Iruntarinia*, the Oruncha are spirits of *Altjiringa*. They are mischievous by nature. They often snatch a candidate spontaneously, taking him or her suddenly into the **earth** for initiation.

In the third initiation process, initiated shamans, or Nung-gara, perform the function of the *Iruntarinia* spirits in a somewhat more painful version of the process. The Nung-gara extract small *atnongara* from their bodies, which were originally received from the spirits in their initiations. They score the candidate's skin and press the **crystals** into the body. The process is repeated each day for three days, after which the characteristic hole is made in the tongue. The candidate remains in the men's camp to heal, while observing **silence**, sexual abstinence, and strict food **taboos**.

Atnongara Stones

The *Iruntarinia* exchange the initiate's internal organs and implant a supply of magic quartz crystals before they close up the body. These *atnongara* stones are the source of the shaman's power. He will learn to project them into the body of the patient to counteract the harmful effects of sorcerers' intrusions.

As long as these *atnongara* remain in the body or under the direction of the shaman, the shaman's powers can be used for **healing**. However, the *atnongara* can be withdrawn by the spirits, if the shaman breaks taboos. For example, the shaman may not eat fat or warm meat, inhale the smoke of burning bones, or allow himself to be bitten by the "bull-dog" ants. If the shaman's *atnongara* are withdrawn he must return to the site of his initiation and

repeat the ordeal to have them replaced.

Healing

Serious ailments, with no obvious physical cause, are considered the result of malevolent **sorcery** by a human or spirit. For example, the **diagnosis** may show that a human sorcerer who wears special feathered shoes, a *Kurdaitcha*, has inserted a bone in the patient or one of the *Iruntarinia* has inserted an *Ullinka*, a short, barbed stick with an invisible string attached, which the spirit pulls, causing the patient great pain. The shaman must extract the energy intrusion.

In ordinary cases the patient lies on the ground while the shaman call on his **helping spirits** and powers. The shaman sucks vigorously at the affected part of the body, spitting out pieces of wood, bone, or stone. Among the Western Arunta some shamans have a special lizard as a helping spirit who adds great power to the sucking **extraction**.

In a serious case, as with an *Ullinka*, two or three shaman may work together. The patient is brought into the cleared space and supported in a half-sitting position. The shaman stands close by, gazing at the patient and locating the offending object. The shaman suddenly goes off some distance and looking fiercely at the object within the patient, he bends slightly forward and repeatedly jerks his arm outward at full length, with the hand outstretched. This action projects *atnongara* from his own body into the patient's to counteract the effects of the sorcery. He then dances across the **space** with characteristic high knee action and repeats the movements that project the *atnongara*.

Finally, the shaman returns to the patient, searches for the offending substance, and sucks it out. If it is an *Ullinka* the shaman cuts the string and sucks the barbed stick out. When the offending object is removed, the patient will make a full recovery. The *atnongara* stones return to the body of the shaman when the healing is complete.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Arutam

The *arutam* is a type of soul that does not exist at birth; it must be acquired in a **Shuar** ritual at a sacred waterfall. The *arutam* serves as a protector and guide for men. A person may possess two *arutam* souls at a time and endeavors to do so. The **uwishin (shaman)** always possesses *arutam* souls, which appear as an inverted rainbow in a person's chest when viewed under the influence of *natem (ayahuasca)*.

Ash

The alkaline ash is added to plant preparations to release the bioactive compounds in alkaloid **plant hallucinogens**, stimulants, and medicines. Ash is prepared by burning the wood of several different, but specific, trees. The resulting ash is mixed with water and the ash filtered out. The filtrate is then boiled down or allowed to dry, yielding an alkaline residue or "salt."

Examples of this practice in **South America** are the ash prepared with **ambil (tobacco syrup)**, to release its bioactive compounds and the coating for **epená** pellets when they are not to be used immediately. Ash is also used in the preparations of **Coca**, betel nut, *Duboisia*, and **yopo**.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Atnongara Stones

Atnongara stones are the source of the **Aboriginal shaman's** power in **Australia**. The *Iruntarinia*, **Rainbow Serpent**, or

other initiating spirits insert a supply of magic quartz **crystals** into the body of the novice during his initiation. He must learn control of the *atnongara* stones, moving them in and out of his body at will. They are used to aid in **healing** and are projected into the body of the patient to counteract the harmful effects of **sorcery**.

As long as these *atnongara* remain in the body or under the direction of the shaman, the shaman's powers can be used for healing. However, the *atnongara* can be withdrawn by the **spirits**, if the shaman breaks **taboos**. If the shaman's *atnongara* are withdrawn, he must return to the site of his **initiation** and repeat the ordeal to have them replaced by the initiating spirits.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994.

Auditory Driving

See **sonic driving**.

Australia

The Australian Aborigines are indisputably the oldest continuous **culture** on **earth**. The chronological dating is academically disputed, with the most conservative estimate being 40,000 years and the most liberal 150,000. However, the **Aboriginal** elders know they have been here on earth since the time before **time** began, the **Dreamtime**. They trace their ancestry to the original beings who emerged directly out of the Dreamtime as it birthed all that we call physical reality from the **big bang**. The traditional Aborigines explain that since then they "have lived and kept the earth as it was on the First Day."

The Dreamtime is called by different names in different tribes, though the concept remains the same. The Dreamtime is *Altjiringa* to the **Arunta** (**Aranda**) of Alice Springs (central Australia), *Djugur* to the Aluridja of Musgrave Range, *Bugari* to the Karadjeri

of southwest Kimberly (northwestern coast), *Unggud* to the **Ungarinyin** of north Kimberly, and *Maratal* to the **Wiradjeri** (southeastern Australia), to name just a few.

Cosmology

In the time before time, Divine Oneness placed many spinning discs in the void. Earth was one of these discs, flat, featureless, and silent. Divine Oneness created light and gave knowing to each disc. From this knowing, or consciousness, came water, atmosphere, land, and all the great beings of the Dreamtime. Thus the Creative Conscious is everything that came from Divine Oneness. Then Divine Oneness created the female and the world was sung into form by her.

The great celestial Rainbow Snake is a representation of that line of consciousness energy that began as total peace in Divine Oneness and became all that is. Through the **Rainbow Serpent** the conscious energy changed, expanding into a range of vibrations that became **sound**, color, and form. Contact with the **Rainbow Serpent**, common in Aboriginal **ritual** and **initiation**, is a return to Source and the original creation of all things.

The Dreamtime before time was a period when great **powers** and beings pervaded infinite space with incomprehensible intensity and force. These powers and beings lived out their dreams unencumbered by the physical limitations of space and time, which did not yet exist. The Dreamtime stories tell of the adventures of these powers and beings who lived prior to the manifest world. It is from the adventures of these Dreamtime **Ancestors** that the vibrational patterns of every imaginable physical and psychological characteristic, interaction, and relationship came into being.

As this Dreamtime epoch gave over into the next, these vibrational patterns and energies congealed, shaping the initially limitless space into the forms, topography, and geography that we now experience as the material universe.

Each prominent landform is the direct manifestation of some aspect of a particular Dreamtime Being. Each deep canyon, rocky outcrop, body of water, etc., holds spiritual significance for individuals or groups who are descendant of that Dreamtime Being. Thus the Aboriginal people do not own the land, they are related to it literally, in both a physical and spiritual sense.

During this second epoch of transformation the Dreamtime Ancestors tried different forms, those of plants, humans, and animals. This is the time of the mythological journeys of the initiated Dreamtime heroes like emu, kangaroo, dingo, and ant and Wati Kutjarra, two traveling **clever men** who moved over Australia creating the landscape, or the Dreamtime women who brought the Law, rituals, and ceremonies into the world.

As the Dreamtime Ancestors entered the third epoch, they retired to their abode beneath the earth and in the **sky**. The human, plant, and animal species became distinct, though always related, species. Like the Dreamtime Ancestors, human **spirits** await rebirth in the earth or retire at death into the landscape to become the spirits of nature.

Aboriginal society drew its laws from the Dreamtime and transferred them from generation to generation. The Dreamtime laws concern marital patterns, familial respect, and responsibility codes as well as a strict ethic in regard to their relationship with spiritual reality and the sacred nature of the earth. The rigorous **taboos** of familial relationships, both physical and psychological, are based upon the belief that the original patterns of the Ancestors are reflected in human relationships today.

Traditionally, Dreamtime stories were not expressed simply in verbal or written form but were enacted, chanted, painted, costumed, danced, sung, and visited in deep **trance** states. In this way the Laws came alive as creative energies and relationships hidden beneath the natural world were brought into awareness and action.

As a result of following the Dreamtime laws Aboriginals keep few material **possessions** and live a nomadic life and are therefore considered one of the world's most primitive cultures. However, scholars argue that they are also the most sophisticated in the world. They have sustained a way of life which is organized around allowing individuals access to the collective cultural wisdom. Through this connection to the Dreamtime they can maintain a consciousness in which everything is alive and connected. Day-to-day life is timeless, filled with meaning, and influenced directly by human thought and intention.

This connection to cultural wisdom goes beyond handing down oral traditions and enters into an experience of ancestral memory accessed in the waking and **dreaming** states that are part of traditional life. Through the Dreamtime each individual connects to the Source, the Divine Oneness that is all things. It is not an essence that surrounds things or a presence inside of things. Oneness is everything.

Traditionally there is a quietness and **silence** to much of Aboriginal life. Time is spent alone in thought, reflecting on dreams, and being ready at any moment to enter into a state of rapport with the Dreamtime. For the Aboriginal, dreaming is part of their spiritual discipline and an aspect of serious meditation.

There were 500 to 600 distinct nomadic tribes: the saltwater people, the Emu people, the wild people, etc., speaking 200 different **languages** or dialects in the early 18th century when the Aboriginal alone inhabited the Australian continent. There are now distinct Outback Nations struggling to maintain their nomadic way of life and the rights to enough land to live it on.

The traditional way of life and general beliefs of the Aboriginal people, pre-contact with Europeans, are dying with the Aboriginal people. There were 350,000 Aboriginals in 1788 and only 206,000 by the 1986 census. What is

more telling is that 66 percent of the Aboriginal population lives in cities, no longer practicing their nomadic way of life.

Communication

From the Aboriginal perspective everything has a silent **song**. Everything wishes to be “heard” and sung to in return. Therefore, Aboriginals are in constant, silent communication with Everything or **singing**. Normal Aboriginal communication occurs silently from the head/heart in a multi-dimensional, experiential way that there is no adequate English word for. Auditory communication (voice) is used for singing, praying, chanting, celebrating, **healing**, and to communicate with humans who have forgotten how to head/heart talk.

This head/heart communication with Everything insures the survival of peoples traveling in the Outback. Aboriginals can create spirit markers on the landscape and in the Dreamtime landscape to alert each other to places of vital resources, like food and water, and vital importance, like **ritual** sites and **caves** containing their recorded history.

Soul

Ungud, the Rainbow Serpent, is the source of human souls. These souls have the appearance of small snakes and are found in **dreams**. After death, they return to the *ungur* (sacred) places where they lived before their human manifestation.

Aboriginals believe that souls preexist, living outside the physical world where they wait to enter the body of a mother on earth. Some tribes believe the soul chooses the mother and others believe the soul has no choice in the matter. Either way all humans are believed to be animated by a spirit that is an eternal being who is visiting the world in human form.

Each human has at least three spirits: the Yowee, the equivalent of the soul; the Doowee, a dream or journeying

spirit; and a Mulloowil, or **shadow** spirit. During **training** the **shaman** must learn to exercise complete control over his or her own Doowee. When this skill has been mastered, the Doowee is called a Mullee Mullee.

Initiation and Death

Death, seen as transformation at its most profound, is considered the great **initiation** rite and is the template for all other initiation rites. Aboriginal men have elaborate formal **ceremonies** that include death enactments and deep trance experiences. In traditional aboriginal life childbirth brings a woman literally to the threshold of physical death. There is no need for formal ceremonies. Aboriginal women undergo initiation through natural processes: childbirth in particular, the onset of menstruation and menopause, as well as deep trance experiences. Initiations and other major life transitions are considered to be death and rebirth, marked by ceremonially conferring a new name and often a specific body of secret **knowledge**.

Initiation

The full function and purpose of Aboriginal initiation rituals are complex and in part kept secret. There is no single ritual for which we have all the secret knowledge and understanding. Full knowledge of the rituals and secret life of adult males is reserved for initiated men and full knowledge of the rituals and secret life of adult females is reserved for initiated women. The deepest secrets are not shared between genders nor are they shared with the uninitiated, which includes outsiders. The pursuit of knowledge is even more occluded when we inquire into the rituals and training through which shamans acquire power.

Initiation into Adulthood

The initiation process brings each young adult into connection with his or her helping spirits, and through them, into a full realization of the Dreamtime. This generates the necessary

level of awareness of the Whole, the laws that maintain the Whole, and his or her place in that Whole. Maintaining this level of awareness, an adult can fully participate in community life as a person of power, unlimited by ordinary space and time.

Aboriginal boys and girls who are approaching or have reached puberty participate in a series of rituals that extend with intervals over several years. For adolescent boys of some regions the first ritual involves circumcision. The form of the ritual varies region to region, however the general pattern and purpose of these rituals are the same. The child-self of the initiate dies and with it the child's ignorance of esoteric knowledge. From that death the self is reborn to a new life of knowledge, power, and adult responsibility. Without that death no other transitions in life, including death, can be accomplished with a clear **vision** and deep spiritual understanding.

An entire complex of rituals, chants, sacred sites, dances, myths, and laws for behavior on which life and the future depend is transmitted through the initiation process. This information is passed on over time in stages. Each stage must be learned perfectly in word and action for the purpose is not only to build the character of the adults, but to preserve the sacred heritage and ensure the future of the tribe. Completion of a portion of esoteric knowledge and training is marked by participation in a ritual of the secret symbols, chants, and dances showing the individual's integration of that degree of initiation.

After a man has obtained the highest degrees of male initiation he may become eligible for initiation into the women's law. The pattern of this initiation is laid down in one of the most ancient Dreamtime stories, that of Djankawu and his sisters. In short, the two sisters of Djankawu discover that he has stolen their dilly bags full of **power objects** and the secrets of sacred rituals. The older sister realizes that this is a sign that it is time to allow the men, for

a period, to take control of the power accessed by possessing the sacred bag. The sisters understand that as women the knowledge and power is innate within them in their **wombs**, which hold not the symbolic but the actual power of creation.

This is an example of the Aboriginal understanding of the necessity to modify the intense and extreme aspects of the ancestral patterns through their customs and laws. The characteristics and qualities displayed by Dreamtime Ancestors are extreme, distinct, and absolute. The Aboriginal people act to reflect patterns of the Dreamtime in their way of life while incorporating and harmonizing the patterns with physical and social reality.

Helping Spirits

Every initiated individual inherits his or her family or clan totem animal. This helping spirit can bring the individual information in a waking or a trance state. In addition, a shaman connects with an individual, personal helping spirit(s), a *yunbeai*, who assists the shaman. The shaman can draw on the *yunbeai* for help in performing **healing** and magic or transform into the *yunbeai* in times of danger.

Shamanic Initiation—"To Be Made"

Shamanic initiation begins only after an individual has completed his or her initiation into adulthood. An individual who has completed this process has "been made," or transformed, which refers specifically to the existential changes that occur during shamanic initiation. The initiation of male shamans across Australia follows a general pattern that involves the following six stages.

1. The candidate is called. **The call** comes spontaneously by spirit, through heredity, or by selection, approval, and acceptance by initiated shamans, due to natural talents.

2. The candidate is "killed" by the initiation spirits or by the shamans acting for those initiation spirits. How this occurs

and whether it is perceived as a “death” or a trance varies by region and tribe.

3. **Dismemberment.** Body parts, usually the internal organs, bones (**skull**, thigh, ankles), and/or joints are removed, cleansed, and replaced.

4. Magical objects and substances are added to the candidate’s body. These animals spirits and objects, for example, **crystals**, liquid crystal, pearl shells, and spirit-snakes, embody the power of the Rainbow Serpent.

5. The candidate is restored to life. He may appear a bit mad for several days before returning to **ordinary consciousness**.

6. The candidate establishes his own contact with the **spirits of the dead** and the spirit beings of the Dreamtime. Professional training begins.

The Shaman’s Power

Through the initiation ritual the candidate receives power from the spirit Beings of the Dreamtime, a power that is coalesced in the magical objects placed in the candidate’s body. Each tribe attributes the shaman’s power to a specific spirit or spirits. In the southeast, candidates are prepared by **Baiami** in the **sky** or on the spot. In the **north** and far northwest, candidates go to the sky Beings. In central Australia, candidates are operated on by Dreamtime heroes. In the southeast and far west, Murray River, Kimberleys, and Arnhem Land, candidates receive power directly from the **Rainbow Serpent** who lives in the water and is connected with the sky.

Miwi

All Aboriginal adults can access the Dreamtime awareness to some degree while waking or sleeping using breathing techniques and concentration. This power or ability is called *miwi* by some tribes. *Miwi*, located in the body in the pit of the stomach, is present in all people and especially developed in shamans. Shamans learn to use their *miwi* and the shamanic powers that come during initiations directly from the Dreamtime Ancestors and heroes.

The shaman is a specialist who is called in when a person is uncertain of their own interpretation of psychic or spiritual communications or when the situation calls for an extreme, complex, or extraordinary solution. For example, anyone who applies himself can learn **sorcery**, for it is easy to set things asunder. However, only the shaman understands the powers with enough depth to heal the victim of the sorcery and return things to right order and flow.

Aboriginal Shamans

Each tribe has a word for shaman. Many tribes have many **words** distinguishing between gender, different aspects of the profession, like rain-making, healing by sucking, or **divination**, as well as words to distinguish between witchcraft, sorcery, and healing.

Gender

Both men and women are initiated for example by Kalera, the Rainbow Serpent, from whom they obtain the magical stones that are the source of their power. Both male shamans (*baramambin*) and female shamans (*baramambil*) can cure **illness**, affect the **weather**, and visit the spirits of the dead to obtain magical, curative, and injurious powers. In addition *baramambin* can divine a murderer and other aspects of dealing with sorcerers, which is considered man’s work.

There is no gender bias in the Dreamtime stories. Men and women are equally able to use and misuse the powers granted humans through their connection with spirits. Men and women are equally able to perform as shamans. The roles of male and female shamans flow along the lines of gender roles in the community at large. In general, women are the guardians of the natural laws and the protectors of bodily life, while the men are the guardians of the spiritual realms and protectors against sorcery.

There is significantly less information about the initiations of female shamans, in part because there were

significantly fewer female anthropologists at the time of contact, leaving scholars with no access to the women's information. Speaking historically, there have been less time and **energy** spent gathering information on female shamans in Australia, as with many indigenous peoples.

Training

Training is necessary after initiation to learn to use the spirit powers received in the form of the magical substances, such as quartz, shells, stones, bones, spirit snakes, and cords. Any of these objects can be projected into another person where they will create either sickness and death or healing. The new shaman must learn to use them with clear intent. The shaman must also learn to use the *bukkur*, a coil of magic rope that is absorbed into the body. The *bukkur* is extended from the body to provide a means by which the shaman travels to the **Upperworld**.

In many tribes there are taboos against practicing too soon after an initiatory experience. New shamans train with experienced shamans, usually for at least twelve months, to learn to control the magical substances placed in the shaman's body and to move them in and out at will. In many tribes the shaman only comes into his true power when the spirit of a dead ancestor becomes a helping spirit. From these spirits the shaman learns the songs and dances for healing and ritual.

Reasons for Shamans

Traditional reasons for calling on the service of a shaman are: illness, death, and to counteract the harmful effects of spirits of the dead or mischievous or malevolent spirits. Shamans are called on in cases of chronic misfortune or bad luck, particularly in love, hunting, or fighting. Shamans affect the weather, particularly in bringing rain, and perform divinations. Divinations are used to determine the nature of something or an event occurring out of sight relative to which we must take precautions or

the steps to overcome the various challenges to obtaining an object or goal.

In some tribes the shaman also acts as a coroner. For example, after a death among the Dieri, the *kunki* (shaman) divines who the murderer is by looking for an aspect of the murder's spirit who unknowingly will hang around the corpse or the grave. The shaman may also question the corpse to determine cause of death and/or the appropriate path of revenge.

Healing

Illnesses, **pains**, and deaths that do not have obvious natural causes are diagnosed to be the result of sorcery or malevolent magic. Sorcerers perform black magic with clear malevolent intent toward the victim. Spirits tend to perform black magic in response to a prior act by the victim, usually the breaking of a taboo or a Dreamtime law.

To counteract the harmful effects of sorcery the shaman must extract the bad blood, bone, quartz, or other stone that has been shot into the victim by the sorcerer. To perform the **extraction** the shaman rubs the afflicted part, generally the abdomen, at times with enough vigor to induce vomiting. In some cases the shaman will take a magical substance from his own body and insert it into the patient to aid in the healing. As the rubbing progresses the shaman is able to extract the offending object by hand or by sucking. This may be a material or a magical object.

Sorcerers and malevolent spirits can also cause death by stealing the victim's soul. When soul theft is diagnosed, the shaman travels into the spirit realms where the soul is lost or being held and retrieves the lost soul.

Plants are used medicinally and in various steps of different healing processes. Aboriginal knowledge of medicinal herbs is usually regional, covering a range of remedies for colds, coughs, diarrhea, and fever, as well as oral contraceptives, sedatives, ointments, and intoxicants. Knowledge of their land and its plant life enables

Aboriginals to find water and, in times of drought, to find plants to serve as sources of water.

Death

If the shaman determines that a healing will not be successful, he or she will then begin to prepare the victim and his or her group for death. After death it takes three days for the soul to complete its initial disengagement from the body. It is important that the deceased's name is not spoken by the living, or the soul may be tempted to stay on earth as a despairing ghost, creating havoc among the living. It is important that all those connected to the deceased are careful and cared for.

After the burial the deceased's spirit emerges from the grave and is met by his or her ancestors, who will help the spirit on the difficult journey to the **Land of the Dead** in the sky. The spirits of the dead travel along a straight **energy** path that passes through the Pleiades and on to the constellations of Canis Major and Canis Minor. Within these constellations the spirit finds the great star Sirius, the gateway to the Realm of the Dead.

Spirit Songs and Dances

Communication with the Ancestors is maintained and renewed by shamans who go to visit the spirits of their dead Ancestors to receive inspiration for songs and dances. The shaman must follow a formalized sequence of spirit realm experiences that require specific responses from him. When all goes well the Ancestor guides the shaman to a place where the spirits of the Ancestors gather to dance and **sing**.

The shaman must behave modestly, sitting and covering his eyes with a branch in order not to see too many spirits at once. The shaman may not remove the branch to watch until the helping spirit who brought him tells him it is time to do so. At that time the shaman is attentive, learning the songs and dances he is directed to learn. When the dancing is done, the spirit

escorts the shaman's soul back to where his body lies.

The shaman may continue these journeys for many nights to gather dances and songs and to remember the words, tunes, and all movement and choreography of each dance and related **song**. Eventually his wife will ask after his soul. He responds by telling her where he has been and teaching her the songs and dances. He will then teach them to everyone else so that they can be performed in a community **dance** ritual.

Community Ritual

The continuation of the Dreamtime Law is assured by the constancy of ritual and ceremonial life. This expression of these social laws has enabled the Aboriginal culture to flourish for 100,000 years or more. Through the songs and dances gifted to them by their Ancestral spirits, the people are able to enter ecstatic trance states to contact and listen to the voices of the Ancestors.

In the center, the sandy ground has been cleared of bush and stones creating a dancing space surrounded by large **trees**. The dancers prepare by painting their nude bodies with white and **red ochre** mixed with rushcomb flush and sticky fluids. The ritual dynamic is set up on the corroboree ground between the seated chorus of women in the **south** and the dancing men in the north. The **singing**, led by the **clever man**/poet, reaches an ecstatic pitch into which the dancers step moving forward toward the singers and back, again and again.

Some dances are performed at sunset, after which people return to their camps for dinner. Later, in darkness, the dancers and singers assemble again. Particular dances involve specific movements or choreography to accomplish certain ritual ends. With growing ecstasy of movement and song, people begin to fall into trance. Some disappear into the bush to experience their trance journey in the Dreamtime.

Those who entered trance emerge slowly as the **sun** rises, gently coming out of rapport with their Ancestors. The singers greet the sun in song and the singing stops. People slowly disperse for breakfast and to make ready for the day.

Community Power Objects

Waningi are created for the dances from a structure of sticks upon which string is wound and woven, similar to a God's Eye weaving (**thread cross**), but much more elaborate. *Waningi* are places for the Ancestor spirits to enter when they are called by the singing and dancing. The *waningi* are held by their creators even while in trance.

Longish pieces of wood and stone disks play an important part in rituals and myths. The wood, often decorated with largely abstract anthropomorphic figures, represents the living presence of Dreamtime Ancestors. Other objects contain the beings who lived before.

Broken Link

At times a shaman may lose his powers to find the gathering of the Ancestors. In this case all the men gather around the shaman who lies on the ground. They sing and slowly rub the shaman's body for hours. The shaman eventually slips into trance and his spirit roams, singing a specific song and looking for an Ancestor spirit. The Ancestor spirits, hearing this particular song, send out a spirit to look for the wandering soul of the lost shaman. The Ancestors value the active relationship with their descendants, just as the descendants value their connection to their Ancestors.

An Ancestor spirit finds the shaman's soul and promises to return in a specific number of days to help him find more songs and dances. The shaman's soul returns to his body and the singing and rubbing end. In the number of days given the shaman hears a distant call and wanders off into the bush where he will sleep and enter trance. His soul is met by the Ancestor spirits who tear him to pieces, renewing his original

initiation experience. The Ancestors carry all the pieces deep into the **Lowerworld** where the shaman's soul is reassembled and taught the dances and songs.

Blood Sacrifice and Cannibalism

For Aboriginal people, blood is the physical connection to the Ancestors. Blood communicates in ways that are hidden and spiritual between the Dreamtime world and **ordinary reality**. To share the blood or a small piece of flesh was to enter into a deep, metaphysical rapport with another and to assimilate a desired quality or energy of that being. This process holds psychic, psychological, and physical meaning for Aboriginal people.

While technically cannibalism, the practice of this ritual was infrequent and limited. For example, a young man might ingest a portion of the thigh with the intent to assimilate the skills of a highly accomplished deceased hunter, or the body fluids of a revered elder might be ingested or rubbed onto the skin in order to assimilate the essential qualities of the deceased. Aboriginal cannibalism occurred only within the context of a natural death and did not include human sacrifice.

Complementary Medicine

In the 1970s, non-Aboriginal Australians recognized that the shaman had to play an essential role if health services were ever going to adequately serve the Aboriginal population. The cooperation of shamans in Central Australia was sought and gained in several centers by medical officers from Alice Springs. Due to the success of this practice, the combined effort spread to other health centers.

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Avá-Chiripá

The Avá-Chiripá, who call themselves Avá-Katú-Eté, meaning "the true men," are an indigenous people of what is now Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil in **South America**. The Avá-Chiripá, along with the Mbya and Paí Cayuá (and possibly the Guayakí), are the large subgroups comprising the Guarani people.

The *Avá-Katú-Eté* discussed here are highly acculturated, having returned to their forest habitat after 150 years living under the rule of the Jesuits. The Christian beliefs and practices did not succeed in altering the symbolic content or the spiritual practices of these indigenous people at the deepest level. The majority still maintain the structure of tribal life that is centered around the revered *nande'ru*, the **shamans**. There was little or no interruption in the transmission of tribal myths and cosmological concepts over the years.

Cosmology

The father of the first *nande'ru* (meaning "our fathers," common-*paí*) was *Nanderú Guazú*, "our great father." In the *Avá-Katú-Eté* creation **myth**, *Nanderú Guazú* creates the world and then places it upon the eternal wooden cross, which embodies the power of the four cardinal directions. Immediately, *Nanderú Mbaé Kua'a*, "our great father

who knows all things," appears and together the two creator gods copulate with the first woman. She becomes pregnant and is transformed into *Nandé Cy*, "our great mother."

Nandé Cy doubts *Nanderú Guazú* and provokes his anger. He abandons her on the recently created **earth** and returns to the **Upperworld** with *Nanderú Mbaé Kua'a*. Meanwhile, *Nandé Cy* gives birth to cosmic twins, *Kuarahy* (**sun**) and *Yacy* (**moon**), the offspring of her double copulation with the creator gods. *Nandé Cy*, alone on earth with the infants, is devoured by *añag* (jaguar spirits) of the future whose grandmother attempts to kill the twins and then adopts them.

The cosmic twins live to avenge their mother, fighting the *añag* in a series of mythical adventures that result in the creation of food, plants, **fires**, the **bow**, edible animals, kinship rules, and the social law. *Kuarahy* in an effort to communicate with his father, *Nanderú Guazú*, develops shamanic techniques and becomes the first great shaman or *paí guazú*. He makes the first *mbaraká* (**rattle**) and with it he is able to enter a trance that allows him to reach his father in the Upperworld, who then takes his son from the earth.

Nanderú Guazú does not intervene directly with humankind from the Upperworld. He sends his messenger, *paraka'o ñeengatú*, the parrot. This is why parrot **feathers** are central to the shaman's **costume**. *Kuarahy* communicates with shamans through his messenger, *mainó*, the hummingbird. *Kuarahy's* brother, *Yacy*, is both the **trickster** and the keeper of the cyclical nature of life. His messenger is the *kurusuvá* bird.

The eternal palm tree, *pindó vyjú*, connects the earth with the spirit realms, serving as the **axis mundi** in *Avá-Katú-Eté* cosmology. *Pindó*, the **Tree of Life**, connects paradise in the Upperworld, *oka-vusú*, and the **Land of the Dead**, *ñe'eng-güery*, with the earth.

The Name and the Soul

“Vital words,” or names, are sent by the spirits of the Upperworld or of “the country of the dead.” The name is an aspect of the soul totality of the person. The “vital word” and the **vital soul**, or divine soul, are synonymous, not as one, but as a unification of the two. The name is the person. It is essential that *Avá-Katú-Eté* children are given the correct name.

Some shamans have the power to receive the “vital word” in their **dreaming**. The power is given by particular **helping spirits** and not given to all shamans. Those who have this power can perform *mitá-mbó-ery*, the **ritual** for **naming** children. During the ritual the women **chant prayers**, while the shaman sings and rattles to enter a trance that will enable him to clarify the correct name and the origin of the name in the spirit world.

If it becomes clear during the *mitá-mbó-ery* that the child’s soul is the reincarnation of an Ancestor, the child’s parents and the living relations of that reincarnating Ancestor are told. Today, the *Avá-Katú-Eté* have two names, their vital word name that is shared within the **sacred** community and a second Christian name that is shared with outsiders and strangers and to which no great importance is attached.

Soul

The *Avá-Katú-Eté* conceive of the soul as having two parts. The *ñe’eng*, or divine soul, guides one in living by the social laws defined by the spirits, like vegetarianism, meditation, and practicing spiritual tranquillity. The *asynguá* is responsible for base passions, evil appetites, and other behaviors that violate the socio-cultural order, like adultery, meat eating, and excesses in sexual activity and alcohol.

Cultivation of the *ñe’eng* while simultaneously balancing the passions of the *asynguá* is a central focus of *Avá-Katú-Eté* life, especially for their shamans. They desire entry into “the land without evil,” *Ywy mará ey*, which

is on the earth in **ordinary reality** for ordinary people. However the right to entry must be earned through an immensely rigorous lifetime exercise in spiritual practice and discipline.

The purpose and the goal of life are to achieve a state of *agüyjé*, spiritual perfection and to gain entry into *Ywy mará ey*. This requires a lifetime practice of special techniques of concentration, strict vegetarian **diet**, and absolute observance of all rituals and sacred laws. This practice is thwarted by the disrespect of people of different **cultures**, excessive behaviors, and the introduction of **taboo** foods, like fats and alcohol.

Beyond the state of *agüyjé* is *kandire*, an even higher state of spiritual perfection requiring even greater discipline and extraordinary practice. When one is “becoming *kandire*” flames spring from the chest as the heart is set afire by the illumination of *tatá-chiná*, divine wisdom.

Death and the Psychopomp

At death the *ñe’eng* travels either to the home of the deity who originally gave its vital word name or to *oka-vusú*, paradise in the Upperworld. The *ñe’eng* must pass through a series of tests to get to either destination. The **energy** the individual has given to his *asynguá* over his lifetime creates imperfections in the soul that make it more difficult to traverse the obstacles along the soul’s path. The shaman’s role is to **sing** the funeral chants that describe the journey with all of its tests and challenges to guide the *ñe’eng* along its path as it leaves the body at death.

Only the *ñe’eng* can reincarnate and thus a third destination is *ñe’eng-güery*, “the country of the dead” where the *ñe’eng* await their reincarnation. Reincarnation is not automatic; it only happens in certain circumstances. For example, a shaman can perform a ritual to induce the reincarnation of a particular soul, like a deceased shaman or great leader.

It is not the nature of the *asynguá* to reincarnate, though it will try. At death the *asynguá* transforms into the *angüery*, “the spirit of death,” who will roam the earth disturbing the living with **disease**, madness, and death in an attempt to reincarnate by taking the place of a living *ñe’eng*. After a death, the shaman performs a set of complex rituals to protect the living and to persuade the *angüery* to move on.

Chants

Chants are received from the spirit world, often in dreams, and they are a source of power. Every person has the potential of receiving his or her own personal chant or **power song**. *Avá-Katú-Eté* chants are either sacred, *guaú*, or common, *koti-hú*, and both are used in rituals and ceremonies though at different times. Sacred songs are either *guaú eté*, true sacred songs sung in an unintelligible sacred **language**, or *guaú-ái*, little sacred songs sung in archaic Guarani. In all cases it is the tone of the chant that carries its power.

The shaman’s chants are more potent than those of ordinary people. This potency comes from the fact that the performer of the chant is a person of power who is **singing** a chant of power. The powers combine in a way that the shaman can direct and utilize. For example, while the shaman is chanting, he is in communication with helping spirits and divine messengers. The *paí-gauzú*, the great shamans, have significant power and numerous chants which they can direct into healing and conducting ritual, among other things.

Initiation

The selection of *Avá-Katú-Eté* shamans is a spontaneous act of spirit in which the spirits reveal the initiate’s power song. Traditionally, the revelation of one’s personal chant and its corresponding shamanic powers is received in a dream or in a journey to the country of the dead experienced in a dream. In either case, both take place in the dream state with the participation of

helping spirits (spirits of nature or Ancestor spirits) who transmit the personal chant to the initiate.

Today, some initiates are selected and trained by *paí-gauzú*. However this must be followed by a mystical experience that occurs during sleep in which the spirits visit and teach the initiate his power song. Often this type of selection is simply an affirmation by a prestigious shaman of a selection already made by spirit.

The *paí-gauzú* discusses the attitude toward life the novice *nande’rú* must strive for, the necessary diet, and the need to govern all acts by love. The initiate must concentrate on his dreaming practice and allow his faith to grow while observing all social and spiritual laws and avoiding excesses.

Initiation and Training

Initiation continues in stages with the training over several years. After selection the novice must learn the correct behaviors and meditations that induce the potent dream journeys of *Avá-Katú-Eté* shamans.

The *nande’rú*’s dreaming is the source of shamanic knowledge and power. If the novice is disciplined and works with the content of these dreams, his wisdom accumulates and he can cultivate the lightness and purity necessary to travel to *ñe’eng-güeri*, the country of the dead. There he can communicate with the dead *paí-gauzú* and learn sacred prayers, songs, and healing skills.

Early in his training, the *yasaa* (feathered sash) energy is sung into the initiate’s chest by spirit in a dream or by a *paí-gauzú*. When this step of the initiation is performed by a shaman, he will sing sacred songs continuously while he attaches the parrot feathers to the sash, breathes on it, and places it on the initiate’s chest. The energy is sealed into the initiate with a prayer and the circular hand motions of the *paí-gauzú*. The initiate is informed of the proper taboos to observe with the *yasaa*. When the novice shaman has received his personal chant,

he can learn to use the feather bunch along with the sash in healing.

Years later, when the *nande'ru* has mastered the journey to the country of the dead and integrated the wisdom of the ancestral *paí-gauzú*, he will begin to receive visits from the *mainó*, the sacred hummingbird messenger of the **sun**. *Mainó* conveys more wisdom and teaches the *nande'ru* to communicate with the “spirits of all things,” meaning the plants and animals. The *nande'ru* can then cultivate a relationship with a helping spirit who will assist him in healing and other acts of shamanic power.

The *nande'ru* continues to learn from the spirits, practice in the community, and cultivate the lightness and purity of his soul. Only *Avá-Katú-Eté* shamans of the highest rank will be taught to use the double-crossed band of feathers, which indicates the *paí guazú*.

Functions of the Shaman

The *Avá-Katú-Eté* perceive that the shaman's powers are derived directly from the powers that rule the **kosmos** and inform all earthly and human order. The primary function of the shaman then is to maintain the continuity of that order. Through his dreaming the shaman is guided to see the true nature of things and to take the actions necessary to restore the divine order.

The *nande'ru*'s dreaming is consulted to determine suitable and fertile places for cultivation and the most auspicious time for planting or harvesting. After a plot has been cleared, the *nande'ru* is called on to clear anything manifest—like ants or vermin, or spiritual—like sorcery or malevolent spirits, that could be harmful to the crops or create disease.

The *nande'ru*'s dreaming is called upon to guide the hunter into a successful hunt; to locate honey, hearts of palm, and fruits and to assure the safety of women and children gathering them; to control the **weather**, and to foretell the future.

The *nande'ru*'s dreaming is called upon to divine the identity of robbers, to define appropriate reparations, and to find lost community members. The *nande'ru*'s power can also be used to punish an individual who has seriously and consistently transgressed the social law. However, it is rare for shamans of rank, the *paí guazú*, to act in this way as their great power and spiritual insight give them other options for deterring misconduct.

The presence of a *nande'ru* reassures the community that they are in good relationship with their environment. If they were to be out of balance the forces of that environment could attack the whole group as well as individuals. The misuse of power by a *nande'ru* to induce pestilence, disease, or death causes an immediate reaction against him. The community feels unprotected from the malevolent powers he has set in motion that will affect the balance of their relationship with the environment.

Finally, the *nande'ru* is called on for healing and to doctor the effects of sorcery. Sorcery is usually attributed to the *nande'ru* of other groups who send malevolent spirits to attack the *Avá-Katú-Eté*. In these cases the *nande'ru* must doctor those affected by the sorcery and send his own helping spirits to punish the suspected sorcerer in the neighboring community.

Illness

The *Avá-Katú-Eté* distinguish between two basic types of **illness**. There are those illnesses that are the result of an increased imbalance between the two parts of the soul, for which the patient is ultimately responsible. His excessive or improper social behavior has overloaded his soul with negative forces that must now be removed before he can be cured. Other illnesses are the result of activities of malevolent spirits. In this case the spirits are able to enter invisibly by taking advantage of the weakness created in the souls of people who lack piety. These spirits must be removed before the illness can be cured.

Illness is thought of as more a social disease than an individual disease, as it is the result of imbalance in the relationship of the individual within himself and/or with the community. The result, however, is the same. An alien element is allowed inside the body which the shaman must dislodge before health can be restored. The healings by sucking, magical breath, and prayer all work to dislodge and expel the alien element.

Healing Techniques

Prior to any of the following treatments the shaman enters his dreaming to discover the cause of the illness, the treatment necessary, the number of sessions needed, and any necessary herbal preparations.

Treatment by sucking:

An alien element (energy intrusion) causing persistent illness is located in the patient's body, sucked out, and expelled with great force. The shaman will continue with subsequent sessions until he knows from his dreaming that the body is cleared. The shaman's power prevents the intrusion from entering his own body. In addition the shaman purifies his throat with a shot of alcohol immediately after each spitting expulsion of the intrusion.

Treatment by magical breath:

A *paí guazú* who has received divine power can transmit it to others on his breath or on a combination of breath and **tobacco** smoke. The *paí guazú* breathes into the soft spot on the top of the head or into the affected body part. The power that enters the patient will struggle with the misplaced spirits who are creating the illness until those spirits are dislodged from the body.

This technique is also used in the initiation and training of novices. The power enters the initiate's body on the breath, causing it to shake with tremors as it attempts to suddenly absorb the power. The initiate himself is moved into an extreme emotional state by the transmission.

Treatment by prayer:

Prayer is not used in the general sense to simply pray for someone's health. The prayers, or chants, are specific, learned from the spirits, and are in that sense "**medicine**." This treatment is called for in serious cases when the shaman needs to invoke the spirit of the deity who is the source of his power, so that they may combat the source of the disease together.

Prayer is a common treatment, for example, in the case of poisonous snake bites. The prayer is chanted without further application of herbs or the laying of hands. These anti-venom prayers are unique to each shaman, given to him by the spirits in his sleep, and often very successful. The power of these prayers reaches beyond psychosomatic suggestion because this treatment is used effectively to heal animals, who are not believed to be suggestible.

Treatment with herbs:

The average adult knows many herbs used for everyday complaints. The shaman is asked to **diagnose** serious illnesses and determine any herbs necessary in the particular healing. When herbs are used the spirits of these medicinal plants are being called on to attack the spirits creating the illness. The spirits also show the shaman how the plant is to be harvested and what chants are to be recited during the gathering and preparation.

Treatment with the Name:

As a last resort in cases of serious illness and imminent death, the shaman can change the name of the patient, sending death off with the old name. After this healing ritual the old name must never be spoken again. To do so would renew the threat of death.

For the *Avá-Katú-Eté*, the success of a healing rests in part on the shaman and in part on the community. The collective behavior of the community affects the socio-sacred field in which the shaman functions. His success requires social cohesion in good

relationship with its spiritual environment. Failure is attributed both to the shaman and to the psycho-spiritual balance of the community.

Costume

In the beginning *Nanderú Guazú* ceded a portion of his powers to *Kuarahy*, the **first shaman** along with the use of his costume. From this tradition the *nande'ru's* costume is made up of the *yasaa*, a sash of cotton plaited with feather ornaments to be worn across the chest, the *poapi-guaá*, a bracelet of cotton and feathers, the *acaan-guaá*, a crown of multi-colored feathers, and the *kuruzú-ipoty*, the feathered cross, which is sometimes replaced with a handful of large, red parrot feathers.

Tools

The shaman's tools are, for the most part, the only traditional objects still in common usage. These include the *mbaraká*, **dance** rattles, the *kuruzú*, feathered crosses, and the *takuapú*, **rhythm** sticks used by women in the rituals and dances. Every adult male has a *mbaraká* to use during ritual, however they lack the potency of the shaman's. The *kuruzú* is symbolic of the eternal wooden cross on which the world was placed after it was created. The four sacred cardinal points each correspond with a wind and a specific deity spirit.

The shaman's basic tool is the *mbaraká*. The *Avá-Katú-Eté mbaraká* does not contain a spirit, but can be used to invoke other spirits. The small, black fruit used inside the rattle is from the *ibahú* shrub, the template for which is found in *oka-vusú* in the **Upperworld**.

Community Healing and Ritual

The most important ceremony of the *Avá-Katú-Eté* is the *ñemboé kaagüy*, or prayer of the forest. The date is determined in the dreams of the highest ranking shaman who will officiate the **ritual**. The ceremony traditionally lasts for nine days, involving eight days of sacred chanting, dancing, and praying that transition into the ninth day of festive celebration.

The *ñemboé kaagüy* used to be performed once a year, but is performed much more frequently now in response to contemporary stresses on the community. The power of this ritual not only heals those who participate, but it activates other forces which are summoned to help the community to heal situations of crisis with the outside world like epidemics, incurable illnesses, and unfamiliar spirits the shamans have not yet determined how to deal with.

The *ñemboé kaagüy* is an example of how the practices of the *nande'ru*, while showing adaptation to wider social and cultural pressures, continue to guide the spiritual life of the *Avá-Katú-Eté* and to be the axis around which their cultural identity revolves. The *nande'ru* have effectively reinterpreted new socio-cultural forces through their own symbolic code and looked to traditional cultural patterns to guide their actions in response to a new age.

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Axis Mundi

The *axis mundi* is a conceptual place where creation and entropy, the essential generative and destructive forces of the universe, exist together, mirror images of each other. The *axis mundi* joins the diametrically opposite forces of the universe as One within the **Great Mystery**. It connects the centers of this world with that of the Otherworld.

While the *axis mundi* is an important concept in many philosophies and **religions**, its relationship to **shamanism** is unique. The *axis mundi* is not just a metaphor for the **shaman**, but an actual place through which the shaman

moves, albeit in an **altered state of consciousness**. Nonetheless, the shaman feels the **ecstasy** that results from experiencing the Oneness-with-all-things that is the nature of the *axis mundi*.

Through the *axis mundi* the experienced shaman can travel anywhere in the **Kosmos**. These journeys are often ecstatic, though not always. Ecstasy is not the purpose of the shaman's journey; however, it is often a byproduct. The *axis mundi* is for the shaman both a practical tool and a spiritual awareness.

As the connection between the seen (physical) with the unseen (spiritual) worlds, the *axis mundi* is most often visualized as a great tree connecting all of the Kosmos; its branches reaching into the **Upperworld**, its trunk residing in the **Middleworld**, and its roots reaching into the **Lowerworld**. Wherever this **Tree of Life** reaches, the shaman can travel. In the physical world the *axis mundi* is embodied in **trees**, stone monoliths, central structural columns, and in the shaman him/herself.

Shamanic **cultures** conceive of the universe in different ways. For some there are two worlds, the seen and the unseen. For others there are the three worlds described above, or more. Regardless of the number of realms, the *axis mundi* is consistent. It is the connection between the realms, the Cosmic Center through which different transcendental planes and realms connect.

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Ayahuasca

Ayahuasca has been an important hallucinogenic sacrament for the **South American aboriginal** peoples from the beginning of their time on earth. This plant **entheogen** is woven deeply into the fabric of their lives, mythology, and

philosophy. The *payé* (**shamans**) of **South America** drink *ayahuasca* to release their souls from their bodies so that they can hear the **spirits** of the plants and animals of the rain forest and those of the invisible world speak to them.

Ayahuasca is a **Quechua** word that has several translations: "vine of the soul," "vine of the dead," "Vine of Spirit Wisdom," and "taking new form or changing," which is a reference to death and **shapeshifting**. For the Quechua these translations all mean the same thing. They are similar in meaning to the various names given *ayahuasca* in other languages. *Ayahuasca* is also known as *caapi*, *kahi*, *natema*, *pindé*, *yagé*, *yajé*, *mihi*, and *dápa*.

The central ingredient in *ayahuasca* is the giant forest *liana* (large woody vine), *Banisteriopsis caapi*, which grows throughout the Amazon and Andes of South America, the tropical zones of **North America**, and the West Indies. *Banisteriopsis* is revered as a sacred plant for its psychotropic properties.

The actual plant **medicine** is made from several species of lianas of the Malpighia family. *Banisteriopsis caapi* is the one ingredient that does not vary. Different tribes and different shamans within tribes blend *B. caapi* with different plants or admixtures. *Ayahuasca* is used primarily in the northwest and the surrounding areas of Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, western Brazil, and parts of Venezuela.

Indigenous peoples make distinctions between "kinds" of *Banisteriopsis*, though western botanical systems, which are not morphologically based, do not recognize these distinctions. Nonetheless, these "kinds" are used to prepare different remedies and blends which do have different physiological effects. The aboriginal distinctions may be due to age of the *liana*, the different parts of the *liana*, soil conditions, light/shade conditions, and amount or pattern of moisture. It is conceivable that these variations could alter the

plant's chemical composition enough to produce the variety of effects observed. However, the energy of the spirit of the plant and of the *icaros*, the *payé's* songs *camayed* (blown) into the drink, must also be taken into account.

Use

Ayahuasca is used primarily for **diagnosis** and treatment of physical **illness**, and secondarily for **divination**, **initiation**, and inducing prophetic **visions**. Divination often involves determining the plans of enemies to ward off disaster, **sorcery**, and enemy attacks. *Ayahuasca* is not only the shaman's tool. It is used by the people to reconnect with their ancestors, to see the gods and the origin of human and animal kind, and to understand the establishment of their social order.

In a **healing ritual** the *payé* drinks *ayahuasca* to diagnosis the true spirit origin of an illness or disease or to contact spirits who can identify the problem and suggest appropriate measures. Illness is often diagnosed as the result of energy intrusions in the body of the patient, or sorcery. The *payé* uses **tsentsaks** (invisible darts) while in trance to "see" inside the patient's body and to help remove any foreign **energy intrusions**.

The patient often drinks *ayahuasca* as well, particularly when detoxification of the body is the prescribed. Both *payé* and patient drink *ayahuasca* in cases where **ritual** removal, **purification**, and replacement of body parts are necessary for healing. *Ayahuasca* is used by the *payé* to locate and retrieve lost or stolen souls from the spirit world for their patients.

Ayahuasca is used secondarily by the peoples of South America as a visionary sacrament, particularly during initiations into adulthood or shamanic training. While in the induced trance state, the individual's soul travels into the spirit realms and returns to the source and origin of all things. The reality of the spirit world and illusory quality of the "real" world is revealed. Day-to-day

life dissolves into a fantasy and the true nature of existence, the order of the universe, the origin of humankind, and the individual's place in the universe are revealed. In this state, the individual is able to communicate with the Ancestors for guidance and direction in life.

Preparation

Ayahuasca is prepared from *Banisteriopsis caapi* and/or *Banisteriopsis inebrians* in diverse ways, most of which are variations of two basic procedures. In the first type of procedure, bark is scraped from a stout vine and kneaded in a cold water process, practiced in most of Colombia. In the second procedure the vine is boiled in a longer, multi-step, hot water process, practiced in the western Amazonian regions. The hot water process produces a bitter, thick liquid of greater potency that is taken in small doses. The cold-water process produces a less concentrated liquid that is consumed in larger doses.

The admixtures used are chosen to enhance the magical, ritual, and/or medicinal properties of the drink relative to the purposes for which the drink is being prepared. For example, the bark from the lipuna nigra tree is added when black magic is suspected to help the shaman pinpoint the source of the magic that is causing the illness. The *payé* determines the particular mixture of plants used under the guidance of the spirits, particularly the spirits of the plants themselves.

The plant additives, or admixtures, are often highly toxic and hallucinogenic themselves. The most frequently used admixtures are the leaves of *ocoyajé* or *chagropanga* (*Diplopterys Cabrerana*), which increase the strength and length of the journey; chacruna (*Psychotria viridis*) which activates the psychotropic effects of *Banisteriopsis*; *Psychotria carthaginensis*; or the leaves of *Banisteriopsis rusbyana*. In addition, the leaves of *Nicotiana*, or the psychoactive *Burgmansia* and ***Brunfelsia*** may be added to further increase the

potency and duration of the psychotropic effect. Admixtures are also selected for their medicinal properties, such as emetic, analgesic, purgative, etc.

The *payé* often gather the plants in the rain forest with younger **apprentices**. During this time the apprentice is taught the stories of the sacred plants and instructed in the distinction between the “kinds” of *Banisteriopsis* and their relative potency. Apprentices are also instructed in the different admixtures and their medicinal properties.

Cultivation

This *liana* is fast growing and easy to cultivate, though *payé* prefer older *lianas* growing wild, which are considered stronger in their psychoactive effects. As the plants become more scarce in the wild, practitioners compensate with cultivation in their **Coca** plots or near the *maloca* (large communal house).

Active Principle

Until the 1990s the active constituents in *ayahuasca* were believed to be the *beta*-carboline alkaloid compounds isolated from *Banisteriopsis caapi*. However, the active constituents are now believed to be DMT and other tryptamines found in the admixtures, for example, *chagropanga* (*B. rusbyana*) and *chacruna* (*Psychotria viridis*), the two more common admixtures. Though normally not orally active, the monoamine oxidase inhibitors found in *B. caapi*, harmine, harmaline, and tetrahydroharmine, allow the DMT to be absorbed through the intestines. The activated tryptamine increases the potency of the drink making the visions more vivid, the **colors** brighter, and the trance state longer lasting.

Ritual of Receiving

Ayahuasca is widely used in South America and the rituals for receiving *ayahuasca* vary **culture** to culture. However, the use of light and **song** is relatively consistent. Light is considered incompatible with the trance state

induced, therefore the rituals usually begin after sunset and any lights are extinguished after the first portion of *ayahuasca* is consumed. The spirit of *ayahuasca* and the spirits who participate in *ayahuasca* rituals are drawn into the ritual by the *payé's icaros*, or songs. After the *ayahuasca* is consumed the *payé* sings a long series of chants, often accompanying himself on a **bow** or with a leaf **rattle**.

In some cultures participants are cleansed before participating in the healing ritual. A bath is prepared with the leaves, stems, and blossoms of flowers known for their purifying qualities. The purpose is twofold: to cleanse the physical body and to open the senses to the *ayahuasca* experience. After drying, participants enter the ritual **space**.

The *payé* sings to the *ayahuasca* to call in its spirit and to the spirits needed for the journeys and healings to be performed that night. He blows **tobacco** smoke on the *ayahuasca* from a pipe or *mapacho* cigarettes and then calls people one by one to drink. The *payé* sings *icaros* to invoke spirits, to send others away, and to shape the visions of the patients. At the same time the *payé* works directly on the patients, **singing** over them, blowing, and working with leaves and *tsentsak* to clear the body of unwanted energies. The *payé* works continuously throughout the night.

When the patient drinks the *ayahuasca* there are several energetic components engaged in the healing: the *ayahuasca's* hallucinogenic properties, the *ayahuasca* as a “*doctor*,” the environment or setting, the guidance in the *payé's icaros*, and the *payé* as a “*doctor*.”

Ayahuasca can also be taken “blown.” To prepare a portion of “blown” *ayahuasca* the *payé* sings and **camays** (blows) his or her own **spirit**/energy/power into the drink. In this way the spirit/energy/power of the *payé* is ingested with the spirit/energy/power of the *ayahuasca*. Working from the inside out, the *payé's* energy guides the individual on a more directed and potent healing journey.

After taking *ayahuasca* “blown” the patient must observe **taboos** to protect the spirit/energy/power of the shaman that will remain in the patient’s body for several days or weeks. Restrictions may involve abstinence from certain foods, medications (other than *ayahuasca*), sexual activity, upsetting situations, or shock. These restrictions may be quite strict and required for a duration of several days to several months.

Characteristics of the Ayahuasca Experience

The psychoactive effects of *ayahuasca* vary with the age of the *liana* used, the environment the *liana* grows in, the admixtures used, the preparation process, and the amount consumed. The effects are also influenced by the physical environment, the ritual or ceremonial environment created by the *payé*, and the **music**, songs, guidance, and suggestion of the *payé* administering the drink. There are potentially many more physical and psychic variables that affect the experience.

The psychic effects begin 20 to 40 minutes after drinking the *ayahuasca* and may last from six to eight hours, depending on the variables listed above. *Ayahuasca* typically causes vomiting within the first two hours after ingesting the **medicine** and/or diarrhea. Purging and **cleansing** is one of the health benefits of drinking *ayahuasca*. Vomiting and diarrhea are considered positive, medicinal side effects from the indigenous point of view, not signs of illness.

The wide-ranging and sometimes bizarre psychic effects of *ayahuasca* vary greatly with different admixtures and different individuals. There are certain constant characteristics for both indigenous people and outsiders. They include extremely heightened senses—smell, sight, hearing, and touch, normal to hyper-normal muscular coordination, and the appearance of light and other visual effects distinguished by multicolored geometric patterns that repeat, merge, and form kaleidoscopes.

The trance state induced can be either euphoric or aggressive.

The euphoric, or ecstatic, characteristic of the trance state is experienced as the soul leaving the body. The Tukano people of **Amazonia** explain that the soul is pulled by a strong wind along the Milky Way and beyond to the place of origin of their ancestor. The Zaparo of Ecuador explain that they feel themselves lifted into the air while in trance. The Shipibo-Conibo *payés* of Peru explain that they leave their bodies and transform into **birds** that fly to the Upperworld of the spirit realms.

Indigenous practitioners report a broad range of common characteristics, including: visions, sometimes in dull blue, gray, or purple and sometimes, with certain additives, quite brilliant in color; night vision or a heightened ability to see in the dark; visions that can be seen with eyes open or closed in day or night; heightened sense of hearing; change in physical coordination, either increased or decreased; macropsia (objects appearing larger than life), appearance of animals, particularly snakes and jaguars, appearance of multitudes of people or spirits in human-like forms, and the appearance of dangerous waterfalls or veiled mountains.

The frequency with which jaguars and anaconda snakes appear to individuals under the influence of *ayahuasca*—whether native or foreign to the rain forest—is significant enough to be intriguing to psychologists. It has been suggested that the jaguar and anaconda appear because they are the most powerful and dangerous animals in the tropical forest, commanding both respect and fear. However, this does not explain why the same animals appear for non-natives, nor does it correlate with the explanation of the indigenous peoples. The **Shuar** *payé* explain that the jaguar and anaconda spirits have the most power in the spirit world of the tropical rain forest and those who drink the *ayahuasca* are asking for help and thus calling out for power.

It is common for the *payé* to shapeshift into a jaguar while in trance. Yekwana *payé* roar, allowing the jaguar spirit to speak through them. Tukano *payé* report feeling themselves encoiled in a large snake or devoured by jaguar jaws. Shipibo-Conibo *payé* acquire great snakes while in trance who defend the *payé* in spirit world battles against sorcerers and other *payés*.

Songs

Icaros are the **power songs** sung during *ayahuasca* rituals to invoke specific shamanic powers. They are sung to induce different altered states of consciousness and to influence the content of specific *ayahuasca* visions. Shamans learn *icaros* directly from the *ayahuasca* and from the plants they work with. Like other power songs, the **words** are secondary to the power of the melody.

The *icaros* are learned during training by ingesting a plant **teacher**—most frequently *ayahuasca*. A master *payé* may know as many as three thousand *icaros*, each learned for a different purpose. Each *payé* has a main *icaro*, or power song, that resonates with the essence of his or her power.

Art

Indigenous peoples explain that much of their **art** is inspired by the visions and trance experiences induced by *ayahuasca* and other plant entheogens. The mythology of the various people is found in the art largely because the *ayahuasca* experience reconnects them with their ancestors and the place of their origin in the spirit world. The **colors** used, the abstract designs, and the figures represented all have very precise interpretations. In addition, the subject matter of the art, whether abstract or figurative, consistently correlates with ingesting a particular plant entheogen, a specific blend of admixtures, or even a specific amount of either.

Traditional Tukanoan art, for example, is inspired by *ayahuasca*-induced visions. The Tukano paint beings, like *Pamuri-mahsé*, the germinating **Sun**, or

the Master of Animals, abstract designs, like concentric **circles** and chains of diamond-shaped links, and the story of their own cosmology on the bark wall of their *malocas*. The drawings often depict *Pamuri-mahsé*, who came to earth from beyond the Milky Way, as the originator of the people and the *ayahuasca*. Yellow and off-white are used to represent both the Sun and its germinating semen. Red symbolizes the fertility of women, the uterus, blood, **fire**, and heat. Blue is symbolic of **sacred** tobacco smoke and thought.

Peruvian **vegitalista** Pablo Amaringo has created some of the most elaborate and eloquent depictions of what he sees and experiences in *ayahuasca*-induced trances in *Ayahuasca Visions: The Religious Iconography of a Peruvian Shaman*. These pictures clearly depict the rich interweaving of the energies of ordinary and **non-ordinary reality** experienced by the *payé* in the tropical rain forest.

Use in Western Medicine

An extract of *Banisteriopsis caapi* is sometimes used during delicate eye operations to dilate the blood vessels behind the eye. Several studies in Brazil, where the religious and psychotherapeutic use of *ayahuasca* is legalized, have shown the entheogen is useful in the successful treatment of alcoholism and cocaine addiction.

Luna, Luis E., and P. Amaringo. *Ayahuasca Visions: The Religious Iconography of a Peruvian Shaman*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1991.

Peixoto, B. Anthropologist, Brazilian language specialist, and shaman. Personal communication.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

———. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Ayahuascero

An *ayahuascero* is a **shaman**, indigenous or **Mestizo**, who uses *ayahuasca* in his or her shamanic practice. *Ayahuasca* is an **entheogen**, a vision-producing drink made from **sacred** plants. Drinking *ayahuasca* enables the shaman to identify the spiritual causes of illnesses, to treat **illness**, to affect the **weather**, foresee the future, find lost objects and people, find fish and game, or to engage in **sorcery** and acts of psychic warfare.

Teaching

The *ayahuasca* itself is both a healer and a **teacher**. For those who drink *ayahuasca*, the **plant spirit** heals even when it does not induce **visions**. When *ayahuasca* does induce visions it is a great teacher who teaches anyone able to open himself to the teaching. Non-shamans drink *ayahuasca* to learn about their vocations and professions, the health of their soul, their place in the Universe, and how to heal themselves.

For the *ayahuascero*, *ayahuasca* sets the pace, course, and content of their training. While in an *ayahuasca*-induced trance, the spirits of the plants show the shaman a plant and often where to find it and how to use it. The next day the shaman looks for a plant with leaves and bark of the same shape and color as shown in the journey. The plant is prepared as instructed and given to the patient as **medicine**. In this way *ayahuasca* gives prescriptions to the shamans and shamans learn to use the vast resources of the rain forest.

The spirit of *ayahuasca* also presents special **diets** and **taboos** to follow for a prescribed time which will enable the shaman to learn about the plants and roots or **icaros** (songs) necessary to heal the more serious problems. The shaman may be directed to spend months to years secluded from society and family, abstaining from sex, and following a special diet to learn to see and hear the spirits and to work with them in **healing**. During this time the

shaman ingests a plant, merging with it and learning from it how it can be used.

Training

Training varies in difficulty and **sacrifice** from **culture** to culture; however, *ayahuasca* is always the primary teacher for the *ayahuascero*. In many cultures the rigors of training, which involve long **purification** processes that can be emotionally, psychologically, and physically traumatic, are quite difficult. There are six different levels of working with *ayahuasca* and each takes approximately six years of commitment and sacrifice to master. These levels are student, *muraillo*, *murayo*, *alto muraya*, *altomando muraya*, and *banco*. Each level involves a special **plant diet** and seclusion, different types of study, and different levels of dedication and ability.

A typical diet is rice and plantains with no meat, butter, fruit, sugar, or salt for six years. During this time the *ayahuascero* drinks *ayahuasca* at least twice a week and ingests the plant he or she is learning from daily, if it is other than the *lianas* from which *ayahuasca* is made. Over time the *ayahuascero* learns not only of the medicinal uses of different **trees** and plants, but also to hear and **sing** the *icaros* of the trees and plants necessary to empower the remedies, to heal, and to call the spirits into the healing rituals.

These prolonged periods of dieting with the *ayahuasca* provide the *ayahuascero* with the mental and spiritual energy needed to communicate with the powerful spirits who do the healing. These spirits are, for example, the *sacharuna*, the spirits of the forest, and the *ninaruna*, the spirit of the fire, a very powerful spirit called on to heal life-threatening illnesses like cancer. The *yacaruna*, the spirits of the water, are so powerful that there is no illness they cannot cure. The *ayahuascero* learns to travel under the water into the world of the *yacaruna* to gain their help in healing.

Though the spirits do the healing, the shaman must be able to call the spirits into the healing ritual and to communicate with them. The shaman's role is essential for healing to happen. Without authentic communication between the spirits, the shaman, and the patient, the energy necessary for healing is not translated from the spirit world into the physical world and healing does not occur.

Cause of Illness

Traditional causes of illness are **soul loss**, soul theft, and energetic intrusions in the body, usually caused by an act of **sorcery**. Today most mental and physical illnesses are brought on by the spiritual problems that are caused by stress, fear, exposure to pollution and to electromagnetic fields—all of which overload our nervous system, interfering with our ability to experience, interpret, and integrate our life experience accurately.

Healing

For minor illnesses the *ayahuascano* may work without *ayahuasca* using **tobacco** smoke, brushing or cleansing the body with plants, sucking, sucking with *yachai* (magical **phlegm**), or magical hand movements. However, *ayahuasca* and the help of powerful spirits are needed for major illnesses like cancer or soul loss. *Ayahuasca* allows the shaman to travel in the spirit world or to travel into the patient's body in a way that enables the shaman to operate, cutting out the illness with the mind or hands.

If the illness is identified as an energetic intrusion, the shaman may cough up some *yachai* and spit it into the area of the intrusion. The *yachai* is sucked out with the source of the illness. Then the shaman must decide whether or not to swallow the intrusion. The intrusion can become a source of energy for the shaman after the illness dies, if it is good. If the intrusion is bad, the shaman's body rejects it and the shaman will vomit and purge the intrusion.

Ayahuasca is a very powerful healing medicine when consumed in a healing **ritual** guided by a trained *ayahuascano*. Even when physical illness has progressed to the degree that curing is not possible, the *ayahuasca* taken by the patient can bring spiritual healing. People who have no training with *ayahuasca* have been shown the truth about themselves so clearly by the *ayahuasca* that they can heal themselves.

Ayahuascanos believe that *ayahuasca* reveals the truth about ourselves so that we remember who we truly are. Simultaneously, the *ayahuasca* cleans out the body and the visions of demons, the manifestation of negative thoughts, emotions, and fears, gives over to **visions** of real spirits, whom we can only see when our bodies are cleansed of toxins and fears. With repeated use of *ayahuasca* people begin to see beyond their personal **pain**, to see themselves in the context of their **ancestors**, other people, and the universal forces that connect us all.

Ayahuascano's Paraphernalia

Paraphernalia includes **altar** cloth or tarp, kerosene lamp, *ayahuasca*, *aguardiente* (sugar cane liquor) infused with garlic and camphor, rosewater perfume, *mapacho* black tobacco cigarettes, matches, **huacas** (special stones), a *maroella* or *chacapa* leaf fan, which is used like a **rattle** or to brush people.

Aztec

A record of the **sacred plant hallucinogens** used by the ancient Aztecs appears to have been rendered in stone. Xochipilli, the Aztec "Prince of Flowers," was discovered on the slopes of the volcano Mount Popocatepetl. His face is rendered in ecstasy, as though seeing visions in an **altered state of consciousness**. His head is slightly tilted as though he is listening to voices.

His body is engraved with stylized flowers which have been identified as a variety of sacred plants, most of them

entheogens. The glyphs on the statue depict *Teonanacatl* (**psilocybe mushroom**), *Tlililtzin* (**Morning Glory**), **tobacco**, and Sinicuichi. The pedestal on which the Prince sits is decorated with a design representing cross-sections of the caps of *Psilocybe aztecorum*, an hallucinogenic **mushroom** found only on this volcano. Xochipilli represents not just the Prince of Flowers, but the Prince of Flowers that enable one to communicate with the Divine.

Teonanacatl, the “divine flesh” of the Aztecs, are psilocybine-containing mushrooms which are still employed by shamans in healing rituals today. These “Little Flowers of the Gods” are referred to as “flowers that intoxicate” in Nahuatl poetry and chants. At least twenty-four species of fungi are employed in southern Mexico today demonstrating that shamans use a wide range of different mushrooms depending on the season, **weather** variations, the specific purpose of the healing, the shaman’s relationship with the spirits of the mushrooms, and the shaman’s personal preference.

Use of *Ololiuqui* can be traced back to the sacred ceremonies of the Aztecs. The seeds of *Ololiuqui* (*Turbina corymbosa*, or *Rivea corymbosa*) were used in Aztec rituals as a hallucinogen and in healing as an analgesia.

Tlililtzin, prepared from the seeds of the Morning Glory, *Ipomoea violacea*, was highly valued by the Aztec people for its hallucinogenic properties. The Aztecs prepared *Tlililtzin* for use in **divination** and other shamanic rituals. *Tlililtzin* was used in the same way as *Ololiuqui*.

Toloatzin, made from *Datura*, the “Holy Flower of the North Star,” was a sacred entheogen and valued medicinal Aztec plant. It is also known as **Toloache**. The most extensive use of *Datura* occurs in Mexico and the Southwestern United States where the most common species used is *Datura innoxia*.

The Aztecs also used a very potent aquatic species of *Datura*, *Datura ceratocaula*, that grows in the marshes and shallow waters of Mexico. This species is an extremely strong narcotic. This sacred medicine was treated with great reverence by the Aztecs before being used. The Aztecs call this *Datura* “Sister of *Ololiuqui*.”

Sinicuichi, one of the plants depicted in the glyphs that adorn the Prince of Flowers, is *Heimia salicifolia*, a probable plant hallucinogen used by the ancient Aztecs. *Sinicuichi* is a tall shrub with slender leaves and single yellow flowers along the stem that grows abundantly in moist places and along streams in the highlands of the Americas and West Indies. In preparation the leaves are harvested and slightly wilted, crushed in water, and the whole mixture is allowed to ferment before drinking.

The ancient Aztec narcotic *Pipiltzintzintli* is suggested to have been *Salvia divinorum*. The perennial herb with ovate leaves and bluish flowers is still used by the **Mazatec** people who call it *Hierba de la Pastora* (“herb of the Shepherdess”) or *Hierba de la Virgen* (“herb of the Virgin”). The Mazatec cultivate *Hierba de la Pastora* in plots in forests away from roads and homes. This plant is used as an aid in divination in rituals. The leaves are chewed fresh or crushed and diluted in water to be drunk.

Tzompanquahuitl, a hallucinogen and medicine of the ancient Aztecs, may have been made from the bright, red-orange seeds of the *Erythrina coralliodes*, a small tree that grows in the hot, dry regions of Mexico and the American Southwest.

Solandra brevicalyx and *Solandra guerrensis* are reported to be either *Tecomaxochitl* or *Hueipatl* of the ancient Aztecs. In Mexico, a hallucinogenic tea is made from the branches. *Solandra*, an erect shrub with thick leaves and yellow to cream colored, funnel-shaped flowers, is closely related to *Datura*. The plant contains tropane

alkaloid with active principles:
Hyoscyamine, scopolamine, nortropine,
tropine, cuscohygrine, and other bases.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

B

Bad Medicine

Bad medicine is one of three major classes of **Ojibwa** medicine, along with curing **medicine** and protective medicine. It is any execution of a medicine practice with the intent to manipulate another into doing something that they would not ordinarily do. Bad medicines include: love medicine, **hunting medicine**, gambling medicine, and other medicine practices executed for the exclusive benefit of the practitioner.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Badoh Negro

Badoh Negro is the Zapotec name for the **plant hallucinogen** made from the seeds of **Morning Glory**, *Ipomoea violacea*, for use in **divination** and shamanic **rituals**.

Baiami

Baiami is the creator **spirit** of the first man for the **Wurunjerri** of **Australia**. *Baiami* is the source of all magical and shamanic **power** of Wurunjerri shamans. *Baiami* is the initiating spirit invoked in the body of the master shaman to execute the final three stages of Wurunjerri shamanic **initiations**.

In the **Dreamtime** history, before *Baiami* left humanity, it summoned all the doctors and called upon them to continue practicing their magic and to avoid wasting their power through conflict with each other. See also *karadji*.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Bala

Bala is a hereditary **totem spirit** that is handed down from grandfather to father to son to grandson during the boy's **initiation** into adulthood. The *bala* is "sung" into the body of the initiate during the rite. He must then learn the **chants**, **rituals**, and concentration to call the spirit forth in the future. During the rite of transmission from **teacher** to student the *bala* duplicates itself without dividing or losing power. See also **helping spirits** and **Wurunjerri**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Balian

Female **shaman** of the **Ngaju Dyak** of Borneo. The *basir* is her **gender-variant male** counterpart. Both the *balian* and the *basir* embody the *sangiang* deities while in **trance**. Masters of trance, these shamans utilize **embodiment** trance states to allow the *sangiang* to speak through them directly and **journeying** trance states to travel to the **Upperworld** to visit the "village of the gods."

The *balian* is "chosen" spontaneously by the *sangiang* and acquires her shamanic powers through this spiritual event. Traditionally, only those who are called and who forge a sacred relationship with the divine can serve as shamans among the Ngaju.

Training

The novice is taught shamanic techniques by elder shamans, who were primarily women. The *balian* is taught to enter the necessary trance state by allowing the *sangiang*, the possessing spirit, to enter her body through the stomach.

The novice is also taught traditional **chants, songs,** and dances. Together the *balian* and *basir* officiate at **sacred** events, like the New Year's ceremonies.

Trance

The *balian* and *basir* work in an embodiment trance state that is considered feminine or receptive. The *sangiang*, whether a male or female deity, is considered masculine or the dynamic, entering force. The nature of this relationship—the shaman as the vessel for the energy of the *sangiang*—is illuminated in the Ngaju terms for trance. The shaman's **altered state of consciousness** is called *bandong*, meaning boat, and *mangumpang*, both **words** with additional meanings which connote male/female sexual intercourse.

The Ngaju worship *Mahatala-Jata*, an androgynous deity. *Mahatala* is the male aspect, a hornbill who lives on a mountaintop and rules the Upperworld. *Jata* is the female aspect, a watersnake who lives in the sea and rules the **Lowerworld**. The two aspects are joined by a jeweled bridge, the rainbow, and so joined become *Mahatala-Jata*, the total Ngaju godhead.

The *balian* and *basir* were seen as the embodiment of this androgynous deity when they served the temple as hierodules (one who functions as a sacred sex partner for those who worship at the temple). During this sacred sexual activity *balian* and *basir* were referred to as *tambon haruei bungai*, “watersnakes which are at the same time hornbills.” Through sexual union with the *balian* or *basir*, a Ngaju man was brought into the presence of *Mahatala-Jata*, his god.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Banisteriopsis

Banisteriopsis caapi is a giant forest *liana*, or large woody vine, that grows

throughout the Amazon and **Andes** of **South America**, the tropical zones of **North America**, and the West Indies. *Banisteriopsis* is the central ingredient in *ayahuasca*, a plant **entheogen** used widely by **shamans** throughout South America, and is held to be a sacred plant for its psychotropic properties.

Banjhakri

Banjhakri is the **forest shaman** (*ban*—primitive, *jhakri*—shaman) who, with his lover/wife *Banjhakrini*, is the initiator of **Tamang** shamans. He kidnaps children believed to be pure of heart and takes them to his *gufa* (**cave**) where he trains them in shamanic skills. If the child proves to be pure of heart, gifted with shamanic skills, and clever enough not to be killed by *Banjhakrini*, the child is initiated.

Initiation occurs in the *gufa*, traditionally a place of transformation, like a **womb** or tomb. *Banjhakri*'s cave is full of **power objects**. He teaches the use of a magic net, golden **drum**, the **mastery of fire**, and how to use the powers of different animal helpers.

Banjhakri can be seen in both worlds, a 4-ft-tall, monkey-like man who is a descendant of the **sun** and thus a deity. He is often golden and seen with a cone-head, a sign of Buddha. He is known to be a **trickster** and a lusty, sexual being. He is also a stern judge of compassion and the purity of one's heart. *Banjhakri* works as a team with *Banjhakrini* to initiate **shamans**. They are considered by some to be the two sides of one great being. See also **Nepal**.

Peters, L. G. Personal communication, 1998.

Banjhakrini

Banjhakrini is the Queen of the Sorcerers. She is the fierce initiator of **Tamang** shamans with her husband/lover, *Banjhakri*, the **forest shaman**. She is the dismemberer, known as a man-eater and hunter. She

is dangerous, but without her there is no **initiation** of the shaman. She wields a golden blade which connects her to the beginning of **time**.

Banjhakrini can be seen in both worlds as a large, dark, bear-like being with long hair. Her cone-head associates her with Buddha and, like her husband, she is a deity. *Banjhakrini* works as a team with *Banjhakri* to initiate shamans. They are considered by some to be the two sides of one great being. See also **dismemberment**.

Peters, L. G. Personal communication, 1998.

Barasana

The Barasana are one of many indigenous shamanic peoples living in the western regions of the Colombian **Amazonia**. The Barasana **shamans** use a particular narcotic snuff obtained from thunder. A resin that suddenly appears on the leaves of *Pagamea macrophylla* (a small caatinga tree of the coffee family) is believed to be a gift from thunder. When the resin appears the leaves are picked, dried, and pulverized to be used as snuff in **divination ceremonies**.

Songs and Dances

Common to people of Amazonia is the drinking of the plant **entheogen ayahuasca**. The Barasana practice a particularly intricate line **dance** during their *ayahuasca* **rituals**. The dancers accompany themselves with gourd **rattles** in the right hand and the shoulder of the dancer in front in the left. They move in unison, dancing in complex foot patterns and **rhythms**.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Basir

A **gender-variant male transformed shaman** of the Ngaju Dyak people of

Borneo who practiced until the early 20th century. For the Ngaju, **balian** (shamans) are female and called to their profession by the *sangiang* (deities). The *sangiang* also call men, who must serve or suffer **illness** or death at the “hand” of the *sangiang*. To serve the *basir* must become a woman in dress and social behavior and a *balian* in **training**.

The culture’s relationship with the *basir* is complicated, involving fear and respect and ridicule. Ridicule often arose as a way others tried to alleviate their discomfort around the *basir*’s spiritual power and gender variance. *Basir* means “unable to procreate, impotent”; however, it is unclear whether or not the *basir* was a true hermaphrodite, or simply functioned as a transformed shaman, whose primary social role was not to father children.

Training

The novice is taught shamanic techniques by elder shamans, who were primarily women. The *balian* is taught to enter the necessary trance state, by allowing the *sangiang*, the possessing spirit, to enter their body through her stomach.

The novice is also taught traditional **chants**, songs, and dances. Together the *balian* and *basir* officiated at **sacred** events, like the New Year’s ceremonies.

Trance

The *balian* and *basir* work in an **embodiment** trance state that is considered feminine or receptive. The *sangiang*, whether a male or female deity, is considered masculine or the dynamic, entering force. The nature of this relationship—the shaman as the vessel for the **energy** of the *sangiang*—is illuminated in the Ngaju terms for trance. The shaman’s **altered state of consciousness** is called *bandong*, meaning boat, and *mangumpang*. Both **words** have additional meanings which connote male/female sexual intercourse.

The Ngaju worship *Mahatala-Jata*, an androgynous deity. *Mahatala* is the male

aspect, a hornbill who lives on a mountaintop and rules the **Upperworld**. Jata is the female aspect, a watersnake who lives in the sea and rules the **Lowerworld**. The two aspects are joined by a jeweled bridge, the rainbow, and so joined become *Mahatala-Jata*, the total Ngaju godhead.

The *balian* and *basir* were seen as the embodiment of this androgynous deity when they served the temple as hierodules (one who functions as a sacred sex partner for those who worship at the temple). During this sacred sexual activity *balian* and *basir* were referred to as *tambon haruei bungai*, “watersnakes which are at the same time hornbills.” Through sexual union with the *balian* or *basir*, a Ngaju man was brought into the presence of *Mahatala-Jata*, his god.

The Transformed Shaman

To complete his transformation, the *basir* must function sexually as the receptive partner with other men. Primarily the *basir's* sexual activity was in service to the temple. However, it was common and sanctioned by the community for the *basir* to enter into long-term, marriage-like relationships with non-gender variant, masculine men.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Bear Ceremonialism

An anthropological term for shamanic **rituals** and **ceremonies** focused on the bear that are widely practiced across North Asia and **North America**. The persistent presence of this ritualized relationship shows the longstanding role of the bear and Bear spirit in the lives of humans. The Cult of the Bear flourished in northern Eurasia from 40–35,000 to 15–10,000 B.C.E.

The Ainu of **Siberia**, for example, consider the bear is lord of the forest, who influences the abundance of forest

game. When a bear is killed in self-defense or the bear is sacrificed in an elaborate ritual, the bear's spirit is appeased by inviting it to a feast, where it is honored and offered food and vodka.

Among the **Eskimo** the bear is a reoccurring figure in the **initiation** of new shamans. Eskimo shamans revered bears as the strongest protector of the **helping spirits**. The bear is a source of shamanic power and a highly valued helping spirit among the Eskimo, **Saami**, and many Siberian and **North American** peoples.

The skin of the bear is often worn as the shaman's **costume**. These shamans **dance** to call on the spirit of the bear and, as they enter **trance** and merge with the Bear spirit, they become bears in the performance of their rituals. The bear is one of the three most prominent animals represented in the costumes of shamans around the world. **Birds** are the most common; the deer/reindeer being the third.

The bear is one of the **earth's** most powerful **healing** spirits. The bear is not called on for **displays of power**, so much as for the real healing work of the shaman. When a shaman who works with bear spirit as one of his or her helping spirits is presented with a particularly serious or complex healing problem, he or she calls on the bear for assistance. In many cultures it is the “bear shaman” who is called on for healing when other shamans have failed.

In North America the **Lakota** considered the bear a curing animal. The most powerful Lakota shamans acquired their powers of curing from the bear spirit. Even the Lakota who have worked with the bear spirit for centuries are consistently astonished by the **power** of the bear shaman and his or her ability to bring the gravely ill back from near death.

The Lakota associate their medicinal herbs with the bear. The Bear Dreamers Society explain that the bear is the only animal dreamed of that offered herbs as

remedies for healing. Any Lakota who dreamed of bear gained the powers of healing with medicinal plants.

Most of the tribes in North America associated bears with curing. The Cherokee performed a bear dance highlighting the winter **ceremony** to protect against the epidemic **diseases** brought by Europeans. The Cheyenne and other Great Plains tribes believed that bears not only healed humans, but that they could heal themselves and other bears with herbs. The Miami Indians hung bearskins smeared with green dye in their homes to prevent sickness from entering.

Among the Zuñi, the word for doctor is the same as the word for bear. The bear spirit was considered a Priest of Long Life who gave **plant medicines** and the power to heal. When the doctor performed healing he wore a necklace of bear claws and bear paw mittens pulled over his hands. "Bear medicine" or "bear root" is one of the strongest **medicines** used by Pueblo healers. The medicine induces a trance-like state when ingested. It was given to the patient and ingested by the doctor to aid in diagnosing the cause of illness.

Anthropologists hypothesize that this consistency of the bear as the healer is because bears are very like humans. They are omnivorous, stand upright, and their bones resemble those of humans. Their characteristic behavior of hibernating and of giving birth while in hibernation makes them potent **teachers** of rebirth and the regenerative powers of turning within.

However, the bear shamans explain that when they ask for help in healing, the bear spirit showed up then and continues to show up today. For the northern hemisphere it is the pattern of **energy** of Bear that resonates most powerfully with healing.

Barnett, H. G. *Culture Element Distributions, No. IXV: Gulf of Georgia Salish*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1939.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Belladonna

Atropa belladonna, of the nightshade family, is one of Eurasia's most potent psychoactive plants. The round, soft, blue-black berries, commonly referred to as "love apples," contain psychoactive constituents. *Belladonna* is also known as Sorcerer's Cherry, Witch's Berry, Devil's Herb, Murderer's Berry, and Dwaleberry (the English *dwale* derives from a Scandinavian root meaning "trance").

Belladonna means "beautiful lady" in Italian and refers to the practice among fine Italian ladies of putting drops of *Belladonna* sap into their eyes to dilate their pupils. The resulting deep, dark eyes and dreamy, intoxicated stare were considered the height of beauty and fashion. See also **Deadly Nightshade** and **hexing herbs**.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Berdache (Berdach)

Berdache is a term used by anthropologists to refer to an androgynous, morphological male who fills non-masculine social roles. *Berdaches* served as dreamers, sages, healers, and artisans. They have special ceremonial roles in many **religions** and important economic roles in their families. The *berdache* is trained to fulfill female **gender** work responsibilities. He adopts much of the behavior, **language**, and social roles of women and mixes both men's and women's clothing with garments denoting his sacred status.

The *berdache* has a clearly recognized social role and an accepted social status, often based on **sacred berdache** characters in the tribal mythology.

Berdaches gain prestige by their spiritual, intellectual, and artistic contributions to their societies and by their reputation for hard work, excellent craft work, and generosity.

Berdaches are known for their talents in **divination** and **dreaming**. The *berdache's* role is usually distinct and complementary to that of the **shaman**. In some cultures, and with some unique individuals, the *berdache* was also a shamanic healer. In these instances the individual's skills have expanded beyond the boundaries of the *berdache* and he is considered a **transformed shaman**.

Ordinarily the *berdache* and the shaman fill complementary yet unique roles in **ritual** and **ceremony**. The *berdache* embodies a unique perspective which the shaman utilizes in ceremony and as counsel in problems affecting the community.

History

The first Europeans to the New World were surprised to see men dressed as women, and referred to them as "*berdache*." The foreigners assumed that these people displaying mixed gender were hermaphrodites (having both male and female genitalia). However, they proved to be anatomically normal males. Thus the use of hermaphrodite as a synonym for *berdache* is incorrect.

Berdache is used in this volume to indicate this alternative gender role in general, because no other accurate English word exists and to avoid using a term belonging to a particular culture.

The majority of Native American cultures accept the existence of more than two genders. Some individuals who are physically men have male **spirits** and some have female spirits. The same is true for women. The *berdache* is a man accepted spiritually as "Not Man." The spiritual orientation of the *berdache* ranges from a quality of spirit between that of men and women to a quality of spirit distinct from either. The *berdache* is considered a third gender.

The social position of the *berdache* is different from that of women, though he does women's work. There is a distinction between feminine and non-masculine. The *berdache* is a non-masculine male—not a woman, or a superior woman, not even a socially defined woman. The character of a *berdache* is seen as distinct from either sex. The alternative gender role is a mixture of diverse **elements**.

Each individual's relationship with spirit overrides other expected relationships. The *berdache* is expressing a spirit that is unique and androgynous. It is also the expression of a desire to be creative and a gift of powerful dreaming. Religious, occupational, sexual, and gender roles are all equally important in defining the *berdache*.

The traditional activities of the *berdache* are similar culture to culture though the specific activities do vary, e.g., weaving versus making pottery. All these activities are derived from abilities given the *berdache* by spirit. The *berdache* is what his dreams make him and he is given certain **powers** by the nature of his "go-between" spirit.

Activities of the Berdache

The *berdache* is believed to have sacred powers arising from his sexually androgynous being which increase his skills in dreaming, prophecy, and negotiation. The *berdache's* activities include **blissing** ceremonies, providing lucky names, offering spiritual protection, and divination. The *berdache* performs specific roles in rituals and ceremonies. For example, it is traditional for the *berdache* to bless the central tree in the **Sun dance** ceremony of the Plains Indians.

Mediation

The *berdache* was a respected mediator, valued for his unique perspectives on issues, particularly those arising between women and men. The *berdache* was believed to be able to see situations more clearly than those viewing it from the perspective of a single

gender. This unique perspective begins in childhood. The *berdache* child sees the basic concepts of life differently from others, and sees how things could be more and better than they are.

Divination and Dreaming

The *berdache* is also a mediator between the physical and the spiritual realms. His relationship with **helping spirits** is a defining characteristic of the role and an aspect of all his activities. The *berdache's* strong gifts in divination and prophetic dreaming were exercised for the community as a whole. When gifted in this way, a *berdache* was trained in spiritual matters and played a prominent role in rituals and ceremonies.

Teachers and Parents

The *berdache* often adopted orphaned children and children from overcrowded families. *Berdaches*, given their higher than average intelligence and aptitude for balance, were often responsible for educating the children. The *berdache* taught the tribal history through the narration of legends and moral tales, passing on the culture's morals and values to prepare the children to be the future of the people.

Caretakers, Healers, and the Dead

Unlike the female shamans, the *berdache's* maleness suited the tradition of all male hunting expeditions and war parties. The *berdache* traveled with the men, serving as healer and caretaker and bringing the party luck in their hunt or raid. The *berdache* had the physical strength to carry the wounded to safety and at least some healing ability. In many cultures the *berdache* was the person responsible for preparing the dead for burial and conducting the funeral ceremony.

The rare *berdache* did at times fight in the war parties. However, he put on men's clothes to do so, distinguishing this activity as distinct from his role as *berdache*.

Though rare, there are a few North American tribes in which *berdache*

status from the beginning did not involve participation in ritual and ceremony. The *berdache* role did vary in specifics and was not restricted to cultures where the *berdache* took part in the spiritual leadership.

Calling to Become Berdache

A boy's inclination toward female activities and communicating with the spirit world was noticed in early childhood. The role of the *berdache* could not be forced on him by others nor could he grasp at it for status. It was believed that a true *berdache* would act out his basic character and the true nature of his spirit given the opportunity. Most cultures presented the boy with a ritual in early adolescence. The boy then chose the role through his own actions in this ritual context. Based on the outcome of the ritual the boy was (or was not) recognized as *berdache* and his **training** would begin.

Some individuals reported feeling reluctant to take on the role of the *berdache*. Reluctance is often a sign of the authenticity of **the call**. It is common for people to initially feel reluctance when accepting the responsibilities and burdens of any kind of **sacred** person. No matter how clear the call to a spiritual duty, the person being called knows the path will not be easy.

The spirit world is the determining factor in assuming the *berdache* role and in leaving it. Like the shaman, if a boy was called by spirit to become a *berdache* he had to assume the role. If not, mishap or **illness** would befall him, his family, or his tribe. Families felt it was a great honor to have a *berdache* for a child just as it was to have a shaman in the family. Both were sacred people.

A range of attitudes towards the *berdache* is found in **aboriginal** cultures around the world. Overall the *berdache* is an accepted and respected role; however, there were exceptions. For example, a few North American Indian cultures, the **Iroquois**, Apache, Pimas, and Comanches, did not respect the *berdache*. The mythologies of these

cultures presents the *berdache* in an unfavorable light.

The role of the *berdache* can be treated as a loose, global pattern that does not always apply to peoples even in nearby areas. This pattern is found in four areas of **North America**: the Prairie and western Great Lakes, northern and central Great Plains, and lower Mississippi Valley; Florida and the Caribbean; the Southwest, Great Basin, and California; and the Northwest, western Canada, and Alaska. The pattern is also found throughout Asia, the islands of the Pacific, and to some extent **Africa**. Similar roles have also been described in regions of Central and **South America**.

Sexuality of the Berdache

The sexuality of the *berdache* is non-masculine. The *berdache* may be asexual or he may be the receptive sexual partner in sacred sex with masculine men. He may also be the receptive partner in normal sexual relations with traditionally masculine men, though not with another *berdache*.

In some cultures the *berdache* marries, taking a husband in a long-term committed relationship. In other cultures where the *berdache* can prosper alone, he might live alone and accept visits from different men. Men visiting the *berdache* are not required to make a choice between being heterosexual or being homosexual. With the role of the *berdache* institutionalized, he serves the sexual needs of many men without competing against the institution of heterosexual marriage.

There is great variation in the sexual aspects of the *berdache* role between tribes and between individual *berdache*. Indigenous cultures make a distinction between physical hermaphrodites and the *berdache* who is hermaphroditic in spirit alone. The *berdache* is sexually androgynous, not homosexual. None of the contemporary generalizations, like transsexual, homosexual, and transvestite, used to describe the *berdache* are accurate. The *berdache* is “halfmen-

halfwomen”; their spiritual essence defines them as a third gender while they are anatomically male.

The *berdache's* sexuality is accepted in the same way as his androgyny; both are seen as reflections of his spirit. The *berdache's* unique sexual behavior is a characteristic of *berdache* status, as is his special ceremonial role. However, the sexual behavior alone does not distinguish the *berdache* without the personal and spiritual characteristics. Personal character, gender role, ceremonial role, relationship with spirit, and sexual behavior together distinguish the *berdache*.

Female gender variation was recognized in a number of cultures. A woman's assumption of the masculine, hunter-warrior, gender role did not involve the ritual and **initiation** necessary to recognize a *berdache*. Female gender variation had a separate and distinct status of its own. In native languages, the words for *berdache* and for gender variant females were different, unrelated words. A generic term comparable to *berdache* could be the term *amazon*.

The following is a list of cultures that respected and incorporated the role of the *berdache* into the fabric of their societies. Listing these names does not imply that they are exactly the same roles. In some cultures the role is that of a transformed shaman, in others it is the *berdache*, while in others it is the role of the sacred *heirodule*. The distinction is not always clear because the information was suppressed due to its sexual variance, misunderstood, or traditionally not shared with people of other genders. For some of these **cultures** the traditional name has been lost while the role lives on in the oral traditions:

Acoma: *mujerado*

Aleuts: **shopan** or **achnucek**

Arapoho: *haxu'xan* or *a-whok*

Araucanians (Chile)

Assiniboine

Cheyenne (northern): **he man eh**

Chippewa (**Ojibwa**): *a-go-kwa*

Chukchee: *yirka-la lu*
 Chumash: *joya*
 Cora
 Cree: *ayekkwew*, meaning “neither man nor woman”
 Creeks
 Crow: *badé*, meaning “not man, not woman”
 Flatheads
 Gabrielino
 Gros Verde
 Guajiro (Venezuela)
Hawaii (Polynesia): *mahu*
 Hidatsa: *miati*
 Hopi
Huichol
 Hupa
 Illinois
 India: *hijra*
 Klamath
 Kodiak Island Eskimo: *shopan* or *achnucek*
 Kutenai: *stammiya*, meaning “acts like a woman”
 Kwakiutl
 Lache (Colombia, SA): *cusmos*
 Laguna Pueblo: *mujerado*
Lakota: *winkte*
 Kansa
 Luiseño
 Maidu: *osa’pu*
 Mandan: *mihdacke*
Mapuche (Chile)
 Maricopa
Maya
 MicMac: *geenumu gesallagee*, meaning “he loves men”
 Mohave: *alyha*
 Navajo (Athabaskan): *nadle*, meaning “one who is transformed”
 Nez Percés
 Omaha: *mexoga* or *min-gu-ga*
 Oman: *xanith*
 Papago
 Pima: *wi-kovat*
 Pomo: **Daoism**
 Potawatomi: *nowkansas*
 Puerto Viejo (Peru)
 Quinault: *keknatsa’nxwix*, meaning “part woman male”
 Samoa: *fafafini*
 Santee: *winkta*

Sauk & Fox: *i-coo-coo-a*
 Seminoles
 Shoshoni: *ma ai’pots*
 Tewa Pueblo: *kwih-doh* or **quetho**
 Timucua
 Tolowa
 Winnebago: *siange*
 Yokuts: **tongochim** or *tunosim*
 Yuki: **i-wa-musp**
 Yuma: *elxá* or *marica*
 Yupik (S Eskimo)
 Yurok: *wergern*
 Zapotec: *ira’muxe*
 Zoque
 Zuñi: **Ihamana**

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.
 Russell, P. *The Gay 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Gay Men and Lesbians, Past and Present*. New York: Citadel Press, 2002.
 Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Bes

A dwarfish, lion-headed Egyptian god, who is the ancient **shaman** protector of women in the critical moments of conception and birth. He is most often seen dressed in leopard skins, dancing and playing a **frame drum**. His dancing and drumming ward off malevolent influences during these vulnerable moments.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Big Bang

The “big bang” is a scientific theory explaining the origin of the universe in cosmological terms. The theory holds that billions of years ago there was absolutely nothing in a vast **emptiness**. Then a violent eruption of a point source exploded, beginning the manifestation

of our universe. This scientific theory is relevant in that it explains in scientific terms the creation stories of shamanic peoples around the globe. See also **evolution** and **Kosmos**.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

Birds

Birds have both a symbolic and a literal relationship to **shamans**. In visual and oral records of the exploits of shamans, the presence of a bird is symbolic of the ecstatic **trance** state, during which the shaman's soul leaves the body and flies through the **spirit** realm with the ease of a bird in flight.

In a more literal sense, bird spirits work as **helping spirits** with shamans. In **Siberia**, **Africa**, Indonesia, **North America**, and **South America**, for example, bird spirits participate with the shamans in their activities in the invisible world. The bird may be a guardian spirit, a guide, or the form into which the shaman transforms to enter the altered state. Bird-like **dance** movements and **sounds** are used by shamans to call on the bird spirits to aid them in entering **altered states of consciousness**.

The bird figures prominently in **shamanism** throughout the world. For example, the primary relationship with parrots and the raptors in Amazonian shamanism can be seen in the exquisite feather headdresses worn by shamans. These birds are ancestral figures who populate the mythological stories of South American peoples from the beginning of time.

Parrots are essential helping spirits for the shaman, connecting the shaman through association with the limitless power of the **sun**. Parrot **feathers** are used to make some of the most powerful shamanic tools. The macaw itself is seen as a shaman who takes the hallucinogenic *viho* snuff and transforms into a jaguar, like the human shaman.

The raptors—vultures, buzzards, hawks, falcons, and eagles—were assistants, companions, guardians, and helping spirits of the Ancestral shamans. Today the vulture transforms into human form by removing its feather cloak, allowing the shaman to don that same cloak and transform into a vulture to enter the spirit world. As a vulture the shaman gains the gifts of vulture's exacting sight and ability to fly in the spirit world.

The vulture, like the macaw and *viho*, is a shaman associated with the **plant hallucinogen**, *ayahuasca*, the visionary vine. The vulture's gift is its extraordinary sight and ability to move between the worlds. The vulture, like the eagle of North America, can soar so high that it disappears from view, seeming to enter the **Upperworld**, and then drops back down to **earth** with lightning speed and pinpoint accuracy. The shaman gains these powers in the invisible world through association with the vulture spirit.

The harpy eagle, the largest eagle in South America, is another primary helping spirit in the Upperworld just as the jaguar is in the **Lowerworld**. The harpy eagle and its feathers figure prominently in the novice shaman's initiatory journeys and in the initiated shaman's dress.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Black and White Shamans

In some **cultures**—Siberian, **Saami**, and Indonesian for example—**shamanism** is found in black and white forms. Black **shamans** employ full **possession**, or ecstatic **trance** states; work with **helping spirits**, particularly animals; perform **healing** rituals; and involve the spirits of the **Lowerworld**. This traditional shamanic form is involved in treating **illness** and **disease** and exorcising the lower spirits associated with

these maladies. Black shamanism is shamanism, as defined in this volume.

White shamanism developed later in some pastoral cultures. Called **priests** in other parts of the world, white shamans engage the spirits of the **Upperworld** exclusively, through **prayer, blessings** and ceremony. White shamans do not use trance states, rituals, or work with animal, plant, or elemental helping spirits for healing.

In cultures with black and white shamans, they are usually different people. The black shamans can make blood **sacrifices** when necessary and the white shamans only make sacrifices that do not involve blood. In most cultures the features of black and white shamans are combined in one person, as with the **Tamang** of **Nepal**. These shamans work with whatever spirit and in whatever way is necessary to accomplish the desired outcome.

Eliade, Mircea, ed. *Ancient Religions*. New York: Citadel Press, 1950.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Co., 1995.

Blacksmith

In many **cultures**, the blacksmith is responsible for the magical transformation of the body and soul of the **apprentice** into the **shaman** through **initiation**. In some cultures the blacksmith is the only person considered more powerful than the shaman because his soul is protected by **fire**. The blacksmith's awesome **power** is that of transformation through the **mastery of fire**, making him both **teacher** and initiator.

Blacksmiths embody the skills to transform the **elements** of the universe. They take the basic element of the **earth** and transform it, working the **metal** into tools, weapons, and jewelry. Stories tell of shamans who encountered blacksmiths in their journeys. Those who survived their initiation at the hand of the

blacksmith received unbreakable **swords**, knives, jewelry, or other shamanic **paraphernalia** with magical properties. For example, the dress of Siberian shamans is covered with essential metal ornaments that connect the shaman to the blacksmith and the mastery of fire. See also Siberia.

Allen-Coombe, J. "Weaving the Way of Wyrd: An Interview with Brian Bates." *Shaman's Drum* 27 (Spring 1992): p. 200.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Co., 1995.

Blessing

A blessing is the simplest form of **power retrieval**, which is a type of **shamanic healing**. A **shaman** uses a "blessing" to replace health, balance, unity, and the **energy** of good will towards one's own life or *suerté* (luck) to a patient. A typical **Celtic** blessing, used to restore energy, places the **power** of something in Nature onto the person. For example, "May the power of the Winds be on you."

The energy returned in a blessing can be conveyed to the patient in a variety of ways including the touch of **feathers**, smoke, a **song, dance**, or **camaying** with liquor or flower essences in **water**. Blessings are often conveyed to participants in **healing** rituals, like **sweat lodge** ceremonies or meetings of the **Native American Church** during which **peyote** cactus is given as a sacrament. There are as many ways to convey a blessing as there are cultures.

Cowan, T. Personal communication, April 1997.

Perkins, J. *The World Is As You Dream It*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1994.

Blood

Most shamanic **cultures** recognize the extraordinary **powers** associated with blood and menstruation. The Yurok of

California, for example, believe that a woman is at the height of her powers when she is menstruating. This time is used for **healing** and **divination** for the benefit of the community, not wasted in mundane tasks and social distractions.

Menstrual blood was believed to contain the essential energies of the feminine and the creative energies of the unfertilized egg. Both energies are life-giving, cyclical forces of Nature which can be utilized as potent healing energies. The association between blood and the feminine can be observed in ancient **languages**, like Sumerian, in which *Adam* signifies blood and *adamu* the “principle of female matter” or “matter of life.”

Red ochre is believed to be the remnants of the menstrual blood of the goddesses who inhabited the **earth** at its beginnings. It is a **sacred** substance, particularly in **Africa** and **Australia**. Red ochre is rubbed on bodies, **costumes**, **power objects**, and instruments for sacred rituals to connect these things to the power of those first Ancestral goddesses. Menstruation opens a crack between the worlds within the body of the bleeding woman. This opening is like the crack between the worlds that is opened whenever a **shaman** conducts a **ritual** or enters **trance**. The particular energetics of menstruation create a heightened connection to the other worlds for women from two days before bleeding begins until she is flowing. For female shamans this bleeding time increases her power in the **altered state of consciousness** making her particularly agile and clear.

Høst, A. *Learning to Ride the Waves*. København: Scandinavian Center for Shamanic Studies, 1991.

Bodily Fluids

The **shamans** of many cultures used different bodily fluids, including bone marrow, saliva, sweat, cerebrospinal fluid, the synovial fluid of the knee, semen, and menstrual blood in **healing** and **sacrifices**. These fluids, whether

from animals or humans, were believed to contain different essential energies from their source. These essential energies were embodied by consuming the fluids or accessed by using the fluids in healing rituals or sacrifices.

For example, saliva is used to store and transmit energies, like the *tsestak*, the invisible darts used by **South American** shamans to heal and sorcerers to harm. Australian **Aboriginal** healers applied menstrual blood directly as a healing salve and remedy. Semen was used by **Eskimo** sorcerers to give life to a *tupitkaq*, a supernatural being created from dead animal parts and sent out on missions to do harm to others.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Bön

Bön is the ancient **shamanism** of Tibet, believed to be both animistic and magical. It preceded the arrival of Padma Sambhava (C.E. 749) in Tibet and the spread of Buddhism. There are many Tibetan legends that tell of the confrontation, suppression, and subjugation of the early Bön practices by **Lamaism** (Tibetan Buddhism). However, the Bön system survived, was still prevalent in 1920, and continues to be practiced alongside Buddhism today.

The essential wisdom of Bön shamanism is that by establishing and maintaining good relationships with the **spirits**, through respectful communication and appropriate **offerings** of gratitude, the human imbalances that result in **disease** and misfortune can be harmonized and brought into balance. Bön **shamans** utilized ecstatic **trance** states induced with drumming and **chanting mantras**. They are believed to have used both **journey** trances and

embodiment trances to communicate with the spirit world. In their original form the ecstatic rituals of the Bön shamans involved hundreds of people.

Bön-Po is an ancient practice. The first stage of Bön shamans was known as “the black sect.” The second stage ended during the reign of a mythical king, Gri-gum Tzan-po, and the third stage began (C.E. 620–649) during the reign of the first Buddhist king of Tibet, Srong Tsen Gampo. White Bön evolved out of the third stage. The ancient Bön shamans of the black sect were able to display marvelous acts of **power** while in trance. They are said to have licked hot **metal** and other acts of **mastery of fire**, pierced their bodies with weapons without harm, flown physically through the air, and cut iron with feathers.

Black and white Bön are entirely different spiritual practices. The white Bön **religion** is close to Buddhism. It has assimilated almost all Buddhist literature, and although the names of the deities and scriptures are different, their functions and ideologies correspond to Lamaism. In contrast, black Bön is a spiritual practice that is animistic, shamanic, and passed on through the oral tradition. **Tamang** shamanism is believed to be very close to the ancient black Bön shamanism.

The First Shamans

There was a **time**, Bön mythology explains, when a “rope” connected earth and heaven. Through this rope of white light or rainbow light the realms were interconnected and the humans enjoyed immortality. On earth this rope of rainbow light connected to the heads or helmets of the first kings. Then this attachment was unintentionally severed, humans became mortal, and illness and demons entered the world.

This is the reason the shamans wear a crown of peacock feathers, symbolic of the rainbow that extends from the heads of initiated shamans. The rainbow **colors** of the feathers recreate the Rainbow Bridge during the shaman’s ritual, allowing the shaman to ascend to the heavens

again. At death each human soul follows the Rainbow Bridge and ascends, returning to the source of all life.

Initiation

Candidates are chosen spontaneously by spirits. The soul of the candidate is taken into the spirit world to be tested, and if it should prevail, initiated. There is one story of a boy who was abducted by spirits and roamed with them for thirteen years in the wilderness. During that time the boy learned to speak with the spirits of the animals and to utilize their powers to perform shamanically.

Bön shamanism involves a complex system of spirits. There are powerful deities and **animal spirits**, who are called on by the shaman for help, and other types of spirits, like the *üör* (harmful **spirits** of humans who die violent unnatural deaths), who cause illness and death among humans. The **helping spirits** can enter the body of the shaman to perform tasks in **ordinary reality** and they can be dispatched to perform tasks for the shaman in **non-ordinary reality**. The spirits are typically summoned by **singing** the **prayer** or mantra that invokes the desired spirit or deity.

Bön shamans perform rituals for **divination**, **healing**, psychopompic work, and **weather** making, and some black Bön shamans could be employed for acts of **sorcery**. They also create a variety of **amulets** and **charms** for protection from harmful forces. The simplest amulets are a protective prayer or **spell** and symbol written on a piece of paper that is tied in colorful string. Other amulets include herbs, beads, small clay or dough figures, and the like that are blessed by a **priest** or shaman. **Thread crosses** are also created for protection.

Weather Making

The role of the weather maker in the country is to protect the crops from hail and drought. The most important tools for weather making are the **drum**, thunderbolt, and a bell, *phur bu*, the human

thighbone trumpet, the sound of which frightens away the demons that prevent the rain. The **weather shaman** is also well versed in reading the physical and spiritual signs of coming weather.

Healing

Much of Bön curing was **soul retrieval** work. Bön soul retrieval rituals were performed in several different ways, though the original reasons for the different techniques are no longer known. In one technique the deer spirit is asked to retrieve the lost soul. In another method the shaman conducts a ritual in which the spirit that has stolen the patient's soul is summoned and offered a *torma*, an offering cake, in return for the patient's soul. The *torma* represents the union of the five pleasure senses and its consumption brings complete satisfaction. The offending spirit, hungry for satisfaction, trades the stolen soul for the *torma* and the shaman returns the soul to the patient.

In a third soul retrieval ritual Bön shamans reinforced, repaired, and refastened the patient's lifeforce to the body through the recitation of the Mantra of the Life Deity. Through the **power** of this mantra the shaman is able to recall the straying lifeforce, refasten it in the body of the patient, and restore the patient to a state of health.

Bön shamans also performed **exorcisms** when necessary.

The Bön shaman also performed as the **psychopomp** in funerary rites. In these rituals the shaman utilizes ecstatic **soul flight** to enter the spirit world and locate the soul of the deceased. If the soul has been captured by malevolent spirits, it is freed, and if the soul is lingering in the earthly realms with the living, it is conveyed into the spirit realms. Wherever the soul is found, the shaman escorts it to its final destination so that it does not return as a ghost and cause harm for the living.

Divination

Bön shamans use a variety of methods for divination. A rosary is used for simple

divinations. The question is posed, the rosary is rolled between the hands, and then the beads are counted off. The remaining number of beads are interpreted for the answer.

The drum is used in a more ancient form of divination, the *rnga mo*, similar to practices used by Siberian shamans. White Bön priests perform *rnga mo* with a large drum and the black Bön shamans use a half drum, or small drum. *Rnga mo* is performed to divine the cause of illness primarily, and less frequently to answer questions concerning relationships and business.

The face of the drum is specially prepared for each performance of *rnga mo* with symbols representing the patient, other humans involved, and the various spirit forces potentially involved. Onto the symbols on the drum are placed a drop of milk with a seed. When the drum is prepared, the diviner, playing a second drum, summons the helping deities and presents the divination question. The movement of the seeds on the drum are read. If the patient is to recover, then the drumming, questioning, and reading of the seed movements continue until the cause of the illness and the necessary remedies are clear.

Paraphernalia

The drum plays an important role in trance **induction**. The rhythmic drumming is often accompanied by **rattle** or chanting, which invokes the spirits. The Bön shamans use a single-headed, **frame drum** called a *phyed rnga*, or "half-drum."

Simple effigies, called *lekan*, are made from wood, cloth, and fur. A *lekan* is made as a home for *ongons*, or spirits. If the *ongon* is harmful, the *lekan* may be used as a prison or if the *ongon* misbehaves, the *lekan* is beaten or destroyed.

An arrow decorated with multi-colored silk ribbons and copper buttons called a *nda' dar* is used for a variety of purposes. It is used in divination especially with the spirits of **fire**, in soul retrieval healings, and as a tool to aid in

sucking healings performed to suck the illness out of a patient's body.

The Bön shaman also wears a **metal** headdress crafted with prongs that represent antlers. Some scholars believe these originally represented the antlers of a stag.

Belyea, Charles. *Dragon's Play: A New Taoist Transmission of the Complete Experience of Human Life*. Berkeley, CA: Great Circle Lifeworks, 1991.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Dieties*. Delhi: Book Faith India, 1996.

Peters, L. G., and D. Price-Williams. "Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism." *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 3 (1980): 397–413.

———. *Ecstasy and Healing in Nepal: An Ethnopsychiatric Study of Tamang Shamanism*. Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1981.

Bön-po

Pre-Buddhist spiritual practices of the Bön shamans in Tibet. Mongolian **shamanism** is very close to that of the ancient Bön shamans, as is the shamanism of the **Tamang of Nepal**.

Bow

A single stringed instrument, like the bow used to shoot an arrow. The bow is used by shamanic peoples across **Siberia** and in **South America** to induce **trance** and support the **shaman's** journey while in trance. The bow is usually used alone and instead of a **drum**. It is less demanding than the drum in inducing **altered states of consciousness**.

Saami shamans string a reindeer antler to construct their bows. A bow is used by the Lebed Tatars and certain Altaian peoples in Siberia. Kirgiz Tatars use a *kobuz*, a stringed instrument that accompanies trance-inducing dancing. Bows are also used by the **Shuar** of **Amazonia**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Brain Waves

Brain waves are the rhythmic fluctuations of voltage between parts of the brain which result in a flow of electric current. That current pulsates in the human brain in a range of frequencies measured in cycles per second, or hertz (Hz).

Beta waves vibrate between 14–20 Hz. The state of awareness characterized by beta waves is associated with active, waking attention, focused on everyday external activities, and states of anxiety, tension, and fear.

Alpha waves vibrate at 7–14 Hz. The state of awareness characterized by alpha waves indicates a relaxed internal focus and a sense of well-being. The alpha state also correlates to the electromagnetic field of the earth and is the basic rhythm of nature.

Theta waves vibrate at 4–7 Hz. The state of awareness characterized by theta waves is a drowsy, semiconscious state, usually experienced at the threshold of sleeping or waking, and shamanic states of consciousness.

Delta waves vibrate at 1–4 Hz. These waves characterize deep sleep or unconsciousness.

Hemispheric synchronization is another characteristic of shamanic states of consciousness. In very young children the two hemispheres of the brain are synchronized. They develop as one and share control of mental activity.

At about five years of age each hemisphere begins to specialize, the right hemisphere in **pattern recognition** and the left hemisphere in logical and rational recognition. The two hemispheres begin to operate in different modes and at different rhythms.

Hemispheric synchronization may be induced in adult brains, allowing both hemispheres to operate again in a synchronized **rhythm**. This state of unified whole-brain functioning can be

induced during periods of intense creativity, deep meditation, or monotonous rhythmic **sound**, like the shaman's drumming.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Brugmansia Aurea

Brugmansia aurea, or *Solanaceae*, is an aborescent shrub or small tree with beautiful, fragrant flowers, which is closely related to *Datura candida*. All species are dangerously toxic and appear to have been used as hallucinogens for thousands of years. *Brugmansia aurea* is highly valued by **payé** (**shamans**) throughout **South America** as a **medicine** and as the hallucinogenic plant sacrament called **Toá**.

Brugmansia species are widely used and highly cultivated by **payé** in South America. Therefore there is a great variation in the specifics of its many preparations and uses. In general, *Brugmansia* is used as a **plant hallucinogen**, as an admixture in **ayahuasca** (also a plant hallucinogen), and in a range of medicinal preparations.

The *Brugmansia* species prefer the cool, wet highlands above 6000 ft (1830 m), though they do grow in the warmer parts of South America. Many species have beautiful, tubular, trumpet-shaped flowers, that blend from one color at the top to another at the base. *Brugmansia suaveolens* (formerly *Datura suaveolens*) is the one species that grows well in the low, hot lands of southern Colombia and Ecuador. *B. suaveolens* is used by the Ingano and Siona of the Putumayo region. In the Valley of Sibundoy in the Colombian **Amazonia** *Brugmansia* is highly cultivated, though only the **payé** drinks the hallucinogen. The Kamsá and Ingano of this area use *Brugmansia aurea* in a wide range of preparations and applications.

Brugmansia has been cultivated and manipulated for centuries because it is

of high value as a hallucinogen and a **medicine**. *Brugmansia aurea*, or *Buyes*, is no longer found in its wild state. It is suspected to be a cultigen with *B. suaveolens* and *B. insignis* considered the probable hybrid origins.

Brugmansia aurea is used in its "normal" form and a variety of "atrophied," or cultivated, forms. These rare cultivars are "owned" by the shamans who cultivated or inherited them. Their bizarre appearance is associated with the different physiological effects induced by the varying chemical composition of the different cultivars. Not all cultivated forms are used; some are too toxic and some not potent enough.

Cultivars

Kinde Borrachero, or *Quinde*, is the most widely used *Brugmansia* species in the Sibundoy Valley. It is a cultivar whose leaves have been reduced to slender strands giving the plant a chaotic, disheveled look. The leaves of *Munchiro Borrachero*, another highly prized cultivar, look as though caterpillars have eaten them into random, irregular shapes. This species has been cultivated for its high alkaloid content, resulting in potent psychoactivity. During the deep trance induced by this cultivar, the **plant spirit** speaks through the **payé** while a young initiate interprets, later informing the **payé** of the results of the **trance**.

The most potent cultivar is *Culebra Borrachero*. It is prepared in an infusion with only the leaves due to its high concentration of the psychoactive compound scopolamine. *Culebra Borrachero* is preferred by the Kamsá **payé** for **divination**, foretelling the future, for healing in the most difficult cases, and as a remedy for rheumatic or arthritic **pains**.

Brugmansia sanguinea is the **sacred** plant hallucinogen of the Chibcha people of the high Andean Colombia. It is used in their rituals at their Temple of the **Sun**. In Peru *Brugmansia sanguinea* is known as *Huacacachu*, "plant of the tomb," because the **payés** use it to induce trance states that allow them to communicate with their **Ancestors**. *Huacacachu*

leaves are made into a tea or the seeds are powdered and added to fermented drinks. The onset of the trance state can be quite violent. Physical restraint is often necessary until the onset of the deeper **visions**-filled trance.

Use

As a hallucinogen the function of the *Brugmansia* species is two-fold. First, the plant induces a trance state in which the *payé* can enter the spirit world to **diagnose**, divine information, and combat acts of **sorcery**. Second, the plant **spirit** informs the *payé* how to harvest and prepare the plants to heal and cure **illness**.

For a wide range of illnesses *Brugmansia* is the plant the *payé* is instructed to prepare as a medicinal remedy. *Brugmansia* species are used medicinally to treat rheumatism and arthritis, to induce vomiting, to expel gas, to expel worms or parasites from the intestines, to treat infections, and to expel pus from infected wounds.

B. suaveolens and *B. insignis* in particular are used as admixtures to increase the psychoactivity of other plant **entheogens**, like *ayahuasca*.

Brugmansia-induced trance states tend to connect the individual with his or her ancestors. The **Shuar** use this quality as a unique way of disciplining disobedient children. The child is given a drink of parched maize and *B. sanguinea* that induces an **altered state of consciousness** in which the child is connected with his or her ancestors. The ancestor spirits discipline the child and remind the child of his or her place not only in the communal structure, but in the unfolding of the ancestral **dream**.

Preparation

All parts of the plant contain psychoactive constituents to varying degrees, therefore there are many preparations for many different purposes. Teas or infusions are prepared in hot or cold **water** from crushed leaves and flowers. The leaves can also be mixed with an infusion of **tobacco**.

The leaves and/or flowers are crushed and the juice is taken straight, in a cold water preparation, or in **trago** (sugar cane alcohol) when used as a hallucinogen. The soft green bark of the stems can be scraped off and soaked in water, as another method of preparing the hallucinogenic drink. The seeds are powdered and used widely as an additive in **chicha**, a common drink made of fermented *manioc* (cassava) root.

Active Principle

The active principles of *Brugmansia* are similar to **Datura**: atropine, scopolamine, and hyoscyamine. These tropane alkaloids antagonize acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter, inhibiting any bodily functions dependent on acetylcholine's ability to transmit neural impulses in the brain. Scopolamine is found in the largest quantities and responsible for the hallucinogenic effects in all the *Brugmansia* species.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

Brugmansia induces a powerful trance with violent and unpleasant effects, sickening aftereffects, and at times temporary insanity. This is a heavy price to pay to speak to spirit and the reason the *payé* is often the only person allowed to use *Brugmansia* in many cultures. The *payé* will choose to use *Brugmansia* in cases of serious illness or illness that resists other treatment or in situations in which the results of the *payé's* divination will have a serious effect on a large number of people.

Brugmansia preparations induce full sensory **visions** and experiences with sight, **sound**, and taste that can be quite terrifying and distressful. The specific effects of *Brugmansia* vary with plant, preparation, and the individual drinking it. Generally, the plant induces a deep and violent altered state initially, during which the individual may need to be restrained. The individual slips into a stupor, with eyes fixed and mouth closed, then in approximately fifteen minutes the whole body goes into

convulsions, with eyes rolling and mouth foaming.

Eventually the physical distress passes and gives over to an extended sleep that is interrupted with sudden waking visions. In these visions the *payé* communicates with beings of the spirit world, the Ancestors, and the souls of the dead. *Brugmansia* is used by non-shamans who are in deep need of particular prophetic visions.

Songs and Dances

Once the plant hallucinogen is ingested, the *payé* usually **chants** to the spirit of that plant, to focus the trance state on answers to the problem and the **power** to help. For example, after drinking the hallucinogenic tea the Ingano *payé* begins a long, monotonous chant to the spirit of *Munchiro Borrachero* asking for the insight into the cause of the illness and the power to cure it. Songs or chants are also necessary components in the proper preparation of the different hallucinogenic or medicinal preparations.

Use in Western Medicine

Alkaloids like scopolamine and atropine have been used in modern **medicine** for over one hundred years. Scopolamine is commonly used to prevent motion sickness. Atropine is used in ophthalmology to dilate the pupil. Together scopolamine and atropine are used to decrease muscle spasm and gastric motility.

The traditional preparation of *Munchiro Borrachero* is used to treat a specific strain of streptococcus and *Brugmansia aurea* is considered effective by modern medical standards in the treatment of rheumatic pains.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

———. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Brujo

A brujo is a sorcerer who works with fear and other malevolent energies. The brujo works toward malevolent or benevolent ends depending on personal interest or gain. Traditionally they are feared for their ability and willingness to use an individual's fearful feelings of exclusion, isolation, and separation against them in acts of **sorcery**.

Shamans and brujos use similar techniques to work in **altered states of consciousness** with the energies of the invisible world.

Brunfelsia

Several species of *Brunfelsia* are used as **sacred plant hallucinogens** in the Colombian, Ecuadorian, and Peruvian Amazon. *Brunfelsia* grows in the tropical zones of **North America, South America**, and the West Indies. It is a woody shrub or tree with flowers of five petals, unfolding from a bell-shaped calyx and ranging from blue to violet. *Brunfelsia chiricaspi* is found in western **Amazonia** where it is known as *Chiricaspi* and *Chiric-Sanango*. *Brunfelsia grandiflora* is wider ranging, growing from Venezuela to Bolivia in western South America. In Colombia it is commonly known as *Borrachero*.

Use

Brunfelsia chiricaspi has a wide spectrum of medicinal uses, ranging from treatment of yellow fever to snake bites. *Brunfelsia grandiflora* subspecies *Schultesii* is widely cultivated in western South America for medicinal purposes.

Brunfelsia is also considered a sacred plant and spirit guide because of its hallucinogenic properties. The roots, and less frequently the leaves, of *Brunfelsia* can be prepared alone or as an admixture to preparations of **ayahuasca**. Prepared alone, *Brunfelsia* is used only when the shaman is faced with a particularly difficult or persistent problem. The use of *Brunfelsia* as the primary hallucinogen is decreasing due

to its potent toxicity and unpleasant side effects. Today *Brunfelsia* is primarily used in preparations of *ayahuasca*.

Preparation

Brunfelsia chiricaspi leaves are used by Kofán, Siona, and Ingano shamans to prepare the hallucinogen, which has harsh side effects due to its high toxicity. The Kofán and the **Shuar** add *Brunfelsia* to heighten the hallucinatory effects of **Banisteriopsis** when making *ayahuasca*.

Active Principle

The *Brunfelsia* species found in western Amazonia have highly toxic psychoactive properties, though the active principle has not been isolated. Scopoletine, which has been isolated, is not known to be psychoactive.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

The distinguishing characteristic of *Brunfelsia* intoxication is a sensation of chills, which gives rise to the name *Chiricaspi* or “cold tree.”

Use in Western Medicine

Brunfelsia grandiflora subspecies *Schultesii* is under investigation as a potential drug affecting cardiovascular activity.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

———. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Bullroarer

A sound-making device used by **shamans** in many **cultures** around the world. It is often associated with thunder and lightning and shamanic acts to influence the **weather**, like rain making or diverting storms. The bullroarer is made from a flat piece of wood fastened to the end of a string. The free end of the string is held while the end attached to

the wood is twirled around above the head. The **sound** emitted is much like an eerie wind. *Rhombus* is the bullroarer's technical English name.

Buryat (Buriat)

A shamanic people of the **Altai** Mountains in Central Asia. The Buryat practice an independent and indigenous tradition of esoteric **knowledge** more ancient than **Daoism (Taoism)**, Buddhism, or Hinduism. The Buryat and Mongol **shamans** are the bearers of what remains of the spiritual tradition, philosophy, and science shared by the Central Asian peoples. The general patterns found in the **shamanism** of this region are those of **Siberian** shamans.

At the foundation of Buryat shamanism is a unique system of values based on the unity of all things. Unity allows harmonious functioning of people and nature. Unity requires that each person have a clean **energy** connection to the environment. This relationship exists in time and space and must be acted upon regularly, though actions influence both sides for better or for worse.

Buryat shamans are the *odigon* female and the *boo* male. The strength of a shaman is determined by his or her *udkha*, or line of mystic continuation. The power of the **helping spirit** who calls the shaman into the vocation and initiates him/her determines the power of the shaman. The strongest shamans were initiated by *tengeri*, the **Sky**, and called *tengeri duuddamshi* ‘incantators to the Sky.’

The Buryat shamans who practiced in the beginning of the twentieth century possessed knowledge, much of it secret knowledge, and power unknown to the Buryat shamans of today. Contemporary Buryat shamans do not have the power and knowledge to fully follow the classical traditions of their shaman **ancestors**.

Cosmology

The spirit world is composed of three realms, the **Upperworld**, **Middleworld**, and **Lowerworlds** that are inhabited by beings. The realms have levels, or

planes, that are represented in seven, nine, or twelve (*tapty*) notches, steps, or rungs that appear in myths, **dreams**, and shamanic rituals. In the Buryat Upperworld, for example, the **Moon** inhabits the sixth level, the **Sun** inhabits the seventh level, and *Bai Ulgen*, the supreme sky deity, inhabits the ninth level. Merkyut, the bird of the Upperworld, assists shamans in traveling to the Upperworld.

In the beginning of time the Buryat explain that there were only Buryat *Tengri*, the gods. The *Tengri* in the west created humans who lived happily and the *Tengri* in the east created humans who suffered. The western *Tengri* gathered to discuss how to help the eastern humans and decided to send them a shaman. They sent Eagle from the east who flew down to **earth** to help the humans. But Eagle could not speak the human's **language** and, unable to communicate, Eagle returned to the Upperworld unsuccessful.

The *Tengri* gathered again and decided the Eagle should return to earth and bestow its shamanic powers on the first person it met. Eagle flew back to earth and came upon a woman sleeping. Eagle had intercourse with her and transmitted its shamanic powers to the woman. This woman became the **first shaman**. In other versions of the story the son born of her union with the Eagle became the first shaman.

The early Buryat shamans who acquired their shamanic powers from the *Tengri* were said to perform displays of great power. They traveled across great distances like lightning, they could see at a distance, locate lost items, and foretell the future with great accuracy. They were able to see the spirits, into souls of men, and to hear the voices of the dead. These powers are said to have waned because the first shaman (son) wasted his powers by continuously challenging the gods and incurring their punishment.

Tree of Life

The birch tree is the Buryat **Tree of Life**, the Cosmic Axis that connects the spirit

realms and allows the shaman to communicate with the gods. The birch is called *udesi burkhan*, "the guardian of the door," referring to the function of the Tree of Life as the entrance to the spirit world for the shaman. It is also called *sita*, meaning "**ladder**" and *geskigiir* meaning "step." It stands in effigy in the shaman's tent as a mark of office.

Soul

The Buryat conceive of the human soul as a **multiple soul**. The first soul resides in the bones and at death it remains in the skeleton. The second soul resides in the **blood** and at death it is eaten by spirits. This soul can leave the body and is roughly equivalent to the **free soul**. The third soul resembles the person and at death this soul appears to humans as a ghost. The primary cause of illness is the theft of loss of one of the souls.

Helping Spirits

Traditionally, Buryat shamans received their *utcha*, the shamanic divine right, or powers, directly from the *Tengri*. It is a later **evolution** that shamans receive their power from Ancestor spirits. The Ancestor spirits and **animal spirits** function similarly as **helping spirits**. They convey the shaman into the spirit world, reveal the mysteries of the vocation, and teach skills, techniques, and songs. The shaman sings to call on the helping spirits, like Merkyut who comes **singing** in response and sits on the shaman's right shoulder.

The animal helping spirit is the *khubilgan*, a term interpreted as "metamorphosis," from *khubilkh* which means "to change oneself" or "to take on another form." The shaman can merge with the **power animal** and assume its form and powers. Buryat shaman challenge one another, fighting the battles in animal form. If a shaman's *khubilgan* was killed in the fight, the shaman died soon thereafter.

The Call

The candidate is called by the spirits, either the *Tengri* or a shaman ancestor. The candidate's soul is forcefully taken

into the spirit world, often leaving his or her body in a state of mental or physical illness. The spirits of the Upperworld teach him or her. They visit the gods of the Center of the World, Tekha Shara Matzkala, the god of the **dance**, fecundity, and wealth, who lives with the nine daughters of Solboni, god of dawn.

These deities work only with shamans and only shamans make **offerings** to them. Much of the teaching transpires as energy transmitted through sexual intercourse with the spirits. While leaning and **training**, the candidate's soul learns through sexual relations with Tekha's nine wives. When the training is finished, the candidate's soul meets his or her future celestial spouse in the **sky**. The shaman will continue to learn through this relationship for the rest of his or her life.

Training

For many years after **the call**, the candidate's first ecstatic experience, training continues in dreams, **visions**, journeys, and dialogues with the spirits. The candidate prepares in solitude, often taught by old master shamans, particularly the master ("father/mother shaman") who will perform the candidate's **initiation ritual**, during which she is consecrated and recognized by the public as a shaman.

Initiation

After at least two to three years of training, *kharaga-khulkha*, the public initiation ritual, is performed. Prior to the ritual, a **purification** ceremony is performed, during which the candidate is purified in **water** three to nine times traditionally.

This purification by water is obligatory for shamans at least once a year, but is often performed every month coinciding with the new moon. This purification process is used each time the shaman becomes contaminated during a **healing** ritual. If the contamination is especially grave or involved **sorcery**, the purification may be performed with blood instead of water.

The birch plays a central role in the *kharaga-khulkha* initiation of the Buryat shaman. A birch is cut and placed in the center of the yurt, with its branches extending through the central hole above the tent roof. The chief birch inside the yurt is connected by one red and one blue ribbon to a traditional arrangement of birches outside. The ribbons represent the rainbow the shaman traverses to reach the Upperworld. The initiate ascends the tree, with a saber in his or her teeth, performing in the physical world what is happening in the Upperworld. The shaman climbs the nine levels to enter the realm of *Bai Ulgen*.

There is **singing** and dancing with at least nine dancers. Nine pigs are sacrificed and the initiated shamans drink the blood and enter into a long, ecstatic trance. The festival continues for several days, and eventually transitions from **sacred** ritual into a public celebration. The candidate's family and numerous guests participate.

Healing

The shaman performs **divinations** to make diagnoses and prescribe remedies. When **soul loss** is diagnosed the shaman utilizes **trance** to enter into the spirit world, locate the lost soul, and return it to the patient's body. The shaman also functions as **psychopomp**, escorting the souls of the dead to the underworld.

In a Buryat **soul retrieval ritual** the shaman and patient are surrounded by **power objects**, among them an arrow. A red silk thread is attached from the point of the arrow to the birch set up outside the yurt. The patient's soul will travel along the thread on its return, through the open door and re-enter the body. The Buryat believe that the horse is the first to perceive the return of the soul and shows it by quivering.

On a table in the yurt offerings of cakes, *tarasun* (a **libation**), brandy, and **tobacco** are laid out, along with anything the person particularly enjoyed. Friends and people of the age of the

patient are invited to the healing. All of this is done to remind the soul of the pleasures of life in the body and to help entice it to return.

Black & White

Traditionally, Buryat shamans worked with the spirits of the Upperworld and Lowerworld without prejudice. However, possibly due to the influence of outside **religions**, there evolved a clear distinction between the “white” shamans, the *sagani bö*, and the “black” shamans, the *karain bö*. The *sagani bö* communicate with the spirits of the Upperworld and the *karain bö* communicate with the spirits of the Middle- and Lowerworlds.

The **costume** of the *sagani bö* is white and for the *karain bö*, blue. This dualism, which appears in Buryat mythology, became more pronounced in the culture over time. For example, there are innumerable classes of demigods divided into black Khans and white Khans who share a fierce and mutual hatred. The black Khans are served by the “black” shamans who are the only practitioners able to intercede with these spirits.

Power and the Gods

According to Buryat legend the first shaman possessed unlimited power. *Khara-Ghyrgen*, the first shaman (son), continuously tested his power against the gods, tricking and angering them. In one legend *Khara-Ghyrgen* declared that his power was boundless. A god, hearing this, stole a girl’s soul and shut it up in a bottle to test him. The god put his finger in the bottle to be certain the soul did not escape.

Khara-Ghyrgen beat his two-headed shaman’s **drum**, entered trance, and flew through the sky, sitting on his drum. He found the god with the soul in the bottle. *Khara-Ghyrgen* transformed into a spider, stung the god’s face, and rescued the girl’s soul when the god pulled out his finger from the bottle to strike the spider. Furious, the god curtailed *Khara-Ghyrgen*’s power and from

that day forward the magical abilities of shamans diminished.

The Drum

The original shaman’s drums were two-headed **frame drums**. They were used to induce trance for the shaman’s journeys to the **Land of the Dead** to retrieve lost souls. The Buryat tell an ancient story about the Lord of the Dead and how he grew angry at the shamans for stealing these souls back. In an effort to destroy the shaman’s powers, the Lord of the Dead struck the shaman’s drum with a thunderbolt, splitting it in two. This is why most of the Buryat shamans work with single-headed drums today.

The Buryat Costume

Spirits and their powers are embodied in the Buryat shaman’s **costume**. The costume of the female shaman includes two sticks with one end fashioned into a horse’s head and encircled by bells, thirty black and white pelt “snakes” that hang from each shoulders to the ground, a number of metallic figures sewn onto the costume, representing horses, **birds**, and other **power animals**, and her cap made of iron fashioned into three points representing deer antlers.

The cap and stick horse mark levels of initiation. At the first initiation the cap, in the shape of a lynx, is not **metal** and the “horse” is made from the wood of the birch, of which care is taken to be certain that the tree does not die. After the fifth level of initiation the shaman receives the iron cap with representative deer horns and a horse of iron sculptured into a horsehead decorated with numerous bells.

Paraphernalia

The Buryat have numerous **paraphernalia** which are kept in a chest with the cap, drums, stick-horse, furs, bells, etc. Also included is the *abagaldei*, a large grotesque **mask** made of hide, wood, or metal and fashioned with an enormous beard. Finally, attached to the chest or the costume directly is the *tolii*, a metal **mirror** with the figures of twelve animals attached to it.

- Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.
- Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.
- Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Bushmen

A term used by outsiders to indicate the **!Kung** or Ju|'hoan people of the Kalahari Desert of **Africa**. "Bushman" has been used as a racist term by outsiders in the past. Today some value a conscious political decision to enoble the term by using it to mean an independent and nonconforming individual who is not controlled by the central authorities. Other peoples of this region simply choose to use the general term "**San**" for themselves. See also **Ju|'hoansi**.

Bwiti

A **religion** practiced cross-culturally in the Gabon and Congo regions of **Africa**. To enter the Bwiti religion initiates must see Bwiti, the **Ancestors**. The only way to see Bwiti is in the **altered state of consciousness** induced by *Iboga*, the **sacred plant entheogen** utilized by Bwiti followers.

Through *Iboga*, members of the Bwiti religion can connect with their Ancestors and maintain a direct, personal relationship to their common origins as these Africans. This experience changes the once hostile individualism of warring tribes into the unifying individualism of a common origin. Bwiti practitioners are able to maintain a sense of identity apart from the Western world and stop the destructive influx of foreign ideologies, societies, and religions like Christianity and Islam.

Zame ye Mebege, the last of the creator gods, gave the people "*Eboka*." The Bwiti origin story explains that one day *Zame* saw the Pygmy *Bitamu* gathering fruit high in an Atanga tree. *Zame* wanted *Bitamu's* spirit. *Zame* made *Bitamu* fall to his death so that *Zame* collected

the Pygmy's spirit. Then *Zame* cut the fingers and toes from the body of *Bitamu* and planted them throughout the forest. The Pygmy's fingers and toes grew into the *Eboka* bush.

Iboga is found primarily in the wet, tropical zones of west-central Africa, primarily the Congo and Gabon. A root of the Dogbane family, it is the most prominent **plant hallucinogen** used on the African continent.

Use

Iboga is essential to the Bwiti spiritual practice as well as to other secret societies in Gabon and the Congo. Within the Bwiti spiritual practice *Iboga* is used for two purposes. First, it is used in the initiation **ritual** to "break open the head" of the new candidate and allow the Ancestor spirits in. Second, it is used by initiated members to connect with the spirit world for guidance from their Ancestors.

For initiation into the Bwiti religion, initiates are given massive doses of the pulverized root. One to three basketfuls are consumed over an eight to twenty-four hour period in one or two portions during the course of the ritual. After consuming these large amounts of *Iboga*, the initiates sit in the middle of the ceremonial building. They wait for the desired physical collapse and hallucinations through which they will visit or be visited by their ancestors. The contact is essential for the initiates.

During the initiate's comatose-like collapse, his or her soul has left the body and the initiate is now a *banzie*, roughly translated, an "angel." *Banzie* refers specifically to the freedom of the soul from the physical body. The soul, now in the spirit world, begins to wander with the ancestors to visit the gods. One *banzie* recalls his initiatory experience, "I walked or flew over a long, multi-colored road or over many rivers which led me to my ancestors, who then took me to the great gods."

Regularly a limited dose is taken before and in the early part of the **ceremony**. A much smaller dose is taken

again after midnight. The **altered state of consciousness** desired is characterized by the feeling of floating or flying and a visual sensation of rainbow-colored spectrums of light surrounding objects. These rainbows are interpreted as the **sign** that the soul is nearing the realm of the ancestors and the gods.

Nyiba-eboka refers to the religion, spiritual practices, and rituals developed around *Iboga* and the Ancestors. There are complex ceremonies with dances and songs that are essential to the Bwiti spiritual practice. These vary

greatly by locale because the Bwiti practice unites peoples of many different tribes, who all bring their traditional dances and songs. The cultural importance of *Iboga* and the related Bwiti spiritual practices are seen everywhere, particularly in the growing number of followers.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.



Caapí

See *ayahuasca*.

Caduceus

The pair of intertwined snakes in the classical symbol of health. In this symbol the snakes represent balance between opposites, which describes the state of health of the human body. Historically the snake is associated with health through its eternal relationship as a **helping spirit** for the **shaman**, and the snakes of the *caduceus* (Egyptian) survive as a symbol for health and **medicine**.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

California Region

The indigenous peoples of north-central and north-coastal California have a view of **disease**-causing agents that is unique to **North America**. **Illness** is believed to be caused by the intrusion into the body of “**pains**,” as they are referred to in the anthropological literature. Pains are the cause of all disease, death, and trouble. These same pains are also the source of the **shaman's** power, so much so that the measure of a shaman's **power** is directly proportional to the number of pains held in the body.

Pains are **energy intrusions** sent by a spirit, sorcerer, or someone with intent to harm the victim. Pains are in and of themselves supernaturally powerful and are in that way distinguished from the energy intrusions that cause illness in other **cultures**. Other energetic intrusions are

given power by the spirits or sorcerers who create them; their power is not innate.

Pains manifest in a variety of forms, frequently forms clear and sharp at both ends. They are able to fly from source to victim and continue to move even after being extracted from the body of the victim/patient.

The shaman takes the pains into his or her body after they are extracted from the patient. In this unique way, the shamans of California gain **healing** power through an acquisition and control of pains. Additional pains can be acquired by dancing and fasting at isolated spots or by extracting them from patients.

There are other unique sources of power for the shamans in this region. **Dwarves** are a source of power for the Shasta, Atsugewi, Northern Maidu, and Yuki shaman. In these regions the *axeki* (pains) are conceived of as having human form. They are found in rocks, streams, lakes, mountains, the **sun**, **moon**, and some stars. The *axeki* become **helping spirits** for the shamans.

Among the Yokuts, Wishram, and Tenino, power is acquired from water-monsters. These long-haired beings live in the **water** and are another source of supernatural power for the shaman.

Generally in North America the shaman and the **priest** have distinct and sometimes antagonistic functions. The priest can be considered a keeper of **ceremony** whose position is secured through **knowledge**. The shaman can be considered a creator of **ritual** whose position is secured through the ability to enter **trance** and direct the powers of the spirits to the aid of humans. Among the California tribes the distinction between priest and shaman is sharply drawn in the **north** and **south** and all but disappears in the central region.

There is also a strong tradition of the **transformed shamans** throughout the California region. The traditional Klamath, Pomo, Tolowa, Yokut, Yuki, and Yuma—to name a few—recognize

female, male, and **gender-variant** shamans. The transformed shamans are generally believed to be the strongest spiritually, in that they were able to draw from both realms of humanity. The women are considered the next strongest spiritually and the male shamans the least strong spiritually. Many transformed shamans were renowned for their power and ability to cure illness.

Park, W. Z. *Shamanism in Western North America*. New York: Roman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1975.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Wissler, C. *The American Indian*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938.

Camay

A technique widely used by **shamans** to blow balance, unity, and health into people, plants, and minerals. To *camay* is to convey a **blessing** onto another. *Camay*, the Peruvian **Quechua** word for this technique, is difficult to translate. Roughly it means to blow the Connection-of-all-things, the life-giving **spirit** of all things, onto another being. The creator, Viracocha, *camayed* the **dream** that became the universe into existence.

Shamans *camay* with the breath alone. However, *camaying* is more often performed with a **sacred** liquid which the shaman sprays in such a way that the patient is enveloped in a fine mist. A highly refined liquor, like **trago** (cane alcohol) is used, as is freshwater, flower essences in water, and freshly ground spices, like cinnamon, in a sacred liquor.

Shamans also *camay* with **fire**. The shaman *camays* a liquor, like *trago*, across the open flame of a candle. The mist of liquor ignites and the patient is enveloped in flames that cleanse, but do not burn.

Perkins, J. *The World Is as You Dream It*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1994.

Candomblé

Candomblé is the oldest and purest of the many Afro-Brazilian spiritist traditions. The teachings and practices are directly descended from the ancient and traditional African **religions**, primarily Yoruba (originally of the peoples of southwestern Nigeria).

African people were brought across the Atlantic to work as slaves on the sugar plantations in the northeastern part of Brazil in the 16th century. These people retained large segments of their culture and religions even though people of tribal nations were separated and their **languages** and customs outlawed.

As a way of concealing their outlawed spiritual practices, slaves worshipped when their Catholic plantation owners did. Gradually the African *orishas* (gods/goddesses) became syncretized with the Catholic saints, but the *orishas*, beliefs, songs, dances, and musical instruments survived. With emancipation in 1888, Afro-Brazilians began to practice their religions more openly.

Orishas are living, energetic forces that manifest themselves in elemental forces of nature, social functions, and directly through **incorporation** into human beings during Candomblé rituals. These **possessions** or **embodiment trances** are intentional and desired. The ability to enter and exit these trances is cultivated. Master adepts of the Candomblé traditions are referred to as *babalorixa* (male) and *yalorixa* (female).

The Candomblé in Salvador were primarily of Yoruba origin. Originally the mediums were only women. The Candomblé de Caboolo in Salvador added cultural elements of the indigenous peoples. Today Candomblé remains a religious practice of the lower class in Brazil.

Goodman, Felicitas D., J. H. Henney, and E. Pressel. *Trance, Healing, and Hallucination: Three Field Studies in Religious Experience*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974.

Cangkdeska Wakang

The “**sacred** hoop” or **medicine** wheel ever present in the rituals, **altars**, and ceremonies of the Plains peoples. In its simplest form the medicine wheel is symbolized by a limb bent into the shape of a hoop. An equal-armed cross is often added, dividing the hoop into four quadrants and symbolizing the four winds or four directions. Even in these simple forms the *cangkdeska wakang* implies all of the **colors**, winds, directions, spirits, and teachings associated with the wheel as a whole.

In the medicine wheel the **Lakota** associate black with the **west** and the home of the Thunderbeings who send them rain. White is associated with the **north**, the source of the great white **cleansing** wind. Red is associated with the **east**, the source of light and home of the morning star who gives humankind wisdom. Yellow is associated with the **south**, the summer, and the power to grow. See also **shamanic symbols**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Cannibal Dancers Society

Ojibwa healing society. See *windigokan*.

Cave

Caves, used as portals between the worlds, are often the sites of **shamanic** initiations. They are places between here and there, functioning both as earthen **wombs** of creation and receptacles for the dead. Caves embody the essence of initiation, death, and rebirth.

The **Arunta (Aranda)** of **Australia** initiate must sleep at the mouth of a cave, allowing the spirit of the cave to kill him and take him into the **earth**. There the **spirit** replaces his internal organs with magical viscera and returns his soul to his body, to awaken a new man. In **Nepal** initiates fall into trances during which their souls are taken to the cave of *Ban jhakri*, the **forest**

shaman. There *Ban jhakri* and his wife test the initiates’ cleverness and purity of heart, discarding those who fail. The initiatory spirit for the Dancing Societies of the Kwakiutl (**North America**) also resides in a cave.

Caves are the **domain** of powerful spirits or **power** spots in and of themselves. In these **sacred** chambers of the earth the **shaman** is permitted access to the presiding spirit or power. Shamans use this power to clarify or confirm **divinations** or to incubate **dreams**.

There is evidence that caves may also be selected by shamans for their resonance, which would enhance the chanting and **music** of the **ritual**. Chambers with higher concentrations of cave paintings, believed to record the **visions** of the shaman while in **trance**, also showed better resonance than chambers with little or no cave **art**.

The cave art, from 16,000 or 10,000 B.C.E. found in caves across the plains of Europe, is believed to have been produced by shamans to communicate their journeys in the spirit world. The cave walls are covered with people engaged in ritual, shamans in heightened energetic trance states, animals, **phosphenes**, and **therianthropes**. The size of handprints found in more than twenty caves throughout Italy, France, and Spain offers evidence that the shaman artists of the Paleolithic era were women.

Krupp, E. C. *Skywatchers, Shamans & Kings: Astronomy and the Archaeology of Power*. New York: Wiley, 1997.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Celtic

The general Greek and Roman name applied to most of the tribes of peoples inhabiting Ireland, Scotland, Wales, England, and the adjacent continental Europe at the time of the Roman

invasion of England in 55 B.C.E. The “Celts” were not British, but the Indo-European incomers who arrived in the sixth and seventh centuries B.C.E. They subjugated the previous peoples, namely the Picts in North Britain and the Fomorians in Ireland, and established themselves throughout the area by the fourth century B.C.E. These tribes were never united into one “Celtic Nation”; they had different **languages**, tribal names, and diverse lifestyles, which reflected the ways they drew their livings from the diverse lands they now spread across.

Nonetheless, these tribes are treated together as an ethnic group because they shared distinctive racial, cultural, and spiritual continuities. They shared similar customs and values: they were wild, fierce, enthusiastic warriors and boastful, colorful people, flaunting body ornamentation and jewelry. They shared similar institutions, some of which created recognizably Celtic products, like metalworks, **storytelling**, poetry, and **song**. They also shared similar beliefs in family, hospitality, feasting, drinking, loyalty to clan and tribe, the presence of spirit in all things, the inherent connectedness of all things, and the immortality of the human soul.

At least part of the Celtic shamanic tradition is the tradition of the R'nDraoic—the knowledge bearers. Much of that knowledge was recorded on the **ogham** stones, which the R'nDraoic read. For centuries people were not willing or able to hear the knowledge and the R'nDraoic were considered evil; they were persecuted and killed for practicing their beliefs.

The destruction of the pre-Christian spiritual life of the Celtic peoples by missionaries and governments of subsequent invading forces was quite thorough. The spiritual and shamanic life of the Celts was wiped out or sent underground with the introduction of Christianity in C.E. 431. The spiritual roots of the Celtic peoples may be even more elusive than those of the native peoples of **North America**. Though the

task of uncovering them is similar, they have been lost for many more centuries.

Like the powerful spirituality of the **first peoples** of North America, Celtic spirituality was denigrated and labeled as superstition by classical writers from other cultures and villainized and outlawed by conquering governments and their **religions**. Yet, even with the variations between peoples in style and form, there was a vital Celtic spirituality that at its heart was shamanic.

The shamanic traditions never completely disappeared; Celtic people can still be found today practicing prophecy and **divination** (skrying), second sight, spiritual **healing**, poetic **invocation** and communication with the “Otherworld.” The blending of the natural and supernatural accounts for the strong strain of mysticism running through Celtic thought and **culture**.

Cosmology

From surviving Celtic literature we can piece together the Celtic **shaman's** view of the Universe. It is first and foremost centered around the Great Tree, or the **Tree of Life**, which for the Celts was the **Oak**. The Great Tree functioned as the connection between the **Upperworld**, the **Middeworld**, and the **Lowerworld** in the Celtic shaman's universe. As in many cultures the Great Tree is the means by which the shaman travels between the worlds. The Celtic shaman stands in the center of this Universe superimposed on the Great Tree.

The Middeworld (*Abred*-Welsh) stretches out from the center, from the trunk of the Great Tree, in all eight cardinal directions. It contains both the physical world that we inhabit and its Otherworldly dimension, symbolized in the stone **omphalos** at its center. These planes of existence overlap and interrelate in such a way that we can find portals and access one dimension from the other.

From the branches of the Great Tree the shaman accesses the Upperworld (*Gwynvyd*-Welsh for White Land), the place of the stars in a vast, spiritual

sense. The Upperworld contains the stars as beings, as well as the **sun**, the **moon**, and the other heavenly bodies, gods, goddesses, and many **helping spirits** in other forms. The shaman can view the entire cosmos from the Upperworld and move out into it for teaching and inspiration.

From the roots of the Great Tree the Celtic shaman moves into the Lowerworld (*Anwn*-Welsh), the realm of the **ancestors**, the primal beings who are the founders of the Celtic race. It is the **domain** of spirits of the **earth**, **fire**, and of the beasts. The **crystals** imbedded in the roof of the Lowerworld empower and light the realm, reflecting the stars in the night **sky** and the heavenly bodies of the Upperworld. In the Lowerworld the Celtic shaman encounters the Lord of the Lowerworld, the Goddess of the Earth, and the stag-headed god who guards the Well of Segais, the Source from which all knowledge comes.

The Seven Rivers of Life flow from the Well of Segais out into the Lowerworld and upwards into ribbons of rainbow **energy** which encircle all of the worlds in the Celtic Universe. Within the flow of the energies of the rivers of life are the **spirits** of the **air** and the water and the all of the totem beasts. Finally all of this: the three worlds, the Great Tree, and the energy of the Rivers of Life are all seen contained and living within the shell of a hazelnut that rests on the lip of the Well of Segais.

Above the Upperworld is *Ceugant* (Welsh), the ineffable realm of deity. All of these realms both ordinary and nonordinary exist in the **Kosmos**, or *manred* (Welsh), the underlying pattern of it all.

The Glyph

One single glyph appears on stones throughout all the Celtic countries. It is the basic pattern of two crossed lines, marking the four directions, enclosed in a **circle**. This circled cross is a “short-hand” symbol of the Celtic Universe. Like a cross-section taken from the

hazelnut resting on the Well of Segais, this simple circled cross, with its above and below dimensions imagined, becomes a map of all the worlds. This glyph is often represented with eight lines, and for those with an understanding of the shaman’s Universe, it is symbolic of the many layers of meaning that correspond with the eight spokes. In this way the glyph of the circle cross represents the foundation and order present in every dimension of **ordinary reality** and **non-ordinary reality**.

It is understood that the Tree of Life and the shaman stand in the center both literally and symbolically. The following list contains examples of the layers of meaning that correspond with the cardinal directions and other positions around the center of the circled cross. Each of the following elements of Celtic cosmology, whether natural or mythical, have symbolic meaning.

The sources of power important to Celtic spirituality include Hollow Hills, the Blessed Isles, the Sacred Grove, the Spirits of the Forests, and the Head of Wisdom. The most essential **power objects** are the Musical Branch, Cauldron, Blade, and Cup.

Spiral of Creation

The Spiral of Creation is woven of **sacred space** and sacred **time**. The Celts believed this **spiral** to wind simultaneously upwards and downwards, in such a way that any one point could touch any other point at any time. All eventualities become possibilities as the energy of the Spiral of Creation pulses between occurring and reoccurring.

Sacred Time

Time was sacred for the Celts. In Celtic stories there are few references to time; those that appear are references to seasons, time of day, phase in the moon cycle, or stage in the character’s **life cycle**. Time was not valued as the linear movement of cumulative events through space, as it is for modern man. The sacred time of the Celts moved in the spiral of the cosmos where each

event affects the whole. Thus timing was valued—timing a **ritual** with the phase of the moon or a festival with the sun solstice—time was not.

For example, a woman of the R'nDraic shared this teaching from her grandmother. She and her grandmother had spent the full moon nights for three months healing an oak tree. The woman, then a child, expressed her frustration that the tree had not acknowledged all of their effort on its behalf. Her grandmother replied, "This is your first lesson in how irrelevant time is . . . Time is not relevant, it is not significant. We don't know time as it really exists. What we have in this world is an illusion." Two months later the Oak's expression of gratitude brought tears to her eyes.

Natural Events

- The four great festivals of the Celtic Year (seasonal),
- The Sun Festivals; two Solstices and two Equinoxes,
- The twelve divisions of the Moon cycles,
- The four directions.

Mythical Events

- Four stages in the cycle of human life,
- The spirits of the four elements: Earth, Air, Fire, and Water,
- The pantheon of gods and goddesses,
- The ogham alphabet and word-oghams,
- Helping Spirits of all kinds,
- Culturally valued qualities; e.g., compassion, inspiration, endurance, power,
- personally valued qualities that are added to the wheel based on the shaman's life experience, dreams, lessons, and achievements.

All of these layers of meaning and many more interrelate. For example the layers of the four directions, the elements, valued qualities, and word-oghams relate as follows and correspond accordingly on the wheel:

- **East**, Air, Inspiration, Renewal, and the Path of Opening the Way,

- **South**, Fire, Changing ways, Growth, and the Path of Coming into Being,
- **West, Water**, Creativity, Love, and the Path of Passing Within,
- **North**, Earth, Strength, Clarity, and the Path of Finding Wisdom.

As the shaman used the symbolism within the wheel and worked with the associations again and again, the patterns of nature and the relationships between the inner and outer worlds are revealed to him or her.

Sacred Space

The Celtic shamans and people celebrated and honored their relationship to Spirit out in Nature, open to the elements. To the Celt, space was also sacred for it provided access into the Otherworld and the Sacred Spiral. Ordinary three-dimensional space was valued most highly when it contained portals into the fourth dimension, into the spirit realms. Such sites are often called power spots because some manifestation of the Earth's power is felt more strongly there than elsewhere. Selecting powerful spaces allowed the shaman to work with "ley" lines, rivers of energy which form a natural grid across the land.

The Celts also saw the sacred in the "betwixt and between" places: places where water touches land, mist, moors, fog, bogs, twilight, dawn, and dew. These places and conditions were symbolic of transformation and one's ability to live between worlds, both highly valued by the Celts. All edges and borders between elemental realms or complementary terrains or simply places where opposites meet were places filled with magic.

Portals into the World of Sunlight

All of these sites, whether naturally occurring or power spots enhanced by human hands, served as portals into the Otherworld. Everywhere the Celt duplicated his or her sacred universe, the channels between the worlds were opened. The Otherworld was experienced as a place of tremendous healing

and light. It was a place of love, of the Source of all things, and of the Wholeness of existence. By moving through these portals and out of Space and Time, the Celts entered the Sacred Spiral and connected with the Source of all things where they received healing, inspiration, and an experience of Oneness.

Stones and Stone Circles

The Celts used the ancient stone circles and standing stones, like Stonehenge and Avebury, that were already put in place by the peoples living on the land before the Celts. The clearings encircled by stones functioned like the groves encircled by **trees**. The large stone monoliths functioned like the Oak tree for the Celtic shaman; they are the ***axis mundi***, the Tree of Life connecting all the worlds and allowing movement between them.

Many sacred sites of stone are simply dolmens, portals of two (or more) huge stones standing upright, topped with a lintel stone. Through them the shaman finds entry into the Otherworld.

Springs, Rivers, and Lakes

Springs, rivers, and lakes were believed to all ultimately come from the Well of Segais and to bring messages up from the Lowerworld. All water flowed from this Source and back again as it passed through its cycle of water to the sea to mist/vapor to clouds to rain that trickles finally back into the ground, returning to the Source. Thus the water was wise, carrying the information from infinite transformations of form and the reconciliation of opposites necessary to complete the cycle of life.

Wells

Wells were held sacred for many reasons. One because of their association with water (above), and two because they were important entries to the Otherworld. Through them the Celtic shaman could connect to all the other worlds through the various forms of water. Wells were places of healing,

transformation, and connection with the people of Faere. Wells were also held sacred for a third and practical reason; they played an essential role in the prosperity of the land. When the well, or the maiden of the well, was abused or treated with disrespect and ran dry, the land, the crops, and all the people suffered.

Groves

Natural groves of trees, *nemeton* (from *nemed* meaning **shrine** and *fidnemed* meaning a forest shrine), were used as sacred sites, as were the ones created intentionally by planting trees in a circle. Trees were seen as conductors of energy, like the Tree of Life. The grove, with the trees encircling, represented the universe of the Celtic shaman; like the circled cross, it was a cross-section of the hazelnut resting on the Well of Segais.

Mounds or Long Barrows

There is evidence that the Celts used ancient mounds, or "long barrows," for ritual and **ceremony**. Like the monumental stone structures, the mounds were built before the Celts arrived, as far back as 200 B.C.E. In the Irish literature the mounds are known as the palaces of the Dananns (see Dwellers of Faere below), however exactly how they were used is no longer clear. What we do know is that they were places where the humans met the people of the Hollow Hills, the people of Faere.

Within each barrow a microcosm of the Celtic universe was again reproduced. The dome within the mound symbolizes the Upperworld; in the River Boyne the mound is 30 feet high and 338 feet across. The ground below reflects the same shape in construction and is symbolic of the Lowerworld. Within the center of the mound, representing the Middleworld, was an entrance to a passageway with spiraling designs carved into the stone which leads into the center; at River Boyne that chamber is 20 feet high. Most mounds have four chambers at each of the four directions.

Some chambers contain stones carved with shallow oval basins.

In the smaller mounds, a tree or pole would have been set in the center, functioning as the Tree of Life. On the larger mounds, in the past, a stone monolith would preside, serving as the *axis mundi* for the ritual work performed within the mound. Smaller stones (usually thirty-five) encircle the outer edge of the mound, symbolic of successive rings of creation. On some mounds an inscribed ogham stone is positioned on top of the mound. There are hundreds of these mounds, large and small, found across England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland.

Ogham Stones

Many natural sacred sites are centered around ogham stones, stones bearing inscriptions in the ogham alphabet. There are over three hundred ogham-inscribed stones lying in the earth in Britain and Ireland, dating as far back as the fourteenth century C.E. These stones are portals into the Otherworld for those who are trained to travel there. The inscriptions locate the portals and leave messages there for those who can read the Ogham and understand the deeper meanings.

The Ogham stones were the giant rock tablets of the R'nDraoic. They carved what appear to be simple notches into the stone that actually tell a dimensional story for those who are able to read it.

The Otherworld

The Otherworld is the common Celtic term for the invisible realms within the shaman's Universe that we can not see with ordinary eyes. In the land of the Celts, it is filled with many beings in human form. The Otherworldly beings particular to Celtic traditions are "the good people" or the "people of *sidhe*" (pronounced *shee*), who are the ancient gods and goddesses who dwell in the Hollow Hills. They are the faeries of folktales.

"Faeries" are a race of beings who have mastered the **art** of living in both worlds. Celtic tales are filled with accounts of humans and faeries intermarrying and bearing faery children. Faeries are not necessarily small, unless they choose to be. In *Irish Fairy and Folk Tales*, W. B. Yeats said, "Everything is capricious about them, even their size." There are accounts of faeries who are smaller than human size, the same size, and larger size, even up to fourteen feet tall.

In Celtic faery lore there is a reoccurring theme that the beings of the Otherworld need human contact. For reasons that are not necessarily clear, the *sidhe* actively seek to share their wisdom, power, and secrets with humans. To this end, faeries enter ordinary reality to be with humans and cause humans to enter into the *sidhe*, into their realm. It is as if it is necessary for the survival of both species that we communicate and help each other. It is the shaman who recognizes the importance of the **interdependence** between spirit and human beings to the structure and fabric of the Universe.

For the Celtic people the Otherworld is real and alive. It is not an archetype or a product of the imagination. It is a world, a realm, experienced by all the senses in the journeying altered state. It is the source of reality and in that it feels in many ways even more real than the physical realm itself.

The Array of Celtic Helping Spirits

The *sidhe*, the people of the Otherworld, the people of Faere, are the Celtic equivalent to the Siberian shaman's helping spirits. The people of Faere, the Otherworldly kings, queens, gods, goddesses, and men and women, set out seemingly impossible tasks for training the **apprentice** shaman. They then help the initiate in person or through intermediate forms, much like the **animal spirits** that help the Siberian Shaman through his initiation and in his healing work.

Dwellers of Faere

The *sidhe*, the peoples of Faere, are also known as the Lordly Ones or the People of Peace. Scholars believe that the origins of the Lordly Ones are lost to us, however an ancestor of the R'nDraic—the *knowledge bearers*, who also seem to have been shamans—relates the following history of the Lordly Ones:

The R'nDraic were part of the Tuatha De Danann (also Dé Danaan and Dé Danann) tribe. Anann means women and sunlight and about thirty other things, yet they all also mean caring. They were the children of Danu (also Dana, D'Annu, D'Anna), the Goddess of Light, the Soul. In their day they were a great people. Their home was known as the Isle of Saints and Scholars. They were heroes.

When their knowledge appeared extraneous in the tide of Christianity, the Tuatha De Danann were defeated by Fir Bolg and driven out of Ireland to the Isle of Skye. However, they wouldn't leave Ireland. They returned to watch over Ireland and her people, by transmuting themselves, entering the spirit realms, and becoming the “other people,” or the “little people” (though they weren't necessarily little) of Ireland. Even today in Ireland the descendants of the R'nDraic in our world can pass through the doorways into the other realm. There they meet their ancestors, the spirit warriors led by Eochair-namban (aEochaidh) who stand ready to defend Ireland.

Gods and Goddesses

Celtic **shamanism** was an integral part of the Celtic culture and tradition. There was no centralized Celtic pantheon, but an array of gods and goddesses of many names and varying characteristics that arose in a localized way from the people and the geography. Many of the gods and goddesses of that tradition take their place in the shaman's Universe, around the circled cross, and are there to assist the shaman in his or her journeys and healing work.

Breeyid—Brighid

The Goddess of fosterage, learning, inspiration, and smithcraft. She is also seen as a strong protector, **teacher**, and healer, such that many healing wells are named for her.

Blod-eye'weth—Blodeuwedd

Blodeuwedd, a beautiful woman in a dress of flowers, came to the Celts from the plant world. Created from flowers by magicians, she is less sympathetic towards humans and their foibles. However she is a strong protectress of the natural world and in her Owl form she helps in cases of persecution.

Looch/Hleye—Lugh/Llew

Warrior gods of sun, light, warmth, and inspiration, Lugh (Irish) and Llew (British) are steadfast companions in trying times. Lugh, also known as *samil-danach*—“the many gifted,” and Llew—“skillful hand,” is the patron of poets, the talented, and the inspired.

Govann'on/Gub'noo—Gofannon/Goibnu

Gofannon (Irish) and Goibnu (British) are the smith gods who are historically in relationship with the shamans of their people. They are the gods who refine the **swords** of warriors and the **souls** of mankind. They are patrons of smiths, craftspeople, and all in fields of labor or design demanding great skill of the hand and eye.

Brahn—Bran

Bran, also known in the form of Raven, is the Lord of the Gods, the giver of primal and ancestral wisdom. He is a god of protection, boundaries, guardianship, and inspiration. He is the patron of storytellers and a protector of travelers.

Man-ann-awn/Man-ow-with'an—Manannan/Manawyddan

Manannan (Irish) and Manawyddan (Welsh) are gods of the sea, fertility, and procreation. They are restless and skillful and give the gifts of sight beyond sight and wise-skills.

Kerid'wen—Ceridwen

Ceridwen, the goddess of barley and pigs, brews the potion of wisdom and inspiration from which the shaman

must drink. Her powers are best invoked when making remedies or conceiving new projects.

Arown'—Arawn

King of the Underworld, Arawn is a powerful protector who provides access to ancestral wisdom. He crosses into the world of humankind and may be invoked to protect those who travel through places that appear unsafe.

Arriann'hrod—Arianrhod

Arianrhod is the goddess of destiny and the mistress of the Spiral Tower, the place of initiation within the Otherworld. She is often represented with moon-like symbolism, carrying a silver wheel. She is invoked for inspiration, divination, and to gain clarity of personal destiny.

Makk-a—Macha

Macha is the battle goddess; she is an ally of great power in times of true need. Yet, be warned, she has little patience for the small problems of humankind. She is the carrier of the mirrored maze, a symbol of her ability to take the soul beyond life.

Rig-an-ton-a/Hree-ann'on—Rigantona/Rhiannon

Rhiannon is the daughter of the Lord of the Underworld; her older name is Rigantona, meaning "great queen." She is the goddess of horses and the protector of sacred land, which she embodies. Wrongfully accused for the death of her child, she helps the wrongfully accused, those overburdened with responsibilities, and women who have suffered miscarriages.

Teeger-Nonos—Tigernonos

Tigernonos, great king and Rhiannon's consort, is the primal god of the Celts, possessing supernatural powers and deep wisdom. When invoked he offers empowerment, earthly wisdom, and the guidance of a strong, reliable companion along difficult paths through ordinary and non-ordinary reality.

The Green Man

The Green Man, with vines in his hair and beard and leaves growing from his

mouth, nose, and ears, is perhaps older than the gods and goddesses of the *sidhe*. He is both a fertility god and guardian of the earth whose charge it is to prevent her misuse. He is the Wild Man who has taken many guises over time. Whatever his form or name, the Green Man of the Forest teaches each generation of their Oneness with Nature—oneness with the earth herself and with all that share her as a home. The Green Man teaches that human lives cycle just as the rest of Nature from birth, through growth, realization of potential, death, and rebirth.

The Horned One

Lord of the Animals or the Animal Master is common to many shamanic cultures. The Animal Master may be male, female, or both. Where the humans live with herds of horned animals, the Animal Master is seen with horns or antlers. The shaman, wearing horns or antlers, dances into a **trance** enabling him or her to merge with the Animal Master and to talk to the Spirit of the Animals, divining the information necessary to assure a good hunt.

In Celtic times the Animal Master was an antlered guardian, possibly Cernunnos, though that name is based only on a partially transcribed inscription. It is unclear whether the figure portrayed on the Gunderstrup cauldron (a Celtic artifact from 200 B.C.E) in an antler headdress seated in the journeying position and staring into the Otherworld is the Animal Master or a shaman seeking communication with the Animal Master. The ambiguous **gender** of the figure, who is both beardless and breastless, is often a characteristic of the shaman who stands between worlds.

Ancestors

Ancestors also present themselves as helping spirits for the apprentice shaman, particularly if the ancestor was a shaman him- or herself. It is the responsibility of the ancestors to hold the memories of the people, the

teachings, and the wisdom gained from the past, all the way back to the dawn of humankind. Through the Ancient Ones, the Ancestors, the Old Ones, the Grandmothers and Grandfathers, the shaman draws of the collective wisdom of the Ancestors and translates it into information and visions appropriate for the time, the ritual, or the healing at hand. The Celts were known to fast in preparation for sleeping on the grave sites of ancestors for the purpose of seeking visions or special powers.

Totem animals

Celtic shamans and Celtic people have totem animals; spirit beings who attach to humans at birth. The totem animal is in a sense inherited, it is connected with the family and clan. Celtic shamans were trained to retain their relationship with their totem animal from childhood. Their totem animal is a representation of their shamanic identity to their ancestors in the spirit world and is symbolic of the qualities that individual expresses in the physical world.

The following is a list of twelve totem animals and the qualities traditionally attributed to them by Celtic peoples. These are the animals that appear most frequently in Celtic stories; this is not a complete list of Celtic totem animals:

Brionnfhionn—Salmon

Salmon swims in the pool at the foot of the Nine Hazels of Wisdom, who drop hazelnuts into the pool where they are eaten by Salmon. Salmon is able to transmit this wisdom to others, often those who eat him, and for this reason Salmon is associated with wisdom and gaining knowledge.

Abhach or Sailetheach—Deer or Stag

The Deer, both male and female, is a magical creature that leads people into the Otherworld. The deer often shapeshifts into a beautiful woman. For the Celts, Deer represents travel into Faere (the Otherworld), **shapeshifting**, and the qualities of swiftness, grace, and keen scent.

Cab-all—Horse

Horse, as with people of many other cultures, was seen by the Celts as a symbol of power, speed, and stamina. Horse is also seen as a faithful guide into the Otherworld and therein.

Aracos—Hawk

Hawk is a helper in journeys of spirit flight, especially those to the ancestors in search of **knowledge**. Hawk is also a symbol for far-reaching memory and for traveling far.

Iolair—Eagle

Eagle, as with people of many other cultures, was believed by the Celts to carry the qualities of swiftness and keen sight. In addition the Celts saw in the Eagle a depth of wisdom and knowledge of the Otherworld and because of this Eagle is also associated with magic.

Airc and Bacrie—Sow and Boar

The pig, in male or female form, is associated with the inspired visions of shamans, poets, bards, and prophets. Pig, an Otherworldly animal, is believed by the Celts to carry great totemic power and strength.

Druid-dhubh—Blackbird

Blackbird sings its mystical song at twilight, the time that is neither day nor night and is therefore a time of going between. The Celts believed that the song of Blackbird could transport the listener between worlds. For those who listen, Blackbird shares deep secrets about the Faere, the Otherworld, and magic.

Badb and Bran—Crow and Raven

For the Celts, Crow is the bringer of knowledge, though not always the kind the listener wants to receive. Thus, Crow is often seen as a bird of “ill-omen.” Crow is also symbolic of skill, cunning, and single-mindedness. Crow is an accomplished companion in the Otherworld, though tricky. Like Crow, Raven is seen as an oracular bird, who brings messages both welcome and unwelcome without bias. Because of this trait, both **birds** are associated with war and the battlefield.

Caoit—Cat

Cat is invoked as a guardian for protection. Cat also shares the ability to conceal one's inner strength and powers until needed, and then to defend them fiercely and fearlessly.

Balgair—Otter

The Celts honored Otter because it lives successfully between two worlds, water and earth, and is believed to possess great wisdom due to this trait. Otter is also believed to possess qualities of faithfulness, single-mindedness, and the ability to conceal one's essential abilities and inner treasures. Otter is symbolic of invulnerability and thus aids recovery in **healing** work.

Abach—Hound/Dog

Hound is known for the skills of the hunt, speed, perseverance, scenting, and tracking. Hound's "near-human instinct" makes it a frequent companion.

As-chu—Eel

Eel eats Salmon and thus carries similar traits of giving wisdom and inspiration. However Eel is also a great protector, particularly when actual defense is necessary, physical or energetic.

Power Animals

Celtic shamans developed working relationships with animal helping spirits in addition to their totem animals. The totem animals above are also potentially helping spirits. Like the **totem spirits**, **power animals** provide specific powers and skills that the shaman calls on in times of need. Unlike the totem spirits, the power animals do not represent the shaman's identity in the spirit world.

Animals that lived "betwixt and between" the worlds of air, water, and earth were particularly potent allies; their wisdom helped the Celtic shaman to live between the ordinary and Otherworldly realms. Waterbirds (associated with the Sun gods) like ducks, geese, and cormorants, and otters and beavers were honored for this reason. Frogs and others animals whose **life**

cycles involve transformation were also powerful allies supporting the shaman's own personal transformation into a third type of being, one able to live between the worlds in the harmony of the Kosmos.

The shaman invokes different animal spirits and asks to embody the animal or their special qualities. By establishing a relationship with the animal, the shaman may use the animal's great powers and particular strengths to accomplish the healing or other task before the shaman.

Gaining access to the special qualities of the helping spirits is just one facet of the extraordinary relationship between the shaman and their helping spirits. The shaman also learns from the helping spirits. The animals may teach the shaman **power songs** and/or give the shaman the **words** to invoke power (to call power in) or to cast intention (to send power out). Shamans may also learn the language of the animals and at times speak that language while in trance.

The Elements

The Celtic shaman worked with the four elements: the spirits of the earth, air, fire, and water. The shaman also worked with the **elements** in their combined forms, of which there are many in this land filled with windy moors, bogs, and sea islands rising from the mists and vanishing into the fog. Working with these elements the shaman was able to effect changes in **weather** and the environment around him or her.

The shaman also worked with the spirits of the earth and the sky as beings. This work is different than working with the earth and air as elemental spirits. The earth and the sky are complex beings; in that complexity lies their great powers. The elements are pure essential powers; their great power is that they are pure and not complex.

The Plants

All the plants of the Celtic shaman's world were potentially helping spirits,

e.g., vines, heather, ivy, ferns, honeysuckle, witchhazel, gorse, gooseberry, and other berries. Trees were particularly prominent helping spirits in the Celtic shamanic tradition. The following list of trees begins with the Oak—the Tree of Life, the center of the Celtic shaman's Universe:

Oak—The Tree of Life

An Irish woman trained in the shamanic practices of the R'nDraoic explains that the Oak is the Tree of Life. It is part of the shamanic culture and it is like a road system that enables the shaman to journey into other worlds.

The trees were functional as energy channels to move between the worlds and as helping spirits themselves. The following trees were recognized by the Celts, who named the letters of their ogham alphabet after them in Gaelic. Some of the trees' symbolic characteristics are listed:

Birch—beginnings and cleansing

Hazel—wisdom and inspiration

Ash—clarification

Apple—youth, power, and the Otherworld

Other trees relating to the Ogham letters: Elm, Rowan, Alder, Willow, Whitethorn, Hawthorn, Holly, Elder, Aspen, Mulberry, Fir, Broom, Blackthorn, Pine, Furze, Yew, Elecanpane, and Beech.

Shapeshifting

In the following poem from the Welsh shaman/bard Taliesin we see reported one of the most powerful opportunities afforded the shaman through his or her relationship with his or her helping spirits, shapeshifting:

I have been in many shapes:

I have been a narrow blade of a sword

I have been a drop in the air:

I have been a shining star;

I have been a word in a book;

I have been an eagle;

I have been a boat on the sea;

I have been a string on a harp:

I have been enchanted for a year in the foam of water.

There is nothing in which I have not been.

To have been all things is the key component to the Celtic shaman's ability to access the power to help others to heal. Through this merging the shaman experiences the energetic truth that all things are made of the same energy, that they share the same power, and that that power and energy moves between them, sharing consciousness and the creative power of life. Therefore, healing is a shifting of energy between the need for healing and the ability to heal.

Whether or not the Celtic shamans were able to physically shift form, the act of identifying with the animal spirit in question gave the shaman that animal's perspective of the world. As the shaman continued to identify with and learn from animals, plants, elements, and the faere folk he or she became able to cast an ever broadening web of awareness out until he or she was ultimately aware, literally from the perspective of all things, of the interconnectedness of all things. The Celtic shaman embodied through shapeshifting the connectedness of all things, the central belief of the Celtic worldview. Given the abundance of Celtic poems like Taliesin's above, we can assume that the desire and ability to connect with all things was not limited to shamans, but embraced by poets, bards, and potentially even the common folk.

Orientation

The Celts as a people were deeply and daily aware of moving between the worlds. To do this well, and without getting lost, one needs to be able to orient oneself in space and time, regardless of the landscape. It takes six coordinates to locate a single point in space. This is why the Celts honored the four directions and the earth and the Sky. By orienting themselves between the North and South, the East and West, and the earth and sky, they located their own center, the seventh point, within.

Journeying

A Celtic shaman of the tradition of the R'nDraoic—the knowledge bearers—received his or her calling from the **Otherworld**. Training came from the spirits and other shamans often in the family, like a grandmother or grandfather. In contemporary times the training is carried out in secrecy and extreme fear of being committed to a mental asylum if discovered.

Celtic literature and art show us that the Celtic shaman's regular position for journeying was probably sitting, with a prone position used when embarking on long **journeys**. John Matthews, a scholar of Celtic shamanism, believes that the sitting position for journeying is portrayed on the Gunderstrup cauldron (a Celtic artifact from 200 B.C.E.) and that the figure on the cauldron is a Celtic shaman in an antler headdress and not Cernunnos as is often assumed. Similar to the yogic half-lotus position, the sitting **posture** for journeying involves pulling the legs up, knees relaxed and open, and tucking the left foot under the right thigh and leaving the right foot slightly in front of the left.

The shamans of the R'nDraoic also journeyed collectively in the sitting position. Each person would prepare and define where he or she was going and what they were to do once they got there.

For long journeys into the Otherworlds, Celtic shamans often prepared themselves for days with fasting and **cleansing**. These journeys were taken lying prone, covered by or lying on a blanket or shawl with the corners near the head folded in to cover the eyes. Often these journeys were accompanied by **drum, music**, or song to aid the shaman in leaving and returning.

Vehicles used to support the journey

Music

Several **vehicles**, or tools, were used to support the shaman in his or her journey. Mentioned most often in the literature are those of music, chanting,

singing, and darkness. These tools, coupled with the preparatory practices of prolonged fasting, cleansings, and sleep deprivation would be adequate to support a journeying practice. The use of music is also in keeping with the shaman's relationship with the people of *sidhe* and their use of "faere music" to induce trance in humans. The harp, the Musical Branch, and song appear most often in the literature.

The Drum

What does not appear in the literature is the use of the drum, though the Irish have a drum very like the Siberian shaman's drum called the *bodhran*. There are many viable reasons for the drum's absence in the literature. Two of the most practical are: the drum alerts others to the practice of shamanism, which Celtic practitioners were trying specifically not to do as Christianity forced their practices underground. The other could be that the drum was common, interwoven into daily life, festivals, and music of the people as was their connection with the Otherworld and not noted.

Whatever the reason, the use of the drum is widespread in shamanic practices. Given the presence of the *bodhran*, it is not unreasonable to speculate that Celtic shamans used the drum at times to support their journeys. The *bodhran* is a single-headed **frame drum** made from cowhide, deerskin, or goatskin. The *bodhran* is still used on the significant days of the ancient ceremonies, implying use during much earlier times when the practice of shamanism was still widespread.

Psychoactive Plants

The literature suggests that the Celts may also have used a mixture of psychoactive plants to facilitate particular journeys, though it does not appear to have been the norm. It is not clear in what situations the shaman would have employed this vehicle.

The Call

"Taken by the faeries" is a common phrase used to explain odd behavior

and debilitating **illness** with no obvious cause or cure. When the Celtic society was still shamanic, “taken by the faeries” meant one had been called into the initiation crisis of the shaman. It was common that the illness or madness lasted for seven years. To others it would appear that the individual was depressed, in the throes of some unknown physical illness, or simply behaving in odd, socially unacceptable ways. For the individual, the journey had begun. They had stumbled or been drawn into the Otherworld and were engaged in an adventure of some kind with the Faerie Folk. How the individual resolves the journey, and if he or she does, determines whether or not they become a shaman.

Training

Learning how to use one’s senses in the spirit realms is the primary purpose of the shaman’s **training**. Celtic shamans were trained to use seven inner senses: instinct, feeling, speaking, tasting, seeing, hearing, and smelling. The great depth and breadth of understanding of the shamanic traditions was gained through experience: it was lived. Experience is the essential element in learning from the multi-layered symbolism of the circled cross; it must be lived to be understood.

The apprentice also learns the nature of the shaman’s Universe by journeying into and working with the many layers of symbolism of the circled cross. Each of the eight directions opens from the center onto a unique pathway of learning. Together, in their completion, they constitute the basic understanding necessary to engage the powers of the Celtic shaman’s universe.

Learning to read and communicate through the ogham alphabet was another aspect of the Celtic shaman’s training. The stone inscriptions were generally read from the bottom to the top, though that is not necessarily true for ogham writings on other mediums. There are many lists of glosses, some riddling glosses, some not even recorded to be

understood and memorized. Lists particularly useful to Celtic shamanism are the *Alphabet of the Word-ogham of Mac ind Oic*, the *Word Oghams of Morann Mac Main*, and Fionn’s Window from *The Book of Ballymote*, which is assumed to refer to Fionn Mac Cumhail who also experience the “illumination of wisdom.”

Fionn’s Window depicts the relationship of the ogham letters around the circled cross, a shorthand symbol of the Celtic shaman’s universe. The other lists contain systems of meaning for the letters. Together they create an overlay of “five dimensional” information that is quite remarkable. It begins to explain how the shaman was able to record the complex understanding of the Otherworld in such a simple alphabet.

Like other sacred and symbolic written systems, the literal translation is much less than the experience of interpreting the meaning of the message for oneself. To translate the messages into ordinary words rendered them very small and very lacking. Literal interpretation limits interpretation. Just as the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao, the inscriptions on the Ogham stones defy translation and invite the reader to journey through the portals found in the stones themselves.

Using only two lists, the *Word Oghams of Morann Mac Main* and Fionn’s Window, we can illustrate how quickly the depth of meaning in the alphabet alone evolves. Standing in the center of the wheel, like the Celtic shaman, we see that the work in the east opens the path of Opening the Ways. This work is air and spirit related. The Ogham symbols tell us it is a journey involving Challenge, Seeking, *Trian* (undefined), Beauty, and Protection. The work of the southeast opens the path of Strength and the journey involves feeling. Work in the south opens the path of Coming into Being. This work is fire and mind related and the Ogham symbols convey that the journey involves Effort, Satisfaction, Healing, Anger, and Inspiration. The

work of the southwest opens the path of Insight and the journey involves hearing, listening to spirit. Work in the west opens the Path of Passing Within. This work is water and emotion related and the Ogham symbols convey that the journey involves Misery, Travel, Fear, Insight, and Wisdom. The work of the northwest opens the path of Cleansing and the journey involves sight. Work in the north opens the Path of Finding Wisdom. This work is earth and body related and the Ogham symbols convey that the journey involves Age, Love, Defense, Death, and Opposition. The work of the northeast opens the path of Inspiration and the journey involves taste and smell.

Correct interpretation of the Ogham letters and inscriptions depends on a full spectrum of knowledge of various systems of meaning, knowledge of the relationship of the letter, or letters, to each other, to the full inscription, and to the context in which they are found. The letters communicate information only to those similarly trained. For individuals, like those of the R'nDraoic, the Ogham letters allow relatively secret communication, filled with secret meanings and five-dimensional stories about the shamanic mysteries.

The Celtic shaman's instruction occurs primarily in the Otherworld. When the apprentice asks "Where are these worlds?" the teacher answers "Go there." As in the case of the woman of the R'nDraoic, her grandmother was her teacher in physical form, however much of her training occurred in her journeys. Entering the Otherworld through her journey, she would meet her grandmother there in various spirit forms and be instructed by her.

Instruction also comes from the spirits of nature. The form was not as important as the content and the learning the spirits of nature offered. The trees, stones, elements, and other spirits of Nature can teach the apprentice in ordinary reality and the apprentice can journey into the Otherworld to learn from them there.

Things were "taken into the journey" as a training form and, later, as a healing form. Questions or problems seeking solution would be written on a piece of paper, folded up, and, without being read first, "taken into the journey." The woman of the R'nDraoic explains that at some point in the journey she would connect with her teacher and with what was being asked on a different level. Then she would go to one, or more, of the elements for the answers. Used initially as a training process, this journeying technique was also used for divination, **diagnosis**, and determining remedies.

Learning different means of protection from malevolent energies was also a part of the shaman's training. In one protective practice, called *lorica* (Irish) or *breastplate*, the supplicant verbally invokes an energetic armor. The armor is created through the imagery of the request from the energies of the four elements: earth, air, fire, and water, and of the spirit world.

Initiation

It is suggested that surviving the seven-year illness of being "taken by faeries" is the Celtic shaman's initiation. However, as **the call** and initiation are defined in this book, we must consider surviving one's initial experience in the *sidhe* as surviving the call to the shaman's life, not the initiation into the practice. Initiation for the Celtic shaman marked the maturation of their ability to be a person living between the worlds and to see life from a third point of view that is neither ordinary or Otherworldly, but both.

There is a great deal of training necessary to get from the place of emergence from the call to being capable of fulfilling the role of the shaman in a community and of sustaining one's own energy while doing so. It is probably safe to assume that since the Celts had celebrations, festivals, ceremonies, or rituals to mark every other passing in their lives, they also had initiation rituals for those who survived both the call

and the training necessary to master the art of **shamanic healing**.

The following is an example of only one woman's initiation, however it gives us a good sense of the form and function of Celtic shamanic initiations. Initiation for the woman of the R'nDraoic occurred when she was fifteen. For her it functioned as a unique passage crossed between the worlds. From it she gained recognition and was accepted into the R'nDraoic. That group was then able to further facilitate the flow of knowledge and awareness in her continuing growth as a shaman.

The woman recalls that the preparation lasted for seven days. Each step was accompanied by a story, which was followed by other stories of how that step had been accomplished by others before her for generations. Seven other people took part in her initiation because each one had a unique "basket of knowledge." She possessed some of the knowledge from each of the other "baskets" and an overview of them all that none of the others possessed. That overview was the unique shamanic gift she had been given at birth. Like the journeying, it had been with her all her life waiting to be trained and put into context so that it could be put into use.

The initiation ritual began with **purification**, then dedication, and finally consecration with all the elements. The ritual itself consisted primarily of working with fire and secondarily with all the elements. The central focus of the ritual was to become one with the fire. "The fire is like the emergence of life into the physical. The goal was to unify with the spirit of the fire to the point where he wouldn't burn me. So there was a point where I stood closer and closer to the fire and called on the spirit of the fire. . . We called on Tinne, the spirit of the fire, and at a certain point he came out and he embraced me and took me through the fire. And we danced."

After the close of the ritual there was a feast to celebrate her passage and to

break the participant's fast, which may have been at least seven days. The woman reports that to this day she renews this ceremony of the union with the fire and the elements every year on Beltaine.

Naming

We can assume that the Celtic shamans' training continued after initiation, because there was also a **naming** ceremony years after the initiation. The training probably shifted after initiation from skills and general practice to the development of the individual's unique gifts. For example, once initiated into the R'nDraoic, a member waited seven years to be named a name that came from within them and summed up the individual's essence and the gifts or traits they brought to the group.

Daily Practice

Elements of the daily practice of Celtic shamans are for the most part lost to us. However the daily practices of the Irish woman initiated into the R'nDraoic illustrates how Celtic "shamanic beliefs" were woven completely into the fabric of everyday life.

Speaking of her grandmother she says that it was her practice to "pay tribute" to the fire gods in some way every day and whenever she stoked or banked the fire. The predominant element used was fire and care was taken to always balance it with other elements. For example, when the fire was lit each morning a representative of each of the four elements was present: a little ash from the previous day's fire would be mixed with salt to represent the earth, the bellows provided air, and there was water from the well. When then fire was lit and brought in, the elements would all balance each other.

"Sourcing" was another aspect of daily practice. Sourcing is to draw on the power of an element, or other power source, by coming into union with it. For example, when stoking the morning fire the power of the earth and air would be sourced into the hearth and merged

with the fire to balance the elemental powers. In another example of “sourcing,” her grandmother sourced the power of the earth each morning by going out of doors, bending down, and putting some dirt on the forehead with the intention of raising and gaining the earth’s energy.

It was also an important part of one’s daily practice to honor and stay in good relation with the helping spirits. The woman explains that for the Celtic shaman it was essential to stay in good relation with the Oak. “It’s an entry way and because it’s the mighty oak only the good energies can come through it. You have to be on really good terms with the oak. Pay tremendous tribute to the oak to be allowed to use it for visiting or going from this world to the others.”

Divination

The Celts had many methods of divination. **Seers** have the gift of *shealladh*, literally “having two sights.” The most significant shamanic methods are listed below.

Tenm Laida

Tenm Laida is translated to mean the burning song, or illumination of song. Through this form the shaman accesses the power of **chant** to access **altered states of consciousness** necessary to communicate with the spirits.

Dichetal do Chennaib

Dichetal do Chennaib or Extempore Incantation is translated in several ways; all can be interpreted as forms of divination. The first, “cracking open the nuts of wisdom,” refers to divination as opening the nuts that grow on the nine hazels around the Well of Segais, which contain all the wisdom of the Otherworld.

The second translation, “incantation on the bones of the fingers,” refers to working with the ogham letters and mysterious ogham inscriptions carved into stones and other power objects. A third translation from the Irish law tract, *Senchus Mor*, suggests a divination technique using physical contact to

access ancestral wisdom. *Didhetal* is described as when a “poet” (prophet or shaman) was divining information. He or she places his or her staff on the person’s body or head to divine information about the person.

Imbas Forosna

Translated as Wisdom that Illuminates, *imbas forosna* is a form of divination using extremes of dark and light to inspire vision. In practice, a trained seer is placed in a dark space for a prolonged period. In this womb of darkness the seer is able to journey back into the Kosmos, into the **Emptiness** of creation and inspiration, of Death and Rebirth. When seers are brought forth suddenly into the light, they return suddenly from their journey and share the insights and illumination gained on their journey into darkness. Traditionally the **skulls** of dogs were crafted into power objects and utilized in the *imbas forosna* divination practice.

Dream Incubation

Dreams were used as a vehicle for self-induced visions. These dreams could be induced a number of ways including the position and or place of the sleeper, bodily contact with other men or women, and contact with the skin of an animal on which the sleeper lies, as in the druidic practice of *tarbh feis* or the Scottish *taghairm*.

Neladoracht—Divination by Clouds

The Celts saw clouds as a medium through which the winds and the spirit of Air communicated the mysteries to them. The winds from each of the directions were given a name, a characteristic, and a color. How these wind beings shaped the cloud told the watchers what they needed to know.

Ogham

Ogham is known as “the secret language of poets” or “the tree alphabet,” because each of the letters is named after a tree in Gaelic. It is an alphabet of twenty letters plus five more, probably added at a later date, described as *eochra exsi*, the keys of knowledge. The

creation of the ogham is attributed to *Ogma Sun-Face*, the god of inspiration and poetry. The original order has also been changed over time and from use. There are many different lists of “glosses” to the letters that ascribe different meanings to the letters and in so doing imply different systems of knowledge that can be accessed through the letters. There are lists that equate the ogham letters with desirable human qualities, body parts, trees, riddles, and elements of the shamanic experience and many more lists that are lost or were never recorded.

The complexity of this simple alphabet of slash marks and shapes comes from the vast and multi-layered range of symbolic reference required to be able to not only read the letters and words, but to actually derive the intended meaning. The translations of ogham writings are full of magical nuances that tie the alphabet to the magic and practices of the shamans, wizards, and witches of the time.

The ogham was used in divination by inscribing the ogham letters on billets of wood, drawing or casting the billets, and interpreting the resulting symbols. There are specific records of it being used to determine the sex of an unborn child and guilt or innocence in crimes with no witnesses.

Divination Journey

As with other shamans, the Celtic shaman used the journey for divination, diagnosis, and to determine an appropriate remedy. To accomplish this an ordinary reality object, or written question, was held by the shaman and taken into the journey to act as a magnet to attract back whatever was being asked for. For example, if the shaman is journeying to help a person, they would hold on their person something of tremendous meaning or power to that person as they entered into the journey. The object is then displayed in the journey to the helping spirit, who projects it outward into the spirit realms to attract the answer. Similarly, if the question is about how to get something to grow,

earth is taken into the journey to attract the answer.

Once the shaman has received what he or she is looking for, he or she asks permission of the tree used to journey into the Otherworld and the helping spirit found there to bring whatever is recovered in the journey back into ordinary reality. There must be agreement that whatever is being brought back belongs in the ordinary world and that it is accepted by all concerned.

Healing

Not much remains in detail of the actual Celtic healing rituals. However, there are descriptions that tell of pieces of Celtic shamans’ healing practices. In one practice an opening to the energy of the creative life force is opened with the hand and the flow of energy in the patient is intuitively returned to harmony. Another teaching is that of a clean heart to clear the heart channel and direct the conscious thought to will that the patient be all right.

When a shaman needed more of the life force energy for healing he or she reached into the realms where more of it is available, gathered it, brought it back, and sent it to where healing was needed.

The following is an example of a healing ritual using fire. The shaman determined that the sickness in the family was caused by a darkness in the house and lit small fires that took away the darkness that was causing the sickness. Like cleaning a house, she “cleaned” the darkness with the fires. Once the space of the house was cleaned, the shaman could look into the spirits of the family members and diagnose their needs. The shaman then worked with them individually.

Healing Techniques

The healing techniques believed to be used by Celtic shamans include, and are not limited to, the following: The healing power of the Word, found in **spell**, poem, **prayer**, and song is a powerful part of Celtic ancestry.

Dream Incubation

In **dream incubation** the shaman's role is the preparation of the patient for the ritual, the opening of the **sacred space** (physically and spiritually) for the patient to dream in, closing that sacred space, and aiding the patient in interpreting his healing dream.

The patient and the **dreaming hut, cave**, or grave must be prepared. The patient is cleansed physically and then spiritually through purification rites. It is not clear how the site was prepared, only that **offerings** to the helping spirits were made at the site before sleeping. The patient then enters the space and sleeps, questing for a dream containing the necessary remedies for healing or a visitation from a god, goddess, or helping spirit who performs a healing in the dream. If a dream did not come, the patient was instructed how to prepare further and when to return to dream again. If sleep did not come the needed information or healing often came in a direct, waking vision.

Chalk pipe

The chalk pipe was used by Celtic shamans (female) to get into a place of peacefulness. Once the desired state is invoked, it is possible that the shaman used the pipe smoke to **smudge** and clear the patient's energy.

Sticks

Sticks and stones were used (with their permission) as receivers of illness. In the healing work, the shaman diagnoses the root of the illness, connects with the energy of the illness as it resides in the patient, and then uses his or her hands to transfer the energy of the illness to the stick or stone. The stick or stone is then cleansed and left out of doors so that the energy of the illness can exit the carrier.

Stones

Stones, painted with symbols, have been found at ancient sites from the Northern Isles to Caithness. Common symbols from these stones can be interpreted as the circle cross, the **spiral** of

life, energy, stars, the Otherworld, gateway, sun, moon, eye, mountain, rivers, drum, and Kosmos. They may have functioned for Celtic shamans as the **churingas** (painted stones) function for Australian shamans. The stones are used as containers to hold powers for the shaman or they act as direction finders and maps of the shaman's universe.

Silver box

Silver box was used for carrying **sacred** messages into the journey. For example, the name of the person needing healing was placed into the box with power objects, like plants, stones, or sticks, necessary for the healing.

Teach-an-alais (Sweat house)

The *teach-an-alais* was shaped like a beehive with a low entrance. A fire was lit inside and allowed to burn until the floor and walls were hot enough to rake out the coals and add turf sods to create the moist steamy atmosphere. The patient was placed inside alone to sweat and quest for healing. It is not clear whether or not the Celts also used their *teach-an-alais* for purification rituals like the First peoples of **North America**.

Psychopomp

Psychopomp, escorting the souls of the dead through their death transition, was most likely one of the healing roles the Celtic shaman performed. The Celts' relationship with death was not fearful like that of post-religious peoples. They believed that the human soul was immortal and that eventually it would pass on to another body. Death for the Celts was "the center of a long life."

Celtic oral tradition is full of *immrama* (Irish) tales of fantastic voyages and adventures charting the soul's journey through this life and onto the next. Like the classic Books of the Dead, these tales assure the living that the final passage from these earthly realms to the Otherworld has been charted and they show the living the stages, experiences, and transformations necessary to complete

the journey. The *immrama*, maps of the territory and terrain of death, most likely came from the journeys of Celtic shamans. And having been there many times before and returning safely to tell those tales, the shaman is able to go again as psychopomp, to accompany those making the transition for the first time and to assure a successful passage.

Ritual

One of the primary rituals was a ritual to celebrate the running water of life. Running water was symbolic of the life-force energy that is the Source of life and flows through the living. The ritual celebrates the human ability to be a part of the river of life, to rise above it and to perceive it. The ritual is to recognize that and respect it, to remember to experience it with the joy with which it was given and to also view it from above.

Planting a tree is another primary ritual. The Celts always planted a flat stone from a riverbed or other source of water under the tree to draw the water to the tree. The ritual was completed by sprinkling sand around the tree.

Paraphernalia

It is not uncommon for the Celtic shaman to have received their power objects from the *sidhe* to learn from the people of the *sidhe* how to turn an object like a stone or a stole into an object of power. What appears again and again in Celtic literature is the need to return power objects to *sidhe* after the death of the shaman. Specific instructions are often left for the heirs to throw objects into a lake, well, or other means of returning them to Nature.

The Severed Head

Author Tom Cowan in his book *Fire in the Head* explains that the Celts believed that the soul was immortal and that the physical seat of the soul was in the head. From this belief sprang many Celtic traditions involving severed heads since possessing the head was considered the same as possessing the

soul, power, or spirit of the deceased. Skulls were treated as power objects. They were fashioned into goblets and used as cups at sacred wells.

For the Celts, the head represents and contains the sacred. For the Celtic shaman, the skull must be “emptied” of the shaman’s soul and his or her **ordinary consciousness** and then opened to the presence of Spirit and the shaman’s helping spirits. The shaman must enter this state of emptiness to work. Then cleared of ordinary consciousness the shaman’s mind becomes the gateway through which he or she journeys into the Otherworld. “Fire in the head” found in many Celtic legends is symbolic of an altered state of consciousness, as in the shaman’s journey or the battle trance of the warrior.

The Crane Bag

The “Crane bag” was used by shamans to carry their power objects and their healing and divination tools. The crane bag (made from the skin of a crane) was revered as the sea god, Mananan’s, container for secrets of magic and power. Crane is recognized for grace, its trance-like stance, and its association with the supernatural. As the Christian era unfolded, the crane became known as unclean and evil, and “crane” became a euphemism for “witch” because of crane’s association with the supernatural.

The Silver Branch

The Musical branch, or Silver branch, laden with bells, blossoms, magical **birds**, apples (symbolizing Otherworld), hazelnuts (symbolizing Wisdom), or acorns (symbolizing the Sacred Oak), is central to Celtic Spirituality. The branch is the hallmark of the Poet, and also a passport into the Otherworld. The shaking of the branch is said to produce faery music that lulls the listener into a dream-filled sleep where they may enter the Otherworld or they may be healed if ill or wounded. The branch is also symbolic of the Tree of Life, and through this symbolism it reconnects

the shaman to the center of his or her Universe.

Cup

The cup is symbolic of the cup of knowledge and truth, the empty hazelnut and the empty head. It also symbolizes a human's ability to be a holder of knowledge. Recall the cup being passed in preparation for the collective journey mentioned above.

Stole, Shawl, or Blanket

Stoles, shawls, and blankets were handmade for their use in the shaman's practice and often handed down from shaman to apprentice. Stoles made of heavy linen and hand embroidered were considered very sacred. The stole was used in journeys "to higher places," its shape defining the sacred space the shaman left from and returned to. Shamans spread the stole out on the ground, and lying on it, placed the front ends across their faces and eyes to block out light and other distractions.

Robes

The robes worn for shamanic work were usually very old, handed down from shaman to apprentice. The robes themselves were considered sacred and their significance was far reaching. The robes were also found in the Otherworld, at times distinguishing a familiar teacher who appears in an unfamiliar form during the journey.

There are also numerous references to the feathered cloaks of shamans in the literature. The cloak like other pieces of the shaman's **paraphernalia** is a power object. Intention and power is sung and chanted into the cloak while it is created so that the shaman can slip into that power when he or she slips into the cloak. In this way the cloak embodies the power its creator intends. It is not symbolic of the power, it is the power.

Celtic Festivals

The Celts were agricultural people; the passing of the seasons was important to them. The change of season not only

marked changes in the weather, but also changes in the relationship between the physical world and the *sidhe*. The Celts honored the day each of the four seasons began with great festivals. They are:

Samhain (*Summer's Death*): Nov 1.

Imbolc (*Time of Lactation*): Feb 1.

Beltaine (*Bright Fire*): May 1.

Lughnasadh (*Lugh's Wedding*): Aug 1.

Each of the four great festivals actually begin in the evening of the previous day. The Celts valued the movement from darkness into light and back into darkness again, therefore they measured the "day" from evening to evening. The period from Samhain to Beltaine was known as *an ghrian beag*, the lesser sun, and the period from Beltaine to Samhain was *an ghrian mor*, the greater sun. Each festival celebrates and takes advantage of a particular relationship between the ordinary world and the Otherworld. Each festival had great symbolic meaning and functional application for the Celtic people.

Samhain (Sa' wen): Nov 1.

The woman of the R'nDraic describes Samhain as "the beginning of the new year . . . the biggest festival . . . All the other worlds converge at that time. It's a time of tremendous power where you can really call on the elements . . . It's believed by our people that the gods at that time dropped their barriers between each other, between other realms . . . but when you do drop those barriers there is a convergence of negative energies, too." She continues to explain that Samhain celebrates our unity with all that is including recognizing the other realms that are not friendly to us. In Samhain the humans unite with the unfriendly energies and celebrate and **dance** together. "We kill them with joy and pleasure and happiness."

The boundaries between all polarities are questioned during Samhain. The blending of genders and uniting of what appears to be opposites through **costumes** and crossdressing reminded the Celts of the beginning when man and woman emerged from the Original Unity.

Samhain marks the high or low point of the cycle, depending on your perspective, however it is considered the “New Year” (or the time of the year renewing) because it is when the barriers between the physical realm and the other realms are overflowing.

Imbolc (*Im’olk*): Feb 1.

Imbolc is the time for Divination concerning personal direction and destiny. It is the time that the mother’s milk flowed for baby lambs and for the many babies born of joinings during last year’s Beltaine festival. It is the time to celebrate new beginnings of all kinds.

Imbolc is a festival of the family, the extended family, and the coming of all new life. Brigid the Goddess of Midwifery and Fosterage is honored.

Beltaine (*Bel’ta-na*): May 1.

Beltaine is the other major gateway between the worlds. Young people seek gifts from the folk of the Otherworld, the *sidhe*. They sleep outdoors over the night of the festival and often make love. In the morning couples drink deeply together from the well before sunrise, honor each other’s beauty by weaving flowers and leaves into each other’s hair, and then return to the village with a young sapling for the day’s Maypole festivities.

The Maypole is used to embody the energy of the Tree of Life and the festival celebrates the spiraling of the Universe around that central tree. A circle of dancers, alternating boy and girl, rings the tree with each dancer holding the end of a ribbon tied to the top of the tree. The girls dance in one direction and the boys in the other; in this way the dancers embody the great polarities of life, particularly death and rebirth. As the dancers weave in and out of each other, the ribbons wrap the tree in a double spiral (double helix), reflecting the interwoven nature of all life in the Universe.

Beltaine celebrates the end of winter and the beginning of summer. It is a time to ignore restrictions and commitments and to open to greater strength and realizing desires. Any child con-

ceived in the spirit of this festival time is considered sacred, the offspring of the God of Fertility and The Goddess of Spring.

Lughnasadh (*Loo’nas’a*): Aug 1.

Lughnasadh is the time for divining the communal direction and destiny. It is a time of **sacrifice** as the crops are brought in and the condition of the harvest is determined. The abundance of the harvest reflected the power and commitment of the tribe’s *tanaiste*, or monarch, chieftain. If the crops were not good and a decision was made to choose a more able ruler, the ritual games, business deals, and arbitration of this festival time would be the opportunity to do so.

Lughnasadh is the festival of the tribe. It is a time to celebrate the harvest, the flocks, and the resulting wealth of communal efforts. It is also a time to assess responsibilities, align commitments, and forge new partnerships and trial-marriages. Lugh, the god of Sunlight and Inspiration, is honored here.

Dark and Light in Balance

Writing about the Celts, authors spent a lot of energy talking about how the Celtic traditions are *light focused*, as if still trying to validate the goodness of Celtic spirituality in a predominantly Christian world. From this research it seems that the Celts were actually *balance focused*. The Celts were respectful and aware of negative energies and the need to work with them or become lost in them. Each festival begins at sundown and flows until the next. The focus seems to be on moving from the dark into the light and back into the dark again, always moving along the circle of existence. For example, Samhain celebrates their unity with all that is. It also recognizes other realms and energies that are not friendly. However the point of Samhain is to unite with these energies, to bring them into the celebration and to “dance” with them. In this way the power of what the Celts feared in the darkness is restored to

balance with joy and pleasure and happiness.

Poetry and Storytelling

The shamans were the first storytellers, largely because storytelling is a form of teaching. It was a means by which the shaman could teach the true nature of the Kosmos and her people's place in it. To offer a story in the Celtic world was to offer a sacrament. Storytelling allows the sacred mysteries to break through into ordinary consciousness where they open the mind to the possibilities of non-ordinary worlds.

In the Celtic tradition the story was so highly valued that roles emerged in the communities for poets, bards, and seanachies. The Celtic shaman was still a storyteller and a poet, however not all poets were considered shamans. Nonetheless both shamans and poets journeyed and the stories of both tell of shapeshifting. They both utilized the journey as a tool for their art; the shaman to create healing rituals and the poet to create stories and poems.

Celtic poetry contains shamanic themes encoded in the poems. The poetry tells tales of the initiatory experience from which comes great wisdom. The poetry often includes themes of rebirth, usually into animal form. The poems also tell of transformation into the manifestations of the four elements, into trees and different aspects of Nature, and ultimately into the whole of creation. It is this experience of All-that-is, of Oneness, that is central to all shamanism and found in the poetry of the Celts.

Poetry was seen as a gift from the Otherworld. While in the throes of composing a poem, Celtic poets were considered mad or to have been taken by faeries. The poets themselves report having flown like birds or having passed the time with the beings of the Other realm.

For the Celts truth derives from spirit and both the shaman and the poet journeyed to discover Divine truth.

From Divine truth came the universal order of things, the endless cycles of creation and death that weave into the Web of Life. This was the "fitness of things" and the Celts found it in Nature, in their relationships with each other, in art, and in each individual's life. The "fitness of things" lives at the heart of shamanism and at the heart of the Celtic culture.

Cowan, E. *Shamanism: Quarterly for the Foundation for Shamanic Studies* 5, (1992): 14–19.

Cowan, Tom. *Fire in the Head: Shamanism and the Celtic Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Encyclopedia of Celtic Wisdom: A Celtic Shaman's Source Book*. England: Element Books, 1994.

Ceremony

Shamans use ceremony and **ritual** to create the quality of **sacred space** necessary for their work with **spirit** to succeed. Though the **words** are used interchangeably today, ritual and ceremony are not the same. They are two powerful shamanic tools for creating change through the intervention of spirit in human affairs.

When a shaman creates a successful ritual the energy spirals upwards, towards Spirit and the Unknown; it is unpredictable and uncontrollable. That is the magic of ritual. In contrast, the magic of ceremony is predictable and controlled.

In a successful ceremony the energy spirals downward, towards the **earth**, drawing Spirit into the community. That is the purpose of ceremony, to ground people and to strengthen the community bonds and the bonds with spirit and the **Ancestors**. Ceremonies, like a first planting, a stomp-dance, a harvest celebration, or even a Catholic Mass or

Jewish Passover, are essentially the same each time. It is the familiar form and experience of the Divine that empowers ceremony to build community, ease the heart, calm the mind, nourish the soul, and to bring people into the same time and **space** with one another.

The success of a shamanic ceremony depends in part on the focused intention of the participants and on the absence of doubt. It is not important that participants believe or have faith, only that they participate with an absence of doubt. Traditional shamans were known to stop ceremonies and clear the audience of doubters to assure the success of the ceremony.

Somé, M. P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Chamber Mounds

Large mounds of earth that look like hills, but contain stone chambers constructed in various sizes and arrangements of rooms with connecting passages. Chamber mounds function as gates to the spirit world and are used for **dream incubation** and **ritual**. It is not clear whether the power of these sites is due to the **spirits** of the land, **Ancestor** spirits who dwell within them, or both.

These ancient mounds, or *tumuli*, are called *sidhe* in Ireland and *raths* in Scotland. They are also found in **North America** and other parts of the world. Some chamber mounds show evidence of being used for burial. Others show evidence of construction which exactly aligns the chambers and windows with astrological occurrences, like the winter solstice. Internal chambers range in size from ten meters in diameter to 50–100 meters.

Though the practice is rare today, there are stories of chamber mounds being used for ritual and dream incubation. The chambers are used in particular when the purpose of the ritual is to connect with the Ancestors who came to the land at the beginning of time. For example, legends describe how Newgrange, in Ireland, was used to connect with ancestral spirits.

It is said that the *Tuatha De Danann*, the ancestral spirits who ruled Ireland, were a race of supernatural beings who were reborn as mortals. It is believed that the *Tuatha De Danann* dwell in the chamber mound of Newgrange, as well as other *sidhe* across the countryside. Individuals seeking counsel with these Ancestors stayed in the dark mound chambers for three days and three nights, fasting and asking for guidance. During this vigil, **sacrifices** and **prayers** were offered in hopes that the Ancestors would appear in sleeping or **waking dreams** to give counsel, guidance, and **blessings**.

Chanjan

Chanjan is the **Tungus** term for the **souls** of the living. The soul after the death of the body is called the *omi*.

Kalweit, H. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1984.

Chant

Chanting is a tool used by shamans to enter **altered states of consciousness**. The function of the chant is two-fold. The arrangement of tones of some chants invoke specific **helping spirits** when chanted properly. In addition, some chants may serve to balance the left and right hemispheres of the brain, aiding the shaman in entering **trance**.

Chants and **songs** are used in **healing** and shamanic rituals. The **singing** of the chant is one of many ways the **shaman** weaves the container of **energy**

and guides its transformation throughout the course of the **ritual**.

Chants are part of the collected power of the shaman and are owned by the shaman in many cultures. In some cultures chants are sung quietly, so that they can not be stolen by other shamans or sorcerers. The shaman acquires chants directly from the **spirits**, as a means to call on them in the future. Chants can also be inherited from a human **teacher**.

Similar to entrainment with the pulse of the **drum** during shamanic drumming, chanting brings the heart-beat and breath into resonance with the body and the body in tune with the resonance of the chant. As the chant invokes the intended spirits the chanter comes into resonance with these spirit energies as well.

Chaos

Chaos is a state of randomness; it is the confused, disorganized state of primordial matter before the creation of distinct and orderly forms, like the cosmos. Chaos is by definition non-linear, however, scientists are finding universal patterns in chaos, like the behavior of the **weather**, flowing fluids, and humanity.

Few but the **shaman** thought of non-linearity as a creative force; yet it is non-linearity that creates the mysteriously beautiful patterns of most real-world systems. Chaos is a new way of seeing, a new attitude toward complexity. It turns back a trend in science toward linear explanations and reductionism (breaking systems down into smaller and smaller parts). What people are finally realizing is that reductionism has a dead end to it. Scientists are much more interested in the idea that the whole can be greater than the sum of the parts.

Gleick, J. "New Images of Chaos That Are Stirring a Science Revolution." *Smithsonian* 18, no. 9 (December 1987): 122–134.

Charm

A charm is a **power object** whose innate properties allow the manipulator of the charm to direct supernatural forces to create a desired result or to aid the manipulator in some specific way. Charms come in many different forms and can be directed to aid in many different purposes. Charms can be objects, substances, herbal mixtures, **songs**, **incantations**, and prayer **offerings** made to increase the efficacy of the **prayer**.

Unlike a **fetish**, charms are not created to embody a **spirit**. The spirit **power** of the charm is inherent to the charm. For example, the power of an animal charm does not come from possessing the **animal spirit** within it. The charm's powers are native to it and similar in qualities to those of the animal spirit. See also **medicine** and **talisman**.

Lyon, W. S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism*. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Ch'i (Ji, Ki)

Ch'i is the primordial life force and the **power** an individual derives from that life force. *Ch'i* begins in human life when the sperm pierces the egg and physical life is conceived. *Ch'i* is the continuous flow of **energy** linking everything within a person, the various tissues, organs, brain functions, etc. *Ch'i* also links the individual to the environment, environments to each other, and so on until everything in the Universe is connected.

Also known as *prana* or *kundalini*.

Chia, Mantak. *Awaken Healing Energy Through the Tao*. New York: Aurora Press Inc., 1983.

Chicha

A slightly fermented drink made by women from *manioc* (cassava root) and occasionally from fruits throughout **Amazonia**. *Chicha* is a daily staple food for many peoples and is almost their sole source of carbohydrate. An active man may drink four to five gallons a day and a woman two to three.

To prepare *chicha* the root is harvested, rubbed down, the poisonous (cyanogenetic glycoside) juice extracted, the pulp boiled, chewed, and the mash is spit back into a container where it ferments overnight. *Chicha* is prepared in dugout canoes for rituals where it is consumed in great quantities. It may take as many as ten days to make enough *chicha* for a large **ritual**.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

China

In the earliest records of Chinese history the *wu* (**shamans**), predominantly female, are described as experts in **exorcisms**, **extractions**, prophecies, rainmaking, **healing**, and **soul retrievals**. Their role in tribal society was to gather information from the spirit world to aid individuals and the community. They entered **trance** states to **journey** into the Unknown and gather the needed information from the spirit world.

The ancient Chinese emperors believed that all the wisdom of human affairs lay in the **Upperworld** and that access to that wisdom was necessary for political authority. Therefore the *wu*

was a crucial part of every state court. The influence of the *wu* was pushed aside around 200 B.C.E. when Confucianism became the central organizing belief system of the Chinese Empire. The *wu*'s shamanic performances in the Chinese court were abolished in 32 B.C.E. The Chinese became even more removed from their shamanic roots by the arrival of Buddhism around 200 C.E. Today the Chinese are primarily Buddhist, Taoist, or Christian.

The **shamanism** practiced by the many tribal groups also disappeared, in part due to the oppression of the Confucian government and in part due to the emergence of Daoists as a dominant shamanic group. To a great degree **Daoism** (**Taoism**) replaced the ethnic spiritual traditions of shamanic tribes.

Today it is through China's "folk Daoism" that the Chinese people are returning to shamanism. The roots of Daoism lie in the ancient shamanic practices with which it has always shared beliefs. However, after centuries of suppression, there are relatively few shamans who remain connected to and able to interpret the Divine.

Paraphernalia

The **drum** remains one of the most important **power objects** for Chinese shamans. The drum, often accompanied by the **rattle** or chanting and dancing, is used to induce the shaman's trance state.

Contemporary Chinese shamans tend toward elaborate **paraphernalia**: thrones, flags of different **colors**, skewers to demonstrate the depth of their trance state, **swords** and whips for exorcising of malevolent spirits, **costumes** for each of the deities embodied in trance, holy water, divining blocks, red ink, brushes, and charm papers.

The **sacred space** created for **ritual** by these shamans can be quite involved and eclectic. For example their **altars** may be populated by statues of Taoist deities, Hindu gods, Buddhist saints,

and the Madonna, as well as flowers, fruits, burning **incense**, and freshly brewed tea of which the visiting spirits will partake.

Plant hallucinogens

Yün-Shih, *Caesalpinia sepiaria*, is a shrubby vine used as a hallucinogen in China. The roots, seeds, and flowers also have medicinal value. The earliest Chinese herbal manual, *Pen-ts'ao-ching*, states that the *yün-shih* flowers, taken in excess, induce the temporary ability to see **spirits**. Taken over a long period, *yün-shih* induces an ecstatic trance state, allowing **soul flight** and communication with the spirits. See also **ancient China**; **Hmong**; **Manchu**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Belyea, Charles. *Dragon's Play : A New Taoist Transmission of the Complete Experience of Human Life*. Berkeley, CA: Great Circle Lifeworks, 1991.

Chöd

A Tibetan tantric rite that follows the pattern of shamanic **initiation** by **dismemberment** found in shamanic cultures around the world. In the practice of *chöd* (gchod), one **sacrifices** one's own flesh to be eaten by demons as a means of surrendering all that was, is, and could be, and being reborn.

The **ritual** begins with the sounding of a **drum** made of human **skulls** and a trumpet made from a human thighbone trumpet. Dancing begins, the **spirits** are invoked, and with the **power** of meditation a **trance** state is invoked. A fierce goddess appears brandishing a **sword**. Without hesitation she takes the sacrifice, decapitating him or her and hacks him or her to pieces. The hungry spirits

rush in as demons and wild beasts pouncing on the still quivering fragments, eating the flesh, and drinking the blood. From this death the strong of heart are reborn.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Chukchee

A small group on the Chukchee Peninsula in the far northeastern area of **Siberia**. Chukchee **shamans** are traditionally and predominantly women. The majority of the male shamans were *koe'kcuc*, **transformed shamans** or **soft shamans**. "Soft man" or *yirka-la lu* referred to the transformation for a being of the hard **gender** to the softer gender.

This transformation was inspired by the presence of powerful **spirits** in a boy's life. It began gradually between the ages of eight and fifteen, when shamanic gifts and **the call** usually manifest. Though the Chukchee joked about the peculiar ways of the *koe'kcuc*, they also respected them highly for their **healing** abilities and feared their shamanic **power**.

Once initiated the *koe'kcuc* dressed as the shaman women and carried out the traditional responsibilities of females in the community. The *koe'kcuc* excelled in all branches of **shamanism**. The *koe'kcuc's* abilities as receptive sexual partners for non-gender variant men were considered as important to the culture as were their shamanic abilities.

Marriages between the *koe'kcuc* and their non-gender variant masculine husbands tended to be between men of similar ages and often lasted until the death of one of the partners. The longevity and uniqueness of these unions may be in part due to the benefits of power and good fortune brought to the relationship by the *ke'let* spirits (**helping spirits**). As shamans, the

koe'kcuc had spiritual rank over their partners and their relationship with the *ke'let* spirits gave them greater power. Therefore, they were regarded as the heads of their households and their partners took their names.

Early informants tell of a time when the transformation was complete, the sex organs of the *koe'kcuc* physically **shapeshifted** from male to female. A male companion of one *koe'kcuc*, confessed that he hoped that over time the *ke'let* would help to transform his partner's sex organs "like the real 'soft men' of old."

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Churingas

Painted stones carried by traditional Australian **shamans**. The stones are **power objects** used to contain the shaman's personal **power**. They are used as direction finders or cosmic maps for orientation while traveling in the multi-dimensional **dreamtime**.

Circle

The circle is a primary symbol found in almost every shamanic tribe. Symbolically the circle represents periodicity or something that comes back to itself in harmony over and over again. It is a reminder that in the true nature of life every ending is a beginning and that it is the nature of life to cycle through these transitions.

Clairaudient

Having the ability, gift, or **power** to hear **sounds** beyond the ordinary range of hearing. Clairaudience is referred to as

"hearing with **spirit** ears" or "hearing" with a part of the body other than the ears, like the heart or the gut.

Clairsentient

Having the ability, gift, or **power** of experiential perception by the senses beyond the ordinary range of the body's experience. Clairsentience manifests as a kinesthetic, physical experience of events, things, or **knowledge** removed in **space** and/or **time** from the present. The awareness gained through clairsentience does not pass through the usual mental channels of daily awareness.

Clairvoyant

Having the ability, gift, or **power** to see beyond the ordinary range of sight. Clairvoyance manifests in many unique ways, for example, seeing events or objects removed in **space** or **time** from the viewer or experiencing a waking **dream** in which the viewer receives visual information that has symbolic relevance to the present time. Clairvoyance is referred to as "seeing with spirit eyes" or "seeing" with a part of the body other than the eyes.

Classical Shamanism

The practices, **costumes**, and **paraphernalia** of Siberian **shamans** living between Lapland (the northeast region of Norway, Sweden, and Finland) in the east and the Chukchee Peninsula in the west. In *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, author Mircea Eliade presents the theory that Siberian shamans, classified as one large group, can be treated as the prototype for the practice of **shamanism** worldwide. This "classical shamanism" was the single geographic point of origin from which shamanism spread around the world through the natural diffusion that results from migration.

We really do not know whether Siberian shamans represent the oldest

form of shamanism, though the amount of data about the early Siberian forms is overwhelming. The reports on shamans in other parts of the world cannot always attribute the appearance of shamans there to diffusion from **Siberia**. The shamans themselves do not support this theory, explaining that their practices come from the animal, plant, Nature, and Ancestor **spirits** with whom they work.

If migration were the only explanation for shamanism worldwide, diffusion from a common **ancestor** would have had to begin at least 20,000 years ago. It is difficult to explain why shamanic practices would have remained so stable in so many different cultures for this long period of time while **language** and social practices changed much more drastically over this same period.

It is more likely that shamanism was discovered and rediscovered at different times by different peoples. As communities moved through a recurring threshold of social forces of need and survival, the innate human abilities to perform shamanically were triggered and cultivated. In fact we see that with different geographic, climatic, and cultural circumstances, different forms of shamanism emerge which correspond to different local needs.

Current research into the origins of shamanism forces us to consider simultaneous origins as an alternative to diffusion from classical shamanism. Shamanic people all over the globe explain that plant, animal, and Ancestor spirits taught them their shamanic practices, not a wandering foreign human. Furthermore, contemporary shamans continue to have spontaneous experiences of **initiation** and **training** from the spirit world today.

Classical shamanism is most likely not the single origin of shamanism. Shamans emerge, taught by the forces of Nature and the spirit world, when and where they are needed to serve the needs of their community.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Walsh, R. "What Is a Shaman? Definition, Origin, and Distribution." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 21, no. 1 (1989): 1–11.

Cleansing

A cleansing is an **extraction** of non-vocalized, or systemic, intrusions. An extraction is a **shamanic healing** technique for removing harmful **energy intrusions**. To perform a cleansing a **shaman** intentionally embodies his or her **helping spirit** and then uses some object, substance, or action to draw the energy intrusion out of the patient's **energy** body. Once removed it can be disposed of properly.

Cleansing techniques are similar cross-culturally, but do vary in specifics **culture** to culture. For example, brushing the body with leaves to collect and remove the energy or with **camaying** liquor to purify are common cleansing techniques. Cleansing techniques involve, but are not limited to, using branches, stones, **water**, smoke, **feathers**, alcohol, joint manipulation, massage, songs, **sounds** or tones, **spirit hands** (the helping spirit's hands, paws, etc., working through the shaman's), or some personal **paraphernalia** designed for this purpose.

Some **rituals** are designed for the purpose of cleansing, like the Native American **sweat lodge** ceremony or moon lodge ceremony. Cleansing rituals do not necessarily require a shaman.

Systemic energy may be picked up from the environment or it may be a portion of the patient's own energy, which has become stuck in a pattern that is no longer useful. Whether from an external or internal source, the presence of that energy and its lack of movement is not healthy. If not removed, this stuck energy can, over time, evolve into a systemic or chronic physical **disease**.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Clever Man

An initiated Australian **shaman**. Each tribe has a word for shaman in its own **language**. Many tribes have many **words** distinguishing between **gender**, different aspects of the profession, like rain-making, **healing** by sucking or **divination**, as well as words to distinguish between witchcraft, **sorcery**, and healing. Some examples are *wiringin*, *wireenuns*, *ngangkari*, **karadji**, and **Man of High Degree** from the literature.

A clever man is given **power** in his **initiation** through direct contact with the Beings of the **Dreamtime**, the **Rainbow Serpent**, the sky gods, the **spirits of the dead**. He learns to control these powers through a long and rigorous apprenticeship and an initiation of terrors and ordeals beyond those that ordinary man undergoes in initiation into adulthood.

The clever man's existential transformation is thrust upon him in his initiatory experiences: he is killed, impaled, eviscerated, and reborn; he is swallowed by the Rainbow Serpent and regurgitated; his organs are replaced with magic **crystals**, shells, and spirit snakes; and his animal familiar lives within his body.

Yet, these trials are all transformed into powers the clever man learns to control and direct. He can cure and kill. He can travel in the Dreamtime and ascend to the **sky** world on a magic cord that emanates from his testicles. He can fly or "fast travel" great distances at great speeds. He can disappear suddenly, emerge from a tree, or take the form of his **animal spirit**. He can make rain and walk on fire.

His life is one of self-discipline, training, social responsibility, and contact

with powerful spirit beings, both benevolent and malevolent. He seeks **knowledge** and power through his relationship with his **helping spirits** and **Ancestor** spirits. He works through quietness and meditation, receptivity and refined skills, observation and decision. See also **Australia** and **making**.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1994.

Coaxihuitl

Coaxihuitl, meaning green snake or snake plant, is the **Aztec** name for the **plant hallucinogen Ololiuqui**.

Coca

Coca, a plant known to the **Inka** as the Divine Leaf of Immortality, plays a deep and varied role in the lives, traditions, **healing**, and spiritual practices of the indigenous peoples of much of **South America**. *Coca* grows in two primary forms: the Andean shrub plant *Erythroxylum Coca* and a variation of that plant, *Erythroxylum Coca*, var. *Ipadu*. The presence of the *Ipadu* variant implies that *Coca* has been in western **Amazonia** for quite a long time since it takes a considerable amount of time for a new variety to develop in the natural process of plant variation.

Coca, native to western South America, is **sacred** in the lives of many of the region's indigenous peoples both in the lowlands and high in the **Andes**. Origin myths in Amazonia tell of the arrival of the **first people**, a man and woman who arrived in a dugout canoe pulled by a celestial anaconda with three plants: the manioc root, **ayahuasca** vine, and *Coca* plant. Traditionally, the *Coca* plants are cultivated in a plot separate from the plants cultivated for food, signifying *Coca's* separate and sacred role. The indigenous people explain that the **spirit** of the *Coca* plant told them how to prepare and use it.

Use

The *Coca* plant and its leaves are believed to have a highly refined vibrational **energy** and therefore a high spiritual energy. The *payé* (**shamans**) value *Coca* for its narcotic effects of mild excitation, which allows the *payé* to move more easily into **trance** where he or she communicates with the spirits of nature and asks for their help and guidance.

In common, day-to-day use, fresh *Coca* leaves are chewed, providing a mild stimulant and food supplement, which is believed to supply certain **elements** lacking in the local **diet**. The *Coca* leaf is a very effective medicinal plant and is used, for example, in the treatment of stomachaches, headaches, and altitude sickness.

A preparation of powdered *Coca* and **ash** is used ceremonially. The powder is ingested through the mouth from a tapir bone spoon or blown in with squirts from a bark-cloth bag fitted with a hollow bird-bone spout. Powdered *Coca* is also added to preparations of hallucinogenic snuffs, like **épena**.

High in the Andes, the **Q'ero** use *Coca* in almost every **ritual** or ceremony. The leaves are made into *k'intus*, **offerings** into which **prayers** are spoken and then blown. The *k'intu* is then chewed or returned to the *mesa*, both ways of moving the energy of the prayer in the ritual. With the Q'ero, sharing *Coca* is a sacred act of connecting energetically and spiritually.

Coca is also used in the daily life of the Q'ero who make a tea from the *Coca* leaves or chew then to alleviate hunger and increase stamina at high altitudes. Normally the leaves are chewed with a tiny piece of lime ash, which aids in releasing the bioactive compounds.

Cultivation

Traditionally, *Coca* is cultivated, like most plants in the Amazon, by the women in plots cleared near the family home. Plots can be quite large in areas where *Coca* consumption is traditionally high. In areas where consumption is

traditionally low, people like the Koreguajes grow only a few *Coca* shrubs near each house for personal consumption.

Preparation

The preparation of *Coca* is remarkably similar throughout the Amazon, even among tribes unrelated linguistically and separated by great distances. This fact supports the indigenous people's explanation that the *Coca* told the people how to prepare and use it. For many peoples in Amazonia *Coca* powder is prepared from fresh leaves each day.

Coca is prepared by men which is unique in South America where women traditionally gather and prepare plants for food and medicines. Men and boys gather *Coca* leaves daily into a woven basket for roasting as soon after harvest as possible. The leaves are roasted on a round ceramic stone supported by other stones over the fire for 30 minutes to two hours. Great care must be taken to avoid burning the leaves or toasting the leaves at too high a temperature. At times, women will do the toasting.

After the *Coca* leaves are toasted dry and brown, the men pulverize them in a large mortar and pestle. The resulting **powder** is sifted and mixed with an alkaline ash. Throughout the pounding, sifting, and mixing, the *payé*, or respected tribal elder, **chants** the tribe's mythology and creation stories, teaching the people's history while the *Coca* is prepared.

The alkaline ash is prepared in a simultaneous step from the leaves of the *guarumo* tree (*Cecropia sciadophylla*, a member of the fig family) that is usually left standing for this purpose when plots are cleared for cultivation. The leaves are burned and the ash is added to the *Coca* leaf powder to aid in releasing the *Coca's* bioactive compounds.

Active Principle

The active constituent, cocaine, is a highly addictive alkaloid when taken in

pure form. The powder prepared from *Coca* leaves and used by indigenous peoples should not be confused with powdered preparations of pure cocaine.

Use in Western Medicine

The abuse of cocaine should not be confused with the traditional ritual and medicinal use of *Coca* practiced by native peoples. The misuse of the chemically pure substance extracted from *Coca* began with the European arrival in South America and continues today.

Plotkin, M. J. *Tales of a Shaman's Apprentice: An Ethnologist Searches for New Medicines in the Amazon Rain Forest*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1993.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Cohoba

In 1496, the Spanish reported that the Taino people of the West Indies were sniffing *cohoba* to induce **trance** and communicate with the spirit world. These West Indian tribes are now thought to have come from the Orinoco region of northern **South America**, bringing their practice of sniffing *cohoba*, if not the *Anadenanthera* plant from which the snuff is made, with them. *Cohoba* use has since died out largely due to the disappearance of the **aboriginal** peoples of the West Indies. See also **plant hallucinogens** and *yopo*.

Colors

The four basic colors used in the shamanic work are white, black, red, and yellow. These colors reflect the colors of the races of humankind on **earth**. Each color has meaning and is associated with one of the four cardinal directions and one of the four **elements**—

earth, **air**, **fire**, and **water**. The relationship of these associations differs culture to culture.

Green and blue are also found in the essential palates of shamanic peoples. Green or blue may replace one of the four colors above or be added to them in five element systems, found regularly in Asia and **Africa**. In five element systems the colors are associated with the four cardinal directions plus the center and with the five elements—water, **metal**, earth, fire, and wood. The relationship of these associations differs culture to culture.

Color is a wavelength of light emanating from or reflected by an object. Different colors have different wavelengths of vibration, different characteristics, and different effects on human emotions and psychology.

Shamans use color as a means to manipulate energy vibrations in the service of **healing**. Colors attract, hold, and emanate **energy** and therefore can be used as "**medicine**" to help the shaman shift the patient's energy to a healthier vibration. We see the direct application of color in healing, for example, in the use of **art**, **mandalas**, or **sand paintings** in healing rituals.

Meadows, K. *Earth Medicine*. Rockport, MA: Element Inc., 1991.

Contemporary Shamanism

The practice of **shamanism** is a living **art**; its form changes and evolves as is necessary for the **shaman** to meet the needs of the community. People, their communities, the environment, and the spirit world all evolve over time. The shaman must continually adapt to these changes by accessing new information from the spirit world through **altered states of consciousness**, known as the shaman's **journey**. Precisely because of its adaptability, shamanism continues to be an effective **healing** practice in contemporary times.

Contemporary shamans are distinguished from other practitioners as ancient shamans were, by their (1) mastery of altered states of consciousness, their (2) direct contact with spirit in those altered states, and by their (3) service to the community. Contemporary shamans are called on to restore harmony between humans and the spirit world. They journey (allow their **soul** to travel free of their body) into the spirit realms and ask their **helping spirits** to show them the source of problems and how to restore harmony to the situation. Given that **diagnosis**, the shaman may need to alter traditional healing rituals or create entirely new rituals based on traditional **shamanic healing** principles. Although the form of shamanic practices and **rituals** often changes in response to changes in the environment, the function of the shamans' work does not.

Contemporary shamanism responds primarily to the needs of people to come into the presence of the **sacred** for information, healing, and guidance. People live in an infinite and inscrutable Universe as their **ancestors** did. This experience generates existential needs and an ever-present desire to transcend the physical illusion of being separate from others and from God. Current research in **transpersonal** psychology confirms that the experience of **ecstasy** (connections with All things) is as basic a human need as food, drink, and sleep. Studies have shown that when normal people are denied ecstatic experiences or their expression of ecstasy is not guided toward life-affirming functions, their behavior turns violent and pathological. Shamanism, which looks at the state of a person's soul to determine their health, is uniquely suited to meet people's existential and ecstatic needs.

In the practice of contemporary shamanism, shamans have adapted their rituals and techniques to deal effectively with an array of chronic

health problems, contemporary **soul loss**, anxiety and phobias, the human need for contact with the sacred, as well as other traditional needs for the shaman's mediation with the spirit world. Examples of some contemporary adaptations in traditional techniques follow.

In the past, soul loss was usually caused by a sorcerer, extreme fear, or a seriously life-threatening incident. A huge portion of the individual's soul was lost or taken, leaving an inadequate amount of life force in the body to sustain life. The individual often died within days or weeks if the soul was not returned. In contemporary life, smaller soul parts or fragments are lost so that each loss is not life-threatening in and of itself, however the accumulated loss over time can result in a joyless life of depression, chronic **illness**, anxiety, or exhaustion. Though soul loss rarely occurs today due to a sorcerer's intervention, soul fragmentation is a common means of coping with the traumas of contemporary life, the stress of living in spiritless cultures, and the repeated abuses of the body, mind, emotions, and spirit that people, organizations, and communities inflict on each other. Shamans retrieve lost soul parts by journeying into the spirit realms and bringing them back to the living just as shamans retrieved lost souls in past times.

Shamans are called on in increasing numbers to help people overcome crippling fears, anxiety, and phobias. Having perceived the true nature of their own fear in **training** and **initiation**, shamans are relatively free of fear and familiar with its psychological terrain. This understanding, coupled with their connection to helping spirits, enables shamans to be uniquely effective guides through the entanglement of the existential fears and chronic phobias of contemporary people.

Shamans are able to guide anyone who has a sincere desire to connect

with spirit into an experience of the Sacred by utilizing altered states of consciousness. Shamans create rituals for individuals and groups that allow people to come in contact with the Divine. The shaman creates opportunities for contemporary people to fulfill their basic need for ecstasy while assuring their safe return to the physical world.

Another task for contemporary shamans is **power retrieval**, which reconnects the client with their own spirit help. People easily lose their connection with spirit help in cultures where communication with spirits is discouraged or considered a mental illness. Without the protection offered by spirit, soul fragmentation increases along with the tendency to attract harmful energies. The former can result in chronic, systemic physical or mental illness and the latter in chronic, localized physical or mental health problems. Though the origin of people's problems has changed, traditional shamanic healing techniques have needed only small adaptations to remain effective. The traditional shamanic healing techniques practiced today are: **soul retrievals** (returning soul parts), **power retrievals** (reconnecting people to helping spirits), **divination** (retrieving information from spirit), and **extractions** and **cleansings** (both ways of returning **energy** stuck in the physical body to the spirit world).

In some parts of the world shamanism is woven into the religious and healing practices of different ethnic groups. For example, Taoist **priests** are invited to serve specific functions in the shamanic celebrations of Chinese Catholics. Buddhist monks and/or Taoist priests are invited to **chant blessings** in shamanic festivals all over Asia, and the **Mazatec** shaman, Maria Sabina, calls on Jesus Christ while working in a **trance** state induced by the sacred, psilocybine **mushrooms**, **Teonanacatl**. These practices are also mixed in the lives of the people who seek shamans.

In over twenty years of field work with shamans, anthropologist Ruth-Inge Heinze has shown that although people around the world hold their gods, goddesses, saints, priests, and monks with devotion and their **religions** sacred, the majority of people who can, will consult a shaman in spiritual emergencies.

There are two challenges resulting from contemporary life that were rarely, if ever, faced by shamans of the past. First, contemporary shamans must work with a random assortment of multiple ethnic groups in any given community and second, they must compensate for the proliferation of the world religions. Ancient shamans had the advantage of working in homogenous **cultures** of people who shared the same myths and world view. It is a great challenge for shamans today to create a ritual space that is large enough to encompass the many **myths** and world views of the variety of people they may see in one day or who may gather together for a ritual.

Ancient shamans worked with people who were pre-religious; they had no reason to believe that they were separate from God. Religion is based on a belief in our fundamental separation from God and the resulting need to reconnect. Shamanic rituals are based in the experience of our oneness with all things and the ever-present opportunity to remember that fundamental truth of our existence. Though religion and shamanism blend in many parts of the world, creating effective shamanic rituals for people carrying a deep, fundamental fear of separation from God is challenging and dangerous; people are easily lost in this deep-seated fear. The belief that one is separate from God is often healed first, allowing a return to the underlying **knowledge** that we are connected to all things and in all things is spirit. Rituals can proceed safely when they are grounded in the knowledge that separation is not possible where all things are connected.

To meet these two challenges contemporary shamanism must draw **power** from a personal world view large enough to contain the variety of cultural and religious views expressed in its community. This places an even greater responsibility for self-transcendence on contemporary shamans. To master a similar personal state as shamans of the past, contemporary shamans must complete a great deal of personal work in their training and initiation.

The healing practices of contemporary shamans should not be confused with the personal practice of **core shamanism**, a system taught worldwide by the faculty of the **Foundation for Shamanic Studies** and Michael Harner, its founder and director. Core shamanism is a powerful personal practice involving the application of shamanic techniques, primarily the shaman's journey into the spirit realms for one's personal growth and healing. Practitioners of core shamanism work with helping spirits, often journeying and practicing healing together in a **circle** of peers. Working on oneself and one's peers is distinctly different from practicing shamanic healing in a professional sense.

Unlike the shaman who is called by spirit to serve, it is not necessary for a practitioner of core shamanism to be called by spirit into that practice. Anyone may choose to learn and practice the techniques of core shamanism. More important, it is not necessary to be initiated to practice core shamanism. The **ego death**, characteristic of the shaman's initiation, is essential in establishing the shaman's relationship with spirit and the shaman's unique view of the universe. No matter how many years of experience an individual has journeying, without initiation the practitioner remains a novice. Training in core shamanism teaches technique exclusively. Shamanic training also involves practices to develop mastery of personal state and detachment while

moving through the spirit realms. Shamanic training also involves other practices to sustain and perpetually rejuvenate the shaman's energy as they work in altered states of consciousness for hours and sometimes days. These aspects of training are beyond the scope of the teachings of core shamanism and thus they should not be confused with the training of shamans.

Halifax, Joan, Ph.D. *Shamanic Voices: A Survey of Visionary Narratives*. New York: Penguin Books, 1991.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Contemporary Shamans

Contemporary shamans are found in three general categories. There are **shamans** who come from an unbroken shamanic tradition and continue to practice within that tradition today. There are those who come from a shamanic tradition and see themselves as a bridge between their world and the western world; they have added **ceremonies** and **rituals** to their traditional practice that enable them to fulfill their additional role as a bridge between cultures. Lastly, there are those who come from cultures that broke from their shamanic roots long ago, but they are called nonetheless to serve the needs of their communities as shamans today.

The ability to adapt and change is inherent in any shaman's practice. A shaman must continually respond to new information from the spirit world as the seen and unseen environments change over time. Although the form of specific practices may change in response to changes in the environment, the function of the shamans' work has not.

Shamans can rise up out of any society to fulfill peoples' needs for **healing** the wounds of their **souls** and to

connect with the Divine. Though the way these needs are expressed has changed over time, particularly due to the demands of contemporary life, the existential needs remain the same. People want to come into the presence of the **sacred**. We are still humans in an infinite and inscrutable Universe. People need to feel a connection with **spirit** and find their place in the universe. Without belief in their own ability to connect with spirit, people turn to shamans to facilitate them in connecting deeply with the Divine and returning safely to the physical world.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Core Shamanism

Core shamanism is a conservative approach to traditional and contemporary shamanism developed by Michael Harner, the founder and president of the **Foundation for Shamanic Studies**. Central to core shamanism is the practitioner's journey into the spirit world, called **non-ordinary reality**, using a monotonous drumbeat as the **vehicle** for entering the desired **altered state of consciousness**.

Core shamanism relies on only the elements common to all shamanic cultures: the **journey**, the vehicle that supports the journey, and the **helping spirits** encountered in the journey. It is solidly based on anthropological and experiential research of specific shamanic practices and cosmologies worldwide. The practice of core shamanism involves a strict shamanic discipline and adheres closely to the basics of traditional shamanic systems.

Theoretically, core shamanism is an abstraction, in that it does not derive from a singular cultural context. Therefore it does not possess the inherent richness and complexity of a traditional shamanic practice, with

well-established **ritual, costumes, paraphernalia**, and belief systems that draw meaning from the **culture's** cosmology and mythology.

Core shamanism focuses on the practical application of shamanic principles for individual and planetary healing and solving real world problems. The goal of core shamanism is to help Westerners recover their own lost shamanic heritage and capabilities.

The practice of core shamanism includes: the journey into non-ordinary reality to a monotonous drumbeat, relationships with **power animals** and other helping spirits, personal spirit songs, working with **rattles and drums, divination**, and **healing** techniques for spirit **extractions, power retrievals, and soul retrievals**.

Core shamanism provides a method for problem solving without creating additional theology or mythology. Core shamanism is not bound to any specific cultural group or perspective. Contemporary people using core shamanic methods enter altered states, via the drumbeat, that allow them to access the same revelatory spiritual sources that tribal **shamans** have traveled to for thousands of years. Their experiences are genuine and often profound.

Responsible practitioners of core shamanism consciously seek to avoid appropriation or mixing of specific rituals and practices from existent shamanic cultures. There are no rituals, **ceremonies**, cleanings, **blessings, invocations**, or **shrines** in core shamanism.

Core shamanism is a personal practice that enables the individual to use the **sacred technologies**, like journeying, that are available for all humans to experience direct connection with spirit. It is not the goal of core shamanism nor the intention of its **teachers** to create a substitute for the **training** of shamans. Core shamanism does not involve **the call** to become a shaman, the extensive training of the shaman, training in the shaman's mastery of his

or her personal state, or the **initiation** essential to becoming a shaman.

One of the great assets of core shamanism is that it returns spiritual authority to the individual. In the journey, each individual opens to another reality that, through direct shamanic experience, profoundly teaches the individual's heart and mind what is true and what is to be trusted. This focus on journeying emphasizes the actual sensed experience of the spirit world rather than a particular belief system or theology.

Practitioners work directly with the spiritual powers and helping spirits that present themselves in the journey. These original experiences of direct revelation can be deeply transformative for people who engage in long-term practice. The human-centered worldview of many beginning students changes through long-term practice to a worldview centered on balance, honoring the **earth**, and sustaining a connection to all things.

The Practitioner

The role of the core shamanic practitioner differs from that of the contemporary shaman, though they both use many of the same sacred technologies. The goal of the practitioner is to relearn the skills of journeying, drumming, rattling, and other systems of divination and to reestablish a direct personal communication with the invisible world. It is a personal practice that strengthens one's own relationship with the spirit world and potentially with a community of peers who are also practitioners of core shamanism.

It is not the practitioner's goal to interpret the spirit world for the community at large or to mediate between the community and the spirit world like the shaman. Practitioners of core shamanism journey for guidance in their own life, not to define the appropriate actions of others relative to the spirit world.

Practitioners of core shamanism develop relationships with their helping spirits for their own health and well being, while the relationship between the shaman and his or her helping spirits may become detrimental to the shaman's health and well-being while in the process of serving the healing needs of others. Shamans also speak of volatile, ever-changing relationships with their helping spirits and of gaining new helping spirits as they mature as shamans. Shamans and their helping spirits are engaged in a different process than practitioners of core shamanism and their allies.

Criticism of Core Shamanism

Many scholars question the validity of using **elements** of shamanic cultures without also adopting the entire practice and worldview. In this criticism core shamanism is usually lumped together inappropriately with **neo-shamanism** (generally believed to be the blending of beliefs, rituals, and practices drawn from a wide range of shamanistic and non-shamanic spiritual forms). While this criticism may apply to neo-shamanism, core shamanism does not support this random sampling of shamanic cultures.

The most common criticism of core shamanism questions whether or not it is appropriate to revive shamanism by combining elements from different cultures. These core elements may be part of shamanic rituals, but they do not necessarily constitute the essence of the ritual.

However, there are two elements that are universal and essential to the shamanic ritual. They are the practitioner entering an altered state of consciousness for the purpose of journeying into the invisible world to connect with spirit and the use of a tool, or vehicle like the drum, to facilitate the journey. The use of the drum appears throughout the history of humanity for just this purpose. It is a fact that there

are these two core elements in shamanism that led to the inspiration for and development of the contemporary practice called “core shamanism.”

Critics of core shamanism point out that shamanism is not the performance of rituals, but the ability to create and execute a ritual that will fulfill the needs of the community. Furthermore, core shamanism does not teach the skills that are essential for conducting effective and safe rituals. Finally, the orientation to service and the **humility** necessary to literally become a shaman and accept the role of mediator between the **sacred** and the secular does not come from learning core shamanism.

While each of these statements is true, it is questionable the degree to which they apply as criticisms of core shamanism where the goal is not to train or initiate shamans or conduct rituals. The purpose of core shamanism is to recover the skills and the worldview necessary for contemporary people to fill the spiritual void in their lives and to heal the illness caused by that void.

This may create a context within which contemporary shamans who are called by spirit and trained through additional processes can function more effectively. If and when this occurs, it is an aspect of contemporary shamanism in general, not core shamanism specifically.

Core shamanism can teach individuals respect for the rest of creation. It allows practitioners to access solutions to contemporary problems and approaches to living that normally exist beyond the linear **space-time** assumptions that tend to limit creative faculties. The practice of core shamanism is a way of working with the self that cuts across all self-imposed barriers of race, **religion**, and culture and reconnects the practitioner with the Source from which we all are made.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Corn Pollen

Corn pollen is a common **offering** in the **rituals** performed by peoples of the North American Southwest. Called **oneane** by the Zuñi, corn pollen is sprinkled universally as a blessing. *Oneane* is offered at highly **sacred** moments during **ceremonies** and rituals, during individual **prayers**, and as “food” for sacred **power objects**. Called **talasi** by the Hopi, corn pollen is used in the creation of **altars** and as the Zuñi described above.

Lyon, W. S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Cosmic Mountain

See **World Mountain**.

Cosmic Tree

The connection between the seen (physical) and the unseen (spiritual) worlds, the **axis mundi**, is most often visualized as a great cosmic tree connecting all of the **Kosmos**.

The Cosmic Tree, often represented as a pillar, is believed to hold up heaven and serve as the way to that world of the gods. Examples of Cosmic pillars are found in *Irmisul* of the pre-Christian Celts, the *skambha* of the Indian **Rig Veda** (one of the oldest books in the world), in Indonesia, and with the Kwakiutl people who believe the Cosmic pole is copper and connects straight through the three worlds, **Upperworld**, **Middleworld**, and **Lowerworld**, of the spirit world. See also **Tree of Life**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Costume

The **shaman's** costume is an extension of his or her person and **power**. In some **cultures** obtaining the costume is an essential test in **initiation** and part of the process of coming out as a shaman in the community. In other cultures there is no costume at all. The drama of the costumes is perhaps most developed among Korean shamans who may wear several costumes in one **ritual**. A multitude of robes, crowns, and scarves are worn and many more made ready should the **spirits** demand something extra mid-ritual.

In many cultures the shaman simply wears an element of a costume, like a head wrap, belt, or cap, when working shamanically. For example, Amazonian shamans wear magnificent crowns of **feathers**, each different type of feather symbolic of an aspect of the shaman's power. However, feathers and smaller crowns are also worn by other members of the tribe during rituals and celebrations.

The costumes of shamans across **Siberia** are varied, complex, and deeply symbolic. The images on the costume represent the mysteries the shaman experiences on journeys into the spirit world. **Metal** ornaments are attached to the costume in some cultures while animal and skeleton images cover many of them. These costumes are inherited, purchased from the clan of a **dead shaman**, or made for or by the shaman.

Birartchen (**Tungus**) initiates must "see" exactly where they will find their costume in a **dream**. He or she then goes to look for it. Often the costume resides with the relatives of a dead shaman and must be purchased. If the dead shaman is of another clan the costume will not be allowed to leave the clan. The costume belongs not just to the shaman but to the clan whom the shaman and the spirits who inhabit the costume have served together.

The costume of the **Yakut** shaman is covered with thirty to fifty pounds of

metal ornaments, connecting him or her to the powers of transformation, **transmutation**, and initiation. The metal jangles as the shaman **drums** and dances, aiding the shaman's entry into **trance**. These metal pieces are **power objects**. They possess a **soul** of their own and do not rust. The pieces represent bones, breasts, the liver, heart, and other internal organs, and the Spirit of Madness, who aids in **healing** mental illness.

The animals represented on costumes usually dwell within the costume, ready to aid the shaman as **helping spirits in non-ordinary reality**. The costume is treated with respect as a powerful, living being, as with any other power object in which spirits reside. When a costume becomes too worn, it is hung on a tree in the forest to allow the spirits to leave the worn costume and enter the new one.

A shaman's costume must not be worn by anyone who cannot control the power of the spirits to reside in the costume. If released in this way without the focused intent the shaman brings to the relationship, the spirits will wreak havoc in the community. For this reason costumes are not allowed to leave the clan. The spirits and the clan are in a sense responsible for each other's well-being.

Death

When a Siberian shaman dies, the costume remains for a time near the shaman's grave. Ultimately, the costume is kept in the shaman's house where the spirits that inhabit it periodically make it shake and move. The costume will remain there until it is inherited or purchased by another shaman.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Crystal

Crystals are widely used by **shamans** on most continents as **divination tools** and as pivotal **elements** in the **initiation** of new shamans. Crystals are conceived of as crystallized powder, tears, or semen of **sky** spirits. They are associated with gaining supernatural abilities and the movement of initiating **spirits** between the worlds.

In **Amazonia**, guardian spirits enter the shaman directly or through crystals that have magically fallen into the shaman's bag. The **Huichol** also receive guardian spirits in crystals. For the Huichol, quartz crystals are the crystallized **souls** of **dead shamans** who will protect the shaman who finds and cares for the crystal.

Crystals are widely regarded as **sacred**, living people or "live rock." As with other living **power objects**, a crystal has to be "fed" or it will create misfortune for the caretaker. Cherokee shamans, for example, periodically feed their crystals a few drops of animal or human blood.

Quartz crystals appear the same in ordinary and **non-ordinary reality**. This is one of their most unique properties, since most things in ordinary reality take on a different form in non-ordinary reality where the spiritual dimension is apparent. For the shaman, to acquire a crystal is to acquire a power object that, by its very nature, is in both worlds at all times. Crystals are a constant, transparent link between ordinary and non-ordinary reality.

Crystals as Divination Tools

Crystals are widely conceived of as solidified light and used in divination. Crystals enable the shaman to see beyond the natural limitations of distance, **time**, and solid matter. There are many different forms of divination with crystals. Melanesian shamans, for example, look into the crystal to "see" whether the patient's **illness** was brought on by a person or spirit. Keres

shamans use a *ma caiyoyo* (crystal) for divination, **diagnosis**, to locate intrusive objects in the body of a patient, and to locate witches.

Ulunsata (crystals) are used extensively by Cherokee shamans for divination and diagnosis. A simple technique is to stare for a few minutes into the crystal and interpret the images seen in the crystal. In a more complex technique, the shaman placed a drop of the individual's **blood** on the crystal. Within seconds images of the individual's life yet to come flow through the crystal, allowing the shaman to see the individual's future.

Crystals in Initiation

In many cultures around the world the introduction of crystals into the body of the novice by spirits or other initiatory figures is a critical transition in the initiatory process. The crystals are associated with gaining shamanic strength or powers, like the ability to fly through non-ordinary reality. The introduction of crystals plays a primary role in the initiation of, for example, the Semang of the Malay Peninsula, the **Arunta** of Central **Australia**, and the Cobeno of **South America**.

In Australia the *Iruntarinia* (spirits) take the candidate through a multifaceted, initiatory ordeal, during which *atnongara*, the quartz crystal fragments, are placed in the initiate's body. Among the Cobeno it is the shaman who places the crystals into the candidate's head. These crystals eat the brain and eyes away and take their place, turning the mind and eyes of the novice into those of the shaman. In this way the initiate gains the shamanic strength to think and see from the unique and expansive perspective of the shaman.

Sacred Qualities

There is some discussion among scholars that it is the crystal's geometry that endows it with shamanic power in certain cultures. Quartz, tourmaline, and emerald are the crystals most highly

valued by shamans because of their hexagonal crystalline structure.

The Desana, for example, envision the structure of the universe in the hexagon. The crystal's recurrent structural pattern serves as a model for the shape of the universe and a symbol for the patterns and processes of nature. Hexagons define existential space, which are spaces of potential transformation and access to the Source from which life, people, and sacred ritual objects emerge.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Ripinsky-Naxon, M. *The Nature of Shamanism: Substance and Function of a Religious Metaphor*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Culture

Culture is the set of explicit and implicit beliefs and **myths** about the nature of reality and society's place in it that makes the activities of the people in the society meaningful. It is the shared mythos of a society. Each person needs to feel that he or she belongs and that his or her life has meaning relative to the values and overall "big picture" perspective of that shared mythos.

Familiar examples of social mythos are the Judeo-Christian ethic, Depression Era ethic, dualism, reductionist beliefs, or materialism.

Culture functions as a filter, or lens, through which people view reality. The cultural story enables people to understand how and why the world around them works, albeit from the perspective of their culture. The members of a

society living together over generations continuously generate a shared conception of reality through their **language**, their institutions and arts, their experiences, and their common work and play.

Culture also functions as an integrative process through which people identify themselves in relation to the pattern of life histories, experiences, actions, and artifacts. The individual understands his personal mythos according to the 'social facts' rendered from the social mythos.

Every culture defines a version of reality and perceives of it as truth. That version of reality guides the actions of the members of that culture, even when the individual is unaware that they are experiencing the world through their cultural filter.

For example, contemporary western culture finds the Mayan act of communicating with the **ancestors** through bloodletting an act of violent self-mutilation by superstitious, crazy primitives who don't know any better. In turn, the **ancient Maya** would find the absence of bloodletting in contemporary culture not only irresponsible, but dangerous. Without a bloodletting **ritual** the gods are not nourished, the human debt to the cosmic order is not paid, and the humans are left vulnerable to the dangerous powers of **non-ordinary reality**.

One major function of culture is to provide a consensus reality that not only adequately explains the experience of the physical world but also produces a psychologically and psychospiritually satisfactory life for the majority of its members. Growing dissatisfaction among members of a culture can become a powerful internal force for cultural change. See also **monophasic culture** and **polyphasic cultures**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Schele, L., and D. Freidel. *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1990.

Tart, Charles T. *Waking Up: Overcoming the Obstacles to Human Potential*. Boston: New Science Library/Shambala, 1986.

Cupping Horn

A tool made from an animal horn or bone used for sucking **extraction** healings in **North America**. In some traditions the **shaman** makes an incision in the patient's skin covering the area of the **disease**-causing object, **energy** intrusion, or **pain** first. Then, with or without an incision, the large end of the horn is placed over the area of intrusion and the shaman sucks on the small end of the horn or bone. The shaman sucks through horn until the intrusions are extracted from the body.

Traditionally the horn of a buffalo is used for the cupping horn in the Plains and the Southeast. The cupping horn technique is also used by the Cherokee, Seminole, Choctaw, Creek, Natchez, Catawaba, who use a turkey wing bone, and the Chickasaw, who use a 4-inch cane tube. In some cultures, for a fee, a non-shaman can be trained by a shaman in the **knowledge** and techniques necessary for cupping horn extractions.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Curaca

Curaca refers to **shamans** in some parts of the Colombian Amazon while *medico* is the term used for doctor or **medicine man**. In other areas *medico* refers to shaman.

Curandero

Curandero is a colloquial Spanish name for all folk doctors or spiritual healers, which sometimes includes **ayahuasceros** and other **shamans**. *Curanderos* do not necessarily utilize **trance** states. Therefore, all shamans are *curanderos*, however not all *curanderos* are shamans.

Cuy

A cuy is a guinea pig used by healers in the highlands of the **Andes** as well as in coastal cities. The cuy is used in *jaca shoqpi* (rubbing with cuy) to diagnose **illness** and in *soba con cuy* and *cuypitchay* (to clean with cuy) to heal by **cleansing**.

When a person falls ill and household remedies prove to be insufficient, that patient is usually taken to a **shaman**. Whether or not the cuy is used and whether it is used for **diagnosis** alone or also for **healing** is determined by the patient's physical condition and the shaman's methods for healing.

Two practitioners in particular work with cuys: the *entendido* who uses them for diagnosis and the *curandero* who uses them for both diagnosis and curing **disease**. The *entendido* will travel to the patient's home while the patients of the *curandero* must travel to him or her. The *curandero* usually has a room reserved for his or her healing practices at his or her home. The patients must arrive with a cuy that matches their sex, flowers, eggs, and wax candles. In some cases the **color** of the cuy matters. Some *curanderos* work only with black cuy while others request cuy of light-color and younger than three months.

The *curandero* and the patient must meet traditional requirements and conditions to work safely and successfully with the cuy. Non-compliance may render the healing ineffective or transfer the illness or **spell** to the *curandero's* body. Patients must follow the *curandero's* restrictions on behavior and **diet** for three days to one week. For example,

they must not shower or shake hands with others for the three days following.

If the session is a *limpieza*, a cleansing healing requiring the use of alcohol, agua florida (perfumed water), and the cuy, the patient is confined at home for three days. The *limpieza* can also be performed with herbs and no cuy.

Care must be taken to avoid *takpa*, any interruption that destroys the concentration of the practitioner during the session. This interferes with the healing **power** of the *jaca shoqpi*. Anyone who participates or observes the session is expected to remain respectfully through its duration.

Depending on the methods of the practitioner, the session may begin with a general cleansing before diagnosing the patient's illness with the cuy. The *curandero* may *camay* the patient with agua florida or brush the body from head to toe with a bunch of flowers to *shoga* or *shogay* (calm the spirit) and fend off malevolent **spirits**. In preparation the curandero often chews *Coca* and drinks *chicha* or alcohol to prevent diagnostic mistakes.

The patient without clothes stands or lies before the *curandero's* small **altar** and is cleansed in preparation. The *entendido* unfolds a shawl on the floor of the healing **space** and spreads a handful of flowers there to create an altar for the healing session. Often an assistant sits and chews *Coca* to reinforce the healing power of the cuy. The practitioner gently rubs the patient's body with a live cuy, covering the patient from head to toe on the back and then on the front. Some practitioners rub until the cuy dies.

The *curandero* either takes the cuy by its head and holding it upright, cuts the cuy's throat or the cuy is rubbed until it dies. Some practitioners are able to skin the cuy from the neck down so that the entire skin peels in one piece that remains attached only to the hind legs. Other practitioners slit the skin to expose the abdomen.

The cuy and skin are submerged together in a bowl of fresh **water**. The watches for indications in the flesh and membranes and examines the internal organs. From the state of the cuy the *curandero* diagnoses the illness, pronounces what if any illnesses are cured by being drawn into the cuy's body, or recommends remedies, treatments, or number of additional sessions necessary to complete the cure.

The following is a partial list of typical diagnostic signs. A white, thin film covering the back indicates a cold. A similar film with fine lines of blood, like broken veins, indicates bronchitis. Clotted blood in the neck indicates a sore throat. Intestines with air bubbles and sparse feces indicates diarrhea, while diarrhea from irritation is indicated by dark red or purple intestines and intestinal fever by red bloody intestines. If the carcass trembles when put in freshwater and the bowels are shiny, whitish, and glassy, *susto*, or fright, is indicated. **Sorcery** is indicated by yellowish eruptions in the neck that look like pus when poked.

After the cuy has been thoroughly investigated for all diagnostic signs it must be disposed of following a strictly prescribed etiquette. It is the practitioner's responsibility to dispose of the sacrificed cuy properly. If not, the illnesses absorbed from the patient by the cuy could come back to the person who disposed of it incorrectly.

There are several variations of the healing ritual when the patient is a child, often depending on the child's age. When the sick child is rubbed with the cuy, which is not always the case for children, attention is paid to whether or not the cuy dies during the process. With children the death of the cuy predicts the death of the child.

Different cuy body parts are used to prepare healing remedies, however never the parts from cuy used in *jaca shoqpi* or *cuypitchay* as those parts are contaminated with illness. For example,

blood and some inner organs are used in various remedies to cure jaundice, rheumatism, arthritis, and chapped skin. Body parts like the gall bladder, blood, and fat that are to be used in remedies must be removed the moment the cuy is eviscerated. The cuy are also

used in a variety of other ways to cure diseases and epidemics.

Morales, Edmund. *The Guinea Pig: Healing, Food, and Ritual in the Andes*. Tuscon, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 1995.

D

Dagara

A tribal people of West Africa spread throughout the arid region of present-day northern Ghana, southern Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta), and the Ivory Coast. Known as the Tribe of Concealment and Magic, they live in an active relationship with the natural forces of the physical and spiritual worlds.

The Dagara do not assume that life in the physical world will simply flow harmoniously. They believe that harmony with the natural world is earned through constant vigilance, detecting imbalances and **illnesses**, and the willingness to engage in **ritual** to restore equilibrium. One primary goal of the **culture** is balance, particularly between the masculine and feminine energies and among the elemental energies: **earth, fire, water**, mineral, and Nature.

Cosmology

The spirit world is alive and real for the Dagara; they do not distinguish between reality and imagination. The spirit world is fundamental to the physical world; it gives the physical world meaning. The physical world is the spiritual world taking form. Daily life is spiritual life, only in a lower key. The physical life is a rest from the dynamic tension between the imbalance of an ever-changing world and the restoration of balance through ritual.

The Yielbongura—the thing that **knowledge** can't eat—is at the essence of all things. There is no Dagara word for the supernatural because it pervades normal, everyday life completely; there is no separation. Yielbongura suggests that the essence of life and power

resists the attempts of the mind to categorize it in the mind's effort to make the Unknown known.

Space

Though the Dagara do not perceive a separation between the natural and the supernatural, they are quite clear as they move between the worlds which world they are in. The Dagara are keenly aware of the dangers of getting lost between the worlds. They know that the risk of being unable to return to the physical world is death.

Time

The things that are important to the Dagara aren't going anywhere. The **spirits** of the invisible world live forever; they are everywhere in Nature. The **ancestors** are everywhere as well. Thus the Dagara have no word or use for clock-driven time. Instead they value timing. They cultivate an awareness of the state of being of each individual as they are in the present and in relationship to the timeless invisible world.

The Invisible World of the Dagara

The spirit world of the Dagara contains the realm of the Ancestors, the place where the dead go to rest, and the world of non-human entities who are in charge of the order of Nature. The non-human spirits also travel in a world between the human and the spirit worlds. **Medicine** and magic are forged there, in between, and then drawn into the physical world.

Cultural symbolism

The Dagara work with a system of five **elements**: earth, fire, Nature, water, and mineral. There is a sacred **shrine** for each of the five elements. Each shrine is kept by a male and a female **priest**. These shrine priests work in relationship with the spirit that manifests in the respective shrines. A shrine priest is seen as a collective person. Whatever he or she does, alone or in the presence of the village, is considered communal and has communal ramifications. The council of elders is made up of these ten

people, often divided into the male and female counsels.

The role of the shrine priests is distinct from that of the *boburo* (shaman). The priests are specialists with their shrine's particular element. The role of the *boburo* is **healing**. To this end the *boburo* works with more than one element as needed. The *boburo* is not necessarily part of the council of elders and is either male or female.

The Dagara also work with a system of five directions: **west, south, east, north**, and center. The four directions are alive within an individual only when there is a center. The center is found in **initiation**, required for all Dagara to be recognized as adults.

The Dagara believe that all individuals have a center that they grow away from progressively after birth, losing their ability to tell who they are, where they come from, or where they are going. The purpose of initiation is to find the center, remember that it exists, and be with it. The center is believed to be both within the individual and the spirit world.

In rituals the Dagara work with an awareness of five elements: Tigan, the earth spirit; Dawera, the **Nature spirit**; **San**, the mineral spirit; Mān, the water spirit, and Kyere, the fire spirit. In large rituals, like initiations, five elders conduct the ritual, each responsible for the energy of one direction and element.

Tigan, the earth spirit, is associated with the center. Tigan brings a sense of home, identity, groundedness, and the qualities of feeling supported and being careful.

Dawera, the Nature spirit, is associated with the east. Dawera brings major changes and magic. Dawera is associated with the **Trickster**, the Unknown, and the **Great Mystery**. The Nature spirit includes animals, plants, and elements of geography, like mountains and rivers.

San, the mineral spirit, is associated with the west. The power of San is that of communication, **storytelling**, and the connection with and between peoples. The mineral element within people is

associated with the ability to communicate and act. Mineral people learn the genealogies and carry the memories of everything that has happened in the village. San also supports the translation of symbols and information from **dreams** and **journeys** in the spirit realms.

Mān, the water spirit, is associated with the north. Mān brings the power of healing, peace, focus, and reconciliation. In people, Mān provides internal peace, bridging the gap between who people are on the inside and how they present themselves on the outside. Water spirit allows people to be many, to connect with family, village, and community.

Kyere (Chyere), the fire spirit, is associated with the south. Kyere is the **power** of dreams, **visions**, and the connection to the ancestors to move us. The fire element moves people to do, feel, see, love, and hate. It motivates external action and reaction, driving people toward one another, toward the execution of their respective duties, and toward the planning of their lives. Internally, the fire pulls spiritual forces to the individual, causing the family of kindred spirits—those who are always drawn together—to identify with each other.

The Dagara believe that the ancestors can see this fire from the spirit realms burning in each of us. The fire is the rope that links each Dagara with the real home they died away from when they were born into being human, the home of the Ancestors. Through the link of the fire the Dagara communicate with the spirit realms.

Helping spirits

Some of the primary **helping spirits** of the Dagara are Namwin, the Supreme spirit; Wedeme, the spirit of undomesticatable wildness; the Kontombili; and the Ancestors.

Power Animals

The **power animals** of the Dagara may be found in the forms of the animals indigenous to the environment and in mythical beasts. Each **animal spirit** is

believed to embody specific qualities. For example, the chameleon is a symbol of transformation and the **birds** are messengers for the spirit world.

In the Dagara tradition there are both positive and negative trickster animals. For example, Hyena is considered a negative trickster because he never fully uses the potential of Nature and it always backfires on him. Conversely, Spider and Rabbit are considered positive tricksters because they use the powers of Nature fully in a way that benefits all living beings.

Ancestors

The Dagara believe that the Ancestor spirits “stand behind” the individual, offering help from the spirit world. Ancestors are expected to spend a great deal of time as counselors to the living. Which Ancestor or helping spirit comes to give counsel depends on several things: **gender**, what the person is trying to achieve today, and what they need to accomplish in their lifetime.

After death an Ancestor initially appears in dreams in his or her earthly form because the familiar form is more comfortable for the living. As time passes the living become familiar with the ancestor’s energy and the ancestor returns to Nature, taking the form of an animal or tree or some earthly configuration like mountains, rocks, or rivers.

Power, Responsibility, and Initiation

Power and responsibility within the traditional Dagara community are shared by all initiated adults. Initiation is essential to be considered an adult. The uninitiated are believed to be in a suspended state of childhood, regardless of age, and cannot share adult responsibilities and power.

The Dagara consider the ability to see the spirit within all physical forms and to move between the physical and spiritual worlds essential and normal abilities for all traditional adults. Thus, initiation is designed to awaken these basic shamanic skills. Adults are expected to be able to perform the **divinations** and rituals necessary for daily life,

leaving the deeper mastery of these esoteric arts and healing to the *boburo*.

Initiation

The hearing

The first ritual, the “hearing,” is held a few months before birth. The pregnant mother, some of her relatives, and the *boburo* participate. The purpose of the ritual is to allow the child to inform the living where that soul is from, why it chose to come here, and what gender it has chosen. The *boburo*’s role is to ask questions, which the child’s soul answers through the mother’s body and voice. The *boburo* interprets the child’s answers if necessary and names the child based on the purpose the soul communicates for this lifetime.

During the *boburo*’s questioning some souls ask that specific **power objects** or **talismans** be prepared for their arrival. The *boburo* may suggest to the soul that another gender would be more appropriate for its life task. The name acquired in this ritual is reserved, to be given to the child at initiation into adulthood. It serves as a reminder of the purpose of that child’s life.

Initiation into adulthood

Initiation into adulthood is an opportunity for the adolescent child to remember his or her soul’s purpose and to transform into a person capable of fulfilling that purpose. Not all aspects of initiation are the same for young men and women. For example, rituals around the menstrual **blood** and its cycle are part of the initiation of young women only.

Adolescents are initiated with others of their same gender, usually once a year. The ritual may last four to six weeks or more. Girls join the first group to be initiated after the onset of their first menstrual cycle, the time at which they begin doing ritual for their menstrual cycle. Boys join their initiation ritual based on age and maturity of the individual.

The dangers of the initiation process are real and for some the result will be

death. The five *boburo* who conduct initiation rituals do not necessarily know how to return from the infinite number of places between the worlds that children will be drawn into as the spirits initiate them. The novices must be vigilant and find their own way back to their body and their purpose in this life. Every year one or more youths becomes lost in between ordinary reality and **non-ordinary reality** and does not return. These deaths are grieved deeply in the community.

During initiation each individual, boy or girl, is challenged to remember the secret of his or her own nature. The ritual provides many opportunities to remember and also to repair the damage already done by living his or her life disconnected from its purpose.

After initiation, the Ancestors begin to reveal the things people cannot be allowed to know until they have aligned their will with the will of their soul. The Dagara believe that a person submits to his own soul in the initiation ritual. Only then can the Ancestor spirits intervene in that person's life in the many good ways the spirits do.

The Dagara believe that a people cannot gain real knowledge of the world if they cannot see the spirit in all things. Developing this skill is not considered supernatural, but rather part of a natural process of realizing a wider understanding of reality. For Dagara this post-initiation awareness is a return to one's true self, the Divine essence within each human.

For the Dagara communication with the spirit world is necessary in the daily tasks of life. Initiated adults learn basic skills (normally associated with shamans) like divination, tending family shrines, and conducting family ritual, while the *boburo* serves the community as a specialist in these areas and in healing.

Power flows to all Dagara from their ancestors and the spirit world. Physical life and that of the spirit world are experienced as inextricably interwoven. All traditional Dagara function with at least

an awareness of the spirit world if not in direct personal communication with it.

For the Dagara, the health of the individual and community is a state of balance maintained between polarities, like the seen and unseen, masculine and feminine ancestors, water and fire, west and east, male and female roles, etc. This balance is continually reestablished through ritual.

In each family compound there is a shrine to the Ancestors which usually includes some aspect of the family's medicine. The male head of the household is charged with maintaining and nourishing the ancestral shrine, the family's connection with the Ancestors. The first male child is prepared to take on the responsibilities of maintaining the family shrine when his father dies.

Approximately half of the rooms in the family compound are spirit rooms; they are accessible only by the family heads and medicine people. These rooms house the sacred shrines and the family's medicine. The components of the shrine are not fixed. They represent what the family is aspiring towards. Separate shrines may be made or there may be elements of different things in one shrine. These shrines are essential for the maintenance of the family's home and health.

Each head of the household is expected to maintain a very close relationship with his ancestors and to follow their wisdom in counseling his large family. He consults diviners, *boburos*, or priests of the appropriate shrine for ritual and divination needs beyond the daily maintenance of the family. These specialists and individuals consult the village councils for issues between families or involving the community.

The male and female counsels are priests and priestesses of the sacred shrines, plus selected elders and *boburos*. These counsels serve together to make decisions that affect the entire village of family compounds.

The *boburo* works as a specialist within this cultural context of shared responsibility for maintaining balance

on all levels between the physical and spiritual worlds. If an imbalance exists with the energies of the dead, their unresolved energy will haunt the **souls** and **psyches** of the living bringing suffering and death. The Dagara believe that it is the responsibility of the living to heal the dead. Dagara rituals are performed to restore balance and to prevent problems in the future.

Ritual

Rituals are performed on three distinct and deeply interdependent levels: community, family, and individual. Together these rituals are an effective preventative medicine that sustains prosperity and mental and physical well-being.

At the communal level, the *boburo* or the priest/ess of the appropriate sacred shrine performs the rituals. Every adult initiated member of the village is obliged to attend. These rituals are an opportunity to restore balance with the elemental energies embodied in the shrine and to re-establish unity under one spirit, Namwin, the Supreme Spirit.

Successful community rituals liberate a quality of energy that makes it possible for family rituals to work effectively. Led by the head of the household, every responsible (initiated) family member's attendance is required. These rituals honor certain spirits in the name of the family for reasons of prosperity, protection, or health.

Successful family rituals liberate a quality of energy that makes it possible for individual rituals to work. The Dagara believe that all people owe the cosmic order and that they pay this debt through ritual and living their soul's purpose. Furthermore they believe that it is impossible for someone to pay this debt for another. Individual rituals are the responsibility of one person. However, the negligence of these rituals adversely affects the family and the community.

Ritual is the yardstick by which the Dagara measure their state of connection with the hidden ancestral realm. The entire community is genetically

connected through the Ancestors. The Dagara think of themselves as a physical projection of the ancestral realm. Ritual is the way they heal their relationship with this realm when necessary.

Dance, songs, chants, and the drum are essential components of most rituals. However, each ritual is unique. The basic structure stays the same, but any ritual repeated the same way twice loses its power. Even seasonal rituals repeated each year are adjusted to take full advantage of the present conditions.

Rituals invite the spirits to come and help change something that humans are not capable of changing themselves. The form of a ritual is determined by the *boburo* or priest/ess to address the particular change needed in the present situation. Rituals are always different and their outcome is unpredictable.

Dagara **ceremonies** invite the spirits to come and strengthen or energize that which already is. Ceremonies are always the same and their outcome is predictable. Though they may look like rituals, they serve a different healing purpose. They are used to strengthen relationships and community ties through repetition and familiarity.

Sacrifice

Sacrifice is usually a part of Dagara rituals. The necessary sacrifice for a ritual is determined through divination and it is relative to the purpose of the ritual. Examples of appropriate sacrifices include offering **libations** or throwing water or **ash** for rituals of verification, protection, strengthening, or reinforcement. To right a wrongdoing or atone for a prior transgression the appropriate **offering** is the blood of an animal (chicken, goat, sheep, or cow).

For a ritual to be successful, the sacrifice must be correct. The spirits do not recognize inappropriate sacrifices. They will not take what they do not need. For example, offering a libation for safe travels is appropriate prior to a journey. However, if a chicken is sacrificed instead, when there has been no prior

wrongdoing, a wrongdoing will be met along the journey to restore balance. To set things in order and avoid this wrongdoing, the unnecessary transgression against the chicken must be corrected. Another chicken must be sacrificed to right the wrong of killing the first. Then the correct sacrifice, the libation, must be offered for the safe journey.

The sacrificial animals are not discarded as waste. Some are cooked with medicines and eaten as part of the cure. When the purpose of the ritual prevents the animals from being eaten, as with rituals performed to prevent a death, the sacrificed animals are buried or abandoned in the wild. In other situations, how the sacrificed animal dies is meaningful and adds information to the divination and **diagnosis**.

Ritual for healing

Ritual is the primary course of healing **disease** and illness. The Dagara believe that the source of all disease, illness, and disharmony is found in the dimension between humans and the spirit world or in the magic that comes from that dimension. *Boburos* use rituals to work with the energy of this in-between dimension.

All the *boburo*'s methods of healing are considered rituals. Ritual can be used to respond to a present need or as preventative medicine. By restoring harmony between the human world and the world of the spirit beings, the Ancestors, or Nature, the *boburo* heals the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual illnesses of the individual and the community.

Rituals for prevention

Rituals for prevention are performed to avert dangers that would disrupt any healthy state of balance. For example, funerals are in part preventative rituals. They provide an opportunity to complete unfinished business with the dead. This prevents the turmoil and premature deaths caused when villages allow an imbalance with the deceased.

Rituals of celebration

Rituals of celebration are performed to offer gratitude for the help the spirits have given that brings health and abundance to the living. During the harvest ritual, for example, the whole village brings samples of the harvest, both physical and magical, and offers them to the spirit world along with sacrifices of goats and chickens. The ritual offering is followed by a feast to express the oneness of the humans with Namwin and to celebrate spirit's part in the good harvest.

Elements of Dagara healing rituals

There is a pattern and flow to community healing rituals. Within that pattern, there are three elements that are constantly interacting. The *boburo* (or other elder) who guides the pattern and flow of the ritual, the musicians who contain the ritual **space**, and the assembled villagers who participate, bringing the energies to be transformed through the ritual experience. The interaction of all three elements is necessary to maintain the power and energy that the ritual has been designed to transform.

Music and its role in ritual

Music is used to contain the energetic, or non-physical, aspect of the ritual space. Dance and song are used to move the ritual process forward by providing a **vehicle** for expression within the ritual space, which is defined physically by the people gathered.

The instruments and vocalists commonly used in community rituals are the drum, singers (chanters, improvisers), and large xylophones (often two, one "male" and one "female"). The xylophones set the primary melodic influence. The drummer creates a rhythmic space within which the chanted verbal dialogue is expressed between the singers and the participants. Together the musicians provide the necessary container that channels the outpouring of human emotion in ways that the *boburo* can guide toward the ritual's intended goal.

Rhythm and chanting are used together to crack open the part of the self that holds emotions under control. For example in a funeral ritual rhythm and chanting are used to open the participants to grief. Grief is then channeled in such a way that it will convey the soul of the dead successfully through its passage into the other world. Without the help of the drummers, musicians, and chanters, the powerful force of grief cannot be both unleashed and contained. If not contained the emotional energy is useless to the dead and dangerous to the living.

This musical container of the ritual space must be maintained continuously. The musicians do not rest as long as the ritual continues, though the ritual may last one to four full days.

Singers and their role in ritual

The singer, or lead chanter, is considered the engineer of emotion. The person who leads the chants creates poetry on the spot, improvising in ways that will move the ritual process forward. By working with the emotional energies released by the participants, the chanter creates channels for the energy flowing through the ritual.

Drums and their role in ritual

In large community rituals the drummer creates a rhythmic container with the other musicians. In smaller scale **shamanic healing** rituals the drum is used with chanting and **rattles** to create the container. Depending on the demands of the ritual, the *boburo* will drum or work in tandem with a drummer.

The drum is a transportation device that carries the *boburo* into other worlds. The Dagara work with different rhythms to enable travel to different places in the spirit realms. A master drummer can coax special rhythms from the drum that convey others into specific dimensions of the spirit world.

Healing Practices

Dagara healing practices involve divination, the use of plant medicines, and

an array of traditional esoteric arts involving mastery of **altered states of consciousness**. The specialists in the esoteric arts are diviners, medicine people, *boburos* (shamans), and the priests and priestesses of the five sacred communal shrines. All of these specialists are selected from both genders and each shrine has both a priest and priestess responsible for its care and vitality.

Divination, the art of communication with the spirit world, plays a large role in the Dagara practice of esoteric arts. Diviners are the practitioners who specialize in this particular aspect of the esoteric arts.

Divination is essential prior to all rituals and can be performed by a diviner, *boburo*, or priest/ess of a sacred shrine. Divination is used to diagnose the true source of disharmony or illness and to determine the appropriate course of action, which will involve ritual of some kind.

Divination is performed in an **embodiment** trance (the helping spirits are invoked within the practitioner's body). Prior to embodiment, the practitioner selects the appropriate objects from his or her vast collection of power objects (ordinary objects used to contain supernatural power). One object, usually a stick or rod, is designated as the pointer. The selected objects are arranged before the practitioner along with any necessary elements, like fire or water.

The practitioner begins to invoke the spirits, usually with a rattle, bell, chant, or **invocation** spoken in magical language. The full embodiment trance is reached when the practitioner begins to shake with muscular convulsions and sweats profusely, symptoms caused by the effort to control the embodiment **trance**.

The helping spirit is then invoked in the divination pointer as well as the practitioner. The pointer is moved by the helping spirit in answer to the practitioner's questions. In this way the practitioner engages the spirit world in a dialogue. The meaning of this

dialogue is derived both from the order the pointer selects the **power objects** and from the specific interrogation of each object selected. The diagnosis and prescriptions are determined from the practitioner's interpretation of this dialogue.

This type of divination is used to diagnose and prescribe medicines, their preparations, rituals, and necessary sacrifices. If animals are to be sacrificed, the type of animals, the number, and to which sacred shrine the sacrifice is to be given are also determined. Whether the animal is to be discarded, eaten, or cooked with medicines is prescribed. The divination also provides a warning of what will occur if the prescribed cure is not carried out. Negligence in these areas affects not only the individual, but often innocent family members and, at times, the whole community.

Divination tools

A traditional set of power objects is used for divination as described above, with a stick that serves as a pointer. The basic set grows as divinees return to the diviner after carrying out a prescription with a gift. The gift is an object that is symbolic of the successful transformation the divinee has undergone as a result of acting on the divination.

Cowry shells are cast for divination. The Dagara believe that the shells' function is two-fold: first, they scan the energy fields of the people in question, and second, they are a means to open a dialogue with the spirits. Cowry readings are used for guidance, diagnoses of personal and village problems, and to prescribe the necessary ritual actions to restore balance.

Skrying is a form of divination used to see beyond the reaches of physical sight. To skry, a clay pot is filled with virgin water (rainwater collected from the **sky** before it touches the earth). The appropriate magical invocations are spoken over it. The diviner looks into the water to see things, both physical and magical, far beyond the limits of

natural sight. The precision of skrying far surpasses the simplicity of the tool.

The ash thrower is a particular designation of diviner whose role is to help to prevent bad circumstances by negotiating conflicts that involve a living person and a spirit being. For example, the ash thrower listens to a person's bad dream and interprets the necessary sacrifice. They go together to the ancestral shrine to present the issue, throw ash, and ask that the danger or bad circumstances be averted.

Sand is used for divination as a medium for spontaneous writing. Spirit moves the writing hand in the sand, then the writings are interpreted for the diagnosis or prescription.

Healing Techniques

The *boburo* uses divination for diagnosis and to determine the appropriate ritual, sacrificial **offerings**, and/or necessary medicines prior to healing rituals. Two particular types of healing rituals for individuals are **extractions** and **soul retrievals** (described below). The *boburo* also uses medicines, both physical and non-physical.

Extraction

Extraction, the removal of harmful **energies** from the body, can be general or specific. Generalized energies are extracted by rubbing a live animal all over the patient's body. The harmful energies are drawn into the body of the animal. These animals may be sacrificed indirectly in the course of this healing process because the energies removed from the patient are often sufficient to kill the animal.

Boburos also extract specific energies like a *lobir*, an invisible projectile sent into the patient via black magic. After the *boburo* removes the *lobir* he or she can create a *lobir*-proof protective energy to deflect *lobie* (pl.) and send them back to their creators, since the only *lobir* an individual can't be protected against is one of their own making. The protective energy created by the *boburo* is merged with the patient's energy field for life.

Soul loss and soul retrieval

The Dagara consider **soul loss** a serious problem. The Siè is the part of a person's soul that gets lost as a result of trauma or black magic. The Siè is connected to the ancestral world and moves between the worlds. The vuur is also a person's soul. However, it remains in the body and is more comparable to life force energy.

When the Siè is lost in other realms or stolen, the person suffers from serious psychological problems or lives in a state of **chaos**, terror, or insecurity. As the problem progresses, the individual will lose the ability to distinguish physical reality from the spirit world.

A *boburo* of the earth clan retrieves lost soul parts. The *boburo* locates the Siè and uses rituals involving animal sacrifices to retrieve and reattach the Siè. If the Siè remains unattached over time, it forgets that it is connected to a body and abandons the body altogether. This is a dire situation, which the *boburo* cannot fix.

Medicine

Dagara medicines are physical (herbs, plants, and roots) and non-physical. The non-physical medicines are contained in various gourd vessels and power objects. Roots and plants are collected daily and prepared nightly. Some of the roots are used to treat physical illnesses while most are for illnesses of the soul. The secrets of the preparation of all medicines belong to the medicine person and are the spiritual, material, and magical property of his or her family.

Medicines, both physical and spiritual, are prepared and consumed in several ways. Medicines are cooked with the animals sacrificed in the corresponding ritual or with preparations of root vegetables for eating. Medicines can be added to water for drinking or for **cleansing**. Medicines are also made into potions or tinctures that are anointed on the skin or rubbed into small cuts.

Shapeshifting

Shapeshifting (taking the shape of a being other than oneself), though not a

common practice, can be used for healing. For example, a *boburo* developed the ability to shapeshift her patients into animals. To heal she chose an animal in whose body the patient's illness could not survive and transformed the person into that animal. When the illness died in the animal body, the *boburo* returned her patient to his or her human form. This *boburo's* unique skill was kept secret to maintain its power and died with her.

Paraphernalia

The *boburo's* tools involve power objects, which can be anything, and talismans, which are usually in the form of a ring, belt, necklace, or shoes. **Paraphernalia** also involves rattles, drums, a **medicine pouch**, and personal divination tools. What a *boburo* uses depends on who, in terms of helping spirits, "stands behind" the *boburo*.

Power objects, or medicine objects, are essential for diagnosis. For the most part they are trivial-looking things, like bones, stones, or odd **metal** objects. Their power and value come from the energies embodied within them. Gourd rattles, bells, and animal tails are common in the *boburo's* array of power objects.

Talismans are worn as sources of power and protection. The most common talisman is a small pouch filled with power objects and invocations, whose energies together are the talisman. Depending on the actions of its bearer, the power of the talisman may be used to help or to hurt. Talismans are treated with great respect, care, and, at times, fear.

Special elements of the *boburo's* clothing may be used in divination. This is usually a special hat or an article of clothing that has been decorated with powerful aspects of earth or Nature. The type of special clothing and its decoration depends again on who stands behind the *boburo*.

Yélé and Bomo

Yélé or Bomo are the general names used to refer to power objects which are

intentionally left unnamed to sustain their magical properties. Yélé (Bomo) are valued for what they do, not what they are. Yélé (Bomo) seeds, for example, are brought to the shrine to be blessed before each planting season with the crop seeds of millet, corn, and beans. The Yélé (Bomo) seeds are planted for magical purposes along with the seeds planted for crops.

Art

The Dagara believe **art** is the form in which spirits choose to exist in the physical world. When an artist or *boburo* carves a double-headed serpent or an amphibious mammal, the artist is not just creating an image out of his or her imagination, he or she is cooperating with the spirits of those beings. The Dagara believe that the spirits are able to help in healing, repairing the physical world, and maintaining the natural order through their manifestation in art. See also **singing**.

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Daime

See *ayahuasca* and **Santo Daime**.

Dalang

A master in the **art** of Indonesian shadow puppetry. The dalang's mastery is another example of adaptation of shamanic techniques of **trance** and **energy** management. The dalang manipulates over one hundred puppets with different voices and languages and he accompanies himself with his feet on the gamalong, a xylophone-like instrument.

The personalities and roles of the puppets are never confused because the dalang embodies the **spirit** of the puppet each time he takes the character's

part. The dalang is also a master of yoga and meditation, allowing the dalang to draw energy from the environment and channel it to sustain the excellence of the long and complicated performances.

The characters are gods, goddesses, demons, mythical creatures, and simple people. The performances are a mixture of traditional stories and current events, weaving and re-weaving tales of the ever-flowing dynamic between **chaos** and order. The shadow screen itself is a reminder of the illusory distinction between **ordinary reality** and **non-ordinary reality**.

The dalang and his shadow-puppet dramas express the shadow and the light, the chaos and the order without bias or judgment, playing out again and again in infinite variety the values and beliefs of the community. It is said that at times the future is predicted accurately in the dalang's performance.

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Dance

Dance is a tool used by **shamans** to embody spirit, either their own spirit (empowerment) or that of their **helping spirits (embodiment)**. Shamanic dances are choreographed and inherited in some **cultures** and improvised and spontaneous in others. In some situations the shaman is using the **dance** itself as **medicine**, while in other situations the dance is the means by which the shaman enters **trance**.

In cultures where the dances are inherited, like the Kwakiutl, the dances are usually highly choreographed, using formalized body, head, and hand movements that appear to imitate animals and helping spirits. They are handed down as part of the oral tradition, and as such must be remembered exactly. The right to perform each dance is earned after long, rigorous, and exacting **training**. The dance is medicine and

its power is proportional to the perfection of its performance. These dances are valued because they successfully created a connection with **healing** energies that heal specific **illnesses**.

In other cultures, like the **Aboriginals** of **Australia**, it is the relationship with spirit that is inherited. The dance, which connects the dancer to the inherited spirit, is improvisational. These dances often begin with familiar, formalized movements that imitate the behavior of the helping spirit. As the dance progresses, the dancer moves deeper into an **altered state of consciousness** and the embodiment of the helping spirit deepens. In the embodiment trance the initially improvised movement gives over to the spontaneous movements of the embodied helping spirit.

In cultures where dance is a primary tool of the shaman, as with the **mudang** of **Korea**, inheritance of choreographed dances and the embodiment trance achieved through the dance are both important. Dances are powerful healing tools of the **mudang** and so are of great value. They are protected from use by others and handed down directly from shaman to **apprentice**. However it is not enough to imitate the dances of past shamans. A shaman must be able to access the spirit powers through the dance to be able to use the dance as a healing tool.

The intention of the shamanic dance is to enter trance. Imitation is one way to begin the dance which will lead to trance and spontaneous movement. It is also possible to begin with spontaneous movement and allow that to lead into trance. The degree of choreography or imitation is unimportant as long as the dancer is able to reach ecstatic rapport with spirit.

It is essential for a shaman to be able to renew his or her own medicine. It is not enough for a new shaman to imitate the forms of the dances from the past. The dance must function as a means by which the shaman enters trance, connects with spirit, and potentially receives new dances from spirit. As people and

cultures change, so do **diseases** and illness. The authentic shaman must be able to establish a direct link to spirit to receive new dances as they are needed to heal the people.

There are many shamanic cultures where dance serves as a means to enter trance without the structure of family inheritance, ownership, choreography, or the responsibility of conveying tribal history. The **ceremony** sets the environment for dancing and the dancer gives over to the spontaneous movement of spirit **energy** within them. In some cultures, like the **!Kung**, the energy (*num*) is a life-force energy that boils up the spine, making itself available for healing from within the dancer. In other cultures the spirit is clearly that of an animal or deity who also makes its energy available for healing through the dancer.

Spontaneous, authentic movement is used to initiate trance in a great many cultures around the world. Often the shaman begins a healing ritual with drumming and dancing. The dance often becomes more erratic and energetic as the shaman enters trance and merges with his or her helping spirits. At that point the **drum** is often handed over to the assistants so that the shaman is free to dance and work and move in the trance state unencumbered. In actual healing sessions the shaman may return to this spontaneous dancing several times to deepen his or her trance and connection with spirit.

The spontaneity of receiving a dance from spirit is not prohibited in cultures with strong traditions of inherited and choreographed dance. A dance is considered a gift from spirit in any form. However, there is a distinction made between the dances used to embody a helping spirit to enter trance to do healing work and dances with proven track records for facilitating the healing of certain illnesses.

In both cases the dance is a **vehicle** to fill the dancer with healing power, making him/her more powerful through this merging with spirit. The

choreographed dance is medicine because it brings a known healing power while the spontaneous dance is an unknown healing power. If a new dance consistently brings in a particular healing power, that dance will be codified and its choreography added to the shaman's collection of healing dances.

To the observer, the onset of the trance state may not be apparent during the dance. However, dancers report **journeys** that their **souls** take in the spirit world while the helping spirits dance their bodies in the physical world. Mothers, wives, and sisters assist Pueblo deer dancers immediately after the dancing ends to assure that the dancer's soul returns to the dancer's body. If not their souls remain in deer form and escape to the mountains, leaving the dancer in a state of **soul loss** and unable to return to human form.

Dance gatherings, in which everyone dances, are used as preventative medicine in shamanic cultures. For example, traditional Savoonga **Eskimo** dancing, or **aghula**, is "a sacred gathering of power—a direct expression of the hidden spiritual and unfathomable being of life—invoked through drumming and chanting and made manifest by dancing." Some dancers use complex, ritualized patterns, some dance shamanic teaching stories, while other dancers move in improvisation allowing direct inspiration and spontaneous trance states.

Dance is one of four universal healing salves (**storytelling, singing, silence**), which are ways of maintaining health and well-being. The inability to enjoy dancing, or any of the healing salves, indicates a state of soul loss.

Dance is sacred in origin. The spirits continue to reveal dances to shamans in **dreams, visions**, and trances. Dancing these revealed dances exercises the shaman's bond with the spirit world and its powers. To dance is to pray. To dance is to enter a sacred state in which the dancer is in balance with the forces of life.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Halifax, Joan, Ph.D. *Shamanic Voices: A Survey of Visionary Narratives*. New York: Penguin Books, 1991.

Williams, J. E. "Dancing Dreams, Drumming Life." *Shaman's Drum* 46 (Fall 1997): 60–65.

Daoism (Taoism)

A matrifocal spiritual tradition in which the Dao, the **Great Mystery**, may divide itself into all things. Both religious and philosophical Daoism are based in a trust of Nature which is founded in the truth of the Dao (Oneness) that our individual nature and Nature itself are not distinct or separate. Religious Daoism is a compendium of alchemy, medicine, philosophy, yogic practices, **diet**, and complex cosmological **rituals** which are the result of thousands of years of investigation through **trance** of the human relationship to Nature in its physical and spiritual manifestations.

The **wu, shamans**, of **ancient China** may have been partly responsible for the emergence of Daoism from its shamanic roots in the 6th century B.C.E. The **wu** regularly utilized trance states in which the **wu's** soul traveled to the **domain** of a particular helping spirit to bring back information. The earliest records of these trance experiences indicate that though the **journeys** were ecstatic, the **wu** experienced dangerous physical, emotional, and energetic changes, which left their bodies injured, ill, or prematurely aged.

The **dao ren**, male relatives of the **wu**, observed and recorded the trance practices and their results in terms of information and physical effects. The **wu** and the **dao ren** developed theories and techniques for preparing the body for trance that, when practiced, allowed the **wu** to journey safely. As these theories and techniques developed they were observed to protect and improve health in general. They are the ancient roots of

Qi Gong, Tai Ji Quan, and the Daoist yogic methods practiced today.

The creation of Daoism was a joint venture. The *wu*, the yin factor, entered deep trance to scan the true face of humanity's relationship with the Dao and the *dao ren*, the yang factor, organized and systematized the experience into the physical practices, cosmology, and philosophy known as Daoism. See also **China**.

Belyea, Charles. *Dragon's Play: A New Taoist Transmission of the Complete Experience of Human Life*. Berkeley, CA: Great Circle Lifeworks, 1991.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Dass

Dass is the **gender-variant** shaman of the Cahsia Pomo of the **California region of North America**. The *dass* comprised a special order of **teachers** of the **sacred**. Their primary focus was instructing the children in the legends and moral tales that comprise the oral traditions of the people. After years of **training** they were able to **sing** the entire tribal history in sing-song monotone without error or repetition. See also **transformed shaman**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Datura

Datura, the "Holy Flower of the North Star," is also known as *dhatara*, *dutra*, *thornapple*, *toloache*, *toloatzin*, and *tornaloco*. It is one of the "plants of the gods" used by the **Aztecs**. *Datura* plays a major role in native **cultures**, particularly in the Americas, medicinally and as a sacred hallucinogen in shamanic **rituals** and ceremonies. It is related to *Brugmansia* and the **hexing herbs** of the Nightshade family. *Datura* is a

potent narcotic and is known by all who use it to be a dangerous medicine.

Datura is an angiosperm, the most highly evolved of the flowering plants. The conical, sweet-smelling flowers grow erect, five to nine inches long, and open to the **Sun** in a ten-pointed corolla. *Datura* is found in the tropical and warm-temperate zones of wide areas of Asia, **Africa**, the Middle East, **North America**, Central America, and **South America**.

Datura metel, the most common species in Europe and the Middle East, has solitary, trumpet-shaped flowers that range from purple to yellow to white. It is used as a **medicine** and a common hallucinogen. For example, in India it is used for treating a variety of physical problems like fevers and breast inflammations, skin **disease**, tumors, diarrhea, and mental disorders.

Datura ferox is the most common species in Asia and Africa where it is used both medicinally and as a sacred hallucinogen. In northeast Africa, *Datura* is believed to be one of many ingredients in a hallucinogenic drink used by Kunama women in **dance** rituals.

There are many species of *Datura* in the Americas where it is used intensively as a medicine and a sacred hallucinogen. *Datura inoxia*, with white flowers tinged in a range from pink to violet, is the most common species used in Mexico and southwestern North America. For example, the Zuñi consider it the exclusive property of the rain priests, who alone may collect the roots of the plant. The rain **priests** place the powdered root in their eyes to induce communication with the spirits of the Feathered Kingdom and chew the roots to induce communication with the **Ancestors** whom they ask to intercede with the spirits for rain. They also used *Datura* as an analgesic in medical procedures.

Datura ceratocaula, or *Torna Loca* "the maddening plant," is an extremely strong narcotic species that grows in the marshes and shallow waters of Mexico.

The Aztecs treated it with great reverence due to its **power** and potency. Little is known of the contemporary use of this species as a hallucinogen.

Use

Datura is used for both medicinal and ritual purposes with great care. *Datura* is a highly toxic hallucinogen. Improper use, overdose, and overuse have all caused insanity, in both the contemporary and indigenous sense. Experienced shamans who work in **trance** regularly use *Datura* infrequently and only when necessary.

In Mexico, **toloache** (*Datura*) is used by the Yaqui to relieve the pain of childbirth, and the **Huichol** use it for a wide variety of medicinal purposes. The Huichol allow **toloache** to be handled only by people of power who can respect this **plant spirit** and treat it properly.

The ancient Aztecs used *Toloatzin* (*Datura*) as a sacred hallucinogen and versatile medicinal plant, particularly to reduce swelling and relieve the **pains** of rheumatism. In the Nahuatl **language** of the Aztecs, *Datura* is known as *Tolohuaxihuitl* and *Tlapatl*.

The Navajo use *Datura* to induce **vision** and prophecy. The visions are considered especially sacred when they reveal an individual's **helping spirit** and the teaching that spirit brings to the individual at that time. Navajo shamans use *Datura* to induce a trance state that allows communication with spirit for **diagnosis** and a prescription of the **chant** necessary for **healing**.

Use in Initiation

Datura is used in the **initiation** rituals of many cultures. The inherent qualities of the trance state induced by *Datura* are particularly well suited to the needs of initiation. For example, the Yokut of the **California region** of North America used *Tanayin* (*Datura*) as part of the initiation rituals held in the spring. *Tanayin* was taken at this one time to ensure that the lives of the initiates would be "good and long."

The Tubatulabal, also of the California region, held initiation rituals after puberty for both boys and girls. The youths drink large amounts of a liquor prepared by soaking mashed *Datura* roots in water for ten hours. The ensuing trance state could last up to twenty-four hours, during which time the child seeks to "obtain life" by contacting an animal helping spirit or "life" spirit (the spirit of a deceased human). These helping spirits support the person through life and help to cure any serious illness they may contract. As adults the Tubatulabal continue to use *Datura* to obtain **visions**.

Datura stramonium is the primary hallucinogen in *Wysoccan*, the plant sacrament used in the male initiation ritual, *Huskanawing*, of the indigenous peoples of the North American southeast (what is now Virginia). The initiates were isolated for eighteen to twenty days and fed only *Wysoccan*, which induced a temporary, raving madness. If successful, the boy was led by spirit through the ordeal of "unliving" his former child life of needs and desires. The purpose of the initiation was to begin manhood by losing the memories of ever having been a boy.

Preparation

In Mexico, *Toloache* is prepared as a drink by adding it to mescal, a distilled liquor from *Agave*. *Toloache* ointment is prepared by adding *Datura* seeds and leaves to lard which is spread on the belly to induce visual hallucinations.

The modern Tarahumara of northern Mexico prepare *Toloache* by adding the roots, leaves, and seeds of *Datura innoxia* to *tesquino*, a ceremonial drink of fermented maize. They believe that the spirit of *Toloache* is malevolent, unlike the benevolent spirit of **peyote**, but necessary at times to induce a particular deep and intense trance state.

Active Principle

Tropane alkaloids have been isolated in all species of *Datura*. Their active principles are scopolamine, found in the

greatest concentration, hyoscyamine, and atropine. *Datura* is chemically related to the solanaceous plants of the Nightshade family: **henbane**, **belladonna**, and **mandrake**. Meteliodine is a secondary alkaloid in *Datura metel*.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

The effects of the different *Datura* species are very much alike because the active constituents are similar. The intoxication begins with a state of exhaustion or torpor which gives way to a deep trance state filled with intense visions. This state is followed by a deep sleep and loss of consciousness.

Songs and Dances

Datura has long been associated with dance and the worship of Shiva, who is traditionally represented in statues and painted images with *Datura* blossoms woven into his hair. Shiva is the Indian god whose cosmic Dance of Life weaves and reweaves the Life, Creation, **Time**, and Destruction of the Universe. See also **altered states of consciousness**; **Brugmansia aurea**; **Deadly Nightshade**; **entheogen**; **plant hallucinogens**.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Dead Shamans

Shamans spend their entire lives gathering, stalking, and cultivating **power** through their special relationship with the spirit world. These powers are meant to remain in the land of the living for the benefit and survival of the people. Where does that power go when a shaman dies his or her physical and final death?

In some cultures the shaman becomes a **helping spirit** and a protecting spirit for the people. For example, the Darkhat Mongols place the body of the shaman in his or her favorite place

out in Nature with his or her **paraphernalia** hung in a nearby tree. The site is off limits for forty-nine days because the shaman's spirit is considered dangerous.

After three years a living shaman will conduct a **ritual** at the dead shaman's site, leaving **offerings** and encouraging the dead shaman's spirit to become a protecting spirit. If the ritual is successful the spirit will embody an *ongon*, a doll that will be hung in a **shrine** where it serves as a protector of the people.

Some shamans simply turn permanently into the animal that has been their helping spirit for a lifetime. Amazonian shamans become jaguars, Indian shamans become monkeys, and Malay shamans become tigers, for example. These animals who were shamans may in turn become helping spirits for future shamans.

In many cultures that power will be handed down to a successor, if there is a successor who is prepared to receive them. In some cultures a ritual of transmission is performed before the **shaman's death**. More often the power is transferred after death through traditional rituals which are part of the funeral rites of a shaman. In some cultures the rituals are designed to pass the power on to the named successor. Other rituals are designed to allow the dead shaman's spirit to pick the successor from viable candidates.

Shamans who cannot find a successor before their death will continue to look for a successor from the spirit world. The shaman's spirit may have to prepare a successor through his or her **dreams**. Ultimately, the shaman's powers will also be passed on through dreams and spontaneous altered state experiences.

The process of looking for a suitable candidate from the spirit world, which may take years, is often trying and difficult for the living. It is disturbing for the community to have the shaman's spirit tearing around through everyone's dreams night after night looking, testing, and provoking a candidate to

emerge. It can be even more deeply disturbing for the one who is chosen. The individual may not understand that he or she has been chosen and the initial contact with the shaman's spirit may bring on temporary mental and/or physical **illness**.

A community may decide to bury a dangerous shaman in a way that specifically keeps the shaman's power away from the living. If a shaman has abused his or her power and is feared, the community can bury the shaman separately from his or her paraphernalia. These **power objects** are often destroyed, for example splitting the **drum** head, so that no one—living or dead—can utilize the shaman/ sorcerer's power.

See also **altered states of consciousness** and **Amazonia**.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Deadly Nightshade

Atropa belladonna L, one of the **hexing herbs** of *Solanaceae*, the Nightshade Family, was used as a psychoactive ingredient in the magical, inebriating brews of medieval witches. During the intoxication induced by these brews, witches engaged in both benevolent and malevolent aspects of hexing and making magic.

Atropa, named for the Greek fate, *Atropos*, who cuts the thread of life, is a multi-branching, perennial herb with ovate leaves. The solitary, drooping, bell-shaped, brown-purple flowers produce shiny black berries. All parts of the plant are toxic and contain psychoactive constituents. Deadly Nightshade grows in the thickets and woods in the lime soils of Europe and parts of North Africa and Asia.

Use

Deadly Nightshade is best known as a main ingredient in the potions of medieval, European witches, whose herbal brews were used for their hallucinogenic properties and other effects characteristic of their intoxication.

Potions were added to other liquids to drink or to ointments for absorption through the skin. Deadly Nightshade was used to induce **divination** trance states, to spike the wine of the Bacchanal feasts, and as an effective deadly poison.

Preparation

Hallucinogenic mixtures of the hexing herbs were prepared as potions to drink or ointments to be applied to parts of the body where the blood vessels are naturally close to the skin.

Active Principle

The main psychoactive constituent is *hyoscyamine*, with *scopolamine* found in lesser amounts. *Tropane alkaloids* are also present in trace amounts.

Use in Western Medicine

Atropa belladonna is an important source for medicinal drugs. See also **Africa; belladonna; plant hallucinogens; trance**.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Death and Dying

At death the **shaman** escorts the **soul** of the deceased on its **journey** into the Otherworld. Acting as the **psychopomp** is an important traditional role for the shaman. The shaman also functions as psychopomp with souls who, though dead for a long time, still have not completed their passage to the **Land of the Dead**.

Souls of the dead do not automatically complete their passage to the Otherworld at death. The shaman makes certain that the dying person knows the way to the Land of the Dead and that they can follow all the landmarks. The shaman also aids the dying person in releasing attachments and resolving his or her life so that leaving will be easier and the soul will be less

likely to hang around the living in an effort to complete its business.

When a shaman cannot help a patient and another form of **healing** can, the patient is referred to an appropriate healer. However, when nothing remains to be done but to face death, the shaman's role is to prepare the dying for the journey ahead and to escort the soul when its time on **earth** is done.

The ability of shamans to work with death and dying is unique because they have faced the fears of their own death in shamanic **initiation** and have found their way back to the land of the living. The pathways of death in the spirit world are familiar. By ritualizing the transition inherent in the dying process, the shaman can transform dying into a period of growth and healing.

Death is not failure from a shamanic perspective. It is a passage, a crossing over to the Land of the Dead, and a return to the **Ancestors** or the Source. Though it generates a time of grieving, death is part of the cycle of life. Serving the healing in the dying process is part of serving the healing in life.

Decline in Power

The **first shamans** who walked the **earth** in primordial times displayed truly superhuman powers, flying through the air like bullets or fireballs, burrowing literally into the earth to reach the **Lowerworld**, appearing and disappearing, seeing and hearing at great distances, and generally living beyond the bounds of **time** and **space**. It appears that the powers of all **shamans** have declined incrementally since that magical time.

In part this is because the magic in the lives of all people has declined since that time. The creation stories of most peoples tell of a wondrous, paradise-like time in the beginning when animals, humans, and gods all communicated easily and lived as one. In this time the Upper, Middle, and Lowerworlds were a great hole through which anyone could fly without obstruction. All beings lived

in a state of freedom, health, and trust in which death was unnecessary.

Then, through a mysterious misdeed that no one seems to remember the connection between the realms was broken. Communication between the physical and spiritual worlds became harder and harder and all sentient beings gradually lost their original wisdom. Humans, no longer living in balance with all things, began to experience suffering, **illness**, and death. Humans needed someone to risk the dangerous passage across the broken bridge between the worlds to learn what to do. From this need the first shamans were called into service, shown by the **spirits** how to recreate the bridge and help their people.

An **Eskimo** shaman explains that "In the days of our ancestors, the *angaqoqs* (shamans) dedicated their lives to the work of keeping the world in balance; they dedicated it (their lives) to great things, immeasurable enormous things." Yet, as humanity as a whole slipped further and further out of balance, each generation of shamans had a greater task and apparently lesser powers with which to meet that task.

The Buryats explain that the decline in the power of shamans is caused by a lack of **humility** and a reluctance to let the spirit world lead. In the beginning the spirits chose the shamans exclusively. Now, shamans are determined only by their ancestral line. Though receiving power and skills through a hereditary line is accepted in many cultures, even in those cultures the hereditary shamans are considered less powerful than those who obtain their powers spontaneously and directly from spirit.

Today, shaman's work in **trance** states in which their souls can still fly between the worlds. However, rarely do they accomplish that task literally. Shamans transform into animals in their **journeys**, but rarely do they succeed in **shapeshifting** their physical form as their predecessors did at will. And humanity as a whole continues to slip further and further out of balance with other living things.

The decline in the power of shamans is also due to the widespread persecution and subjugation of shamanic peoples on every continent. For example, the conquering Soviets restricted drumming and sound-making **costumes**, essential in the traditions of the shamanic peoples of the former USSR. Today many shamans are strong and trusted healers, but they are not able to produce the incredible variety of sounds that was formerly an integral part of shamanic rituals. The elders say the loss of this ability to create spontaneous **music** is one of the many ways that the new shamans are not as strong as those of the past.

Other peoples believe that the shamans, like the people they serve, are weakened and made soft by taking up European habits and foods. These new customs and beliefs have made the shamans unsure of themselves and the people amnesic, forgetting how they were taught to live in balance with other living things.

The **myths** of shamanic peoples foretold the present-day movement of humanity as a whole into increasing imbalance with the world in which they live. As predicted, humans are becoming greedy and heartless toward one another, unable to grasp the truly important mysteries of life, lacking inner firmness and resolve, losing the ability to find the **sacred** words to pray, to see the truth of the soul, and to act on their original wisdom.

Perhaps the powers of the shamans have not declined as much as they are squandered in the “work of keeping the world in balance.” When the adults of a **culture** take up the responsibility to live in balance, then the shaman’s powers are only needed for the exceptions and the miracles. However, when there are no initiated adults in the culture and everyone has forgotten how to live well in the world, then the shaman’s powers are spread so thin they can barely be seen. See also **Buryat (Buriat); Middle-world; persecution of shamans; Upperworld.**

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Van Deusen, K. “Shamanism and Music in Tuva and Khakassia.” *Shaman’s Drum* 47 (Winter 1997–98).

Depossession

See **exorcism** and **extraction**.

Dew Eagle

See *oshadageaa*.

Diagnosis

Shamans diagnose in uniquely personal ways. However, most of these techniques are versions of three primary **divination** techniques: journeying, spirit **embodiment**, or using divination tools.

In journeying the shaman enters the spirit world to access information directly from the source. In an embodiment **trance**, the shaman asks the **helping spirits** to come into **ordinary reality**, enter the body of the shaman, and impart information through the shaman. When using a divination tool the shaman enters a trance and allows the patterns in the tool to determine the message from spirit.

The shaman must view the patient in the context of all aspects of the individual’s life to diagnose a problem. The shaman looks for balance, in and between, the physical, psychological, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the individual and his or her community. Imbalance in any one aspect is considered a potential opening for illness or misfortune in any other aspect. For example, behavior of questionable integrity affects alignment with the soul which affects the health of the body, and if it breaks a **taboo** with the spirit world, the health of the community. Conversely, restoring balance in any one aspect of an individual’s life affects the balance in all other aspects.

In a divination trance, the shaman is looking for where the flow is disrupted in the patient’s life and why. This “flow”

simply is; it implies no judgment of good or bad. A shaman described experiencing this disruption in the flow like walking by a chair that is knocked over. The disruption is obvious. One automatically reaches down to pick it up. See also **shamanic healing** and **symbolic language**.

Cowan, E. *Shamanism: Quarterly for the Foundation for Shamanic Studies* 5, no. 1 (1992) 4–19.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Diet

Food affects the **energy** of the body and therefore affects the **shaman** in his or her work. There are many reasons a shaman will choose to restrict certain foods or to fast completely. Most reasons are temporary and relative to the particular work the shaman is engaged in. However, **taboos** around eating or not eating the meat of your **helping spirit** is the one dietary restriction that lasts for the shaman's lifetime, or for the life of the shaman's relationship with that **animal spirit**.

Work with Plant Hallucinogens

Working with **plant hallucinogens** is one of the most common reasons for dietary restrictions. Different foods can create very toxic substances when they react with the active ingredients in plant hallucinogens. Foods may also affect the potency of the hallucinogen. By observing a particular diet the shaman can make the experience of ingesting the plant hallucinogen as potent and easy on the body as possible.

Purification

Particularly hard **healings** or **divinations** may require **purification** to succeed, particularly if normal ministrations have already proven ineffective. The shaman may fast, sweat, take emetics, or ingest herbal preparations to prepare himself or herself for challenging work. Purification may also be required

prior to a divination, the results of which will profoundly affect the entire community.

Preparation for Vision Quest

The shaman may also fast in preparation for a **vision quest**. Shamans quest for particular **powers** for healing or for guidance in issues concerning the whole community. The helping spirits may guide the shaman to observe particular dietary restrictions in preparation for such a quest.

Training

Restrictions and taboos involving food are common during the **training** of an **apprentice** in many cultures. For example, among the **Zulu**, the apprenticeship of the *twasa* involves a strict regime of personal healing and purification, involving sweats, herbs, and diet. The discipline is very strict and total abstinence from sex is absolutely mandatory. Certain foods are also forbidden.

Restrictions and Taboos

Restrictions and taboos are often placed on patients during and after healings. For certain periods of time after the healing specific foods and activities may be restricted or forbidden because of their vibrational energy. These restrictions protect the shaman whose energy often remains with the patient for several days. They also give the healthy energetic state created by the healing time to establish itself as part of the new norm within the body of the patient.

Dineh

The name the Navajo people use to refer to themselves, meaning "the people"; also *Diné*. The Dineh came to the American Southwest a millennium after the various Pueblos were established there. The Dineh **language** is a variant of Athabascan, a major native language spoken in the **Alaskan** regions, which implies Dineh origins far to the north of their present homelands.

Dineh history describes the people as descendants and enemies of the Anazazi, the ancient Pueblo people whose villages remain today, mysteriously abandoned in the cliffs of Dineh country. Dineh **myths** are largely variants of Pueblo and **Maya** mythology and Dineh cosmology is similar to that of the Keres. The strength of these patterns' similarity and difference imply multiple or at least complex origins.

Beauty—Hozro

Fundamental to the Dineh worldview is Beauty, or *Hozro*, meaning beauty in its greatest sense, from the most mundane to the most mystical. It is found in all things, all relationships, and all experiences. *Hozro* is the innate beauty and harmony of the cosmic order, the pattern of perfection woven at the moment of creation into the fabric of the **Kosmos**. Truth is found in the way that unfolds from *Hozro*, the Beauty Way.

Dineh **priests** and **shamans** serve the Beauty Way. Among the Dineh the distinction between the two vocations is sharply drawn. The priest is a keeper of **ceremony**, whose position is secured through **knowledge**. The shaman is a creator of **ritual**, whose position is secured through the ability to enter **trance** states and bring the **powers** of the supernatural to the aid of the people.

Navajo shamans and **nadles, gender-variant males**, are distinguished in Dineh **culture** by their direct relationships with spirit. Shamans are not necessarily *nadles*, however some *nadles* became powerful shamans. More often *nadles* specialize in some aspect of curing. For example, the *nadle* healers were considered excellent chanters. They had special **chants** for curing **illness** and insanity and for aiding in childbirth.

A Dineh must first prove to be a reliable worker, dedicated parent, and capable community member before he or she will be accepted into training as a shaman. As an elder, he or she will be able to bring the wisdom of a lifetime to the practice of **shamanism**.

The Dineh recognized diviners who did not heal, but who used various techniques to divine the cause of illness and prescribe the "**sing**," or **healing** ceremony necessary for a cure. Two common Dineh diviners were "hand-tremblers" and "listeners." Witchcraft or **sorcery** was a common **diagnosis** as sorcery and witches, or "skin walkers," were common among the Dineh.

The plant entheogen *Datura* was used by diviners and shamans to induce prophetic visions, diagnose the cause of illness, and to prescribe the sing necessary for healing. These visions were considered especially **sacred** when they revealed an individual's helping spirits and the teachings of that spirit to the individual at that time.

Sand Painting—Iikhááh

The **iikhááh** is a ceremonial **sand painting** created, in part, as a way for the yeii (holy spirits) to enter and leave the ritual or ceremony. It is also a healing tool or type of **medicine** created by shamans to treat illness. Sand paintings are made from the colored sand of ground rock. They are impermanent **power objects** created and destroyed in the healing ritual. See also **divination; entheogen; gender variant**.

Cowan, Tom. *Fire in the Head: Shamanism and the Celtic Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

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Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Dingaka Bones

Dingaka bones are used for **divination** by the Zulu **sangomas** (shamans).

“Throwing the bones” is a process of divination similar to throwing the *I Ching* in **China**. *Dingaka* involve four two-sided indicators as the basic pieces with additional pieces of bones, stones, shells, seeds, etc., added at the practitioner’s discretion.

The four basic *dingaka* are named *lekhwami* or *lekgolo*, the old man; *kgadi*, the old woman; *silume* or *selume*, the young man; and *kgatsane* or *lengwe*, the young woman. They can fall in sixteen different combinations. When thrown, the meaning is interpreted from the spontaneous placement of the bones, their relation to and distance from each other, and their facing, upward (smiling) or downward (sleeping).

Dingaka are used to divine the answers to questions of all kinds. They are used to diagnose whether the **illness** or ailment is caused by witchcraft, **sorcery**, **spirits**, careless or thoughtless actions, a broken **taboo**, a natural weakening of **energy**, or the loss of a soul part.

Before throwing the bones both *sangoma* and patient blow on the *dingaka*, bringing the ancestral spirits of both people in to assist in the divination. The *sangoma* throws the bones and interprets their configuration. In the hands of a skillful practitioner, *dingaka* can detect not only the presence, but the type of spirits around a sick person. Whether these spirits are resentful ancestral spirits, offended **nature spirits**, or malevolent spirits sent by a sorcerer directly affects the type of treatment necessary.

Each *sangoma* creates his or her own *dingaka* set from the bones of the animals sacrificed for the feasts held to mark the completion of different areas of **training**. See also **ancestors**; **sacrifice**; **soul loss**; *twasa*; **Zulu**.

Credo Mutwa, V. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Direct Transmission of Spirit

An awakening of **spirit** is necessary for most individuals to enter into an altered

state for the first time. This awakening has been described as an infusion of **energy**, an opening of energy, usually at the top of the head, or a burning energy rising up the spine. The transmission of this awakening energy traditionally comes spontaneously and directly from spirit.

However, in some cultures initiated **shamans** also take part in provoking the first spiritual **journey**. In some traditions, as in **South America**, **plant hallucinogens** are widely used. In other traditions like the **Midewiwin Society of North America** or the **Aboriginals of Australia**, energy is directly transmitted from the initiated to the initiate. The energy or spirit that is transmitted is called by many different names, including but not limited to *chi* (*ji*, *ki*), kundalini, seiki, and *num*. See also **altered states of consciousness**.

Keeney, Bradford P. *Shaking Out the Spirits*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, 1994.

Disease

Disease is a condition of the body that impairs normal physiological functioning. This includes malfunctioning in the biological and/or the psychological processes.

Shamans focus on the reasons the normal physiological functioning has been altered or shut down. In most shamanic cultures, **soul loss** is considered the root cause of disease. However, chronic disharmony (when one forgets the feeling of belonging and connection and life loses meaning) or chronic fear (the loss of love, joy, and trust without which the force of life itself seems to begin withdrawing from the body) are also seen as potential causes of disease.

Bacteria, viruses, brain biochemistry, and other biological components of disease are considered opportunistic, taking advantage of the weakened state created by the soul loss, chronic fear, or disharmony. See also **healing** and **illness**.

Achterberg, J. "The Wounded Healer: Transformational Journeys in Modern Medicine." In Doore (Ed.). *Shaman's Path: Healing, Personal Growth and Empowerment*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Kleinman, A., and L. H. Sung. "Why Do Indigenous Practitioners Successfully Heal?" *Social Sciences and Medicine* 13B (1979): 7–26.

Disease Object

The object associated with an **energy** intrusion. In the **shaman's altered state of consciousness** the intrusion may appear to be a fierce bug, reptile, spider, centipede, or toad eating at the patient's insides or hissing malevolently at the shaman. The object itself, once extracted, commonly appears to be a stick, bone, tooth, stone, shell, or some amorphous form like clotted blood, black slime, or cobwebs in the blood. However, disease objects are also known to appear, once extracted, exactly as menacing and mobile as they did in the patient's body. Once removed, they are observed scurrying or flying away. See also **extraction; pains**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Dismemberment

Dismemberment is the experience of being pulled apart, eaten, or stripped layer by layer, down to the bare bones of the skeleton by **spirit** beings. The individual, unaware that the experience is occurring in an **altered state of consciousness**, dies.

This death is a "little death" or "**shaman's death**." It is the surrender of the ego that allows for a shift of awareness and transformation of consciousness. This leads to the realization that one is not experiencing a death, but a spiritual rebirth. With this awareness the **spirits** begin to put the individual back together, often adding new magical

parts, like special eyes, organs, and extra bones, or making other additions to the body, like **crystals, feathers**, or some sort of magic substance that will help the novice in the shamanic work to come.

Dismemberment is the traditional shamanic initiatory experience in many **cultures**, particularly in the northern regions of the globe. For example, in **Greenland** the **apprentice shamans** of the Ammassalik **Eskimos** engage in a series of **rituals** for ten or more years to call an emaciated bear up from the sea. The bear rises up and devours the initiate, who loses consciousness until the bear vomits him/her back up. Only after this experience can the initiate begin the next series of rituals to acquire his or her **helping spirits** and continue his or her **training**.

In traditions that expect it, the process of dismemberment, death, and rebirth is necessary to initiate and prepare the shaman. To travel safely in the **Land of the Dead** for others the shaman must have already faced the fear of his or her own death in a real way, thus the dismemberment is gruesome and real. To reach beyond the apparent reality of an **illness** and create **healing** miracles for others the shaman must believe in the **powers** that come through his or her relationship with spirit and so the initiate is reconstructed with magical parts that endow him/her with supernatural powers. To continuously reconnect themselves to the essence of death and rebirth Siberian shamans embroidered their skirts with a skeleton.

The experience of psychic dismemberment is a universal transcultural and **transpersonal** symbol. True transcendence, necessary for safe and effective shamanic rituals, calls for a willingness in the shaman to suffer a genuine death of ego and not merely an imaginary death. The shaman's initiatory **ego death** results in a clear mind, enhanced perception, greater capacity for compassion, and true gentleness toward others.

Initiation is necessary for all shamans, but not all shamans experience that initiatory ego death as a dismemberment experience. Looking cross-culturally, approximately 50 percent of the shamanic cultures expect dismemberment as the defining initiatory experience. In other cultures the form of the experience varies, while the function of the initiation remains constant.

Not every dismemberment experience is an initiation. A dismemberment is an initiation only if it functions as one, which means that the consciousness of the individual is fundamentally transformed through the experience. Without this transformation of consciousness the dismemberment experience is a healing and a gift from spirit to be honored, however it is not a shamanic initiation. See also **Siberia**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Divination

Divination is the act of consulting the beings, or wisdom, of the spirit world to gain information about the past, present, or future in order to facilitate problem-solving. The **shaman** divines in an altered state. **Divination** is used for **diagnosis** and to determine remedies.

Shamans tend to diagnose in uniquely personal ways. However, most of these techniques are versions of three primary divination techniques; journeying, Spirit **embodiment**, and using divination tools. When journeying the shaman enters the spirit world to access information directly from the Source. In an embodiment **trance**, the shaman asks the **helping spirits** to come into

ordinary reality, enter the body of the shaman, and impart information through the shaman. To use a divination tool the shaman enters a trance and allows the patterns in the tool to determine the message from **spirit**.

There are a variety of divination tools and ways of working with them: for example, casting cowry shells, reading guinea pig entrails, throwing bones, burning a reindeer scapula, rubbing a candle on the patient's body and watching it burn, and throwing the *I Ching*. In divination, regardless of the tool, the shaman is looking for patterns that give the elements of the tool meaning. These patterns are different for each diviner and with each tool.

Individual practitioners may specialize in divination with tools or without (**mediumship**). However, the ability to divine alone does not make a practitioner a shaman. Shamans not only divine information, but they are able to take action in **non-ordinary reality** that affects a specific, desired change here in ordinary reality. It is this fact, that the shaman takes intentional action in the invisible world, that distinguishes the shaman from mediums or channels.

Divination is actually used continuously throughout most **shamanic healing** rituals, since it is the nature of the shaman's working trance to remain in communication with his or her helping spirits. The first act of divination is the diagnosis. From there the shaman may move into another type of healing, such as a **soul retrieval** or **extraction**. If the shaman remains in the act of divination, he or she retrieves more information, for example, describing the true, spiritual nature of the patient's problem and the remedy necessary to restore harmony between all the energies involved.

Some examples of the variety of information that the shaman retrieves are: herbal or plant remedies, a personal **ritual** necessary to restore balance, bodywork or physical treatments, or a community healing ritual to restore harmony for or with the community.

Several scholars have presented the idea that the divination trance allows the shaman to perceive energetic frequencies in a unique way. The altered state may offer a shift of perception from which the shaman's "**spirit senses**" enable him/her to perceive things in non-ordinary reality similar to the way the five senses receive **energy** frequencies and enable us to perceive things in ordinary reality.

While the practice of divination may be the reading of energetic frequencies, the power of the shaman's divination is in his or her interpretation. The shaman experiences energies and then interprets them through his or her own **symbolic language**. This language allows the shaman to communicate the experience he or she is having in non-ordinary reality to others in a way that is meaningful to them. It is this ability, to communicate through a symbolic language that the client understands, that separates the shaman's divination from the ramblings of a madman. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **journey**.

Cowan, E. *Shamanism: Quarterly for the Foundation for Shamanic Studies* 5, no. 1 (1992) 4–19.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Djesikon

(Also *chesakkon*, *djesikiwin*). The cylindrical tent used in the **Spirit Lodge**, or **Shaking Tent Ceremony**, a widespread shamanic **ritual** for **divination** and to a lesser extent **healing** performed across much of **North America**. The construction of the tent varies slightly depending on the instructions given to the shaman by the **helping spirits** in preparatory **visions** for the ritual.

Generally the *djesikon* is constructed with five to ten freshly cut poles, ten to twelve feet in length. The poles are stuck upright in the ground, creating a **circle** approximately four feet in diameter, and

bound together laterally with ropes. This structure is then covered with skins or bark, leaving the top open approximately a foot for the entry and exit of the spirits. The floor is covered with boughs. See also **Ojibwa**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Djessakid

The *djessakid* is a type of **Ojibwa** shaman known for performing a **divination** ritual known as the **Shaking Tent Ceremony**; also known as *jesako*, *jessakkid*, *jossokeed*, *jizikiwinini*. The Ojibwa recognize three general types of shamans: **healing**, conjuring, and **seers**. The *djessakid* can be any of the three.

The *djessakid* acquires his or her **power** from *manitous*, or **helping spirits**, through personal **vision quests**. Every person in traditional Ojibwa **culture** also acquires a *manitou* for protection, identity within the clan, and success in hunting, beadwork, pottery, childbirth, etc. The *djessakid* is distinguished by the amount of **power** obtained and his or her ability to direct that power into healing, conjuring, or divination.

The Shaking Tent Ceremony is performed sparingly because the energy expenditure necessary depletes the *djessakid*. The ritual is used to diagnose the cause of **illness**, which in the Ojibwa belief system would be either **sorcery**, **spirit intrusion**, **energy intrusion (disease object)**, breach of **taboo**, or **soul loss**.

The ritual is also used for divining cures for illness, seeing the future or the movement of enemies, locating game and lost objects, and communicating with the deceased. In particular the ritual is used to capture the **free soul** of a sorcerer and to force that sorcerer to cease all malevolent acts causing illness, death, and injury to others.

The *djessakid* who are seers, individuals with “spirit sight,” gain their power from *Animiki*, the Thunder spirit. The power to foresee the future and other acts of clairvoyance is first received in childhood, after which a fast and appropriate rituals are undertaken to cultivate the gift for visions. *Animiki* grant these powers only to a chosen few.

In some groups the *djessakid* was feared, because he was believed to be capable of stealing an individual’s soul and other acts of sorcery. However, the *djessakid* was more likely to perform the Shaking Tent Ceremony to heal illness caused by sorcery, than to perform them. See also *djesikon*.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Dokos

Dokos is the **Wintun** word for **pains**, referring to the **energy intrusions** that a **shaman** removes from the body of a patient. Sorcerers are believed to be the source of *dokos*. With the aid of **spirit**, shamans are able to “see with spirit eyes” and see the *dokos* in the patient’s body as if the body were transparent. If the shaman’s spirit is stronger than the sorcerer’s spirit, then the shaman will be successful in drawing the *dokos* out, usually by sucking or cupping. However if the sorcerer’s spirit is stronger, the patient will need to be referred to an even stronger shaman. See also **disease object** and **sorcery**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Domain

A domain is a web of associations used to identify patterns in humanity in spite of differences in **cultures**, environments, and changes that occur naturally

over time. By defining a set of human features people can be classified by functions, like spiritual leaders, **shamans**, mediators, etc. When a sufficient number of features are found together, they allow identification. Recognizing domains allows us to identify similar social functionaries while allowing for the differences created by vast stretches of **space** and **time**.

For example diviners can be identified by focusing on the function of **divination** rather than focusing on how divination is performed in different cultures, e.g., throwing bones, casting **runes**, ingesting **psilocybe mushrooms**, drumming, etc. Furthermore diviners can be easily distinguished from shamans, because divination is only one feature in the domain of the shaman. Whether or not there is evidence of the remaining features of the shaman’s domain: the mastery of **altered states of consciousness**, the abilities to mediate between the worlds (beyond divination), and the ability to meet the **healing** needs of the community, determines whether or not the diviner is a shaman.

A domain or web of associations may express itself in fluid, diverse, or fragmentary ways. Some traits may be expressed in an obvious manner, while others might appear in a sublimated or somewhat imprecise form. No one feature gives definition to a domain; the definition comes through the association of features. No one thing need be present all the time or in exactly the same way. Rather, a sufficient number of features should be present to allow an identification to be made.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Dreams

Dreams are interpreted as gifts from **spirit**, either the spirit of the dreamer, the dreamer’s **helping spirits**, or from Spirit in the greatest sense. These gifts

or messages come in sleeping dreams, the dreams we have while we are asleep, or **waking dreams**, dream-like **altered state of consciousness** experiences we have while we are awake.

Sara Smith, a dreamer of the Mohawk Tribe, explains that dreams have limitless potential to guide the dreamer. Every dream is a unique and personal teaching tailored by Spirit for the dreamer. The dreamer must respond to the dream or the dream will go back to sleep and the teaching is lost. There are no bad dreams. All dreams are an opportunity to see the beauty of the teachings from Spirit and to learn from them.

There are many different types of waking and sleeping dreams. All shamanic **cultures** recognize at least two types of dreams: big dreams, those with a message for the community, and little dreams, those with a message for the individual who is **dreaming**. In addition, shamans cultivate the ability to dream dreams for other individuals or to enter the dreams of others and work with their dreaming body.

Shamans and Dreams

Anthropological case studies from cultures around the world show that shamans regularly use precognitive and extrasensory dreams for guidance in **diagnosis** and **healing**. For example, **Iroquois** shamans relied on their dreams to diagnosis the hidden cause of an **illness** and to suggest appropriate remedies and healing ceremonies. For particularly challenging or tricky issues a shaman might practice **dream incubation** over several nights or participated in a dreaming process with two or more shamans dreaming on the same subject in the same time of night.

Shamans cultivate the ability to enter a patient's dream for two main purposes. First, the shaman may have to enter the dream to assure an accurate interpretation. It is often the shaman's role to help others to understand the teachings in their dreams so that the resulting actions are aligned with the teachings. Second, the shaman may enter a

patient's dream to heal the patient directly or to help the patient to resolve a reoccurring dream in a new way, freeing the patient to heal.

Of note is a special class of dreamers, who may or may not also be shamans. In many shamanic cultures people learn about the path from death into the **Upperworld** directly from dreams. For example, the Beaver Indians, an Athabaskan people living in northwest Canada, recognize this special gift in dreamers who have died in their dreams, gone on to the Upperworld, and returned with **songs** that describe the soul's **journey**. These songs are a gift to the people and are performed publicly. In that way people learn the path to follow, so that when they die, they can follow the trail of these songs to the Upperworld.

Shamanic Peoples and Dreams

Sleeping dreams are believed to be the wishes of the soul by many cultures. Through dreams the soul can warn us of a future problem or danger. When the soul has a serious message the resulting dreams often have similar characteristics. These dreams are dreamed in brilliant color, come just before dawn breaks, reoccur night after night, or replay several times in one night in slightly different expressions of the same message.

When the dreamer acts on the dream message in their waking hours, the creative force of the soul that gave the dream recognizes that the dreamer is listening and creates more dreams. It is as if dreams notice that the dreamer notices them. Noticing dreams then encourages more messages and guidance to come in subsequent dreams.

The people of many shamanic cultures believe that dreams must be enacted in waking time. This shows the dream spirit that its message has been received and that the dreamer is prepared to act on it. Zulu **sangoma**, Vusamazulu Credo Mutwa, explains that "when we dream, we have to get out of bed and walk toward the dream."

For some, like the **Zulu**, dreams are enacted from a literal interpretation. A significant amount of time and money are spent doing all kinds of odd things, individually and communally, because dreams have counseled them to do so. In this way the dreamer faces his or her fears with intention and future problems are avoided.

In other cultures, like the Iroquois and Senoi, dreams are enacted from a metaphoric interpretation when a literal enactment would be destructive, excessive, or infringe on another's rights. A symbolic enactment fulfills the dreamer's need to express the dream while remaining in balance with the needs of others.

Sara Smith explains that "one of the most precious things that occurs during the night is the **dreamtime** when there is a personal connection to the upper spiritual realms." Today, people need to understand themselves through their connection to the spiritual realm, so that it can provide a proper perspective for their actions in the physical world. This is important because children need to be taught how to understand and to work with their dreams.

For example, there is one particular dream that is dreamt by children all over the world. It is the dream in which the dreamer is falling from a very great height. The Zulu call it the Star Dream because it comes from a time when the souls of all children flew among the stars. Though the dreamer usually wakes with a fright, children need to be taught that the dream is meant for them to learn to fly through the dream landscape and remember their **Ancestors** who flew among the stars.

The Dream of the Kosmos

The underlying belief of many ancient shamanic cultures is that reality as we know it is the result of the Dream of the **Kosmos**, or the dreamtime. Similarly, all people are the result of the dreams of their **Ancestors**. So, from this Great Cosmic Dream comes a thread of life that flows through your Ancestors into

you. That is the dream that the Kosmos is dreaming of your soul that is meant to unfold through the actions and decisions of your life. To live the dream the Kosmos is dreaming of you, you must heed the teachings of your dream.

Credo Mutwa, V. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Moss, R. "An Active Dreaming Approach to Death, Dying, and Healing Dreams." *Shaman's Drum* 34 (Spring 1994): 17-23.

Dream Incubation

Dream incubation is the practice of inducing dreams as a means of seeking **visions** and communication with the spirit world. There are a variety of techniques used to induce dreams including isolation, fasting, **prayer**, self-mutilation, internment in **caves** or chambers, and sleeping in the skins of sacrificed animals or the proximity of **power objects**.

Dream incubation practices are derived from techniques used to induce **altered states of consciousness**. However, since dream incubation does not demand the full **training** and skills of a **shaman**, the practice can be utilized by non-shamans and in non-shamanic cultures. For example, the Greeks and the Romans used dream incubation practices, learned in their contact with shamanic cultures, to seek *chrematismos*, or Divine Dreams through which the dreamer connected with his or her gods and goddesses.

Dream incubation is often practiced in natural caves and man-made **chamber mounds** built into the **earth**. The British, Welsh, and Irish, for example, used dream incubation in chamber mounds to connect with their most ancient **Ancestors**. The process began with a pilgrimage to the dwelling place of the Ancestral spirits in the mound. The dream seeker then stayed in the underground chambers (or caves) for three days and three nights observing an

unbroken fast while making ritual **sacrifices** and praying for dream visions and communications with the Ancestral spirits.

In another practice of dream incubation, utilized in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, the dreamer slept for three days and nights in the hide of a ritually sacrificed bull or ox. In some accounts the animal's flesh and blood are consumed in a **ritual** prior to beginning the three-day fast. In this way the dreamer is calling on the spirit of the dead animal to enrich and empower his or her dreams and act as guide into the spirit world.

Vision Questing is a related practice used to induce connection with the spirit world through **waking dreams**. See also **vision quest**.

Wright, J. M. "A Cauldron-Born Quest." *Shaman's Drum* 46 1997.

Dreaming

Shamans use dreams intentionally as a way to access and communicate with the spirit world. A shaman's dreaming is similar to intentionally entering **trance**. It is distinct from either ordinary dreams or lucid **dreams**. This technique is used, for example, by **Avá-Chiripá** shamans. See also **lucid dreaming**.

Dreamtime

Dreamtime is an Australian **aboriginal** concept of creation, shared by most shamanic peoples in some form. The Dreamtime is a vast epoch that occurred "before time began." The Dreamtime still exists parallel in time to present-day material reality. The true reality of the Dreamtime appears to us in **dreams** and to **shamans** in their **journeys**.

The Dreamtime began when infinite, limitless **space** was pervaded by great **powers** and mythical beings. These beings and powers lived without the limits and definitions of physical reality, which did not yet exist. With incomprehensible intensity and force these beings and powers lived out their dreams. They are the Great **Ancestors**.

The exploits of the Great Ancestors created **energy** and vibrational patterns in space. As the time without form drew to an end, the patterns congealed into the **earth**, landscapes, and interactions of things that we experience as the material aspect of existence. Everything from the forms and features of our dreams to our faces to the land to our **cultures** to the fabric of our Universe was laid down in this way in the Dreamtime. These patterns permeate relationships, ecosystems, and the subtle vibrational energy emanating from all earthly places and things.

During this great creative period of the Aboriginal Dreamtime, Two Men Dreaming moved over the country creating the landscape. The Dreaming women brought the Law and the rituals and ceremonies, creating cultural continuities that may reach back 150,000 years. Thus, the Law is rooted in the land since the Law and the land took form simultaneously.

Many shamanic peoples tell of their origins in a similar time before time. The **Zulu** call it Endelo-ntulo, the most ancient of times when the patterns of dreaming were laid down by the Ancestors. These original dreams from the Dreamtime affect the dreams of people today.

From a shamanic perspective, the Dreamtime is the origin of truth and reality. Material reality, as we experience it, is the result of the dream manifesting itself. It is simply the observable **shadows** or illusions of the original patterns of the Dreamtime. In other words, we and all of material reality are the result of the original Dream and its ever-unfolding manifestation. See also **Australia**.

Credo Mutwa, V. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Parker, K. L., et al. *Wise Women of the Dreamtime: Aboriginal Tales of the Ancestral Powers*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International Limited, 1993.

Druids

Druids, both male and female, acted as counselors, philosophers, shapeshifters, diviners, and magicians of rulers. The druids' skills required a deep and encyclopedic **knowledge** of many branches of wisdom, art, and science, and an ability to interrelate to the many dimensions of the Otherworld. Druid, in Irish *druí*, and Welsh *derwydd*, is derived from the Sanskrit root *veda*, to see or know, and is deeply associated with the **oak** tree, in Irish *daur*, Welsh *derw*, and Gaulish *dervo*.

There is a definite overlap of skills and knowledge between the druid and the **shaman**. Druids who worked in the Otherworld with a *coimimeadh*, or guardian spirit, possessed the ability to divine and retrieve lost souls through shamanic **trance**, and offered their skills in the service of the community could be considered shamans. However, this combination was not present in all druids.

It is not clear to what extent the druids of the Celts were influenced or drew upon the skills of indigenous shamanic traditions. The overlap of local indigenous shamanic traditions and the "official" druidic practice is difficult to judge in Britain and Ireland. See also **Celtic** and **shapeshifting**.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Encyclopedia of Celtic Wisdom: A Celtic Shaman's Source Book*. England: Element Books, 1994.

Drum

Shamans use rhythmic drumming, alone or in combination with **dance** and/or **song**, as a method of achieving an **altered state of consciousness** in which they travel into the spirit realms and interact with the **spirit** beings to meet the needs of their community. Oral traditions around the world acknowledge that percussion in general and rhythmic drumming in particular facilitate communication with the spirit world.

Drums and **rattles** were developed early in human history, possibly in Paleolithic times, though exact dates are uncertain since skin heads and wooden frames deteriorate over time. It is clear that the **rituals** of the earliest known **religions** evolved around the beat of the drum. The earliest **frame drum** may be represented in a shamanic ritual depicted in the wall paintings from the **shrine** room walls of Catal Hüyük (5600 B.C.E.), an ancient city in what is now Turkey.

The Shaman's Trance

The altered state of consciousness necessary for shamanic work requires that the shaman remain alert and aware and able to co-direct the **journey** with the **helping spirits**. The shaman uses the drum to induce this particular altered state. For example a Siberian **shaman** begins quietly to call in his **helping spirits** with his drum and **power songs**. He puts his head down inside the drum, **singing** slowly and dolefully, he strikes the drum in various places with quiet, random strokes. He continues as if to call someone who resides at a great distance. When one of his helping spirits has arrived the shaman hits the drum hard and utters a few **words**. Gradually his song becomes louder and the drumming more regular. As the spirits all arrive the shaman's final blows become very powerful, sounding as if they could split the drum. The shaman drums and sings at the top of his voice and enters his **trance**.

The shaman's drum comes in many forms. Often the shape of the drum is explained in the culture's mythology about their **First Shaman**. Some drums are simply dried skin or bark. However, most shaman's drums are single-headed frame drums, or double-headed as in **Nepal** and Tibet. African shamans use different drums for different purposes.

Generally speaking the single-head, frame drum, also called a tambourine, was used across much of the Plains of **North America**, **Siberia**, and the Arctic where drums were used. Single-head,

water-tuned drums were used in eastern North America, the West Indies, and parts of **South America**. The double-headed drum was used in southwestern North America, down into Mexico and parts of Central America, and Nepal and Tibet. The wooden signal drum is used in the Amazon and other rain forest regions.

Uses

The primary function of the drum is to induce the shaman's trance state for both journey and **embodiment** trances. From the shaman's perspective the drum is used to call on his or her helping spirits for entry into and support in the spirit world. The drumbeat also serves as an anchor, or lifeline, that the shaman follows to return to his or her body and/or exit the trance state when the trance work is complete.

The other specific uses of the drum are diverse and determined by **culture**. Each culture has its own pattern of **rhythms** that serve the different functions of ritual and **ceremony**.

The drum is used to summon the spirits into a ritual or ceremony. Used in this way the drum is a tool for creating **sacred space**. Conversely a forceful beat of the drum can be used to drive away malevolent spirits or intrusive energies that cause **disease**, confusion, and disharmony. Used in this way the drum facilitates the creation of a purified **space** where well-being and health can flourish.

Traditionally the frame drum is used to work with elemental powers. *Kah*, a slap that stops the vibration of the skin head, is the **sound of earth**. *Dum*, a low, open, resonant sound, is the sound of water. *Tak*, a sharp, high-pitched rim sound, is the sound of **fire**. *Cha*, a soft brushing sound or the sound of the tambourine's jingles, is the sound of **air**.

The drum is used for communication, both between villages and between people and the beings of the spirit world. In Lapland and Siberia the drum is used directly for **divination**. These drums are rigged with a pointer,

or frog, made of **metal** rings. These metal pieces are moved across the face of the drum by the harmonics of the vibrating drumskin when it is beaten. The random movements of the frog are interpreted as the message from spirit, often relative to the images the shaman has painted on the drumhead.

Making the Drum

In many cultures the shamans must journey or otherwise ask for a **vision** to discover the design of the drum, the materials to be used to make it, and any symbolic ornamentation or images to be added. This often means that the shaman is shown the specific tree to use for the frame and the specific animal whose hide will form the drumhead.

The drum is both functional and symbolic. The shape of the shaman's drum and the materials from which it is made are highly symbolic. The drum is connected to the **Tree of Life** through the wood of the frame and its association through all **trees** back to the First Tree. In some cultures the wood for the frame ideally comes from a lightning-struck tree, bringing the power of instantaneous transformation into the drum. Lightning here is also metaphor for the striking clarity of the shaman's reborn soul as it rises from the **ego death** of his or her **initiation**.

The drum is connected to the spirit world through the animal whose skin is used to make the drumhead. That animal is asked in ritual to release its earthly existence and to work with the shaman, allowing the shaman to ride it into the spirit world. Thus the **Yakut** call the drum the "shaman's horse." The **Altaics** call it "the whip" that drives the horse and the shaman into the spirit world. The drum is also referred to as a "rainbow-bridge" because it creates a connection the shaman can cross between the physical and spiritual worlds.

The drum has its own spirit and is considered a living thing. The drum may serve as a boat for the shaman or a container to scoop up spirits in the

midst of the shaman's journey. It is also used as a healer in and of itself in rituals like the "healing drum" ceremony of Native North Americans.

Why the Drum Works

Rhythmic drumming can act as an auditory driving mechanism, bringing the **brain waves** into a theta frequency of 4 to 7 cycles per second, by drumming at 4 to 7 beats per second. Researchers have established that theta brain wave frequency, which correlates with hypnagogic imagery, states of **ecstasy**, creativity, and sudden illuminations, can aid entry into altered states of consciousness.

Furthermore, research has shown that any rhythmic pattern of movement, light, or sound that incorporates 4 to 4.5 Hz can effectively induce theta activity. For example, research on the drumming used in the ritual dances of the Salish to induce altered states, found that the predominant frequency of the rhythmic drumming was 4 to 7 Hz. Further research has shown that even when extracted from cultural ritual, ceremony, or intent, rhythmic drumming serves as an effective tool for entering altered states of consciousness and often induces spontaneous imagery that is ceremonial or ritualistic in content.

This supports the theory that the drumming used by shamans in their rituals elicits specific neurophysiological effects. These temporary changes in brain wave activity facilitate imagery and entry into altered states of consciousness. The temporary changes in brain wave frequency occur in most people after 13 to 15 minutes of the sustained drumming pattern. This time frame corresponds with the oral traditions of indigenous peoples and contemporary findings from meditation research.

Rhythmic drumming, even when stripped of ritual, **training**, and suggestion, elicits subjective experiences that fall into the following categories or themes: loss of connection with linear

time, sensations of movement of or within the body, increased energy, temperature fluctuations, relaxed clarity that is free of emotions, emotional discomfort, sensation of leaving the body, visual imagery of spirit beings and spirit landscapes, entry into an altered state of consciousness, and the experience of a journey through the spirit realm involving traditional shamanic imagery.

The shaman's drum plays a central role in gathering and working with spiritual powers. The drum is a living **power object** and may be given its own burial when it is worn out. Part of the burial of a shaman/sorcerer is to break the drumskin, immobilizing the sorcerer and effectively keeping him in the Otherworld. When honored shamans are buried, their drum is either buried with them or handed down to the apprentice or family member whom the shaman has selected to receive his or her powers. See also **Siberia**; **sonic driving**; **theta waves**.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Eliade, Mircea, ed. *Ancient Religions*. New York: Citadel Press, 1950.

Maxfield, M. "The Journey of the Drum." *ReVision* 16, no. 4 (Spring 1994): 157–163.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Dual Nature

The **shaman** is often described as having a "dual nature," being simultaneously "healer and sorcerer, human and divine, human and animal, male and female." The personality of the shaman is complex and expanded by the demands of his or her role in the community at large.

Perhaps an innate tendency toward this dual nature is the reason certain

individuals are called by **spirit** to become shamans and others are not. Of course, why an individual is chosen will never be known. However, shamans tested with current systems for assessing mental health do prove to be both more wild and imaginative while simultaneously more stable and able to balance the strong dynamic forces of life than are their cultural counterparts.

Nowhere is the dual nature of the shaman more profound than in the **transformed shaman**, who was said long ago to have transformed physically from male to female. This “transformation” refers in particular to the metamorphosis in biological males who must transform their masculine **gender** to the feminine gender to become shamans in their culture. Transformed shamans are seen by their culture as belonging to a third or alternate gender. This transformation is sanctioned by their culture and expected of men who are called to be shamans.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.
Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Dwarf

Dwarves are beings who look like small humans, usually about two feet tall. Dwarves possess a blend of skill and **power** akin to that which transformed the **elements** of the universe into physical form. The transformative power of the dwarf is similar to that of the **blacksmith**, thus dwarves are often associated with blacksmiths, if not one and the same.

The dwarf is responsible for the shaman's **initiation** in **cultures** across Europe and Asia. The dwarf transforms the body and **soul** of the novice into that of the **shaman**. In their **journeys** shamans often encounter dwarves who make them unbreakable **swords** and knives, jewelry with magical properties, and other shamanic **paraphernalia** made of **metal**.

Allen-Coombe, J. “Weaving the Way of Wyrd: An Interview with Brian Bates.” *Shaman's Drum* 27 (Spring 1992): 20–29.

E

Earth

Earth is both a **spirit** being in its own right and one of the elemental powers. **Shamans** work with both aspects of earth **energy**. As an elemental **power**, earth can be used for **healing** in its physical form and called on by the shaman energetically to aid in healing in the invisible world during his or her **journeys**. As Earth, the being, shamans are working with the spirit of the planet Earth as a **helping spirit**.

The qualities of the earth **element** and Earth are similar and related, though not the same. Confusion arises because the same word is used (in English) to name the ground we walk on and the planet we live on. A similar relationship exists between the element **air** and the **sky**, however the use of different **words** to name them dispels the confusion.

The role of the element earth in **shamanic healing** rituals is to provide **cleansing**, grounding, centering, or beginning anew. The energy of the earth element may be used directly by applying earth or clay to the skin of patients or initiates or burying a person or **power objects** in the earth. The shamans of many **cultures** utilize the energy of the earth element directly from specific sites by conducting their healings or initiations in **caves** or other land formations where there are special earth energies to draw on. Shamans also retreat alone into caves or other **womb-like** spaces to rejuvenate and restore their own energy.

Shamans use the energy of the earth element in their journeys in similar ways. For example, the shaman may do the healing work in a cave in the invisible world, paint **sacred** symbols of power or protection directly on the spirit body of the patient, or fill the patient's spirit body with earth to help to ground, center, and bring the patient back into balance.

The role of Earth, the being, in shamanic healing **rituals** includes, but is not limited to, connecting humans with the teachings of Earth wisdom, inspiring and guiding the practical application of that wisdom (**knowledge**), and serving as a receptacle for people's gratitude for the physical and spiritual abundance in their lives. The spirit of the Earth is invoked to help people connect to the **heartbeat of the Earth**, to the heartbeat of their own body, and, through those **rhythms**, to the pulse of life in all things.

For the **Quechua** people of **South America**, the Earth is Pachamama. Pachamama is sacred. It is the place where silver and gold from the time before creation are drawn from that great Dream into the material universe and woven into the fabric of the earth.

Almost all cultures recognize the qualities of groundedness and a sense of home in the Earth energy. Beyond those qualities the role of Earth energy is defined specifically culture by culture. For example many cultures include the wisdom of Nature, the stones, and the minerals as aspects of Earth energy.

Somé, M. P. *Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman*. New York: Penguin Group USA, Inc., 1995.

East

The east is a directional **energy** utilized by **shamans** in their **ritual** work and the creation of **sacred space** within ordinary

space. The east is one of six directional energies (east, **south**, **west**, **north**, above, and below) who together define the location of the seventh point, the center. Shamans must remain aware of their center at all times to keep from becoming lost while traveling in the boundless and ever-changing realms of **non-ordinary reality**.

Each of the directions is associated with an element, a season, time of day, **colors**, animals, deities, etc. These associations show both consistency and variation across cultures. The energy of the east is swift, mercurial, and changeable. For many cultures, though not all, the element associated with the east is **air**, the season is spring, the time is day-break, the **life cycle** passage is the baby, souls coming, the power is **vision**, and the **journey** is one of perception and illumination.

Ecstasy

From the Greek *ekstasis*, meaning “a being put out of its place,” ecstasy refers to the experience of extreme emotional exaltation that overpowers the reason and senses and lifts one into a **trance-like** state of rapture. The rapture of ecstasy is often described as the profound experience of being connected to all things that results from a merging with **spirit**. For the **shaman**, a master of the **techniques of ecstasy**, merging with spirit occurs either in **non-ordinary reality** as a result of **soul flight** or in **ordinary reality** as a result of **spirit embodiment**.

Ecstasy is not just bliss or joy. It involves the sense of being pulled out of oneself, expanded beyond the limits of one’s little ego and body. For example, a Korean *mudang* describes ecstasy, or *Mu-A*, as “a sensation which is encountered in our hearts. It is seeing and hearing with the heart. It is the death of the ego.” Ecstasy is the full-being memory of the truth of the relationship of all things in our Universe.

This experience of being transported outside of oneself is to discover oneself

as part of the ceaseless flow of infinitely varying patterns of **energy**, or the **Kosmos**, as described by shamans, religious mystics, and quantum physicists.

In trance the shaman experiences the infinite wisdom of Universe; a Universe which is alive, ever-expanding, and creative. The Universe in its totality, an infinitely complete Oneness, is a challenge for humans to grasp. The ecstatic experience of the true nature of the universe is not easily comprehended or described. Spirits are one of the ways shamans “see,” or give form to their ecstatic experience. Spirits are e. g. hands of the Universe reaching out to the shaman in forms he or she finds easier to comprehend and to communicate to others.

Ecstasy is singled out as the inescapable ingredient of **shamanism**. But the meaning ascribed to it is often diffused and at times contradictory. While there are several definitions of ecstasy, e.g., religious and sexual, and a debate as to whether ecstasy through oneness with God is the same or different from ecstasy through oneness with the Kosmos. Functionally speaking, ecstasy is the state in which the shaman can perform shamanic acts.

Some authors have proposed that true shamanic ecstasy implies **possession** by spirits; others take an alternative view, believing that the true shaman experiences only soul flight. Others argue against interpreting shamanic ecstasy as being exclusive of either trance state. The shaman’s ecstatic experience is always controlled and includes both magical flight and spirit possession.

The practice of ecstasy alone does not define the shaman. The shaman has specific techniques of ecstasy which allow him/her to take action in that state of ecstasy. An ecstatic cannot be considered a shaman, unless he or she specializes in trances during which his or her **soul** leaves the body and goes somewhere to do something that affects change in ordinary reality. Commonly the shaman utilizes ecstatic states to

heal a patient by restoring vital energies or by extracting harmful energies.

Shamanic ecstasy is identified as a specific class of **altered states of consciousness** involving: (a) voluntary control of entrance and duration of trance, (b) post-trance memory, and (c) communicative interplay with participants and spectators while in trance.

The basic need to come into the presence of the **sacred**, to enter ecstasy, is a compelling force for humans. It is the driving force behind St. Ignatius of Loyola who developed a set of exercises whose practice lead to ecstatic experiences, Patanjali collecting the 196 yoga sutras whose practice leads one through the various stages of spiritual development, Taoist cultivation of a complex system of evocations to move spiritual energy, and the spinning dances of the Sufis. It remains the primary reason people seek out shamans and their techniques of ecstasy.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Peters, L. G., and D. Price-Williams. "Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism." *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 3 (1980): 397–413.

Walsh, R. *The Spirit of Shamanism*. New York: Llewellyn Publications, 1990.

Ego Death

The ego death is the critical stage in the shaman's **initiation** during which the initiate's ego sense of self dies or is killed. This death occurs in an altered state and is experienced as real death. The transformation from initiate to **shaman** demands a willingness to suffer this genuine death of ego, not merely an imaginary death experience or psychological metaphor.

The period of initiation prior to the actual ego death strips the initiate of all that is familiar, social and mental habits as well as religious and philosophical ideas. The initiates are stripped of everything they would call their own

until all that remains is their sense of self. As the ego death strips even this from the initiate all that remains is one **energy**, one force, one essence, the Oneness of all life—the individual's connection to the Source.

The divine forces emanating from the Source do not function through individuals who define themselves. The basic challenge of any shaman, and the primary hurdle to gaining **power**, is the human urge to create a self-image. The shaman must continually confront his or her own self-image and surrender it to the spirit world.

When the initiate first experiences ego death, any return to life is uncertain. The initiate, suddenly small, helpless, and humble, finally enters his or her right relationship with the tremendous forces of the spirit world. While in this state of profound **humility**, the interwoven mystical unity of all things can connect to the initiate's heart, mind, and body. The initiate is made one with the spirit world, the universe, nature, animals, and plants, and he or she finally experiences reality in its true nature. The initiate now "sees" as a shaman.

This experiential shift of awareness creates a fundamental change in the initiate's existential condition. The vitality of that awareness reanimates the initiate who comes back to life a shaman. The initiate returns to **ordinary reality** a shaman whose orientation in the world is totally different.

The ego death theme can be discerned in **dreams** and **visions** of ordinary people, though in extremely diluted forms. The death of the "I" is a classic, **transpersonal** experience that is experienced by different people at different levels of intensity. In contrast, the shaman's ego death may miss real physical death by no more than the width of a single thought or breath.

Holger Kalweit, an ethno-psychologist, with degrees in psychology and cultural anthropology and years of study of shamans, explains that when we discuss the shaman's ego death "we are not referring here to a mytho-poetic

imagination of death in the form of allegories and archetypes. The death experience of the shaman is a dangerous walk on a tightrope between this world and the Beyond. It is not a hallucinatory pseudovision of death." See also **altered states of consciousness; dismemberment; shaman's death; the call.**

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Matthews, John. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Dorset, England, Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

White, T. "The Talismanic Art of Jalil Ia Al-Malik." *Shaman's Drum* 15 (Midwinter 1989): 19–23.

Ehldilna

Ehldilna, the **shamanic healing** ritual of **soul retrieval**, is considered the most difficult **Wintun** healing form. It is performed only in dire situations of **soul loss**, when the patient's *lehs*, soul, has left the body because the **illness** has brought the patient so near death or because the *lehs* has been stolen by a malevolent spirit.

During the *ehldilna*, the shaman **dances** into a **trance** state, induced and supported by the **singing** of the audience, in which his or her **helping spirits** set out to locate and recapture the lost **soul**. The participants and **shaman** all gather at midnight. The audience sings and beats sticks in a continuous **rhythm**. The shaman dances into trance with a staff to which is attached a miniature basket for catching the lost soul. Once the shaman's journeying soul and spirits find the lost soul, he or she returns to the **ritual** space and places the basket containing the soul over the patient's heart, allowing it to return to its natural home. See also **journey** and **soul loss**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Elements

The elements **earth, air, fire, and water**, and wood and/or **metal** in some Asian or African **cultures**, are the elemental powers. The **elements** are pure essential powers; their great **power** is that they are pure and not complex, like spirit beings. Elemental powers can be used for **healing** in their physical forms and in their energetic forms, when the **shaman** has journeyed into the invisible world. The shaman derives a great deal of intrinsic power from an intimate relationship with the elements of the natural world.

For example initiates often pass through ritual **purification** by each of the four elements in preparation for their **initiation** ritual. Experienced shamans work with the spirits of the earth, air, fire, water, and the elements in their combined forms; fog, mist, steam, smoke, swamp, bog, wind, etc., to effect changes in **weather** and the environment around them. See also **journey** and **ritual**.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Matthews, John. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Dorset, England, Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Elxá

Elxá is the **gender variant** shaman, or *berdache*, of the Yuma, a people of southwestern regions of **North America**. The Yuma believe that a person with a particularly acute capability for **dreaming** has the potential to transform his or her mind.

In the case of the *elxá*, the change begins as dreams of transformation at the time of puberty. Over time the boy is believed to transform his mind from male to female through his dreaming. The transformation from boy to *elxá* is confirmed in a celebratory communal gathering in which the *elxá* prepares a

meal for friends and family. See also **berdache (berdach)**; **gender**; **gender-variant male**; **transformed shaman**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Embodiment

Embodiment is the **trance** state characterized by an intentional, controlled **possession** of the **shaman** by a **spirit** or **sacred healing energy**. The shaman experiences his or her consciousness and body being taken over, to varying degrees, by a separate entity, usually believed to be a spirit.

The shaman controls the entry into, duration of, and exit from this **altered state of consciousness**. Embodiment trances are induced to serve a particular purpose in the healing **ritual** and the shaman is able to direct the trance experience toward that purpose.

In general, people have a deeply rooted, human need to experience the presence of the "Divine." It is believed that the "Divine" has manifested when the shaman's ego detaches itself from the body and the merging spirit is allowed full possession. Through this intentional possession, or embodiment, the shaman serves as a **vehicle** or mouthpiece for the gods and allows the patient to witness a manifestation of the "Divine."

What makes embodiment an act of **shamanism** and distinguishes it from spontaneous possession is the shaman's mastery of the trance state. The shaman is able not only to surrender to spirit, but to do so with a purpose and to accomplish that purpose while in the trance. The purpose may be **extraction, divination**, or conducting a **healing** ritual for the individual or community.

Embodiment trance states are primary in the shamanism of much of **Africa, Southeast Asia**, the South Pacific, **North America**, east India, and

other regions where the ecstatic trance states employed by traditional shamanic healers rarely involve **soul flight**. In many of these cultures the shaman experiences the embodiment of a special, sacred healing energy that is not associated with a particular spirit.

Embodiment trances are invoked by the same variety of techniques as other shamanic trance states. In southern Thailand, for example, Malay shamans **chant** to invoke "white tigers," or spirit tigers. The shaman does not physically shapeshift into a tiger, but his facial expressions become tiger-like and he moves and jumps like a tiger in a way no human being would be able to do during a normal waking state.

Full embodiment trances are not only expected in some cultures, but they are necessary for the safe and successful practice of many methods of **shamanic healing**. By embodying a **helping spirit**, the shaman's body is protected from the ill effects of harmful energies being removed from the patient's body. The embodiment trance enables the helping spirit to convey information through divination and to conduct extraction healings through the shaman's body.

The word "shaman" comes from the **Tungus** word *saman*. The translation of *saman* as "one who is excited, moved, raised" refers to the shaking of the body that occurs when the shaman has embodied spirit while in trance. As the term *saman* spread to **China** and **Japan** it continued to be used to refer to practitioners who utilize spirit embodiment trances. Given this understanding of the original meaning of the word, it is curious that "shaman" has come to be applied primarily to practitioners of the technique of soul flight, or journeying, and to exclude techniques of embodiment. See also **journey** and **shapeshifting**.

Peters, L. G., and D. Price-Williams. "Shamanism: Phenomenology of a Spiritual Discipline." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 21:2 (1989): 115–137.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Emptiness

The **Great Mystery** is, as explained by Ken Wilber, philosopher and one of the foremost visionaries of our time, that which is unbound and unquantifiable. It is Creativity, the force that drives the constant **evolution** of our **Kosmos**. Creativity, in this sense and on this scale, is emptiness. **Shamans** refer to this emptiness as the Unknown, the Void, the Source, and the Great Mystery. It is that which created the Creator. For the shaman, this emptiness is accessed through **ritual** and in **altered states of consciousness**. Emptiness is the potent space from which the shaman draws his or her **power** and magic.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

Energy

Energy, the most fundamental of all physical concepts, is the capacity for doing work either associated with material bodies or independent of matter. Energy in humans is also vitality, inherent **power**, or the capacity to act, operate, or produce an effect.

Relative to **shamanism**, energy is the substance of which everything is made. It is both formless and many formed. Even when it takes form, it is often more of a flow than a form. Energy is often used as a synonym for **spirit** and other invisible things the **shaman** encounters in **non-ordinary reality**. The shaman understands that energies exist which we have yet to find a way to measure and that the fact that we do not yet know how to measure an energy, like spirit energy, does not disprove its existence.

Edith Turner, distinguished anthropologist and author, describes her

moment of awakening to the reality of spirit energy. While participating in a **healing** ritual in Zambia, Turner observed a traditional Ndembu doctor extract a harmful spirit from a sick woman's back. Turner reports that she saw with her own eyes a large gray blob of something like plasma emerge from the woman's back. In that moment she knew that there is spirit stuff and spirit affliction. It is not a matter of metaphor or symbol or even psychology.

Turner continues to explain that energy, which she thinks of as formless, was not the right word for the blob she saw coming out of the Ndembu woman's back. The blob appeared miserable, purely bad, and without any energy like a ghost. It had both form and definition.

Perhaps energy is the right word. Humans have form and definition and are made of energy. Humans are distinct from other things in their world while at the same time humans and all of those things are made up of the same energy, the atoms of the physical world. Thus humans and things can be considered energy, highly complex patterns of energy.

Shamans see and feel the distinction between different energies in the invisible world as well. They distinguish between their energy, that of their **helping spirit**, the energy of a lost **soul** part, or a harmful spirit that has invaded the patient's energy. It is possible that neither energy nor spirit is adequate to describe the experience of shamans and the realities of the invisible world. See also **extraction; ritual; spirits**.

Turner, E. "The Reality of Spirits." *ReVision* 15, no. 1 (1992): 28-32.

Energy Body

The energy body is that aspect of all living things that is made up of the **energy** of a spiritual nature. The spiritual energy, or spiritual essence, of the energy body is also called **mana, power, prana**, or **ch'i** in various languages. The **soul**,

which is also energy, is directly connected to the energy body.

The energy body normally inhabits the physical body. This second body, also called the subtle energy body, is invisible to most, though some have a natural ability to see it in others. This ability can be cultivated. The shaman enters an **altered state of consciousness**, in part, to see the energy body.

The shaman's **training** also involves cultivating certain skills to access his or her own energy body and refine its vibration. The energy body is the manifestation in the human form of Universal Energy that is intimately involved in human life. Thus, the energy body provides a portal for the shaman into the Universal Energy in its entirety. The ultimate mastery and cultivation of the energy body allows the shaman to access not only his or her own soul, but also the Source-of-all-things, a non-material, cosmic reservoir of energy from which all things come. See also **ch'i (ji, ki); Q'ero; spirit**.

Brennan, Barbara Ann. *Hands of Light: A Guide to Healing Through the Human Energy Field: A New Paradigm for the Human Being in Health, Relationship, and Disease*. New York: Bantam Books, 1988.

Johari, Harish. *Chakras: Energy Centers of Transformation*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 2000.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Energy Intrusions

Also called power intrusions, **object intrusions**. Energy intrusions are misplaced energies which have defined patterns, but are not **spirits of the dead** or other **spirit intrusions**. Energy intrusions include, but are not limited to, thought forms, hostility, suppressed emotions, strongly broadcasted emotions, addictions, cultural bias or suppression, and the creations of sorcerers,

like the *lobir* of the **Dagara** or *tupilak* of the **Eskimo**.

Traditionally energy intrusions are shot into the victim's body by a sorcerer or malevolent **spirit**. Today, some intrusions are created by the victim's own thoughts and maligned behavior within his or her own body. Energy intrusions can cause weakness, malaise, localized pain or discomfort, **illness**, or death depending on the type of energy intrusion and how long it has been in the patient's body. **Shamans** remove harmful energy intrusions by performing **extraction** rituals while merged with their **helping spirits**.

The shaman determines what needs to be removed while in a **divination** trance. In this **altered state of consciousness** energy intrusions look and feel harmful. They may appear as fierce bugs or reptiles, eating at the patient's insides or hissing malevolently at the shaman. They may also appear as sticks, bones, teeth, stones, shells, or the strange creations of a sorcerer. Some forms are amorphous, like clotted blood, black slime, or cobwebs in the blood. Regardless of their form, intrusions feel repulsive; their harmful nature is absolutely clear.

Energy intrusions range from systemic energy, which can be cleansed, to localized energy which can be extracted, to full spirit intrusions, which must be exorcised. The technique a shaman uses to remove energy intrusions is determined in the divination and influenced by **culture**, the type of energy being removed, the skill of the shaman, and his or her personal technique. See also **cleansing; ritual; sorcery; trance**.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1990.

Entheogen

An entheogen is a psychoactive sacrament that induces a spiritual or mystical experience when taken, from the Greek *entheos* meaning literally "god within" and *gen* which denotes the action of "becoming." The entheogen-

induced experience is described as a serene mystical state, ecstatic rapture, a feeling of the Divine Spirit within, or a profound experience of a Connection-with-all-things.

The psychotropic **plant medicines** used by **shamans** to induce altered states are entheogens. From a shamanic perspective all plants have spirits. However, the plants that are entheogens, or from which the entheogenic sacrament is made, have supernatural powers as well. They are **sacred** deities in and of themselves who must be treated with respect and propitiated with correct **offerings**. Some, like the **spirit** of *ayahuasca*, a South American plant medicine, are also doctors. The patient and the shaman drink *ayahuasca* during the healing **ritual**. The spirit of *ayahuasca* can be felt moving through the body like a large snake, healing whatever is unwell.

Entheogenism, the use of substances to explore the Divine, is not in and of itself **shamanism**. Shamanism is the pragmatic use of altered states for the purpose of establishing and maintaining personal and communal well-being, healing, and survival. **Ecstasy**, or Oneness with God, is often an aspect of the shaman's altered state experiences. However, the pursuit of ecstasy is not the purpose of the shaman's altered state, largely because traditional shamanic peoples believe that Oneness with, and not separation from, God is the underlying principle of all life.

The Council on Spiritual Practices has launched the Entheogen Project. The purpose of the project "is to systematically gather **knowledge** about the immediate and long-term effects of entheogen use and to explore how public policy might accommodate responsible spiritual practices incorporating entheogens."

Variations:

- entheogenic—god-generating
- entheodelic—god-revealing

See also **altered states of consciousness; religion; South America**.

Boire, R. G. *Sacred Mushrooms and the Law*. Davis, CA: Spectral Mindustries, 1997.

Council on Spiritual Practices, www.csp.org/practices/.

Epená

Epená is a hallucinogenic snuff used widely by the *payé* (shaman) and adult males of the Tukanoan and Witotan **language** families in western **Amazonia**. *Epená*, ingested in snuff or pellet form, enables the Tukanoan *payé* to communicate directly with *Viho-mahse*, the "snuff-person," who lives in the Milky Way. The *payé* is not allowed to communicate directly with the spirit world. He must communicate through *Viho-mahse* who attends to all human affairs. Thus, *epená* is one of the most important tools of the *payé* as it enables him to communicate with the spirit world.

The various names of *epená* depend on locality or tribe. For example, in Brazil it is *Paricá* and *Nyakwana*, in Venezuela, *epená* and *Nyakwana*, and in Colombia, *Yakee*, *Yato*, and *Viho*. The use of *Yakee* and *Paricá* is traditionally restricted to the *payé* and the others to the *payé* and adult males. The snuff is used in some locales without ceremonial connection, however it is a powerful tool for **diagnosis** and treatment of **illness** for the *payé* everywhere it is used.

Epená is made from the inner bark of several species of *Virola*, a genus of the nutmeg family. *Virola theiodora* is the most important of the *Virola* species used, followed by *V. calophylla*, *V. calophylloidea*, and *V. elongata*, and *V. rufula* and *V. cuspidata* where they are local. *Virola* is native to the tropical forests of Central and **South America**. The outer bark of this slender tree is smooth and brown, mottled with gray. The inner bark has copious amounts of red resin from which *epená* is made. The flowers, brown to golden colored, blossom singly on a stalk or in small, pungent clusters.

Use

Epená is used for medicinal and magical purposes. Different “kinds” of *Virola* plants are used for different purposes, however the distinction is not made along lines that are apparent to Western botanists. Nor does the distinction appear to have any relationship to the hallucinogenic properties of the plant. The *payé* distinguishes between plants based on many hidden characteristics, more akin to the spirit of the individual plant than to chemical makeup. Nonetheless the “kind” does affect the use and potency of the resulting snuff.

The primary *shamanic* purpose of *epená* is to induce a **trance** state that puts the *payé* into contact with the spirit world or with the traditional spirit being(s) who mediate between the *payé* and the spirit world. In this state the *payé* can perform **divinations** for successful hunts and other life sustaining issues, diagnose and treat illness, foretell the future, combat **sorcery**, cleanse **energy intrusions**, and extract malevolent spirits.

Virola resin has a wide range of medicinal purposes and a corresponding range of preparations. For example, the bark can be smoked at ritual **dances** to cure fevers or boiled into liquor the patient drinks to expel malevolent spirits. The unprocessed resin is used as a poison for blowgun darts and medicinally as a topical anti-fungal medicine to cure skin problems like ringworm.

Preparation

The preparation is guided by the *payé* because the *Virola* plant is **sacred** and the spirit must be treated correctly, particularly given its potent hallucinogenic effects. This is the case whether the resin is to be used for medicinal or magical purposes. The preparation methods and plant species used vary with peoples, regions, purpose, and the form preferred for ingesting the hallucinogen.

Generally, the *Virola* resin is collected and prepared either as snuff or rolled into a pellet form. The psychoactivity of

the oral preparation is less intense. For example, the nomadic Makú ingest the bark resin of *V. elongata* directly, without preparation. The Boro and Witoto ingest pellets made from a paste of the resin of *V. peruvianana*, *V. surinamensis*, *V. theiodora*, and *V. lorentensis*.

Traditionally, the preparation of *epená* snuff begins in the cool mornings before the **sun** penetrates the forest and its warmth reduces the flow of the resin. Bark from the lower section of the tree is stripped and, when the resin that exudes flows blood-red, it is scraped from the soft inner bark. The resin scrapings are kneaded in cold **water** for twenty minutes. The resulting liquid is strained, boiled to a thick syrup, sun-dried, pulverized, sifted, and mixed with the **ash** that functions as a preserving salt.

The Waiká of Venezuela use enormous amounts of snuff, sometimes daily. They have several methods for preparation that are all variations on the same process. The cambial layer is rasped from the bark and the trunk of *Virola*. The shavings are gently dried over a **fire** so that they may be stored for future use. When needed, the shavings are wetted, boiled for at least a half hour, and reduced to a syrup. The syrup is dried, ground to a powder, and finely sifted for snuff.

Virola pellets are prepared in variations of the following process. Slivers of the *Virola* bark are carefully boiled down, stirring constantly for at least an hour until a thick paste remains. The paste is rolled into pellets for immediate use. These pellets will keep for approximately two months. If not for immediate use, the pellets are coated with an alkaline ash, or “salt,” and set out to dry.

Alkaline ash is prepared by burning the wood of several different, but specific **trees**. The resulting ash is mixed with water and the ash filtered out. The filtrate is then boiled down or allowed to dry, yielding an alkaline residue or “salt.”

Active Principle

Tryptamine alkaloids are found in high concentration in the resin secreted from the inner bark. Small amounts of monoamine oxidase inhibitors, which enhance the psychoactive properties of the tryptamines, are also found in the resin.

Ritual of Receiving the Plant Spirit, or Plant Medicine

Implements for snuffing *epená* vary, depending on tradition and the size of the dose. Generally, the snuff is placed in one end of a tube and a person blows on the other end, delivering the snuff into the nostrils of the recipient. Long tubes, some an arm's length, are used to ingest large doses of snuff, from six to eight tablespoons. Short tubes made from hollow bird bones are used for smaller doses. Forked, bird-bone tubes may be used for self-administering the snuff.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

Immediately after the snuff is administered into each nostril, the sinuses discharge excessive mucus. The first stage of trance is characterized by hyperactivity and stimulation. During this stage the *payé* calls on the spirits to guide and participate in the **journey** into the spirit world. In many **cultures** the *payé* is summoning his *hekura*, the little men of the jungle, who enter the *payé's* breast and give him the powers to cure, combat sorcery, and see into the future.

In the next stage a period of drowsiness sets in that is disturbed by intense **visions** that correspond with the *payé's* experiences in the spirit world. While in this stage individuals have a faraway, dream-like expression that is associated with the temporary absence of the soul as it travels in the spirit world.

Songs and Dances

Chanting and dancing is at times continuous and through it the *payé* often enacts his conversations with spirits and other invisible energies. It is this transportation of the **soul** into the

spirit realms that is one of the most significant values of *epená*.

Use in Western Medicine

None are known at this time. See also **altered states of consciousness; chant; cleansing; entheogens; extractions; plant hallucinogens; plant medicines; plant spirits.**

Plotkin, M. J. *Tales of a Shaman's Apprentice: An Ethnologist Searches for New Medicines in the Amazon Rain Forest*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1993.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

———, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Eskimo

The Eskimo peoples live in the Arctic region of **North America, Greenland**, and in a few villages on the northeastern tip of **Siberia**. The Kalaalit, **Inuit**, Inupiat, and **Yup'ik** are the main linguistic and political groups included in the term "Eskimo," which is now considered insulting by some groups who prefer their own names for themselves in their own language. "Inuit" has been used interchangeably for "Eskimo," however that is only a satisfactory solution for the Inuit. "Eskimo" will be used here (with sensitivity to the right of any people to name themselves) to discuss the general patterns observed in the coastal **shamanism** of this Arctic region.

There is a large degree of uniformity of **language** and **culture** in spite of the isolation of some groups in the Arctic region caused by geographic diffusion. Among the Eskimo the *angakok* (shaman) functions as both **priest**, keeper of **ceremony**, and **shaman**, creator of **ritual**.

The traditional *angakok* session begins with a great deal of drumming, **singing**, and dancing. When the *angakok* has sufficiently connected with his *torngraq* (**helping spirits**) he is bound securely and left lying behind hanging animal skins or in the dark. The *angakok* enters a deep **trance** and his **soul** enters the spirit realm in a **journey of soul flight**.

While the *angakok's* soul journeys, the people gathered sit with closed eyes and **sing** spirit **songs** in chorus. Sometimes the *angakok's* discarded clothes come alive and fly about the room indicating the presence of spirit in the ritual. Eventually, the *angakok* is heard shouting from the depths, a long way off, as his soul begins its return home. When his soul returns, the *angakok* awakes from his trance, magically unbound, and tells the audience of his journey in the spirit world.

The *angakok* often returns from the spirit world with new songs, **masks**, or other carvings to be created. That which is given by the spirits, whether it is information, **diagnosis**, or art forms, is accepted as truth. Therefore, when the *angakok* returns with instructions for a community **healing** ritual or specific **taboos** they are strictly observed.

The Taboo System

From the Eskimo perspective starvation and **illness** are created when humans break taboos. The taboo system does not reinforce a system of good and evil, which is a foreign idea to the Eskimo. The taboo system attempts to keep the souls of the humans in harmony and balance with the souls of the other living things in their environment on whose graces the survival of the Eskimo depends.

The taboo system is designed to support hard work, awareness, tactfulness, generosity, skill (hunting/sewing), and physical courage in the face of suffering or violence while diminishing murder, theft, stinginess, quarrelsome behavior, and taboo-breaking. Sex, other than

incest, is not part of the taboo system of the Eskimo.

Taboos are physical in nature, like not eating sea and caribou meat together. Punishment is also physical, ranging from the assignment of temporary food taboos to banishment for chronic offenders. The *angakok's* role is to accurately diagnose, with the help of the spirits, what transgressions need to be confessed and how to repair the damage done.

Eskimos are more concerned with the negative effects of the spirits of the recently dead on their daily life than they are concerned with their own deaths. There are far more taboos regulating humankind's personal contacts with the spirit world than there are taboos regulating the interpersonal relationships in the community.

Functions of the Angakok

The *angakok's* first priority is helping to provide food for the community and the next is to cure illness. Both of these functions often involve the taboo system and the need to make amends for violations. The *angakok* is also called upon to change the **weather**, prevent or repair injuries, battle the harmful effects of **sorcery**, divine the source of issues in the present or future, and to enhance personal success in a variety of areas.

Sorcerers

There was an uneasy relationship between the shamans, sorcerers, and the community at large. The practice of sorcery is elaborate and fairly widespread, involving soul theft and the creation of forms of malevolent **energy intrusions**. For example, the *tupilak* is an animal figure created by an *angakok* or sorcerer from bones, other parts of corpses, animal parts, and miscellaneous material. When used in sorcery, the *tupilak* is animated with a malevolent spirit and sent forth to kill the victim.

The Spirit World

Eskimo spirituality and **religion** is physically oriented. There are three realms—

human, natural, and spiritual—that are interconnected to create one world. In the spirit aspect of this world there is an **Upperworld**, a **Lowerworld**, and an Underwater world. Differences arise culture to culture relative to which spirit beings live where and which realm human souls go to given to the nature of their death.

Generally speaking, the Eskimo cosmos is not polarized into male and female deities or animal and human beings. Therefore there is a great deal of **shapeshifting** between human and animal forms, human and spirit forms, and in the transformation or merging of **gender**. There is a concern with how the spirits of dead humans and animals can affect the lives of the living, however this does not translate into a belief in the **Ancestors** as a body of spirit beings to draw on for help.

Spirit

Everything in the Eskimo world has a soul-spirit, or *inua*. Though the translation between “soul” and “*inua*” is not exact, functionally speaking, geographical features, all animals (except dogs in some areas), lamps, entranceways, parts of structures, furnishings, tools, and clothing, all have *inuat*. In Greenland, for example, an animal’s *inua* resembles the animal and is its vitality. *Inua*, means “its man” or “its individual,” which is functionally the soul of an animate or inanimate object.

Soul

The *inua*, *inuat* (pl), concept is basic and universal, but varies slightly from group to group. In the northern regions, soul is *inua* and in the southern regions it is *yua*. A spirit person is *inuk* and *yuk* respectively. In eastern regions the *inua* is a spirit in human form or can take human form, but is not a soul of a deceased human. In the western region the *inua* can be a soul of a deceased human, among other things.

The Human Soul

Generally the Eskimo believe that the soul when freed from the human form

can become a spirit being like other supernatural beings. This spirit being can take other forms like a ball of **fire**, light, steam, or a skeleton. While in the body the human soul is part of a living gestalt with personal qualities carried in the person’s name and a life essence, warmth or breath that animates the human. Furthermore all the parts of the body have small souls, the well-being of which must be addressed in healing practices.

The human soul can take other forms and change from human to animal or object. These transformations can be aided by the **power of amulets**, songs, family totem animals, and helping spirits. Because this shapeshifting is widespread and all animals have *inua* of their own, the hunter must take care of the *inuat* of all that he kills. There are many practices and taboos that are always a part of hunting and fishing that exist specifically for the care of the *inuat* of the game.

Helping Spirits

The *angakok*’s helping spirit is the *torngraq*, and he or she may acquire more than one. *Torngraq* can be supernatural beings, elemental beings, or **animal spirits**. The Inuit believe that there are benevolent and malevolent *torngraq*. Some are simply very strange beings that are harmful if not treated correctly, for example, half-people split lengthwise, thirsty little, dried-up wanderers, or mountain **giants**.

For common people animal protectors, often **birds**, are inherited from the father’s family. Masks embodying the spirit of these animals are worn in rituals. Certain taboos on killing or eating one’s own totem animal are observed. Songs and *arnuaq* (amulets) also offer protection. For every person there is always the possibility of an original, personal encounter with a spirit through which the individual gains a song, an amulet, or a personal protecting spirit.

The important spirits of Eskimo cosmology are **Sedna**, the Mistress of the

Sea Beasts, the Moon-man, and Sila, the Spirit of the Air.

Sedna, Mistress of the Sea Beasts

Sedna, the Sea Goddess, controls the availability of the sea animals to hunters. Therefore, this being literally holds the power of life or death for the people. Broken taboos and the evil deeds of people irritate and anger Sedna who withdraws the animals from those who don't deserve them. The *angakok* must journey to the bottom of the sea, get past Sedna's guards, and calm her anger to win her audience and her favor.

The Moon-man

Depending on the area, either Sedna or the Moon-man controls the availability of the sea animals. Throughout southwest Alaska the *angakok* journeys to the Moon-man to beg for animals. The Moon-man is present in the stories of eastern Eskimos, however Sedna, not the Moon-man, controls the sea animals.

Sila, the Spirit of the Air

Sila, or *silap inua*, is the Spirit of Heaven or the Universe who is never seen, only heard occasionally in the wind. Sila is the most remote, pervasive, impersonal, and abstract of all *inuut*. Sila has none of the human-like vagaries of other Eskimo deities. In some cultures Sila is spiritual power or understanding. Sila supports of the system of taboos, punishing transgressions with illness, bad weather, and scarcity of game animals.

Becoming an Angakok

The process of becoming an *angakok* is similar in the **east** and the **west**. Both expect an **initiation** crisis during which the candidate is being chosen by spirit. In the east candidates can deliberately seek power by fasting and staying alone in the wilderness for long periods of time. In the west candidates are spontaneously chosen by spirit.

The *angakok* gains his or her main body of **knowledge in training** directly from the spirit world. In both the east

and the west this training is augmented by training with elder *angakoks*, often with several since each one is a specialist in a particular technique. There is also a tendency for the profession to continue within families. For example, the spirit who provokes the initiation crisis may be the spirit of an ancestor who was an *angakok*.

Initiation

Death is the central theme in Eskimo initiation. Death by drowning is common as are rituals in which the candidate is shot dead and later revives. In one recorded example, Aggiartog, the initiate, was lashed to a pole and lowered through the ice into the lake where he was left for five days and nights. When he was pulled up he was not only alive, but his clothing was dry. He reported that his dead mother and a human skeleton were now his *torngraq*.

The preliminary *quamanEq* or *anakua* initiation may happen spontaneously or the novice can ask an older *angakok* to perform the transmission. In this initiation the novice receives *anakua*, a lighting or enlightenment of the mind and body. Beyond this experience and instructions on their **sacred** language very little training is received from the older *angakok*. Any power derived with the assistance of older *angakok* can only be maintained through the novice's acquisition and relationship with his or her own *torngraq* (helping spirits).

The novice can obtain *anakua* from his or her own helping spirits after long hours of waiting, sitting on a bench in his hut or in the wilderness, and invoking the spirits. When *anakua* manifests, the novice can see at a distance, into the future, into all the different spirit realms, and into the spirit substance of what is going on locally, for example locating lost souls.

Training

Training continues for years with the *torngraq*, often in secret. One technique is to grind a small stone against a large

rock for hours at a time all through the summer. Over several consecutive summers, the novice *angakok* obtains *torngraq* and through them power. Each spirit **teacher** and new *angakok* teacher broadens his experience and knowledge of techniques. While training and rubbing stones the trainee is subject to more stringent taboos.

The new *angakok* must also master the ability to use drumming and dancing to intentionally enter the journeying trance. In most shamanic rituals there is an intense, prolonged periods of dancing, drumming, and chanting to the point of frenzy, before the *angakok* enters trance. During the dancing the *angakok* often contorts and cries out in the way of his animal *torngraq* or speaks in the unintelligible **shamanic language**.

Drum

The *angakok* is shown the tree that is to be carved into the frame of the **drum**. Where there are no **trees** the frames of drums are made of seasoned hickory or spruce either imported from the mainland or traded through cousins in Siberia. A hardwood strip, about two inches wide and one eighth-inch thick, is soaked in **water**, steamed over night, and then bent into a circular hoop about 18 to 24 inches in diameter.

A wooden *taflu*, handle, is attached to the frame. Traditionally the skin is made from a specially prepared walrus stomach, stretched as thin as parchment paper over the frame. The skin is dried until it becomes taut and resonant. On some drums an inner circle of wood is used to hold the skin in place and add strength to the frame.

Power Objects

The *angakok* creates a **kikituk**, a wooden or ivory figure that is animated by his or her helping spirit and used in healing. The *angakok* can also create a *tupilak* for use in healing, made from bones and animal parts and empowered with a spirit. Amulets, made of teeth, claws, shells, **feathers**, or other animal parts,

serve a protective function and have power as part of the animal species from which they are taken rather than possessing the power of an individual spirit.

Masks

In Eskimo life there is no separation between secular and spiritual life or between the humans and spirit world. Eskimo masks are part of an integrated complex of **storytelling**, song, and **dance** that maintains the physical and spiritual health of daily life. These stories are also a part of an oral tradition that keeps the history alive.

The masks are created of spirit and for spirit. They depict the spirit beings of plants, animals, wind, helping spirits, **totem spirits**, and the characters of the *angakok's* past journeys into the spirit realm. These masks are believed to contain the spirit and wearing them provides access to the spirit's specific powers. The use of these masks is mediated by the *angakok* because of their power.

The severity of the Eskimo way of life exists in contrast to the buoyant nature, optimism, volatile laughter of the Eskimo people. They share a practical, fatalistic acceptance of the **Great Mystery** and its unpredictable effect on their lives. The Eskimo relationship with spirit explains and makes acceptable the uncertainties of life in a harsh and difficult environment. See also **Alaskan; Arctic shamanism; chant; power objects; qilanEq; soul thief**.

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Espantu

Espantu is a sudden fear or trauma believed to cause **soul loss** in various cultures across **South America**. See also *susto*.

Ethics

The ethics of **shamanism** vary **culture** to culture; ethics being the system of moral principles or values that allow individuals to live together and populations to co-exist. The complexity in the ethics of shamanism is primarily relative to the extent to which a shaman's culture accepts **sorcery**, harming others by shamanic means, as an ethical practice.

A cross-cultural determination of ethics in shamanism cannot be drawn clearly in black and white. For example, if the shaman's role is to maintain the health and well-being of his people and a sorcerer in the next village is sending **energies** that are harming the shaman's people, is it ethical for the shaman to return the sorcerer's malevolent energies to him, knowing full well that it will harm the sorcerer? Is it ethical for the shaman to act directly to protect his people by creating and sending malevolent energies to harm the sorcerer? There are ethical lines, but they are not always simple and clear.

Ethical concerns do affect the shaman and the health of the community in which the shaman practices. In general, the ethics of a shaman's practice will affect the shaman's assets, which are reputation, strength of character, personal charisma, and a mastery of ecstatic techniques.

The decision to refer a patient is in part an ethical decision and in part an effort to maintain one's reputation. Shamans all over the world are careful

not to accept cases they cannot solve. Patients are referred to practitioners of other **healing** forms based on the shaman's **diagnosis**. The shaman's reputation grows by word of mouth. It is important that the stories spread by patients tell of the shaman's diagnostic accuracy, healing **power**, and primarily of the positive results of the shaman's healing **rituals**.

The strength of a shaman's character is expressed through the ethics of his or her practice, which can be observed in the health of the shaman or those close to the shaman. The result of misused shamanic powers is often **illness** or death. These may strike the shaman, but more often they strike those close to the shaman who are not as powerful and able to protect themselves.

Ethical issues in the community can create an environment that encourages illness. Each individual's ability to act morally and ethically affects their own internal balance and harmony on mental, emotional, physical, social, psychological, and spiritual levels. Situations that offend an individual's ethics erode that individual's well-being, particularly when the individual does not feel he or she has the freedom to leave the situation.

Similarly the collective action of individuals creates an ethical environment. When the environment does not support the ethics of the individual, the individual's well-being is eroded. This occurs, for example, in situations where an individual is cast out of their social support structure for making an ethical decision. These situations of ethical conflict leave the individual or the community open to physical, mental, and emotional illness, especially when sustained over time. Traditionally the shaman is called upon to diagnose the true nature of the conflict and to define and mediate the necessary healing process.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Evolution

Evolution, seen from a shamanic perspective, is best thought of as Spirit-in-action, where **Spirit** unfolds itself at every stage of development, manifesting more of itself and realizing more of itself at every unfolding. There is a common tread of patterns, laws, or habits that runs through the **Kosmos**, through the **domains** of matter, life, mind, **soul**, and spirit. This common tread of patterns is evolution.

Evolution has direction which can be described as a drive toward greater depth. This direction of evolution does not mean that dissolution and regression do not occur, but that over time a broad direction is apparent, particularly when we look at the increasing differentiation of things in our world. This broad direction emerges as the drive to increase depth, to go beyond what went before, while including what went before.

From evolution a spectrum of depth unfolds, which is synonymous with a spectrum of consciousness. Consciousness is what depth looks like from within the Kosmos. As consciousness realizes itself more and more, it comes into manifestation more and more. The whole/parts (**holons**) do the same. This spectrum of consciousness is also synonymous with a spectrum of Spirit. "As depth increases, consciousness increasingly awakens, Spirit increasingly unfolds."

Evolution produces greater depth and less span, meaning that as the level of differentiation increases, the population at that level decreases. For example in a room with five people, there are many more cells than bodies, and many more molecules than cells. The reason for this is that the holon at the higher level, in this example, the body, transcends the differentiation of the cell, the holon of the lower level. And the body's differentiation transcends that of the cell by including and organizing populations of cells, thus the higher level holon includes the holon of the lower level.

It is the nature of evolution to transcend and include. Therefore, because the evolution of the Kosmos has direction, our universe (a holon in that Kosmos) has direction, and we ourselves (another holon in that Kosmos) have direction. This theme is inscribed on the original face of the Kosmos. It is the pattern written on the wall of Nothingness.

Each level includes the preceding level and adds its own qualities that are not found in the preceding level, causing the intrinsic value of the Kosmos to increase with each unfolding. In our own world matter (physics) unfolds and transcends itself to become life (biology), which transcends itself to become mind (psychology), which transcends itself to become soul (theology), which transcends itself to become spirit (mysticism). While each individual holon's identity expands and transforms to include increasingly more of the Kosmos, the number of individual, transformed holons decreases.

As whole/parts of this evolving Kosmos, our human depth of Spirit increases from subconscious, to self-conscious, to superconscious as we awaken to our Oneness with All Things. Our Kosmic consciousness is Spirit awakened to its own true nature. It is within this Kosmic consciousness, this Oneness with All Things, that the shaman works.

Our evolution is a holon of the evolution of the Kosmos. As a holon of the Kosmos we transcend all and embrace all. There is no final Whole. There is only an endless process, pulsing between Becoming and Being the pure **emptiness** in which the entire process unfolds. Within this process there is the "sudden shock of the utterly obvious" as we recognize our own Original Face, the face we had prior to the **big bang**, "the face of utter Emptiness that smiles as all creation and sings as the entire Kosmos." See also *unio mystica*.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

Exorcism

Exorcism is the **extraction** of a **spirit intrusion** from a person, place, or thing. Extraction is a **shamanic healing** technique for removing harmful **energy intrusions**. The intrusion of a spirit into a living being is considered a **spirit possession**. In this state the intruding spirit will compete with the host for the host's own life force and control of the host's body.

Exorcisms, or depossessions, follow a basic form that is consistent cross-culturally. How the steps are carried out varies. Exorcisms generally follow these seven steps:

1. The possessing spirit is called forth, while the patient's body is fortified with a **sacred** substance, like blessed **water** or **tobacco** smoke.
2. The spirit is asked to identify itself or state its name.
3. The spirit is asked what it wants and why it has possessed the patient at this time.
4. The spirit is promised that its wishes will be fulfilled. (In the Catholic Church, where the possessing spirit is considered a "demon," promises are not made to fulfill the wishes of demons. Otherwise the exorcism process is virtually the same in the Catholic Church as it is for indigenous peoples.)
5. The spirit is asked to leave.
6. If reluctant, the spirit is commanded to leave.
7. When the spirit has been satisfied and has left, the patient is reintegrated into the community.

The shaman adds greater detail to the general structure of the exorcism ritual as it unfolds. How each step of the **healing** is accomplished, the actual actions taken, and the relative importance of each step varies depending on the guidance of the **helping spirits**, the nature of the energy being exorcised, the reason that energy is possessing the patient, and cultural expectations.

Once the possessing spirit is removed, the **shaman** must return the

spirit to its proper place in **non-ordinary reality** and assure that the promises made during the exorcism will be fulfilled. When the possessing spirit is revealed to be a **soul** who did not successfully complete its transition after death, it is the shaman's task to escort that misplaced soul to the **Land of the Dead** or the Source of all souls to complete its **journey**. In this capacity the shaman functions as a **psychopomp**, entering an **altered state of consciousness** and journeying with the soul into non-ordinary reality.

Codifying healing **rituals** can be advantageous for rituals like exorcisms, which are dangerous for the practitioner. By codifying the basic process it is no longer necessary for each shaman to learn the process by trial and error, particularly since error in this case can cost the shaman his or her health. As long as the shaman can enter an altered state and remain open to new information as the ritual unfolds, the exorcism process will remain vital and powerful.

Codifying ritual also runs the risk of turning the ritual into a **ceremony**. Ceremonies and rituals perform different functions. As a ceremony the exorcism process is not flexible. In that case an exorcism can no longer serve its intended purpose. Without the ability to call on the helping spirits and change the ritual to serve the specific needs of the patient and the intruding spirit, the creativity and **power** of the exorcism is lost. See also **embodiment**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Extraction

Extraction is a **shamanic healing** technique for removing harmful **energy intrusions** from the patient's body. These energy intrusions cause weakness, malaise, localized **pain** or discomfort, **illness**, or death depending on the type of energy intrusion and how long it has been in the patient's body.

From the shaman's perspective many physical **diseases** have their roots in localized energy intrusions. These intrusions cause energy that would be flowing in a healthy state to become stuck in the body. Over time this stuck energy evolves into specific physical diseases.

Shamans remove a variety of different intrusions that range from systemic energy, to localized energy, to full **spirit intrusions**. The technique a shaman uses to remove these intrusions is defined in the shaman's **divination** and is influenced by **culture**, the type of **energy** being removed, the skill of the shaman, and his or her personal technique.

Systemic energy intrusions are removed through general extraction techniques called **cleansings**. These energy intrusions may be picked up from the environment or they are part of the patient's own energy, stuck in a pattern that is no longer useful. In this case the shaman intentionally embodies his or her **helping spirit** and cleanses the energy from the client's **energy body** using a variety of techniques, for example, brushing the body with leaves or rubbing the body with fresh eggs, to collect and remove the unwanted energy.

Extractions are performed on localized energy intrusions. These misplaced energies have defined patterns, but are not **spirits of the dead** (which must be exorcised). Energy intrusions include, but are not limited to, thought forms, hostility, suppressed emotions, strongly broadcasted emotions, addictions, cultural bias or suppression, and the creations of sorcerers, like a *lobir* from the **Dagara** culture.

Unintentional spirit **possession** by malevolent or misplaced spirits is perhaps the most severe state of energy intrusion. Possessing spirits are usually spirits of the dead or malevolent spirit beings. These spirit intrusions are removed through a very specific extraction **ritual** called **exorcism**, or deposition.

The following are the basic steps for extraction:

1. The shaman opens the ritual **space**, connects with the helping spirit, and enters his or her working **trance** state.
2. The shaman divines the cause of the illness and nature of the energy intrusion.
3. The shaman removes the intrusion or "drives out the spirit of the illness" from the patient's body.
4. The shaman fills the hole created.
5. The shaman thanks the helping spirits for their assistance, exits the trance state, reenters **ordinary reality**, and closes the ritual space.

There is a high degree of cultural variation in how shamans perform the actual removal of energy (step 3 above). Most shamans perform extractions in an **embodiment** trance, in which the shaman intentionally embodies his or her helping spirit. This protects the shaman and allows the helping spirit to use the shaman's body to extract the intrusion.

Removal can be accomplished through sucking out the intrusion or by using **spirit hands** (the helping spirit's hands, paws, etc., working through the shaman's) to pull the intrusion out. Shamans of **Amazonia** blow *tsentsak* (invisible darts) into the patient to illuminate the intrusion and skewer it. The shaman then sucks out the dart and intrusion and releases them into the rain forest where they will be absorbed. These are a few examples of the variety of removal techniques.

The shaman recognizes what needs to be removed while in a divination trance (step 2). In this **altered state of consciousness** energy intrusions look and feel harmful. They may appear as bugs or reptiles, eating at the patient's insides or hissing fiercely at the shaman. They may also appear as sticks, bones, teeth, or the strange creations of sorcerers. Regardless of their form, intrusions feel repulsive; their harmful nature is absolutely clear.

It is important to dispose of the extracted energies appropriately and

completely. Shamans usually place, or dry-vomit if using a sucking technique, the extracted energies in a container. Some fill the container with sand or **water**. The container is emptied in a location where the energies can be absorbed into nature or eaten by other spirit beings. Some shamans simply release the energies into nature directly after removal.

It is sometimes necessary for the shaman to fill the hole created in the patient's energy body by the extraction process (step 4). Extraction is often a secondary consideration after a **soul retrieval**. From a shamanic perspective, a spirit or energy intrusion can only

enter a body when a person is already vulnerable. **Soul loss** creates a hole in a person's energy, leaving them vulnerable to intrusions. After the extraction the shaman is guided by the helping spirit in how to fill the hole. Shamans may use, for example, a lost soul part of the patient, a helping spirit, breath, light, or **colors** to fill the hole. See also **sorcery**.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1990.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

F

False Face Society

The False Face Society is a **healing** society of the **Iroquois** Nation in the north-eastern United States. “False Face” refers to wooden **masks** that represent forest beings who possess the **power** to heal sickness. The healing powers of these **spirit** beings become available during the healing **rituals** to the society member wearing the mask who then employs the powers in healing the patient.

These masks have a characteristic bent, or twisted, asymmetrical quality. The facial characteristics are large and exaggerated, like deep-set eyes, bent noses, arched brows, and deep, expressive wrinkles. Traditionally the hair was made of corn-husk braids, shredded basswood bast, or buffalo mane, and now of black horsetail hair. If painted, the face is usually red or black.

The likenesses in the mask comes from the particular forest spirit who visits the individual in a **dream**. The dreamer is instructed to make the mask and how to conduct the ritual with the proper feast, **tobacco** offerings, and curing **songs**. Traditionally the dreamer carves the mask on a living basswood tree himself. Today they are often carved by craftsman from a block of basswood or other soft wood.

Members enter the False-Face Society in two ways: either they are visited by the forest spirits in a dream, as described above, or they are cured in a False Face Society healing ritual.

False face masks are used to heal **pain**, swelling, and inflammation of the head, mouth, eyes, ears, shoulders, and joints. They are used for other purposes, however it is the actions of the wearer, not the mask itself, that determines

what the mask is used for. Society members often have more than one mask and the masks are interchangeable among society members. To access the powers of a mask the society member must fully embody the awkward, often humpback-like movement quality and unintelligible **sounds** associated with the spirit of that mask.

False Face Healing Rituals

The False Face Society has two main classes. Each class has a different healing ritual, although both types involve the handling of hot stones, coals, and ashes and blowing the **illness** from the patient. The masks of the first class, the False-Face Company, represent the greatest doctor spirit, who is a hunchback, and the common forest beings who serve under the doctor. The Common Faces make up the second class of masks. These forest beings are all hunchbacked, deformed, or crippled below the waist.

Prior to calling on the False Face Society, the patient is seen by a **shaman** who specialized in diagnosing illness through **divination**. If the illness is within the powers of the society members to heal, a False Face healing ritual is called. The patient, or patient’s family, prepares the mush feast that is a **sacred** offering for the False Face spirits.

The society members enter the ritual **space** naked to the waist and wearing their masks. The singer keeps an energetic **rhythm** for the dancing and curing songs. The masked members **dance**, embodying the awkward body **postures** and movements of their associated forest spirits. They scatter ashes everywhere while the patient stands before the **fire**.

The seat of pain is identified in the patient. Parts of the patient’s body are rubbed vigorously, then hot ashes are blown into the pain. Members also rub hot ashes between their hands and then vigorously massage and manipulate the afflicted body parts. The members continue to work with the coals and the turtle **rattle** until the spirit of illness has

been sent away. The spirit powers in the masks protect the members from being burned by the hot coals.

The False Face Society also performs community healing rituals each spring and fall to expel sickness from the settlement. Wearing their masks the members work noisily through the whole village, rattling loudly, sweeping with pine boughs, and entering every room in every house to drive the spirits of sickness away. The members blow ashes on people who fall ill at this time to drive the sickness out of their bodies.

Masks as Power Objects

False Face masks are sacred **power objects**. They are cared for with respect and treated as living things. These masks are kept, wrapped, in a special location when not in use and amends are made if the mask is accidentally dropped or harmed. If hung on a wall, the face will point inward or will be covered if pointing outward. See also **ash; diagnosis; embodiment; medicine societies; offering**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Family Shaman

This term was used by scholars to distinguish the individual **shaman** who traveled with an extended family from the professional shaman. The family shaman serves the family's needs, particularly divining the correct path forward in situations that concern the family and, in some **cultures**, maintaining communication with the familial **Ancestors**.

The professional shaman serves the community at large. In situations that demand skills, **knowledge**, or **powers** greater than those possessed by the family shaman, the professional shaman is called upon. Some scholars believe that the professional shaman evolved from the family shaman tradition. See also **shamanism**.

Feathers

Feathers are **power objects** that connect the bearer to the **spirit** of the bird that they came from and by association to the mythical beings the bird is associated with. In **South America** for example, feathers and feather crowns are a connection to the **birds** who are sacred beings. These sacred bird spirits are allies, connecting the *payé* to the transformative **powers** of the Divine **Sun** and other **sacred** phenomena of nature.

Feathers are fashioned into crowns and other power objects that are worn or used by **shamans** in their **healing** rituals. The feathers embody the power of the bird's spirit. Wearing them facilitates the shaman's shift from human to spirit form in **trance**. This is the same process as with animal **masks** or skins that facilitate the shaman's ability to embody spirit and to shapeshift into a more powerful spirit form.

Ordinary tribesman also dress in ornate and magnificent feathered head-dresses when they participate in ritual. Male participants are often seen adorned with feathers to dance the bird spirit in the reenactment of a **myth**, for example. In this way the dancer embodies the bird spirit for the duration of the ritual.

The shaman's feathers, on the other hand, define his relationship at all times with the spirit powers and with bird spirits who are his allies. In many regions of the Amazon Basin it is common to see the *payé* wearing exquisite, intricate feather crowns while dancing in shamanic ceremonies and performing healing rituals. See also **embodiment** and **shapeshifting**.

Furst, P. T. "Feathered Crowns of Power." *Shaman's Drum* 29 (Fall 1992): 40–47.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Fetish

A fetish is a **power object** created to provide a dwelling place for **spirit**. Once inhabited by spirit the fetish is regarded as a living being that possesses all of the powers, consciousness, and volition of the spirit it embodies. The fetish must be cared for to keep the spirit alive and well within the object. Most fetishes are the property of an individual, who “feeds” it **prayers** and sacred **offerings**.

There are many different forms of fetishes. The nature of the relationship between owner and fetish differs culture to culture. For example, **Inuit** peoples often have antagonistic relationships with their fetishes. A fetish may be reluctant to share its **powers**, causing the owner to resort to harsh **words** and physical force to compel the fetish to comply with the owner’s request. The Inuit believe that an aspect of the vitality of the fetish is derived from the body of the owner. An obstinate fetish may be given away, causing the fetish to lose some of its vitality while it is disconnected from the body of the owner.

In contrast, **Zuñi** owners have reverent relationships with their fetishes. **Zuñi** fetishes are “fed” prayers and offerings regularly. They are sheltered from vulgar **language**, **smudged** to keep evil spirits away, and wrapped when not in use to guard them from contamination in any form. See also **charm; embodiment; medicine; talisman**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Fire

Fire, one of the elemental **powers**, can be used for **healing** in its physical form and called on by the **shaman** energetically (as a **helping spirit**) in the invisible world during his or her **journeys**. In many cultures the shaman must also cultivate their own “**inner fire**” as part of their **training**. For these shamans

their ability to work with fire in its physical form is a reflection of their mastery of fire in its internal form.

The role of the fire in **shamanic healing** rituals is to provide the **energy** of transformation, **purification**, or release. The energy of the fire may be used directly in healing, as when **Quechua** shamans light the mist as they **camay** (blow the breath of life into a patient in a fine mist of cane alcohol) a patient, engulfing them in healing flames. In other healing techniques the shaman draws the energy from a fire, burning physically in the healing space, and directs it into the patient with his or her hands.

The spirit of fire is used by shamans in many different ways in their journeys to facilitate the healing of the patient. For example, fire can be used by the shamans in **soul retrieval** journeys to cleanse or purify the soul before returning it to the patient. In another healing process the shaman may journey into the invisible world to find the patient’s inner fire (life force) when it has been lost or stolen. Fire, an essential element for human life, arises in many different ways for shamans to work with in the healing of humans.

The role of the fire is defined specifically culture by culture. For example, the **Dagara** of West **Africa** utilize the energy of the fire to connect with the **ancestors** and to fuel **visions** and **dreams**. In contrast, the **Shuar** of the Amazon River basin believe the fire attracts helpful spirits and serves as a sign for souls of the living to find their way home from journeys in the invisible world. For this reason a Shuar lodge is never without its fire. See also **cleansing; elements; fire, mastery of; ritual**.

Fire, Mastery of

Mastery of **fire** is demonstrated by touching or consuming fire, hot coals, or boiling liquids without physical harm. In some cultures mastery of fire is an essential step in a shaman’s **training**. In other cultures it validates the depth of

the shaman's **trance** state. However, neither statement is true in all cultures.

Long ago, **shamans** with mastery of fire could embody the spirit of fire. During **rituals**, these shamans released flames from their mouths, noses, or whole bodies. Other stories tell of shamans displaying their **powers** in competition by flying across the night skies as balls of fire.

Many shamanic peoples speak of the powers the shaman receives from spirit as a "burning," "heat," or as getting "very hot." Often the shamanic trance state is not attained until after the shaman is "heated." The power to generate this mystical inner heat is attributed to both sorcerers and shamans, and to practitioners of magic in general.

Paradoxically, mystical inner heat is often developed through repeated exposure to extreme cold. **Inuit** or Japanese shamans, for example, develop mystical inner heat from prolonged and repeated exposure to cold as an essential step in the training. Initiatory rituals in such cultures involve a display of real "mastery over fire." For example, a Manchurian or **Eskimo** shaman must show his or her ability to generate mystical heat by resisting the effects of prolonged exposure to severe cold or by drying wet sheets with the heat of the bare body. The cultivation of mystical heat can be demonstrated through a resistance to cold or a tolerance of fire.

Cultivating mastery of fire does not necessarily create a shaman. There are belief systems, like those of Tibetan monks and Indian ascetics, which value developing mystical heat as part of their initiatory processes. There are traditional cultures in **China**, Sri Lanka, and India, where lay people walk on fire in an act of faith or to demonstrate their personal integrity. There are even contemporary seminars where hundreds of people walk on fire for personal empowerment. None of these people become shamans through these practices or their mastery of fire. See also **sorcery**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

First People

First People are any nation or tribe of people whose **ancestors** were the first people to inhabit a particular region. This region of land connects them with their past as the home of their Ancestors, the present as the provider of life, and the future as the legacy they hold in trust for their children and grandchildren.

"First People" is used when referring to **aboriginal** peoples because, in general, they prefer it and because it is the rough translation of the name many aboriginal peoples call themselves in their own languages. For example, North American aboriginals are not Indians, a name resulting from Christopher Columbus's mistaken belief that he had "discovered" another route to India. Each aboriginal North American people has a name for themselves in their own language.

First Peoples vary widely in their customs, culture, and impact on the land. However, they all consider the land the source of life—a gift from the Creator that nourishes, supports, and teaches. At the heart of this deep bond between First Peoples and their ancestral land is their experiential awareness that all life—mountains, animals, plants, the **sky**, **weather**, rocks, insects, people—is inseparably interconnected. The material and spiritual worlds are One and all things have **sacred** meaning. See also **First Shaman**; **Fourth World**; **North America**.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

First Shaman

The First Shaman is said to have come from the **sky**, or the **Upperworld**, responding to the needs of the people on **earth**. The First Shaman had great **powers** and god-like supernatural gifts, like the ability to fly, to shapeshift, and to live outside the limitations of **space** and **time**. In many cultures, the story of the **First People** and that of the First Shaman are inextricably interwoven.

The creation stories of most peoples tell of a wondrous, paradise-like time in the beginning when animals, humans, and gods all communicated easily and lived as one. Anyone could move between the realms without obstruction. All beings lived in a state of freedom, health, and trust in which death was unnecessary.

Then, through a mysterious misdeed that no one seems to remember, the connection between the realms was broken. Communication between the physical and spiritual worlds became harder and harder and all sentient beings gradually lost their original wisdom. Humans, no longer living in balance with all things, began to experience suffering, **illness**, and death. Humans needed someone to risk the dangerous passage across the broken bridge between the worlds to teach them how to survive in their new world.

The First Shaman was a hero-god, who brought **knowledge** and the skills necessary for survival in all aspects of daily life on the changed earth. The First Shaman taught the people to hunt, gather, plant, heal, and conduct **rituals**. The cultures, traditions, civilizations, and societies were all built on the knowledge brought by the First Shaman.

In some cultures the First Shaman was a Divine being, male, female, or often both, who came from the Upperworld and took human form to help on earth. In other cultures the First Shaman is selected by the spirit world in response to the great suffering of the humans. The First Shaman is taught by

the spirits the god-like skill of journeying between the worlds as well as the skills and knowledge necessary to survive.

Scholar Geoffrey Ashe believes evidence from the Paleolithic period shows that the teachings of the First Shaman were put into practice predominantly by women. Ashe describes an ancient **shamanism** practiced by groups of women, who connected to the primordial power of the **Great Mystery** through their **wombs** in ritual. The Great Mystery is the essential source of the power drawn on by shamans, regardless of **gender**. The power of women is biologically rooted in the **blood** mysteries of birth and menstruation. Later, when the Paleolithic community broke into different tribes, the familiar individual shamanic practice evolved.

Ashe explains that the most ancient form of the word shaman means “female shaman” because the shamans were originally women. Only later, with the movement of the tribes and the development of different dialects did the word “shaman” take on a male connotation in the **Tungus** dialect. In many languages the word for male shaman is of later development and different origin. See also **shapeshifting**.

Ashe, Geoffrey. *The Ancient Wisdom*. London: Macmillan, 1977.

Eliade, Mircea, ed. *Ancient Religions*. New York: Citadel Press, 1950.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Floriopondio

See *Brugmansia aurea*.

Fly Agaric Mushroom

Fly Agaric mushroom, or *amanita muscaria*, is possibly the oldest hallucinogen. Its use was particularly important to Siberian shamans, who refer to it as the “mainstay of the Heavens.” It is the

most prominent **plant hallucinogen** used in the Asiatic region of the world and has been identified as the possible plant source of the god-narcotic, **Soma**, of ancient India. Fly Agaric refers to its use to stun flies, making them easier to kill. See also *Rig Veda* and **Siberia**.

Forest Shaman

The Forest Shaman is a general term referring to the **spirit** being or deity in various **cultures** who is responsible for the **initiation** of shamans. The Forest Shaman is both a descendant of the **First Shaman** and a manifestation of the essential Wildness of Nature.

In many cultures the initiate is possessed or “taken by spirits” and ends up in the wilderness. Terrified and confused the initiate is tested and taught by the beings of the spirit world. At the essence of this ordeal is the deep, chaotic wilderness and the very human fear of death it inspires. The initiate must face the fear of his or her own death and embrace the power of the wilderness to successfully pass through the initiation to become a **shaman**. See also *Banjhakri*.

Foundation for Shamanic Studies

The Foundation for Shamanic Studies is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization dedicated to the preservation, study, and teaching of **shamanism** worldwide. The Foundation for Shamanic Studies was founded in the early 1970s by anthropologist and author Michael Harner, Ph.D., who continues as its director.

The organization is made up of an extensive international network of field associates and teaching faculty. The foundation has several programs designed to meet its many goals.

The Living Treasures in Shamanism Program enables the foundation to help preserve shamanism worldwide where it is currently being threatened. Shamans in less-developed countries who are recognized as extraordinary by their **cul-**

ture are given resources and financial support by the foundation.

Shamans in the Living Treasures Program clearly recognize the political value of bringing international attention to their situation, not only to end repression and insure survival of their special **knowledge** and traditions, but also to stimulate the younger generation to value and take interest in the shamanism of their own culture.

These shamans are honored and excited to share their knowledge and traditions, even to the point of offering to initiate Westerners into their practices. They do not perceive that their shamanic traditions are vulnerable to dilution or distortion through sharing. For them the threat of the probable extinction of their shamanic tradition if their practices were to die with them is far more real.

The Urgent Tribal Assistance Program enables the foundation to support indigenous peoples worldwide in maintaining, preserving, and reviving (in some cases) their own shamanic practices. The Tuvans, Buryats, several North American **First Peoples**, Tibetans, Nepalese, Canadian **Inuit**, **Saami**, and the Amazonian Kogi are examples of traditionally shamanic peoples who have sought assistance in the revival of their culture's shamanism. In this program, **core shamanism** is taught as a means by which these peoples can restore their shamanism and **shamanic healing** in a ways consistent with their traditions and needs.

The foundation's Shamanism and Health Program was initiated to study the effectiveness of shamanic methods in dealing with **illness** and other problems of daily life. The research is used to educate the mainstream medical community about shamanic healing and its relevance as a complementary approach to healing and health.

The Mapping of Non-ordinary Reality Project was designed to develop the world's foremost archive of cross-cultural narrative of shamanic **journeys**, near-death, and other **mystical experiences**.

The foundation is utilizing this archival data to construct a cross-cultural map of the invisible world.

The foundation offers worldwide **training** in core shamanism. In addition, the foundation sponsors and financially supports grassroots shamanic training in new geographic areas throughout the world. See also **Buryat (Buriat); Nepal; shamanic counseling; Tuva.**

Conton, L. *Neo-shamanism, Core Shamanism, or Shamanism?* The Foundation for Shamanic Studies, <http://www.shamanism.org> (accessed January 2005).

Fourth World

Fourth World is a term used by the World Council of Indigenous Peoples to distinguish the way of life of indigenous people from the way of life of peoples of the First World (highly industrialized), Second World (Socialist bloc), and Third World (developing). In general, the people of the Fourth World believe that the people belong to the land, while the people of the First, Second, and Third Worlds believe that the land belongs to the people.

At issue is the fact that Fourth World peoples share nation states with the people of the First, Second, and Third Worlds. As a result, the people of the Fourth World, who are descendants of the country's **aboriginal** population, are completely or partly deprived of the right to sovereignty over their own land and way of life, which is tied to the land. The peoples of the Fourth World have only limited influence or none at all in the national state to which they belong. See also **First People.**

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary.* San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Frame Drum

The frame drum is a round, wheel-shaped **drum** whose diameter is much wider than the depth of its shell. It may have one head or two heads with a handle attached at one side, like a lollipop. The frame drum is associated symbolically with the feminine, fertility, grain, the **moon**, the **sun**, and the primordial first body of **water**. The use of the frame drum and its symbolism reach back into prehistory.

The difference between the shaman's drum and the frame drum is in how they are played. The frame drum is played with bare hands. The shaman's drum is struck with a bone, **rattle**, horn, or stick to create a single deep resonant **sound**.

In some cultures bells or **metal** implements are attached to the inside rim to add to the drum's **power** to purify, disburse unwanted energies, and to summon the **helping spirits** when beaten. In some cultures the movement of these implements across the picture painted on the drumhead was interpreted as a means of **divination**.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm.* New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Free Soul

An anthropological term for the part of the human **soul** that travels in shamanic **journeys**, in **entheogen**-induced **trance** states, and in deep **dream** journeys; also referred to as dream soul. Many **cultures** conceive of the human soul as composed of different types of souls that have different functions and different names. In general the *body soul* is the soul type that keeps the body alive and the *free soul* is the soul type that is meant to journey in other realms, outside of the limitations of **space** and **time**.

Though the *free soul* is meant to journey about, it is also meant to return. The *body soul* cannot sustain life alone indefinitely. The loss or theft of the free soul, referred to as **soul loss**, is a primary cause of **illness** and death in shamanic cultures around the world.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Fucquay

Ecuadorian **Quechua** word for *camay*, to blow the **spirit** of the Connection-of-all-things to another.

G

Gagohsa

The **Seneca** term for the basswood **masks** of their **False Face Society**. The *gagohsa* are portrayals of powerful **spirits**, carved as directed by those spirits, who have come to assist the members of the society in overcoming malignant forces that cause **illness**, death, and misfortune in the lives of the people.

The **power** and **vision** to carve a *gagohsa* is given directly to the individual by a **spirit** known as *Shagodjiowengowa*, the Helper, who is addressed as “Our Grandfather.” When the mask is complete, the power of the spirit represented is embodied in the mask. Dancing the mask in ritual allows the powers embodied in the mask to enter and be directed by the individual who wears it.

Gagohsa are living **power objects**. They are **sacred** and there are **taboos** and **rituals** involved in their care and handling so that they do not become contaminated or impotent. When a mask changes owners or is returned to use after **cleansing**, a small bag of sacred **tobacco**, *unjengwa onweh*, is attached to the mask to appease the spirit of the mask, insure future goodwill, and preserve the *gagohsa*’s power. When a mask grows hungry, the owner rubs the lips of the mask with corn mush and anoints onto the face sunflower oil, giving the masks their characteristic luster.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Gahnohwahsehna

This sacred **medicine** is made from powdered herbs and sung by members of the **Seneca Niganiigaah** society to empower it. During the **healing** ceremonies of this society, *gahnohwahsehna* is given to the patient to drink in water. The *gahnohwahsehna* determines whether or not the patient will heal. If it floats, the patient will not heal. If it sinks, the patient will recover.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Gaia Hypothesis

The Gaia hypothesis states that “Gaia, the superorganismic system of all life on earth, hypothetically maintains the composition of the air and the temperature of the planet’s surface, regulating conditions for the continuance of life. . . . On earth the environment has been made and monitored by life as much as life has been made and influenced by the environment.” The Gaia hypothesis explains in technical and biochemical terms what the **shamans** have said since the beginning of **time**, that all things are connected and that this interconnectedness has wisdom.

English biochemist James Lovelock and American microbiologist Lynn Margulis developed the Gaia hypothesis in the late 1970s to explain the long-term stability of the planetary atmosphere.

Roszak, Theodore. *The Voice of the Earth*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992.

Gaindowane

The Seneca **Tree of Life**, *Gaindowane*, the Great Tree, is fundamental to the **Seneca** beliefs of their spiritual and physical **Kosmos**. *Gaindowane*’s deep roots and branches that reach to the **sky**

connect the **powers** of the **Lowerworld** to those of the **Upperworld** respectively. The roots of the Great Tree, which are supported on the shell of Turtle, establish the Seneca foundation, its trunk brings strength and unity, and its branches shelter the people in peace and security.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Ganohwa

The **Seneca** term for the **rattle** made from the shell of a snapping turtle used by the **False Face Society** in its **healing** rituals. Use of the *ganohwa* brings into the healing **ritual** the powers of **Gaindowane**, the Great Tree that grows from the shell of Turtle. The *ganohwa* is rubbed against the bark of a tree or other wood surface to access the mystic powers of the **Upperworld** and **Lowerworld** accessed through *gaindowane*, and to invoke the spirit of the rattle.

The *osnoh ganohwa*, another rattle used by the False Face Society, is designed from the bark of a hickory tree and filled with cherry pits.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Geenumu Gesallagee

The *geenumu gesallagee* is a **gender-variant male** who serves a respected **healing** role in the Micmac culture. The *geenumu gesallagee*, which means "he loves men," is traditionally a leader and a "go-between." The go-between's role is to create a bridge between groups, between sexes, or to act as a mediator.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Gender

Gender, our maleness and femaleness, is determined by biological, social, experiential, and sexual factors. In shamanic cultures it is believed to also be determined by spiritual factors. Gender, particularly **gender variance**, is an aspect of **shamanism**. Traditionally **shamans** are of female, male, or a transformed gender.

Gender is apparently fluid and flexible. Gender is not an inborn trait. Biological sex, social roles, and sexual orientation are not linked biologically, but are influenced by each other. Gender identity is part of a range of options for human expression. Shamanic cultures look at the nature of these possible options as the unique expressions of the human spirit.

For example, some shamanic cultures recognize eight genders. There is man with a man's **soul** and woman with a woman's soul. There is man with a woman's soul and woman with a man's soul. There is a man and woman soul in a man and a woman and man soul in a woman. There is also an Everything person and person whose gender is non-translatable. Individuals would only be taught by an elder of their gender or enter the **sweat lodge** with people of their own gender.

Biologically, human sex is determined by the genetic inheritance of the individual, specifically by two chromosomes called the sex chromosomes. Sex differentiation is the process by which the fetus develops the male or female reproductive characteristics directed by its genetic makeup. This is a complex developmental process with many biological variations on the basic male or female theme.

Gender identity in humans is believed to arise from the confluence of powerful factors playing upon a range of potentials which is, in some way, influenced by the presence of our biological sexual characteristics. These powerful factors are experiential and

social, and shamanic cultures believe, primarily spiritual.

In traditional, shamanic cultures gender is an acquired trait with a corresponding social role to fulfill. In these tribal belief systems there are more than two genders and all of these genders have well-defined, traditional roles. For example, in the tribal belief systems of over 130 North American native peoples, biological sex does not dictate the social role or gender an individual assumes.

In some shamanic cultures the shaman's gender does not matter. The shaman's relationship with powerful **helping spirits** and the success of his or her **healing** work is all that is important. In other cultures, like the **Chukchee** or Asiatic **Eskimos**, the shamans are traditionally female and males of transformed gender. In a few cultures the shamans are traditionally male.

The gender identity of **contemporary shamans** is complicated by the influences of dominant governments and religious systems. These systems impose their own biases relative to gender and shamans. For example in ancient Chinese society (1100 B.C.E.) the *wu*, female shamans, were prominent and powerful. Today only approximately one-quarter of ethnic Chinese shamans are women. The Confucian influence has pushed women from prominent positions throughout Chinese society, including shamanism.

The influence of contemporary factors on the gender of shamans is not a single pattern, but must be looked at by individual region or culture. For example, unlike the Chinese, the Korean *mudang* (shaman) is still predominantly female as they were in the past. However they are female now for different reasons. Like the Siberian **Tungus** who influenced their shamanism, the majority of ancient *mudang* were women who were respected and valued in that role. In contemporary Korean culture neither women nor the *mudang* are respected or valued. Only those of an outcast status become a *mudang*,

therefore women are more likely than men to do so.

Contemporary factors, gender biases, and tradition all influence the ability of an individual of any gender to respond to **the call** of the spirits and to become a shaman. See also **Ancient China; gender variant; gender-variant male; Korea; Siberia; and transformed shaman.**

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Vander, Arthur J., James H. Sherman, and Dorothy S. Luciano. *Human Physiology: The Mechanisms of Body Function*. 3d ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Gender Variant

A gender-variant individual is one whose expression of **gender** is a variation of the duality of male and female, heterosexually oriented genders. The idea that there are two fixed genders is not necessarily the case in other cultures or at other times in history.

The cultures that recognized more than two genders and held respected roles for gender-variant individuals often held a pantheistic view of the spirit world. These people worshipped an array of archetypes, including Great Mother Goddess, Amazonian female warriors, male consorts of goddesses, and deities of both sexes who embodied metamorphosis, gender variance, or same-sex eroticism. With these images imbedded in the spiritual awareness of the people, the gender-variant individuals were perceived as **sacred** people, reflecting the unknown, the **Great Mystery**, and the chaotic variety of the spirit realms.

Any individual may or may not express the gender identity implied by their biological sex, or morphology. They may vary in gender identification,

style of dress, economic role in community, or sexual orientation. Traditional shamanic cultures believed that the traits expressing gender and gender variance were bestowed by divine **powers**. Therefore, these qualities were essential to the individual, not a culturally constructed behavior. Furthermore they believed that the unique perspective and wisdom that gender-variant individuals brought were essential to the health of the community.

Gender variance related to cross-cultural **shamanism** is characterized by three traits. These individuals behaved in ways regarded as gender variant, or androgynous, by their respective cultures; fulfilled a sacred role for the community; and assumed the receptive role in sexual relations with traditionally masculine males. Together these three traits characterize a “**domain**” or “web of associations” connecting the sacred role of gender variance in many different cultures.

Many cultures that value gender variance believe that masculine qualities are only half of ordinary humanness. They see feminine qualities as automatically encompassing the masculine, in the feminine, as well as many other characteristics that go beyond the limits of both. Consequently, these cultures recognize the special status of men who have the ability to transcend the limits of masculinity.

Because of the all-inclusive nature of the feminine, women in these cultures are able to participate in activities normally associated with men, without leaving their female gender role. However, for a man, it is not as easy. If a man is moved by **spirit** to incorporate feminine aspects, he has to move beyond his masculinity.

Gender variance of the male **shaman** is not just accepted in some cultures, but it is expected. The transformation of male shamans into women is traditional among the Araucanians, **Chukchee**, Kamchadal, the Asiatic **Eskimo**, occasionally by the **Koryak**, Indonesians (Sea Dyak), Burmese Patagonians, Arapaho,

Cheyenne, Ute, Zuñi, and other tribes of **North America**. These men are **transformed shamans**.

Indigenous cultures tend to share a belief that the divine, expressed in spiritual practices and the **arts**, is inseparable from the body and nature. They believe that gender-variant behavior and heterosexuality are both natural and sacred. They often look upon gender-variant persons as especially capable of performing spiritual functions, as they are believed to hold the **knowledge** of both genders and the mystical wisdom of transformation and metamorphosis. See also *berdache (berdach)*; **gender-variant male**; **Mapuche**; **soft shaman**; **Two Spirit**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Gender-Variant Male

Gender-variant males are found in the **transformed shaman**, **soft shaman**, the *berdache* and the two spirit. In many **cultures**, the Araucanians, **Chukchee**, Kamchadal, the Asiatic **Eskimo**, occasionally by the **Koryak**, Indonesians (Sea Dyak), Burmese Patagonians, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Ute, and Zuñi for example, men are required to become women to become shamans, either through learned behavior or complete physical transformation. The reverse transformation, female to male, is found in hunting and killing, but does apply as a pattern in **shamanism**.

A number of the world's indigenous peoples believe gender variance to be a trait bestowed prior to birth by a divine power or **powers**, a deity, or the stars. These cultures believe gender variance is an essential quality of the individual, part of their **original medicine**, or the unique gifts they have to bring to the world.

Men of various cultures separated over vast stretches of **space** and **time**, have been touched in this way by **spirit**. In general they shared these three character traits. They behaved in ways regarded as gender variant by their respective cultures. They expressed same-sex sexuality, sensuality, or eroticism. They fulfilled a sacred role or carried out a spiritual task, often assisting the shaman, or transforming gender to become the shaman.

Examples of specific multi-cultural and multi-historical traits include: blending feminine, masculine, and sacred garments; engaging in sacred and mundane tasks traditionally assigned to women; distinctive linguistic traits and gestures; creating or producing **art** (literature, **music**, **dance**, drama, visual arts, etc.); the practices of **healing**, **divination**, and magic; the use of **altered states of consciousness** while engaged in those practices; participating in radical activities; and forming special relationships with women. See also *berdache (berdach)*; **gender variant**; **Mapuche**; **Two Spirit**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

General Shamanism

General shamanism and **Arctic shamanism** are the two prominent forms of North American shamanism as defined by scholar and authority on shamanism Åke Hultkrantz. In the general form of shamanism the dominant form of **trance** is not the ecstatic **journey**. The **embodiment** trance is used more frequently to cover a variety of purposes.

For these **shamans** the ecstatic journey trance is part of **the call** to his or her profession. It is the means by which the novice shaman is initially contacted by his or her **helping spirits** and through which the spirits give **power** to the novice. After years of **training**, these

shaman use an embodiment trance state to call on the helping spirits for **divination** and to dispatch the spirits on tasks, such as locating lost items, curing the sick, answering questions, and discovering information about the future.

In this form of **shamanism** the journey trance is used by mature shamans in the recovery of lost souls. This is considered a very serious healing that endangers both the shaman and the patient. It is often performed in a group healing with multiple shamans, as with the **Spirit Boat** ceremony in the Pacific Northwest region.

Whether classified as general or Arctic, North American shamans use the depth and type of trance state necessary to accomplish a variety of tasks. How a shaman determines the trance state necessary depends on many variables including cultural expectations, type of helping spirit used, the **diagnosis**, and personal preference or specialty. See also **ceremony**; **North America**; and **soul loss**.

Hultkrantz, A. "Spirit Lodge, a North American Shamanistic Séance." In *Studies in Shamanism*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962.

Geomancy

Geomancy is **divination** by signs from the **earth**, pronounced geographic contours or features, or by lines and figures jotted at random. Geomancy is derived from the Late Greek *geomanteia*, *geo* meaning earth and *manteia* meaning divination. Geomancy is used to balance the presence and actions of humans with their environment. It is a means by which humans can recognize the most appropriate place nature offers for what they want to do or build, like plant, place a grave site, or build a home.

Shamans may use geomancy to restore the health of a community that has slipped out of balance with its natural and/or supernatural environments.

Imbalance may be caused by breaking specific **taboos** or other human action or by changes in the physical environment, like an earthquake or flood that causes a shift in environmental energies.

Geomancy has been practiced for several thousand years. It is an **art** in many cultures, for example the Chinese practice geomancy as part of Feng Shui, the practice of utilizing the **energy** channels or “dragon lines” that flow through the earth. Not all geomancers are shamans, however shamans may practice the art of geomancy.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Ghesar Gyalpo

The source of everything, Ghesar Gyalpo is the initiating deity in the final stage of the **Tamang bompo's** (shaman's) highest **initiation**. During the last day of the initiation, the *bompo* climbs the nine rungs of the **ladder** to the highest heaven in an ecstatic state and meets Ghesar Gyalpo, a luminous being who sits on a throne covered with *blha mendo*, soul flowers. In the radiant white light of the deity, the *bompo* is reborn.

Ghesar Gyalpo's soul flowers embody the origin and essence of the human **soul** and the pure potential of the **Kosmos**. Ghesar Gyalpo is both the Buddhist concept of nothingness, the undifferentiated void into which the consciousness merges at death, and the source of all things of the Kosmos.

Ghost Dance

This ceremonial religious **dance** was performed to restore the way of life of the indigenous peoples to what it was before the European immigrants came and destroyed it. The Ghost Dance originated in 1888 among the Paiute and spread rapidly to other tribes in **North America**. The creator of this ceremonial dance was Wovoka, a young man who

journeyed into the spirit world and received a revelation concerning a messiah who would restore their way of life. See also **ceremony** and **journey**.

Densmore, F. *The American Indians and Their Music*. New York: The Woman's Press, 1936.

Giants

Giants are the **embodiment** of the elemental forces that created the universe in pre-Christian Europe. Giants held both **knowledge** and wisdom. However due to their wild elemental nature, that knowledge could be gained only at great personal risk to the **shaman**. The giant's tremendous power was unbridled, undomesticatable so brute force was never a successful path to gain the giant's wisdom. Success demanded fearlessness, strength of character, perseverance, and cleverness of the shaman. See also **elements**.

Allen-Coombe, J. “Weaving the Way of Wyrd: An Interview with Brian Bates.” *Shaman's Drum* 27 (Spring 1992): 20–29.

Gichimanido

A variant of **Kitchi Manitou**; also *mide-manido*, *gichimanidoo*, and *Kitche Manitou*. See also **manitou** and **Ojibwa**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Glossolalia

Glossolalia is the technical term for “speaking in tongues,” a neurological phenomenon that occurs in certain spontaneous **trance** states. Some individuals fall into an uncontrolled trance state in which they speak spontaneously in a **language** no longer understood, which sounds like gibberish to the contemporary ear. In ancient times the practice of glossolalia was widespread,

found in the *theomania* of the Pagan Greeks, the Oriental cults of the Roman Empire, the Chinese religious sect of Shang-ti-hui, and the spirit mediums of Tonga, for example.

This phenomenon is similar to some **shamanic languages** spoken in trance. Most **shamans** recognize the language of Nature or of their **helping spirits** speaking through them and can translate and interpret those messages. However, in some cultures the shamanic language is interpreted by the shaman's assistant, while the shaman who is deep in trance is unaware of the meaning.

In religious practices, like Pentecostal Christianity, speaking in tongues is considered a gift from God and encouraged. The trance state is uncontrolled and the speaker usually does not understand the message. The ability to interpret these messages is also considered a gift and is encouraged and cultivated.

Neurologically, glossolalia is linked to structures common to all humans found deep in the brain within the brainstem. It is possible that these structures still carry the "programming" for humanity's earliest languages, like Sumerian, which reflect a consciousness so fundamentally different than ours that we no longer understand the language.

Goomah

A stone that embodies a **spirit** who is one of the *wirreenun's* (**aboriginal** shaman of **Australia**) helping spirit. The *goomah* is a refuge for the *wirreenun* in times of danger. Entering the *goomah* is the *wirreenun's* most powerful sanctuary. See also **helping spirits**.

Parker, K. L., et. al. *Wise Women of the Dreamtime: Aboriginal Tales of the Ancestral Powers*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International Limited, 1993.

Great Mystery

The Great Mystery cannot be understood with the logical mind; however, the energies that flow from it can be directed. **Shamans** use the **energy** that flows from the Great Mystery without needing to fully understand or explain it. This not superstitious, but experiential, similar to a contemporary person using electricity though we really don't understand what it is.

Attempts have been made to define the Great Mystery throughout the ages and they basically amount to *that which is inscrutable or unknowable*. Trying to explain the unexplainable is limited by language. The desire to leap over this paradox and engage the Great Mystery is one of the primary reasons that humans enter **altered states of consciousness**. The experience of the energies that flow from the Great Mystery is possible in an altered state in which the conscious mind is freed from the grip of the logical mind. In this way shamans can know the Great Mystery without needing to explain it.

The Great Mystery is all the answers to the questions that are unanswerable. For example, there was a **big bang**, but why did the first spark appear in that great **emptiness**? Yes, the egg and the sperm come together to create biological life, but why and how does it have a **soul** that exists before and after the body? Yes you are here, but why?

From a shamanic perspective a bit of the Great Mystery is innate in all things, animate and inanimate. **Orenda**, an Anglicized term for the **Iroquois** concept of the Great Mystery, is defined by William S. Lyon, professor of anthropology and author as "the mystical force for potential inherent in **power**; that is the magic of power. This force is inherent in all matter and spirits; it is with this force that the shaman heals. Because this force is mystical, it cannot be understood by the rational mind, although it can be manipulated to cause things to change or to happen."

For the **Dagara**, the Great Mystery is *Yielbongura*—the thing that **knowledge** can't eat. It is at the essence of all things. *Yielbongura* suggests that the essence of life and power resists the attempts of the mind to categorize it in the mind's effort to make the Unknown known.

It is not appropriate to equate the Great Mystery with anyone's god to make the concept easier to understand. Any such explanation is limited by its nature and not really appropriate in a discussion about **shamanism** which predates **religion** and religious thought. To understand shamans and the Great Mystery we must view them from a non-religious, yet spiritual point of view.

Most indigenous cultures have a name for the Great Mystery in their own language, for example, *Kitchi Manitou* (**Ojibwa**), *tamanoas* (**Chinook**), and *wakan tanka* (**Lakota**), which originally referred to the Thunderbeings, but has come to mean Great Mystery.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Somé, M. P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

Greenland

The Greenland region is comprised of the various **Eskimo** peoples, primarily of the Kalaallit linguistic and political group. The traditional life in this region revolved around hunting whales, seals, and walrus. Within the communities people strive to live according to a system of **taboos** that keep them in good relationship with the spirit beings in their environment. The **angakok** (shaman) was called on for crises, famine, and **illness**.

Initiation and Training

Initiation and **training** proceed together primarily in secret and in solitude

over many years. The **torngraq**, or **helping spirits**, are the **teachers**, the initiators, and the source of the *angakok's* **power**. For example, a young Ammassalik man went to a solitary spot on a rocky hillside to make a connection with a helping spirit. He sat for three days rubbing a small stone around and around on a large rock, focusing his mind in a **prayer** than called out to the **spirits** to come to him and make him a powerful *angakok*.

Finally, a great bear rose out of the lake and swallowed him whole. He believed that he had died. Then, after three days, the bear spit out his bones and the body reassembled itself until even his garments rushed back one by one. Having recovered from his **dismemberment**, the young man awoke from his terrifying **trance**.

He had experienced the initiatory event expected by his people. Called in this way by spirit, the young man spent every summer for three or four years fasting in solitude and performing the **rituals** necessary to cultivate working relationships with each of the strong helping spirits who came to him in his **visions**. Over time he learned to call them at will and they agreed to help. All of his training was kept secret until he was sufficiently sure of his power to demonstrate it publicly.

Among the Ammassalik it is traditional for a child to be selected in early childhood by an elder *angakok* for training. The child is taught about the local spirits and deities, the taboo system, **songs** and **chants** for calling powerful spirits, and the shaman/spirit secret **language**. Over a lifetime an *angakok* may have several paid teachers.

Helping Spirits

Tornguang is a general term for the *angakok's* *torngraq* or helping spirits, of which there are many types. They are also called *tornaxssung*, *tornait*, *tornat*, *tartat*, *tungat*, etc., referring to different types and different dialectical variants. The **tornarsuk** is a powerful and particularly dangerous helping spirit who is

called on to answer questions during **divination** sessions. The *angakok* summons the *aperketek*, another spirit who acts as a mediator between the *angakok* and the *tornarsuk*.

Ritual

Torniwoq refers to the shamanic rituals of the East Greenland *angakok* (shaman), during which the *angakok* performs *ilimarneq*, or spirit flight. There are four traditional reasons the *angakok* was called upon to perform a *torniwoq*: a scarcity of sea animals in the sea for hunting; snow masses blocking the ways by land or fjord ice to the hunting places; **soul loss**; and infertility in a married woman.

The binding of the *angakok* is characteristic of the *torniwoq*, as is the *angakok's* *ilimarneq*. The *angakok's* hands and elbows are bound tightly behind his back with a long thong and a heavy stone placed about his neck to keep his **soul** from leaving the **earth** forever. When the *angakok's* soul returns from its **journey** the *angakok's* body will be magically freed of its bonds.

The *angakok's* soul is assisted in *ilimarneq* by his or her helping spirits, often merging with, riding on the back of, or being taken by the hand and led to the desired location in the spirit world. *Ilimarneq* is used for divination; to observe events at remote locations in the physical world; to find game, lost objects, or people; to locate an enemy, identify **sorcery**, or to locate and retrieve a **lost soul**.

During the *torniwoq* the *angakok* is hidden from view behind skins or in the dark. As the *angakok* enters the depths of his trance, he can be heard groaning, shrieking, and whispering. Soon the spirit voices can be heard in the room speaking and laughing in all different tones from different points about the room. The helping spirits may animate his **drum**, beating it and sending it dancing around the room or floating over the *angakok's* head. The beating of the drum is at times accompanied by **singing**.

The reality of the *angakok's* journey is not questioned. There is discussion among Eskimo groups as to whether the *angakok* journeys bodily or whether only the soul travels. It may be that the more powerful *angakut* are able to take their bodies with them while other *angakut* journey only in spirit.

Drum

The *qilaain*, or drum, is the only instrument used by the *angakok* and is fundamental in the process of inducing trance. The *qilaain* is made from a wooden hoop, approximately 18 inches in diameter over which is stretched a piece of skin, preferably the skin of the stomach of a polar bear. A handle, or *kattiilua*, is lashed to the wooden rim of the drum. The *angakok* may choose to add an **amulet** to the *qilaain* to improve the power of his or her singing, e.g., the stiff **feathers** from the root of the beak of the raven are inserted under the lashings, or *kilikirpia*, for this purpose.

The *qilaain* is played by striking the lower border of the wooden hoop, not the drumhead, with the *kättiwa*, or drumstick. During the *torniwoq*, the shamanic rituals, the *qilaain* is usually played by the assistant, freeing the *angakok* to **dance** about, call on his or her spirit help, and enter trance.

The *angakok* uses the *anaalutaa* or the *makkortaa* to invoke his or her helping spirits. The *anaalutaa* is a simple wooden stick that is tapped on the floor to call in spirits and to send others away. The *makkortaa* is a small, round, flat piece of black skin. It is held in the hollow of one hand and rapped soundly and rhythmically with a stick with the other hand.

Illness

Illness is believed to be caused by soul loss or sorcery. Soul loss is considered the cause of most illnesses, particularly when the illness manifests as general debility or malaise. The soul has been either stolen, frightened, or wandered and become lost in the spirit world. The *angakok* drums and chants to enter a

trance and **diagnose** the cause of the soul loss and then proceeds into the spirit world to recover the lost soul for the patient. When the soul has been restored to the body the patient will recover.

Sorcery is suspected when the illness manifests primarily as a localized **pain**. In such a case the sorcerer has created an **energy intrusion** and succeeded in sending it into the body of the patient. The *angakok* drums and chants to enter an **embodiment** trance and proceeds to drive out the **energy**, possibly sucking and/or pulling the energy out.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Lantis, Margaret. *Alaskan Eskimo Ceremonialism*. New York: AMS Press, 1974.

Guinea Pigs

See **cuy**.

H

Hadigonsashoon

This is the original **False Face Society**, from which other Seneca **medicine societies** emerged over time. The original function of this society was to perform the **rituals** necessary to appease **illness-inducing forces** and heal the individuals or tribe afflicted by these forces. See also **Seneca**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Hadihiduus

This is the Men's Medicine Society of the Onondaga (**Iroquois**), who heal with medicine **songs** handed down through the generations within society. These songs are the source of this society's **healing power**. They are secret and never sung outside of the private healing **rituals** in the medicine lodge. The rituals of this society are colloquially called "pumpkin shakes" in reference to the gourd **rattles** used in these rituals. See also **medicine; medicine singing; medicine societies**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Hadui

These are the False Face **masks** of the Onondaga **False Face Society**. Hadui, meaning hunchback, refers to the **spirits** embodied in the carved wooden masks. Each mask embodies the specific powers of a different spirit which are bestowed on the dancer/**shaman** who

wears the mask in the society's **healing rituals**. See also **gagohsa**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Hänäsish

The *hänäsish* is a **medicine arrow** used by the *ki'uks*, **shamans** of the Klamath people of northern California in **North America**; also known as *hänäs*. The *hänäsish* is an approximately 3 to 4 foot "arrow" without arrow heads on either end. They are used in **healing rituals** when the **spirit** of the *hänäsish*, *múluasham sko'ks*, calls out to the shaman to be used.

The *hänäsish* is used to keep the patient's soul in the patient's body, to scare the **illness** away, or to pin down the illness causing intrusion and kill it. The shaman works with the *hänäsish* in pairs, sticking them into the ground on either side of the patient. When the *hänäsish* are used properly they are left in the ground until the patient has recovered fully. To remove them prematurely allows the illness to return or, in severe cases, will kill the patient.

While the *hänäsish* remain in the ground the patient is sung by the shaman. The medicine **songs** may be, for example the song of the spider, lightning, cloud, or wind.

Each pair of *hänäsish* is used with a *tchúpash*, the function of which is to bring the powers of additional **animal spirits** to strengthen the shaman's medicine power. The *tchúpash* is a cigar-shaped, medicine arrow, approximately 3 feet long, with **feathers** attached to each of the tapering ends. The *tchúpash*, also being a weapon, catches the illness in the patient and skewers it into a deep pit in the **earth** called the *shlokúpash*, where it is destroyed. For the *hänäsish-tchúpash* healing to be successful the shaman conducts a five-day, five-night healing **dance ritual**. See also **energy intrusions; extraction; ritual**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Hanblecheya

Hanblecheya means “crying for a **vision**” in the **language** of the **Lakota** of **North America** and refers to going on a **vision quest**. *Hanblecheya* is experienced alone on the hilltop or lying buried in a **vision pit**. The quester fasts for four days and nights, while praying for a vision of wisdom and guidance from spirit.

Hanblecheya is a hard thing to do. To have a vision is almost like dying; you must give yourself up completely. It demands fearlessness and complete self-surrender to the **spirits**.

Erdoes, Richard, and Archie Fire Lame Deer. *Gift of Power: The Life and Teachings of a Lakota Medicine Man*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co., 1992.

Hanblecheyapi

This is the **Lakota** vision quest. The term is derived from *hanblecheya*, which means “crying for a **vision**,” the purpose of all **vision quests**; also known as *hamdéciya* and *hamdéjapi*. Both men and women embark on the *hanblecheya* to obtain *wochangi*, spirit **powers**, and establish a relationship with a **helping spirit**. The *hanblecheyapi* is the primary means of gaining power for Lakota **shamans**. It is a **sacred** practice they repeat over the years to gain new powers, **songs**, and **medicines**.

The *hanblecheyapi* is performed at a power spot usually in a high elevation and always in isolation. The quest lasts for several days, four is traditional, during which time the one questing abstains from both food and **water**. All Lakota *hanblecheya* and those who are visited by a powerful spirit or a spirit who instructs them to do so usually go on to become shamans, healers, or leaders.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Hanhepi

The performance of a **healing** ritual by a **Lakota** shaman, *hanhepi* means “night” and refers to the *wochangi* of night, or the **power**, spirit, and mystery of the night. When the *hanhepi* needed to cure the patient involves wrapping the **shaman** in a blanket and binding him with rope before entering **trance**, the *hanhepi* is called a *yuwipi* ritual. See also **ritual**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Harner Method® Shamanic Counseling

Harner Method® Shamanic Counseling is a system for shamanic **divination** (problem-solving) developed in the 1980s by Michael Harner, founder and president of the **Foundation for Shamanic Studies**. The method involves classic shamanic journeying and studying with **helping spirits** in **non-ordinary reality**, however, the method in its total form has never existed before.

Harner Method® Shamanic Counseling is not typical or traditional **shamanism**, which involves an initiated **shaman**. Nor should it be confused with **core shamanism**, which is a personal practice of shamanic techniques for personal development. The method involves important new systemic and technological changes. These allow the practitioner to guide the client in the technique of journeying while the client uses the **journey** to contact his or her helping spirits who serve as “counselors,” providing a resource of wisdom, guidance, and psychospiritual healing. See also **shamanic counseling**.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Hatáál

The lengthy and intricate ceremonies of the **Dineh** performed for **healing** or some other application of spirit **power**, the *hatáál* are among the most complicated ceremonials performed by healers or **medicine societies** by the indigenous peoples of **North America**. It is common to perform a *hatáál* after the physical aspect of an **illness** has been cured. A diviner is always called on to determine the *hatáál* necessary for the patient.

Each *hatáál*, or chantway, is a grouping of **chants**, in which each chant is a group of **songs** and **ritual** practices. Some take as many as nine days to perform correctly. Many *hatáál* have hundreds of songs, all of which must be performed correctly without repetition, for the **ceremony** to be successful. It takes many years to learn a single chantway and become a *hatááli* capable of performing a *hatáál* and it may take many more years to become qualified and respected by the community.

The name of each chantway becomes the name of the ceremony in which it is performed. Examples are the Blessing Way, Ghost Way, Beauty Way, etc. There are over sixty chantways for healing alone, including chantways for **blessings**, curing, and **purification**. Chantways for blessings are performed for preventative medicine. Chantways for curing, or Holyway rituals, are performed to treat illness and bodily injury. Chantways for purification are performed to cleanse beings, places, and objects that have come into contact with dangerous beings or things. See also **cleansing**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Hatááli

This is a qualified singer of a **Dineh** chantway, or *hatáál*.

Hatetsens

The **Seneca** use this term for **shaman**. Iroquoian **shamanic healing** takes place in the traditional **rituals** of **medicine societies** involving a number of hatetsens and in the practices of individual hatetsens. See also **Iroquois**.

Haudinashone

The Haudinashone live in the area of New York State that adjoins Ontario, Canada. The Haudinashone Confederacy was comprised of a number of **Iroquois**-speaking tribes, the **Seneca**, the Mohawk, the Onondaga, the Cayuga, and the Oneida, and populated by numerous **Algonquian** people from surrounding tribes who were taken as captives and adopted during the long-standing wars between the tribes. The Confederacy became The Six Fires in the eighteenth century with the addition of the Tuscarora. The Haudinashone Confederacy is famous for its constitutional government.

Gunn, Allen P. *Grandmothers of the Light*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.

Hawaii

The islands of the northern corner of the triangular geographical area called Polynesia. New Zealand forms the southwest corner and Easter Island the southeast corner. The people of this area share physical, historical, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. The societies of Polynesia developed complex and highly conscious **art** and literature, philosophies, science, and moral, legal, and ethical codes of behavior.

Cosmology

The ancient Hawaiians believed that all **time** is now. They believed that there

was one body of life to which they, the land, sea, **sky**, and all the things living in the sea, the sky, and on the land belonged. This sense of being part of all things was applied through actions, **words**, and thoughts to all aspects of life. For example, when a need was clearly understood—to move a stone, catch a fish, gather food, build a heiau, **healing**—the resource to meet that need became available. There was no want. There was no waste.

Everything is connected through the **aka** threads. These connections can be created with thoughts or intention. *Aka* threads are receptacles and/or conductors for **mana**. They can be activated with attention and sustained concentration.

Hawaiians conceive of three levels of being that are manifest within the human being. The spiritual or the super-conscious mind is the *aumakua*. The mental realm or conscious mind is *uhane*. The nonmaterial or the subconscious mind is *unihipili*. This is the first level of reality or the physical world. The second level of existence beyond physical reality includes the subjective level of thoughts, emotions, and psychic phenomena. At this level of action everything is connected through *aka* threads.

The third level of reality is *Po*, or the spirit world. *Po* is divided into *Milu*, the **Lowerworld**, *Kahiki*, the **Middeworld**, and *Lanikeha*, the **Upperworld**. When the **kahuna** (shaman) **journeys** into the *Po*, he or she has entered *ike papakolu*, or third-level awareness. The fourth level of awareness is *ike papakauna*. It is the purely subjective mystical awareness of the oneness of the Universe and one's connection with all things.

The Kahuna

The Hawaiian **shamans** are *kahunas* of several different types. *Kahuna* means master or the “keeper of the secret,” from the Hawaiian words *Kahu* meaning “keeper” and *Huna* meaning “secret.” When broken into its root meanings, *kahuna* is very similar to the root of shaman in its original **Tungus**.

Ka means “the,” *hu* means “something surging, boiling over, or rising to the surface,” and *na* means “calm, centered, or settled.”

Kahuna, when placed in front of a title denotes the highest expert in that field in a given family (*ohana*) or island. Thus the title was not often used by the Hawaiians, since it simply denoted any person with great **knowledge** in one or more fields. There were over 40 different kinds of craft *kahuna*, 14 of the healing arts, as well as *kahuna* counselors, chiefs, spiritual leaders, and politicians. The group of Tahitians who came to Hawaii in approximately 1250 C.E. brought with them *kahuna* of new professions like military strategy and temple (*heiau*) **sacrifices**.

The *Kahunas* are adept at using mental techniques to create objective events in **ordinary reality**. They engage and manipulate three factors to do so; *laulele*—an aspect of the imagination, *mana*—a the mystical power or life-force, and psychic connections made through the *aka* field, a vast web of energetic threads connecting all things.

Laulele is more than imagination. It is the power of the imagination when used consciously to establish a mental pattern and combined with the will to manifest that pattern. *Mana* is the **energy** used. Its abundance or scarcity determines the effectiveness of all psychic endeavors. *Aka* is the web of connection through which all things are possible.

Healing

Aumakua is the most important **element** for the *kahuna*, especially those of the healing arts. *Aumakua* is translated as the energy of the **helping spirit** and the relationship with the spirit. For example, each family's *aumakua* is a spirit felt as a living presence of the family, like the spirits of the ancestors. The *aumakua* is ready at all times to act as a guide. It is present in anything and everything.

At its essence *kahuna* healing is the result of allowing the *aumakua* to flow

through the physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual body in its original pattern of perfection without distortion or restriction. For example, loving union and the experience of joy invite the *aumakua* to flow freely. Therefore, the Hawaiian practice of *aloha* (being a part of all and all being a part of me, love) was literally seen as preventative **medicine**.

Language used by the *kahuna* is a powerful tool to direct energies. The Hawaiian language is composed completely of sacred **sounds**, all arranged in different orders to form words. These words used with intention in **chants** or **prayer** invoke the power of these **sacred** sounds. The Hawaiians had chants for everything. **Apprentices** had to memorize and repeat the chants with absolute accuracy so that no **power** would be lost.

There was much written by the missionaries about **sorcery** and the healing *kahuna* was labeled as sorcerer. This is due in part to the missionaries' misunderstanding of the Hawaiian way of life and spiritual practices. However, it was also due to the ability of *kahuna* to do harm. The difference between healing and harming is intention alone, the methods are the same. The *kahuna* simply directed the *aumakua* energies into a life-draining pattern.

Ancient Origins

The origin of the Hawaiian people remains a matter of scholarly dispute. Many Hawaiian clans (*'ohana laha*, all the families on the islands of one family line) trace their **ancestors** back through genealogical chant records to at least 800 B.C.E. These people carry in their oral traditions chants of exploring and populating other lands to the east and the west of the islands. The ancient Hawaiian society had no kings, war lords, or armies. The Hawaiians had no need for these authorities because they practiced their belief in the connectedness of all things in their daily life. They established a clear code of ethical and ecological practices, the *Ka 'Ohana*

Kahua, "the system by which the family ruled." The *Ka 'Ohana Kahua* invoked one punishment, *kauwa* ("to cease to be"), banishment, for planned and deliberate acts of harm against another.

The Polynesian peoples were expert sailors and many Tahitian families settled in Hawaii over the centuries. They usually adapted quickly to the Hawaiian way of life. However the Tahitians who came in approximately 1250 C.E., led by a spiritual leader named Pa'ao, brought great change to the ancient Hawaiian way of life. Pa'ao brought an army and slaughtered and enslaved the Hawaiian people. These Tahitians took over the land and installed themselves as rulers, *na ali'i*. They referred to the Hawaiians as *mana hune* (small power).

Many Hawaiians escaped the slaughter and rule of the invaders by retreating to the **caves** in the hills or sailing to other islands. The people of Moloka'i suffered least. When the Pa'aos warriors arrived at their shores, the Pa'aos were met by the people of the island standing on the beaches, waiting, united in prayer. When the boats beached, the chanting began. The invasion failed, Moloka'i was given the name *Pule-o-o*, powerful prayer, and the people of that island were feared for their great personal power.

Captain Cook came upon the Hawaiian islands in 1778 and the Christian missionaries started arriving in 1813. Blinded by their own beliefs, these peoples remained ignorant of the Hawaiian's highly developed mastery of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual life.

The ancient *kahuna* were deeply involved in the discovery of the nature of their relationship to the universe and had developed the "science" of medicine, psychology, astronomy, agriculture, and spirituality that was at least as advanced as that of Europe and **North America**. Their awareness of the conscious and unconscious mind and its connection to spirit, energy, and the **Kosmos** was more advanced than the concepts of the Euro-Americans who

did not rediscover these ideas until the 1960s.

Types of Kahuna

The *kahuna* related to shamanic techniques and methods were:

Kahuna la'au lapa'au — one who cures and heals broken bones and other traumas through prayer, herbs, and esoteric practices, often instantly or within a few days.

Kahuna la'au kahea — one who heals psychological traumas and **illness** through prayer and esoteric practices.

Kahuna wehe wehe — **dream** interpreter.

Kahuna kilo kilo — reader of skies and omens.

Kahuna nana-uli — one who prophecies the **weather**.

Kahuna nani i na 'ouli — character reader.

Kahuna a'o — teacher of sorcery.

Kahuna na'au ao — teacher of esoteric wisdom and the practices of spiritual illumination.

Kahuna ha'i'olelo — a traveling practitioner of sorcery.

Kahuna keuho — one who drove off harmful **spirits**.

Kahuna kaula — prophet, pure energy, carrier of light.

Kahuna 'ana'ana — one who practices sorcery to do harm, expert in the art of life-draining prayer.

Kahuna ho'o-pio-pio — one who uses sorcery to bring about death and/or magical events.

Kahuna ho'o-una-una — one who sends harmful spirits to cause death.

Kahuna ho'o-komo-komo — one who practices the art of creating illness.

Kahuna pule kuni — a division of *ana'ana* who burn objects of power as **offerings** with their prayers.

Kahuna ninau 'uhane — one who speaks with spirits.

Kahuna haha — one who **diagnoses** illness by feeling the body.

Kahuna pa'ao'ao — one who diagnoses childhood illness by feeling the body.

Kahuna hoo-pio — one who causes illness by touching his body with intent to thereby cause injury to the victim in the same place, expert at inflicting illness by gesture.

Kahuna haku mele ula — makers of chants and **music**.

Kahuna 'ea — one who could raise the dead.

Kahuna hui — one who leads functions and **ceremonies**.

Kahuna one-one-ihonua — of a special prayer **ritual**.

Kahuna pule — expert in prayer or the calling in of spirit and power (*mana*).

Kahuna pale — one who says the life-affirming counter-prayer to neutralize the life-draining, harmful prayer.

Kahuna po'i Uhane — expert in spirit catching.

Kahuna kuhi-kuhi puu-one — locators and designers of the *heiau* (sacred sites).

Kahuna makani — one who works with the wind and with the power of mystic spirits.

Kahuna ho'o-noho-noho — a division of the *makani* who conveyed the spirits of the deceased through the process of death.

King, Seide K. *Kahuna Healing: Holistic Health and Healing Practices of Polynesia*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1983.

Lee, Pali Jae, and Koko Willis. *Tales from the Night Rainbow*. Honolulu, HI: Night Rainbow Publishing Co., 1990.

Yardley, L. K. *The Heart of Huna*. Honolulu, HI: Advanced Neuro Dynamics, Inc., 1991.

Haxu'xan

The *haxu'xan* is a **gender variant** Arapaho man whose **spirit** desires to be a woman. This desire is believed to be a supernatural gift from the **birds** or animals. Boys given such a gift give up the desires of men and gradually grow to be women. They often marry men.

The *haxu'xan* were believed to have miraculous powers and were able to do supernatural things. The *haxu'xan* also apparently experienced the physical transformation of a **transformed shaman**, however it is not clear that they were initiated, trained, and considered **shamans**. What is clear is that the Arapaho believed that the powers of the *haxu'xan* were natural, a part of their uniqueness and their **original medicine**.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*.
Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

He man eh

This is the *berdache* of the Cheyenne. Among the Cheyenne, the shamanic and the *he man eh* societies were secret societies. The **initiation** and **training** practices of these societies were not discussed openly so that the **power** of their magic would be preserved through secrecy. Thus, very little is known about the *he man eh*.

One responsibility of the *he man eh* was to accompany Cheyenne war parties. War parties almost always had a *he man eh* along for **healing** and tending to the range of the warriors' needs. The *he man eh* did not fight, but they did use their powers and **medicines** to bring the warriors good luck. The *he man eh* was treated well as his spiritual powers and unique skills were valued and desired by the war parties for a variety of reasons. See also *berdache (berdach)*.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*.
Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Healing

The specific parameters that represent healing are highly variant and culture specific. In traditional shamanic **cultures**, healing bears little relationship to the remission of physical symptoms. Healing means becoming whole or in harmony with the community, the planet, and one's personal circumstances. In a successful healing it is possible that

physical healing may or may not be observed or the patient may die.

Health, from the perspective of **shamans** and practitioners of complementary **medicine**, involves the physiological, psychological, and spiritual well-being of an individual. Health is a process; it is the continual experience of re-establishing and maintaining balance in and between all human systems. Healing, then, is the process of restoring and maintaining balance in the body, mind, and **soul** of the individual and the community .

Healing is more than controlling sickness; it provides meaning for the individual's experience of **illness**. Carl Hammerschlag, psychiatrist and MD, explains that when one cures a patient and helps him or her to become less vulnerable to the **disease** again, then the practitioner is doctoring well. However, if he or she succeeds in the above *and* helps the patient to understand his or her place in the universe, then the practitioner is a healer.

Some scholars present the idea that indigenous practitioners tend to treat illness and not focus on disease, while allopathic health care practitioners tend to treat disease and systematically ignore illness. Furthermore, they suggest that indigenous practitioners succeed in healing because they primarily treat acute diseases that are naturally remitting, chronic diseases that are non-life threatening, and disorders that arise from the somatization of minor psychological disorders and interpersonal problems.

This point of view, while accurate, does not account for the apparent removal of cancerous tumors and cysts by shamans. Nor does it explain their healing of a broad array of mental illness or the birthing of healthy babies to medically infertile couples. The physical and mental health problems of most of the world's populace were handled by traditional healers, the World Health Organization reported in 1977.

In traditional shamanic cultures **healing symbols**, **prayer**, and healing

rituals and participation sacraments are all used in healing. For the shaman, the act of creation brings the **spirit** into physical form. Therefore, an image or symbol is not merely a representation of the spirit but actually *is* the spirit. The healing **power** of that symbol is the same as the spirit because the symbol *is* the spirit.

Shamans use the fact that an individual's intrinsic spirituality and passive prayers are conducive to health to aid their healing. The research of psychiatrist Dave Larson, president of the National Institute for Healthcare Research, supports these ancient beliefs. Larson continues to say that faith is a crucial element of the **psyche** that should be taken into consideration in health care from the first visit to the physician.

Similarly, sacraments like the Catholic communion and the Native American **sweat lodge** offer healing. In ritual **dances**, like the Native American **Sun Dance**, the **dance** helps the dancers and their communities to heal. The dancers are presented with the opportunity to see the patterns of their lives in their dance and their dance-induced **visions**. While dancing, dancers can create new patterns and consciously choose to live by them. Participants in ritual dances and sweat lodge ceremonies report that they heal old wounds and learn how to live their lives in new ways.

By Western cultural parameters some **shamanic healing** seems improbable or medically worthless. The placebo effect is a term used to dismiss much of what is outside of one's own cultural parameters for healing. However, placebo treatment (an inert medicine or treatment given in place of the real thing) has been successful on 30 to 70 percent of all drug and surgical interventions. This means that the placebo treatment causes more than just an attitude change; it can cause biochemical changes, like decreases in tumor cell numbers, pain, nausea, and anxiety, as well as tissue repair.

Although the biochemistry of the body is not fully explored, it appears that placebos, imagery, hypnosis, and biofeedback all affect the immune system. Imagery, depending on the image, can depress or stimulate the immune system and the body's own inherent wisdom of how to heal. Therefore, the placebo effect cannot be dismissed or used to be dismissive.

The following is one of many possible ways to look at the inter-relationships between different healing disciplines, therapies, and fields. This spectrum of Holistic Healing Modalities was created by the editors of *Common Boundary Magazine* and presented as one way to organize modalities by the area of healing in which they are most effective. Just as there is a range of modalities, there is also a range of individual practitioners within a modality who, despite their specialized **training**, integrate other concepts of mind, body, and spirit into their practice.

Mind

Academic Study of Religion
Conventional Psychotherapy
Psychoanalysis and Counseling

Mind/Body

Holistic Bodywork
Somatic Therapies
Integrated Chiropractic
Process-oriented Psychology
Expressive and Creative Arts
Body-Centered Psychotherapy

Body

Massage Therapies
Physical Therapies
Western (Allopathic) Medicine

Body/Spirit

Holistic Nursing
Network Chiropractic
Subtle Energy Therapies

Spirit

Spiritual Disciplines
Sacraments

Spirit/Mind

Jungian Analysis
Pastoral Counseling
Theology
Transpersonal Disciplines
Body/Mind/Spirit

Oriental Medicine
Shamanic Counseling
Shamanic Healing

- Achterberg, J. "Healing Images and Symbols in Nonordinary States of Consciousness." *Revision* 16, no.4 (1994): 148–156.
- . "The Wounded Healer: Transformational Journeys in Modern Medicine." In G. Doore (ed.). *Shaman's Path: Healing, Personal Growth and Empowerment*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.
- . *Imagery in Healing: Shamanism and Modern Medicine*. Boston: New Science Library/Shambhala, 1985.
- Hammerschlag, Carl A. *The Dancing Healers: A Doctor's Journey of Healing with Native Americans*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1989.
- Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.
- Mahler, H. "The Staff of Aesculapius." *World Health* (November 1977): 2–3.

Healing Symbol

In traditional shamanic cultures an image or symbol is not merely a representation of the **spirit**; it *is* the spirit. The healing **power** of the symbol *is* the **healing** power of the spirit. Symbols and images serve as bridges to **knowledge**, wisdom, and healing.

Contemporary research has shown that images and symbols do have a direct physiological effect on the body. Images communicate with and effect change on tissues, organs, and cells, both deliberately and unintentionally. Images or symbols can be used to effect healing in humans biologically, psychologically, and transpersonally.

On a biological level the image, or imagery function, appears to have an intimate association to the neurological and biochemical systems in the body. Direct neural connections have been identified that link areas of the brain that process images to other areas of the

brain involved in emotion and to areas of the body involved in immunity. These pathways allow the image to affect the emotions which affect the body or the image to affect the body which affects the emotions.

On a psychological level the symbol serves as a link between the known world, the primary process with which one is identified, and the unknown, that which is just outside of the reach of one's awareness. Symbols offer a **language** that bridges the gap between the mysterious, inner worlds of experience and the conscious expression of those experiences. This **symbolic language** allows an unfolding of ones' inner awareness which stabilizes sound mental health.

The use of symbols in healing is most often associated with the **transpersonal** or spiritual dimensions. The iconography, relics, **mandalas**, and sacraments of spiritual traditions all symbolize or represent what cannot be seen or known through the ordinary senses. The individual is allowed access to the **Great Mystery** through these **sacred** symbols. This reconnection to Source, perhaps the most profound state of well-being, is in and of itself healing.

- Achterberg, J. "Healing Images and Symbols in Nonordinary States of Consciousness." *Revision* 16, no.4 (1994): 148–156.
- . "The Wounded Healer: Transformational Journeys in Modern Medicine." In G. Doore (ed.). *Shaman's Path: Healing, Personal Growth and Empowerment*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.
- . *Imagery in Healing: Shamanism and Modern Medicine*. Boston: New Science Library/Shambhala, 1985.

Heartbeat of the Earth

Drumming is referred to as the heartbeat of the earth by many Native Americans. The electromagnetic resonance

frequency of the **earth** has been measured at 7.5 Hz. It appears that drumming allows **shamans** to align their **brain waves** with the pulse of the earth as they enter **trance** states.

Ingerman, Sondra. *Soul Retrieval: Mending the Fragmented Self Through Shamanic Practice*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991.

Helping Spirits

Helping spirits is a general term used to distinguish the spirits (energies of the invisible world) that the **shaman** works with from the spirits that are causing the problems the shaman has been called on to fix. All helping spirits provide protection and specific **powers** or skills that the shaman uses in his or her work. Helping spirits may serve different functions with different shamans.

The shaman enters an **altered state of consciousness** to engage the help of the spirits. Shamans utilize the **journey** state to go into the invisible world and work with the helping spirits there or the **embodiment** state wherein the shaman invites the helping spirits into his or her body to help with the shaman's work here in the physical world. The determination of which trance state is used depends on what the shaman intends to do, the **spirit** help they need doing it, and, to some extent, cultural expectations.

The shaman experiences the helping spirits in a variety of forms. **Ancestor** spirits, **animal spirits**, and cultural deities are common helping spirits. **Nature spirits** are also common; they include spirits of the land itself, spirits of particular land formations, like mountains or valleys, bodies of **water**, rocks, **weather**, and any other manifestation of nature imaginable. **Plant spirits** are helping spirits who serve the additional function of teaching the shaman to work with the medicinal properties found in the plant kingdom.

Shamans also work with the spirits of the **sky** and the **earth** as beings, as

well as the spirits of the **elements**, including earth, **air**, **fire**, and water, and **metal** and wood in some Asian cultures. The four directions, **east**, **south**, **west**, and **north**, are also called on as helping spirits in many cultures.

Animal spirits are the spirit of the whole species. For example, many shamans work with Bear spirit, there are not many bear spirits working with different shamans. Animal spirits are also called **power animals** and can be further categorized by the function they play in the shaman's work. There are power animals who help the shaman generally in the **healing** work, **totem spirits** who are inherited through the family line by all members of the family, and **tutelary spirits** who represent the shaman's identity in the spirit world and serve as the main coordinating helping spirit for shamans who have many helping spirits.

The helping spirits actively seek to share their wisdom, power, and secrets with shamans. For reasons that are not necessarily clear, the relationship is interdependent. It is as if it is necessary for the survival of both humans and spirits that both parties communicate and help each other. The shaman recognizes the importance of this **interdependence** between spirits and humans and mediates the communication and the movement of **energy** between these two worlds.

Gaining access to the special qualities of the helping spirits is just one facet of the extraordinary relationship between the shaman and their helping spirits. Helping spirits are also **teachers**; they train the shaman personally, provoking the growth and development of the shaman, and technically, teaching the shaman ways to work with the energies of the invisible world and the way they impact humans.

As the shaman continues to identify with and learn from the helping spirits, he or she develops an ever increasing awareness of the physical world and its relationship to the invisible world. Ultimately the breadth and depth of this

vision allows the shaman to experience the interconnectedness of all things through their relationship with the helping spirits.

The shaman is in a working relationship with the helping spirits. Helping spirits do not belong to the shaman nor are they controlled by the shaman in any contemporary sense of the word “control.” The shaman has learned to surrender to the wisdom of the helping spirits and they in turn allow the shaman to focus their help to create desired human results.

A shaman or initiate may lose connection with their helping spirits and thus lose the power to help others. The link with a helping spirit may be broken for a variety of reasons: the shaman refuses to do what the helping spirit asks, the shaman dishonors his or her relationship with the helping spirits, the shaman directs the power of the helping spirits to malevolent ends, he or she has a crisis of faith, he or she has a conflict of faith as often occurs when missionaries convert native peoples, or an unexplained or accidental event may sever the link. Sometimes helping spirits simply leave when their teachings are complete.

How the relationship with a helping spirit is re-established and whether or not it can be, depends on why it was broken originally. The reconnection may be accomplished through a personal **ritual** or it may demand the focus of a full, community ritual. The willingness of the shaman to change or **sacrifice** is often the determining factor in whether or not the relationship can be reestablished.

Traditionally, helping spirits come to a person spontaneously in dreams or waking visions. This spontaneous event is referred to as “**the call**”; it marks the awakening of the individual’s awareness that the life of the shaman is their calling. Helping spirits are also sought out by novices in solitary practices, such as **vision quests**, or long journeys assisted by initiated shamans. Experienced shamans may stalk a help-

ing spirit whose particular powers or skills are desired by that shaman. Whether the helping spirit appears spontaneously, responds to the prayers of a vision quest, or is successfully stalked, it is still up to the shaman to cultivate a working relationship with the helping spirit to be able to access the spirit’s power.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Matthews, John. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Dorset, England, Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Henbane

Henbane, *Hyoscyamus niger*, is one of the **hexing herbs** used in witches’ brews and ointments in Europe in the Middle Ages. Henbane is an annual or biennial, strong-smelling herb growing in parts of Europe, North Africa, and southwest and central Asia. The leafy plant has yellow to green-yellow flowers veined in purple that grow to be about one-and-a-half-inches. There are several kinds of henbane and psychoactive properties are found in all parts of the plant. The black variety is the most potent and is believed to cause insanity.

Use

Henbane can induce an altered state of complete oblivion, which made it a particularly effective painkiller in medieval Europe. The hallucinogenic properties of henbane are mentioned in the ancient Egyptian Ebers Papyrus in 1500 B.C.E. In Greece it was used to mimic insanity and induce prophetic visions. It has also been suggested that the priestesses of Delphi spoke their prophetic **divinations** while intoxicated by the smoke of burning henbane seeds. Henbane is best known as a main ingredient in the potions of medieval European witches, whose herbal brews were used for their hallucinogenic properties and other effects characteristic of their intoxication. Initiates into

the practice of witchcraft were given a drink of henbane to enable them to engage more easily in the sabbat rituals. Henbane potions were added to other liquids to drink or to ointments for absorption through the skin.

Preparation

Hallucinogenic mixtures of the hexing herbs were prepared as potions to drink or ointments to be applied to parts of the body where the blood vessels are naturally close to the skin.

Active Principle

The active principles of henbane are tropane alkaloids, particularly atropine, hyoscyamine, and scopolamine. Scopolamine is the primary hallucinogenic agent.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

Henbane intoxication begins with a feeling of pressure in the head and the sensation of someone closing the eyelids by force. Vision becomes unclear, unusual visual hallucinations occur, and objects appear distorted in shape. Hallucinations of taste and smell frequently occur. The intoxication ends in sleep that is filled with **dreams** and hallucinations. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **plant hallucinogens**.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Hesi

A widespread **medicine society** among the Maidu and **Wintun** of the **California region of North America**; also known as Spirit Impersonation society. Members of the hesi embodied **spirits** in their **ceremonies** for **healing** and other functions. See also **medicine**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Hexing Herbs

“Hexing herbs” refers to **mandrake**, **Deadly Nightshade**, and **henbane**, all of *Solanaceae*, the Nightshade family. They are the primary psychoactive plants used in the hallucinogenic brews created by European practitioners of witchcraft during the Middle Ages. These plants were cultivated in the gardens of practitioners with other plants which, either for their psychoactive properties or their bizarre shapes, were used in the preparation of potions and remedies.

Use

Practitioners of witchcraft believe that they have supernatural powers of sufficient strength to influence, benevolently or malevolently, the course of human affairs. Psychoactive and poisonous plants were used to induce **trance** states in which the “witch” could exercise his or her supernatural powers. Hallucinogenic potions enabled witches to divine information, to hex others through communication with the supernatural world, and to transport themselves to distant places where they practiced their craft.

Preparation

Hallucinogenic mixtures of the hexing herbs were prepared as potions to drink or ointments to be applied to parts of the body where the blood vessels are naturally close to the skin.

Active Principle

Mandrake, Deadly Nightshade, and Henbane all contain high concentrations of tropane alkaloids, primarily atropine, hyoscyamine and scopolamine, which is believed to produce the hallucinogenic effects. The differences in the psychoactivity of these plants results from the relative concentrations of the active constituents. Mandrake is highest in scopolamine, Henbane the next, while Deadly Nightshade contains very little.

Application

Potions were drunk or treated as ointments and rubbed into areas of the skin

where the blood vessels are naturally close to the surface, like the pit of the underarm, the high back of the thigh, the labia, and the walls of the vagina. This gives rise, in part, to the association of the witches and broomsticks. Reports from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries describe witches applying the hallucinogenic ointment to the staff of the broom, placing the broomstick between the labia, and applying the ointment by “riding” the broomstick.

This association with the broomstick is also symbolic. A sensation of **levitation** is a characteristic of the **alternate state of consciousness** induced by the hexing herbs. The broomstick is symbolically the means by which the witch enters the alternate state, allowing her **soul** to fly in the supernatural realms.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

Similarities in the hallucinogenic effects of the hexing herbs are the result of their similar chemical constituents. Scopolamine induces an altered state that looks like sleep, but is actually a twilight state between waking consciousness and sleeping in which the hallucinations occur. The sensation of levitation, visual hallucinations, and **journeys** of the soul over great distances are all characteristic of this altered state.

Use in Western Medicine

Chemists have used atropine as a model for the synthesis of several hallucinogens. The effects of these synthetic substances differ from those induced by preparations of the plants. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **plant hallucinogens**.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Heyóka

The sacred clowns, or contraries, found in the Assiniboin, Dakota, **Lakota**, Plains-Cree, Plains-**Ojibwa**, and Ponca

tribes whose outrageous behavior during **ceremonies** brings laughter, lightens the serious mood, and a shift of perspective where needed. The *heyóka* do everything different or reversed, often acting and speaking backwards, for example washing in public with dirt, saying the opposite of what they mean, or building their **sweat lodge** with the opening to the **east**.

Heyóka are called to their role by *wakinyan*, the powerful Thunderbeings who appear in their **dreams** or **visions**. The *wakinyan* also take the forms of **water** symbols or lightning in the *heyóka's* dreams. Anyone who has these dreams is required to participate in ceremonies as a *heyóka*, doing everything contrary. The *heyóka* **dance** in ceremonies and in a special clown dance. When they dance they are costumed in a variety of ludicrous ways, clown-like, with a long-nosed **mask** made of hide or cloth.

The *heyóka* do not gain special **healing** powers from the Thunderbeings like the **shaman**, however they themselves may be healed by the *wakinyan* and their work as a sacred clown. Many prominent and powerful healers in these tribes were also *heyóka*. See also **costume**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Wissler, C. *The American Indian*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938.

Hikwsi

The Hopi concept of a spark of life found in every living thing. Hikwsi come from “the very heart of the Cosmos itself,” which is conceived of as a powerful but unknown thing. Thus, the Hopi Creator is a mystery or an *ane himu*, a powerful but unknown thing that is “very something.”

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Hmong

An ethnic minority living in southern and western **China**, particularly the Yunnan and Kweichow provinces. The Hmong are a mountain people who farm and are well known for a strong work ethic, independent spirit, and love of freedom. The Hmong, which means “free people,” have historically resisted outside authority, both religious and governmental, and have maintained their distinctive dress, oral traditions, and spiritual and shamanic practices. Culturally the Hmong value self-reliance, intimacy with nature, and integrity.

Hmong cosmology has a time-tested coherence and internal logic that is derived from the deeply held understanding that all reality is first derived from the spiritual reality. The Hmong share a highly developed spiritual system that has an intricate beauty and great depth of spirit.

Soul

The Hmong conceive of the human **soul** as a multiple soul having seven, nine, twelve, or thirty-two souls. Health is maintained when all of the soul aspects are in the body, living harmoniously, and cooperating interdependently. **Illness**, depression, and/or death result when one or more soul aspect isolates itself, becomes separated from the others (leaves the body), or the group disperses. A soul aspect may leave the body when it is frightened, stolen by a malevolent spirit or an act of **sorcery**, or it may leave of its own volition.

The multiple souls within the individual and the multiple individuals within the community must all maintain harmonious and interdependent relations with the community of **spirits** in Nature and the spirit world. The Hmong look to **Ancestor** spirits and the spirits of Nature, including **trees**, mountains, rivers, rocks, lightning, and the **animal spirits**.

Soul Calling

Hu Plig, or **soul calling**, is the major form of healing **ritual** practiced by

Hmong shamans. In the soul calling ritual the shaman summons the soul aspects that have left the body and directs them to return to the body, re-integrate with each other, and restore integrity to the life force of the body.

The health of the Hmong society is maintained similarly. For the community to be healthy the individuals that make up the community must live together in a way that is harmonious, cooperative, and interdependent. A society is sick when the people disperse and become alienated, highly individualistic, and competitive rather than cooperative in their interactions with each other.

The Hmong shaman is the *Txiv Neeb*, translated as “**master of the spirits**,” and the shaman’s **trance** is *ua neeb*. Some Hmong believe that their **shamanism** is derived from the shamanism of the Chinese, a belief supported by the fact that older *Txiv Neeb* call out to the spirits by Chinese names when they are in trance. The shamanism of the Hmong is dynamic, simultaneously an agent of cultural change and an expression of the core beliefs of the **culture**.

The Call and Initiation

The *Txiv Neeb* is summoned from a regular life by the spirits, usually the **helping spirits** of a deceased shaman that wish to work through the new candidate. **The call** is spontaneous and the initial result is usually a serious or chronic illness of mysterious origin that does not respond normally to treatment.

An initiated *Txiv Neeb* is called to diagnose the source of the illness which confirms that it is **soul loss**, but that it is the particular type of soul loss created when the spirits take the soul of a candidate into the spirit world to test it and teach it to be a **shaman**. The *Txiv Neeb* strikes a gong, used in ritual to strengthen the shaman while in trance. If the candidate’s body trembles, then he or she has been chosen by the spirits to become a shaman.

The candidate receives teaching in the spirit world, often experienced as

progressing level by level up a twelve-rung **ladder** in the **Upperworld**. The primary test is the candidate's death in the spirit world and rebirth from which the candidate's soul returns to his or her body and the illness passes. The candidate can now enter trance spontaneously, body trembling, however the trance state itself has not been mastered. For this the candidate must learn the sacred **chants** and **mantras** of **power** that will allow him/her to control the entry into and exit from trance.

The candidate will now select a master *Txiv Neeb* as a **teacher**. The period of instruction is two to three years during which the student is in residency or apprenticeship with the master *Txiv Neeb*. The candidate pays a fee for the **training** that is traditionally oral and participatory, much being taught through example and experience.

Foremost the candidate "learns to shake," meaning that she learns to master the trance states and the incorporation of his or her helping spirits. He or she learns the names and nature of the spirits, benevolent and malevolent, in the highly intricate cosmology of the Hmong, the sacred chants, and the basic procedures of **shamanic healing** rituals, which are quite complex and elaborate.

Healing Rituals

Every **healing** ritual begins with an **invocation** to Shee Yee, the **First Shaman** to heal the sick and protect the people from malevolent spirits. The origins of all illness and death arose from the failings of the first man and woman. The first man was self-centered and selfish; he forgot his interdependent relationship with all the beings around him and chose only for himself. As a result of this behavior his egg hatched the spirits of **disease** and evil into the realm of humankind. Humanity suffered greatly until Shee Yee arose to heal the sick and offer protection from the attacks of evil spirits.

All pain and illness are believed to be manifestations of some disharmony in

the natural order of the cosmos. Physical pain and body ailments are the result of a disharmony that has manifested locally. Illness, mental illness, and social imbalance are the result of a more diffuse manifestation of disharmony. The *Txiv Neeb* begins by performing the *au neeb saib*, a **divination** ritual that determines the true source of the problem in the spirit world and an initial remedy. If the remedy works and the patient feels some relief a second ritual is performed, the *au neeb khu*, for curing. If the patient does not feel better a second *Txiv Neeb* is called to perform a second *au neeb saib*.

The ritual procedure is consistent performance to performance, while the specifics of the cause of the illness and the cure vary in each performance. The procedure begins with the *Txiv Neeb* inducing trance and traveling up level by level through the twelve levels of the Upperworld. The *Txiv Neeb* discovers the cause of the illness embodied in the imagery discovered in the spirit world. The helping spirits are called on to affect a change there at the source of the problem in the spirit world. The lost souls are called back to the realm of the living and caught and brought back if necessary. The *Txiv Neeb* returns with the lost souls and the helping spirits are offered gratitude and sacrificial **offerings** for their help.

Rituals begin with a divination or **diagnosis** before the shaman enters trance. A lamp, lantern, candle, or torch is used in the beginning and again at the end of the ritual to divine the success of the healing.

Rhythmic chanting accompanied by bells similar to sleigh bells begins and the *Txiv Neeb* enters trance. The shaman wears a black veil covering the eyes to better "see" with spirit eyes while communicating with spirits. While in trance the shaman rings bells with both hands and chants continuously. The shaman also narrates the adventure, beginning with the arrival of the helping spirits and the climb into the Upperworld.

At different stages of the ritual and of the *Txiv Neeb's* trance, different helping spirits are called in to assist. The first stage of trance is used to locate the source of the disharmony in the spirit world. While in trance the shaman is either sitting on the bench before her **altar** or leaping up on the bench while her soul is in flight in the spirit world. Assistants make certain that the shaman doesn't fall from the bench while in trance.

Behind the shaman's bench the animal to be sacrificed is placed in a box, usually a chicken or a pig. Assistants cut the throat of the animal and collect its **blood** as an offering to the spirits. Traditionally pigs are used more often than chickens because they are considered a better **sacrifice**. However, Hmong, particularly those no longer living in Asia, will adapt to what can be obtained at reasonable effort and expense.

After the sacrifice(s) the shaman's chanting becomes louder and her bell ringing more energetic. She enters a deeper trance, often assisted by gong playing and chanting of an assistant. At this point in the ritual the shaman works with the spirits to facilitate the healing. For example, in the case of soul loss, the shaman secures the lost soul at this climactic point in the ritual and negotiates a deal to bring the soul back to the patient.

In a typical healing ritual the shaman remains in trance for two or more hours. The shaman exits trance when the work in the spirit world is complete and continues with the healing in the physical world. The sacrificed animals, now cooked and prepared by assistants, are set in the entryway as an offering to the spirits. Then the shaman casts the buffalo horns on the floor three times and interprets the resulting patterns to divine the success of the negotiations. This divination technique is repeated until the shaman is clear that her negotiations have been successful.

There are some ailments that have obvious natural causes and are treated

using non-spiritual methods. Massage and herbal remedies are prescribed traditionally. Today a *Txiv Neeb* may also suggest a western drug, therapy, or a visit to a western physician.

Paraphernalia

The **costume** of the Hmong does not embody power for the *Txiv Neeb* as it does for Siberian shaman. The single essential element of the costume is the veil to cover the face while the shaman is in trance.

Bells are used to summon the spirits. Some sound like sleigh bells and others are made of many **metal** cymbals on a metal hoop. Gongs are played to give the shaman strength while journeying in the spirit world and deepen the trance state. Buffalo horns are used for divination. Spirit paper is used for protection on the altar and is burned as an offering during the rituals. The house spirits are feed regularly with eggs, cups of water, and roasted rice placed on the altar. See also **apprentice; multiple soul belief; nature spirits; Siberia; soul retrieval**.

Conquergood, D., and P. Thao. *I Am a Shaman*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1989.

Zbiral, J. "Buffalo Horns and Shaking Bells: My Friendship with a Hmong Shaman." *Shaman's Drum* 22 (Winter 1990-91): 16-23.

Hmuga

This is a sorcerer from the Plains region; also *kingydnngpi*, *hmunga* (Lakota). *Hmuga* is derived from *hmu* or *hmun*, meaning the humming sound made by wings of a large **bird** as it flies near one's head. These sorcerers were believed to be able to shapeshift into owls and other bird forms. In these forms they could fly to graves and steal parts of the dead for making malignant magics or enter places a human couldn't to work their magic on others. **Shamans** or **witch doctors** were needed to cure the **illness** caused by a *hmuga*. See also **Lakota; shapeshifting; sorcery**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Holon

A holon is an entity that is itself a whole and simultaneously a part of some other whole. The term, created by Arthur Koestler, is necessary to discuss the nature of reality. The things and processes that make up the reality we actually experience in this universe are not simply wholes (the wholist view) or parts (the atomist view). All the parts are actually parts of something else, parts of another whole. All wholes are made up of parts. Our reality is made up of whole/parts, or holons.

Everything in our experience is derived of and made up from the same thing. The chair you are sitting in, your body that is sitting, the ideas you are having as you read this, and the emotions you are feeling now are all made up of the same thing. Classical science calls that “thing” subatomic particles. However, this is misleading because contemporary science tells us that those particles are really only the probability that **energy** will be in one place more than in another.

The “thing” of which our experience is made is a whole/part, a holon. Subatomic particles are holons, cells are holons, ideas, symbols, concepts, and images are holons. Our experience and the world we have it in are not so much composed of atoms or ideas as they are composed of holons.

Looking at smaller and smaller holons we find the infinity of probability waves. Looking at larger and larger holons we also arrive at infinity in the way that this moment’s whole becomes a part of the next moment’s whole. In this way the **Kosmos** unendingly expresses itself through **evolution**.

This order of increasing wholeness is a natural outflowing of the evolving nature of the Kosmos. All of the essentials of lower level holons are in higher

level holons, but all that are in higher level holons are not in the lower. For example, the body contains cells, but cells do not contain bodies. This principle establishes holarchy.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

Hopi Prophecy

The Hopi Prophecy was given to the Hopi for the world by Maasau, God of the earth, thousands of years before Christ. So strong is the Hopi belief that the teachings of the Prophecy can lead people out of the **chaos** and confusion of contemporary life and into a state of balance and harmony that Hopi elders have shared the Prophecy with the members of the United Nations. The Hopi Prophecy parallels that of the **Q’ero**, handed down from the **Inka**, and the prophecies of the **Maya**. Portions of the Hopi Prophecy, as interpreted by Grandfather David Monongye of the Hopi Nation, follow:

The Hopi Prophecy consists of descriptions of over 150 specific future events and corresponding teachings and instructions. This Prophecy, or Hopi Life Plan, is an instruction manual for living peacefully in the **Fourth World**, which we are in today. The Hopi Sinom, People of the Peaceful Path, are the keepers of this plan.

As the Hopi see time on **earth**, humanity has already experienced three worlds, or evolutionary cycles. We are now living through the last days of the Fourth World. The Hopi hope to use the Prophecy to guide the One-Hearted people of all nations into the promised Fifth World.

The Hopi Prophecy is based on profound life principles represented by important symbols etched on rocks located in Hopiland. Also etched there on Prophecy Rock is the path of humanity in symbolic form. The two parallel lines depict the two life paths being walked today: One line represents the

path of the One-Hearted people, those who live daily in a True State of Love for all things, resulting in *Koyaanistasi*. The other line is the path of the Two-Hearted people, those who live in ways that willfully deviate from natural laws, resulting in *Koyaanisquatsi*, a chaotic, severely imbalanced way of life.

There are three **circles** etched along the One-Hearted Path, representing three Great Shakings, or world events that establish moral cornerstones for humanity. The first two Great Shakings have come to pass, the rise of Adolf Hitler and the massive postwar cultural exchange between the Eastern and Western hemispheres. The Two-Hearted Path is not marked by these moral cornerstones, instead it simply ends at the Time of Purification.

Just before the end, a line links the path of the Two-Hearted people with the path of the One-Hearted, the True Path. This vertical line is interpreted as a crucial time in the Fourth World. The Prophecy associated with this line predicts that the Two-Hearteds will devise a horrible weapon of great power and will use it in an attempt to force every nation into submission under the will of One. This event is the beginning of the Time of Purification.

The Prophecy states that “a gourd of **ashes**, when cast upon the earth, would boil the very ground, and burn everything for a great distance. Nothing would grow there for a long time. The ash would be poisonous, and when breathed or ingested, would bring sickness, suffering, and death.”

The Hopi interpret this crucial time as the creation and use of the atomic bomb. The Prophecy indicates that the shock and threat created by the aftermath of the use of this weapon of destruction would cause people to realize that the Two-Hearted Path inevitably leads to self-annihilation and inspire them to seek the True Path. This is why the vertical line that connects the two paths is also called “the Return Path.”

As humanity continues along the True Path there comes a third Great

Shaking, which has two parts playing out at the end of the twentieth century. The symbol of this Third Great Shaking is a red hat and cloak. Many Hopi elders believe that the first part of this world event culminated in the prophetic meeting between the Tibetans, the Red Hat People, and the Hopi in 1980. The second part of this Great Shaking, which will be a Final Purification, is not yet complete.

As the Prophecy is interpreted there will be only a short time for humanity to adopt the teachings of the True Path. In that short time humanity must act to correct the many ways of life that are out of balance, resulting in the unnecessary destruction of other people, nature, and the earth. If humanity changes in time and learns to live in a way that honors all things, the resolution of the great polarity will be accomplished. The second half of the Great Shaking, which would result in a Final Purification, might not be necessary.

The Hopi Prophecy explains that if humanity remains too far out of balance, this evolutionary cycle will end. The earth will begin anew in a Fifth World with those things that are able to honor all things, like nature and its ecosystems. However, humans who cannot live in the True State of Love will not proceed into the Fifth World. The purpose of the Prophecy is to alert us to our need to change and to instruct us in how to return to the True State of Love before time runs out on the Fourth World. See also **Hopi symbols; Maya prophecy; purification.**

Kimmey, J. *Light on the Return Path*. Eugene, OR: Sacred Media, 1999.

Hopi Symbols

These Hopi symbols are found in shamanic **cultures** around the world. They are the part of the **Hopi Prophecy** that provides instruction for humanity’s way back to living in *Koyaanistasi*, perfect balance and harmony with all things. These symbols represent the

principles by which humanity can live in peace and harmony with itself and the earth.

Navoti—The Thundercloud

Navoti, depicted as a thundercloud, lightning, and rain, is one of the most profound Hopi symbols. Navoti literally translated means “the entire Universe in perfect harmony and balance.” This describes humanity’s original condition at the time of Creation and the Hopi way of life. Navoti counsels one that harmony must be found both within and without. In practice, Navoti is realized in one’s life by engaging in appropriate **ceremony** and **ritual**.

Tuanasavi—The Cycle

Tuanasavi, depicted as an equilateral cross dividing a **circle** into four equal parts, represents the cycles of change inherent in nature. Like the Medicine Wheel of many indigenous peoples, Tuanasavi teaches that there are four distinct phases in every cycle. It also teaches ways of harmonizing with the change in one’s life.

In practice, Tuanasavi counsels that to follow the True Path of Love one must commune personally with Spirit through **prayer** and ceremony. The purpose of communing with Spirit is twofold: to solicit guidance and to join with Spirit in celebration. The more purposeful the ceremony, the deeper and more instructive the guidance becomes. Prayer and ceremony is a personal responsibility that one cannot put off on another. The realization of all spiritual leadership is in the willingness of the individual to act on the guidance received.

The Spiral

For the Hopi the **spiral** has meaning on many, many levels. The spiral is the **trance** of life on one level and on another it is the eternal path from one dimension, or reality, to another. The spiral connects all things: **time**, **space**, matter, **spirit**, and all states of consciousness. In practice the spiral counsels one to start at the beginning, asking spirit for

permission and guidance, and then go, never giving up. Each human must walk the path they are guided to walk by spirit, never looking for shortcuts, and all effort and patience will bear fruit.

Nakwach—Loving Unity

Nakwach is depicted as two concave lines, standing together, curves nested. Nakwach describes our behavior as members of a great whole. In practice Nakwach counsels cooperation, friendship, caring, compassion, and love.

The Warrior

The Warrior is depicted as two straight lines standing together, without aggression. The Warrior describes the aspects of our behavior as members of a great whole that balance those counseled by Nakwach. In practice the Warrior is prepared to give 100 percent of himself to the protection of that community. The warrior is one who excels for the benefit of his or her people and who exceeds his or her own expectations. See also **shamanic symbols**.

Kimmey, J. *Light on the Return Path*. Eugene, OR: Sacred Media, 1999.

Houngan

The *houngan* (male) and the *mambo* (female) function as the “**shamans**” and **priest**/priestess within the **Vodoun** tradition. The *houngan’s* role is to intercede in the realm of the *loa*, or **spirits**, on the behalf of the living. The contemporary techniques, **rituals**, and **ceremonies** of Vodoun are the accumulated **knowledge** of the Haitian and West African people cultivated through trial and error in their application over centuries.

The *houngan* works with the *loa*, who are the major forces of the Universe expressed in anthropomorphic characteristics as they are seen by the Vodoun culture. In the Vodoun **religion** to “be mounted” and become “the horse” for the *loa* is an honor. This type of **embodiment** trance, or intentional **possession** by the *loa*, allows the *houngan* and

initiates to connect with the spirit realm and experience that state in which everyone and everything are connected.

A full, transcendent possession by the *loa* in which the person allows the most intimate surrender of himself or herself to the *loa* can leave “the mount” with new capabilities, like increased conscious awareness. The *houngan* must cultivate **trance** state abilities well beyond this full, transcendent possession. The *houngan* must learn to enter and exit the trance as needed and without ritual, and to hold a clear and strong intention for the merging. Without the intent, the trances state cannot be used for **divination**, **diagnosis**, or **healing** of the patient.

The “ultimate stage of possession” is achieved only after years of practice at an advanced level of mastery. In this state there is a access to spirit information in a trance state so subtle that only a person who knows the *houngan* personally can detect the minute voice and behavior changes and increased sweating. In this possessed state the *houngan* is lifted to a place where the knowledge of the *loa* is accessible and the *houngan* can move between this state and **ordinary reality** to answer his patient’s questions.

Patients come to the *houngan* for both the source of and the cure for a wide variety of physical ailments, existential anxiety, conflicts with people of different cultures, predictions of the future, and a desire to change the power loss that generates bad luck.

In a private session with the *houngan*, the **altar** is a focal point of **energy** in the **sacred space** for all kinds of healing work. The altar is populated with an eclectic mix of images, including the Christian cross, and bottles of alcohol, placed there as **offerings** to the *loa*.

The **drum** plays an important role in inducing the possession trance in Vodoun rituals, however it is not always used by the *houngan* in private sessions. The *houngan* can work in direct contact or at a distance with the patient.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Huaca

Huaca is a **sacred space** or object in the **Quechua** language. *Huaca* is used to refer to the stones, plants, and other **power objects** used by the **shamans** in their **ceremonies** and healing **rituals**. *Huacas* often come from sacred places, like a mountain or a lake. Many *huacas* are found by the shaman first in a **dream**. Then in acting out the dream, the shaman finds the *huaca* in **ordinary reality** just as he or she saw it in the **dreamtime**. See also **healing** and **language**.

Huichol

The Huichol are an indigenous people of Central America who have settled in the mountains of the Sierra Madre Occidental of north-central Mexico. Today there are approximately 9,000 Huichol. Their traditional way of life remains remarkably unchanged given the history of such forceful outside influences as the **Aztecs**, Spanish conquistadors, Catholic missionaries, and the western industrial complex.

Cosmology

Long, long ago a serpent, the Spirit of Rain, gave life to the Huichol gods and goddesses in the **Lowerworld**. One of these gods, *Kauyumari*, Our Elder Brother Deer, found the **neirika**, the portal that connects all worlds. The gods and goddesses traveled through the **neirika** and came to Our Mother Earth in the **Middleworld**. Thus, it is through the **neirika** that all life came into being on earth. The **neirika** is that which connects and unifies the spirit of all things and all worlds.

Kauyumari sang sacred **words** and **chants** as he wandered. They traveled along threads of **energy**, filling **prayer** bowls and sacred gourds and transforming into life energy. This life energy could be seen on the **earth** in little, white

blossoms. *Kauyumari* continued to **sing** his **sacred** words and chants. Up in the **sky** Our Mother Eagle and *Tatewarí*, the spirit of fire, heard *Kauyumari's* sacred song. Inspired by the song they allowed their sacred powers to weave themselves together into the **medicine** basket, binding Mother Eagle and *Tatewarí* as shamanic allies.

Eventually *Tayaupá*, Our Father **sun** and the Spirit of Dawn, were found and their sacred energies were connected to that of the others in *Wirikuta*, the home of these **Ancestors** and the Sacred Land of Peyote. The *neirika* is in *Wirikuta* as is *Kauyumari*, his temple, and his human manifestation. First Man, who invented cultivation, is also here with the Ancestors in *Wirikuta*.

Our Mother the sea is also in *Wirikuta* where she receives the sacred **songs** of *Kauyumari* into her prayer gourd. Our Mother the sea feeds all life on earth from her prayer gourd. She gives **water** to the Huichol, the animals, and plants, especially the corn, the Huichol staff of life. Blue Deer who enlivens all sacred **offering** gives a drop of **blood** to the corn to give it life.

It is to this magical place, *Wirikuta*, that *Tatewarí*, the **First Shaman**, led the original expedition to collect **peyote**. This same **journey** is repeated annually by the Huichol in the **peyote hunt**. It is an arduous, sacred pilgrimage to the home of the Ancestors and a return to the beginning before Creation when all was Oneness.

The Mara'akame

The *mara'akame* leads the peyote hunt. He or she is the only significant spiritual specialist in the Huichol culture. The *mara'akame* is the shaman, **priest**, and leader, whose central role is to maintain the integrity of the Huichol society. The *mara'akame* performs **healing** rituals and leads community ceremonies. Like the other Huichol, the *mara'akame* is also a maize farmer.

The Tracks of the Little Deer

The sacred relationship of the deer, maize, peyote, and the Huichol is

ancient. It dates back to the time when the plants, animals, and people were one and did not live the separate existences they live today. The deer is the totem animal of the people and peyote is considered "The Tracks of the Little Deer." Peyote is also related in Huichol ideology to maize, the sacred staff of life.

Peyote is the link that allows the Huichol to be again in that time of Oneness and reconnect with the plants, animals, Ancestors, and gods and goddesses of the Beginning. When they eat peyote and **dance** in **ritual** together, they are united with each other and they experience their Oneness with all things. This is the "One Heart" that the *mara'akame* speak of. This experience is the reason the Huichol did not stop their peyote practices or lose their culture, even in the face of great persecution.

Peyote

The Huichol do not believe in the **myths**, rituals, and religious system of their culture. They experience them. They interact with all that these things contain, experiencing them as reality and truth through the entheogenic power of the sacred peyote cactus.

Peyote is a gift from the gods that enables the Huichol to tap into other dimensions, other ways of seeing, feeling, hearing, and sensing the world around them. Peyote is a **teacher** and it is eaten to learn. The Huichol believe that those with strong hearts will receive messages from the gods through peyote.

Huichol children are introduced to peyote while in the **womb** and then through their mother's milk. Eventually they eat the sacred cactus as their elders do. To experience the presence of god in one life from the time of the womb definitely affects how Huichol children see the world and how they learn to interpret supernatural phenomena.

Children are active participants in the peyote hunt, sacred rituals, and community dance ceremonies. The *Tatéi Neixa* **ceremony**, which celebrates

the first maize and green squash, is held especially for children five and under. During *Tatéi Neixa* the *mara'akame* takes the children to *Wirikuta* through song. As the children listen they are transformed into hummingbirds, eagles, and **birds** that fly to *Wirikuta*.

Community Ritual

In the Huichol maize planting ceremony, the dancing is central to the ceremony and continues over several days and nights. Under the influence of peyote, celebrants dance, chant, and offer prayers to the gods and goddesses who will ensure the health of the new crop. When the Huichol dance and pray with peyote they do so for the good of all peoples, not just the Huichol.

The *Hikuri Neixa*, or Peyote Dance, lasts two days and nights. Five, the sacred number of the four directions and the center, is fundamental to the structure of this ceremony. Participants dance five times around the temple compound. Five spots are demarcated with pine **trees** to indicate the cardinal directions and the sacred center. At each location, the participants drink cupfuls of the liquefied peyote and offer the same to their companions. In all they will drink the sacred peyote five sacred times.

Interpreting Visions

The Huichol consider the phosphene patterns characteristic of **visions** induced by plant **entheogens** to be a form of communication from the gods. Though anyone who ingests peyote may receive such visions, the *mara'akame* is more experienced in interpreting these visions than others. On the peyote hunt pilgrims share their visions with the *mara'akame* both to be certain that they fully understand the messages they have received and to share their part of the collective vision with the Whole.

Peyote-induced phosphene images are constant, they appear for anyone who ingests peyote. They are geometric, repeating patterns of color and many

take the form of pulsating **mandalas**. Huichols have given these images meaning and they have integrated the designs into their art, clothing, and **power objects**. For example, the *neirika* is seen in the first moving, brightly colored geometric image that appears.

Art and Preventative Medicine

The Huichol women understand the power as a form of healing that comes from recording the images of their peyote visions in their weaving and embroidery designs. Failure to do so would be a failure to share divine communications. The personal interpretation and content are traditionally kept private, however the images and patterns are to be seen by all. Serious hardships or **illness** are sent by the gods when individuals fail to share their visions with their family and community.

The Huichol *berdache* are also recognized for their weaving and embroidery. They perform a traditional role in the springtime rituals. The Huichol do not share **Mestizo** values and therefore consider gender variance one of the many expressions of an individual's true nature.

Plant Hallucinogens

The peyote cactus, *Lophophora*, is found in two distinct species, *williamsii* and *diffusa*. The Huichol use both species, calling them *Hikuri*. Peyote is found in scattered locations of dry, calcareous soil in the stony desert regions of Mexico.

The Huichol value peyote above the other plant entheogens available to them, such as **psilocybe mushrooms**, **Morning Glory**, *Datura*, and others. The Huichol say that eating peyote "will give one heart" and greatly increase one's *kupuri*, or life-force energy.

The Huichol do not conceive of the peyote as a god in and of itself. *Tatewarí*, the first *mara'akame*, is also known as *Hikuri*, the Peyote-god. *Tatei Hikuri*, or Our Great-Grandmother Peyote, is the delicate, feminine, and mystical aspect of peyote represented in Huichol art.

Tagetes lucida, a perennial herb with small yellow flowers and rich in essential oils, is also used by the Huichol to induce visions. *Tagetes* is smoked for its hallucinatory effects, usually in a mixture with **tobacco** (*Nicotiana rustica*) and occasionally alone. The Huichol frequently drink *Tesguino*, fermented maize, or *Cai* as they smoke *Tagetes* “to produce clearer visions.” See also **berdache (berdach)**; **gender variant**; **plant hallucinogens**.

Myerhoff, B. G. *Peyote Hunt: The Sacred Journey of the Huichol Indians*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974.

Schaefer, S. B., and P. T. Furst, eds. *People of the Peyote: Huichol Indian History, Religion and Survival*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

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Humility

Shamanic ritual is a spirit-based activity performed by humans. Shamanic **ritual** cannot occur without the intervention of **spirit**. Therefore everyone participating in the ritual and its preparation must do so with humility. In humility humans invoke pity and help without becoming pitiful. This lays the foundation for the **interdependence** and interaction between humans and spirits that is characteristic of shamanic ritual.

Somé, M. P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Hunting Magic

Hunting magic was one of the traditional roles of the **shaman**. In hunting societies it may have been a primary role,

since the shaman's role is defined by the needs of the community and the success of the hunt was essential for survival. In areas like the Arctic where little else grows, hunting is the major source of food and all means, both physical and magical, were employed to assure its success.

Hunting magic is a general term for the shaman's **journeys** into the spirit world for the purpose of locating game and the permission to hunt it. In many cultures the focus of this type of journey is a negotiation with the **spirits** of the animals or a being who serves as the Keeper of the Beasts. This Keeper, or Spirit, of the Beasts determines the appropriate exchange in human **sacrifice** for the sacrifice of the animals. Traditional sacrifices were, for example, leaving **offerings**, living by a strict moral code, performing ceremonies to honor the departing **animal spirits**, or, in some **South American** cultures, literally sacrificing human life.

Since all things have spirit, killing was considered sacrilege. However, killing was necessary for survival. This left the hunter vulnerable to the vengeance of the spirits of the animals he killed. It was the shaman's job to determine what was necessary for the hunter and the people to do to protect themselves from vengeance and/or famine. Performing the prescribed ritual offerings prior to the hunt allowed the hunter to find and kill the game successfully and hunt without injury.

The shaman's mediation in the spirit world clarifies what the humans must do to maintain the dynamic balance of mutual sacrifice with their physical environment, (e.g., not overhunting a species) and spiritual environment (e.g., not offending one whose help is needed). The oral traditions tell us that, without the ongoing negotiations of the shaman's hunting magic, the game grew scarce or the avenging spirits of the animals wreaked havoc on the humans, creating **illness** and accidents.

In these particular journeys into the spirit world the shaman presents the

human's needs to the Keeper of the Beasts or, depending on cultural beliefs, to the spirits of the animals themselves. The shaman asks what must be sacrificed in return for the sacrifice made by the animals. If the shaman was able to appease the Keeper of the Beasts and negotiate successfully, he or she was told what sacrifice was necessary, when, where, and how many animals to hunt, and how to honor their deaths.

The original Keeper of the Beasts was the Mistress, or Mother, of the Beasts. The Mother of the Beasts was found in the **Lowerworld** or at the bottom of the sea. For example, the Iglulik **Eskimo** shaman journeyed to the bottom of the sea to speak with Takánakapasáluk, the Great Mother of the Seals. The Mistress was later transformed into the **Master of the Beasts** now referred to in many cultures.

In many **North American** indigenous cultures **hunting medicine** could be obtained by hunters in general, as well as shamans. To gain hunting medicine the hunter undertook a **vision quest** for the purpose of acquiring **medicine**. If spirit responded to the quester he was given medicine and instructions in how to use and renew it. The medicine varied. For some it manifested as the ability to **shapeshift** into the animal to attract it close enough to strike. For others it was a mixture of things that made the hunter's aim true or the game visible. When used or worn by the individual as instructed by **spirit** the hunter was always successful. The continued potency of the medicine usually required the hunter to follow strict **taboos** as defined by spirit.

The simplest form of hunting magic is the shaman's ability to divine the location of game and the amount of game to be taken at this location. Consistent with the variation in **divination** techniques, each shaman has his or her own ritual for performing this hunting magic.

Shamanic peoples all over the globe know that Nature lives with a will of her

own and that she would continue to do so, cycle after cycle, with or without humans. These people understood that if they wanted Nature to conform to their needs—to sacrifice for them—that they must be prepared to sacrifice in return to keep the interrelationship of all things in balance. See also **renewal of life**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

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Hunting Medicine

Hunting medicine is the use of supernatural powers by the **shaman** or hunter to increase the success (quantity) or quality (fattest, largest, best pelt, etc.) of the hunt. Hunters obtained hunting medicine from the shaman or directly from the **spirits**. Hunting medicines created by the shaman or the spirits were considered more powerful than those found by the hunter.

Some **medicines** work directly on the game, making the animals, for example, stop within shooting range, unable to run, or more visible. Other medicines worked on the hunter or his weapons giving him special abilities like the ability to call the game to him, turn invisible to the animals, or simply shoot straight.

Hunting medicines had many different forms: objects, supernatural herbal blends, **prayers**, **songs**, specific acts and **incantations**, or supernatural skills, like **shapeshifting**. The simplest form of hunting medicine was a **charm** or **fetish**. The most complex forms of hunting medicine involved **training**, usually with a shaman, in supernatural skills, like controlling the movement of game or becoming an animal long enough to attract a real animal close enough to kill.

Hunting medicines were effective in large part due to the entire **ritual** process around hunting. Hunters began in the **sweat lodge** to purify spiritually,

empower their hunting medicines, and cleanse their bodies of human scent. There were rituals for approaching, killing, and butchering game, as well as **taboos** to follow for what parts to offer to the spirits, what parts to offer to which people, and what parts to use to make charms for future hunting medicine. Feasts were often held after successful hunts to honor the hunting medicine, the animals, and/or to feed the departing spirits of the animals for their long journeys home.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Huuku

These **shamans** of the Northern Maidu are the leaders of a secret **medicine society**. *Huuku* have numerous **helping spirits** from whom they receive their power and **charms**, *yo'mepa*, believed powerful enough to cause death. In the past the *huuku* gathered annually in a night-long **ceremony** to compete against each other in displays of **power**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.



Iban Dyak

A people of the northwestern region of Borneo. The Iban were first called Sea Dyaks in the literature; however, this term is misleading, as the Iban live miles from the coast. They are hill people, headhunters, and creators of textiles whose economy is based on the cultivation of dry rice.

Iban spiritual traditions and beliefs are passed on in a rich oral tradition. The primary spiritual functionaries are the *tuai burong* (diviner, especially relative to rice cultivation), the *tuai rumah* (headman of the longhouse), *lemambang* (the bard, important in saut rituals), and the *manang* (shaman). The *manang* is not a sorcerer in Iban society. *Empa ubat* (**sorcery**) and *tau tepang* (evil eye) are performed by others.

The beings of the Iban spirit world encountered by the *manang* are the *petara* (deities) who are believed to be benevolent and well disposed to humankind. The *orang Panggau* (mythical heroes) are believed to use their powers to help humankind selectively. The *antu* (spirits) are believed to be capable of benevolence or malevolence toward humankind.

The Soul

The *semengat* (**soul**) works together with the *tuboh* (body), creating a living person's vital totality. The *semengat* can move from the body in **dreams** and for the *manang*, during **trance** states. After death the *semengat* is believed to spend an indefinite amount of time in *Sebayan*, the **Land of the Dead**, and then be dispersed into a mist that is ultimately absorbed into the rice plants. Only the *initiated manang* is able to see

individual *semengat* and to control the movement of his or her own *semengat* to and from the body at will.

Ordinary Iban cannot control their *semengat* or the actions of their *semengat* in dreams. Dreams are controlled by the deities and are then considered messages and revelations. The Iban interpret dreams and look to dreams for guidance in life's pursuits. At daybreak, the Iban gather to share their dreams, interpret them, and determine what actions to take based on their **dreaming** guidance. In this way dreams bring innovation and change to the Iban life, offering new **rituals** and reinterpretation of the spirit world.

The Manang

The *manang* can be either a man or a woman or a **gender-variant male transformed shaman**, called *manang bali*. None of these types of *manang* possess a particular rank or special powers above the others, though an individual *manang* of any type can become quite powerful and renowned. All *manang* must be initiated by accepted *manang mansau* to be recognized as healers.

Each type of *manang* approaches the task of **healing** with a different perspective. They have many options in techniques and types of pelian (rituals) to choose from. The male *manang* have a greater tendency to provoke malevolent spirits into battle, while female *manang* tend to convince (or prevent) the same malevolent spirits from doing harm in the first place. The *manang bali* tend to see beyond gender-biased options and provide another innovative solution.

There are celestial *manang*, essentially the **spirits** of deceased *manang*, and terrestrial *manang*, or living shamans. The celestial *manang* are called upon to assist in the healing of the living in Iban rituals. They are also called upon to neutralize or erase inauspicious dreams or omens as a form of preventative **medicine**.

Inauspicious omens can also be neutralized through sacrificial **offerings**, the ritual use of *batu penabar*

burong (a stone **charm** with the specific **power** to neutralize omens), or through the ritual actions of the *orang tau makai burong* (a person who can eat omens) who is either a herbalist or *manang*. The *manang* is not the sole recourse in neutralizing or erasing inauspicious dreams or omens. When the *manang* is called on, he or she performs a *bedinding*, or shielding ritual, in which the *manang* rubs the dreamer's body with a charm that will render the dreamer invisible to the spirit who wishes to do him/her harm, thus protecting the dreamer.

The *manang* is often called upon to interpret dreams, particularly if they are suspected to be bad omens. A challenging dream could be a spirit trying to give the dreamer a warning or a wish, which would not be considered a bad omen. However, the spirit in the dream could have evil intentions. If so, the *manang* can then prescribe an appropriate course of action to neutralize the omen.

Healing

Illness is interpreted as the result of interference by harmful spirits or **soul loss**. When an Iban becomes ill, a series of progressively more powerful rituals are performed until the patient is healed or dies. In general the ritual progression begins with the *bedara* performed by the family, then the *pelian*, *saut*, and *nampok* performed by the *manang*.

In a *bedara* the family makes offerings to the deities and celestial *manangs* so that they will be reciprocated by making the family's medicinal charms potent for miraculously healing the sick. Offerings are usually a request for reciprocal assistance from helpful spirits. **Sacrifices** are the offering of a substitute life to satisfy malevolent spirits who will then leave the patient alone and allow the patient to heal.

If the *bedara* is unsuccessful, the *manang* is called on to perform a *pelian ceremony*. There are at least fourteen types of *pelian* rituals which vary in difficulty. They are always performed at night when the spirit world is active and in its daytime. To begin, the *manang*

performs a **divination** to diagnose the true cause of the illness, nature of the spirits involved, the condition of the patient's *semengat*, and its current location. Given this information the *manang* determines the appropriate remedy or type of *pelian* to be performed.

In each *pelian* the *manang* begins by invoking *Menjaya Raja Manang*, the highest celestial *manang*, and all the other celestial *manang* to assist in the healing, to make the charms potent and the healings miraculous. The *manang* proceeds with appropriate healing activities: retrieving lost souls, exorcising spirits, shielding the patient, etc. At the close of the *pelian* the *manang* may perform a divination to determine if the healing efforts have been successful. To this end the flower bud of the *areca* palm is read or the *pentik* (carved wooden figure) is stuck into the ground and its position is read in the morning.

If the *pelian* ritual proves insufficient to cure the patient, the family may hold a *gawai sakit*. In this ritual festival for the sick the *lemambang* call on the appropriate deities through their recitation of the *pengap* (**invocation** chant) while the *manang* perform the *saut* healing ritual.

In the *saut*, the *manang* tends to the health of the patient's **soul** by planting and fencing the *ayu* (a soul counterpart) and dispersing any of the harmful spirits. The *manang* initiates the death of the sick person and calls on *Selempandai*, the **blacksmith** forger of souls, to initiate the rebirth of a healthy new soul. The patient is reborn through the performance of the *saut* and given a new name.

If the *gawai sakit* fails to cure the patient, the patient is prepared for a practice called *nampok*. The patient is taken to a solitary place known to be inhabited by spirits and left there with offerings for these spirits. Through the offerings the *manang* surrenders to the will of the spirits, acknowledging that the illness is beyond human abilities to cure, and asks the spirits of the place to heal the patient. The patient waits

alone, preparing to receive either healing or death.

Paraphernalia

The most important piece of the *manang's* **paraphernalia** is the *lupong*, a basket or box in which the *manang* keeps **power objects**, charms with medicinal powers, and occasionally medicinal herbs. (The prescription of medicinal herbs being the **domain** of the medicine men and women, not the *manang*.) The *lupong* contains stones, glass, pieces of tusk, wood, root, and quartz crystals, used for divination and **diagnosis**.

Medicinal charms are not the sole domain of the *manang*. The location of charms is revealed by benevolent spirits to the Iban in dreams and is the possession of the dreamer who then goes out to find them. Ordinary Iban and *manang* keep and use charms regularly.

The one type of power object in the *lupong* that is specific to the practices of the *manang* is the quartz crystal, or *batu ilau*, "the stone of light." By looking into the "light stone" the *manang* is able to see into the spirit world and watch what the *semengat* and the *antu* (spirits) are doing. Using the **crystal**, the *manang* can see the location and state of health of the patient's *semengat*, the *ayu* and *bungai*, plant-like forms tended by celestial *manang* that are symbolic of the patient's soul, or the place and the reason *antu* may have harmed the patient by placing an **energy intrusion** into the patient's body.

The *engkerabun*, or "blinder," is a protective **talisman** kept in the *lupong*. The *engkerabun* is used to render the *manang* invisible to malevolent spirits. It functions in the reverse of the *batu ilau*, which renders the invisible world visible to the *manang*. Much of the *manang's* healing involves various applications of these two abilities together. On the one hand the *manang* makes the visible invisible to the spirit world that protects or shields humankind. On the other hand, the *manang* makes the invisible visible,

tracking, tending, and restoring health to the human spirit.

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Iboga

Iboga is a plant hallucinogen used by **Bwiti** followers in Gabon and parts of the Congo as a "guide to the **Ancestors**." *Iboga* is also the Ancestor **Spirit** to whom the people of all tribes are ultimately related. *Iboga* has the **power** to carry an individual to the **Land of the Dead**, which can be considered an honor or a curse. The spirit of *Iboga* and the hallucinogen are associated with death and movement between the worlds of the living and of the dead.

Tabernanthe Iboga, of the Dogbane family, is found in the wet, tropical zones of west-central **Africa**, primarily the Congo and Gabon. The shrub is both cultivated and harvested wild in the undergrowth of tropical forests. It has a vile-smelling latex, ovate leaves, and tiny, quarter-inch flowers that bloom in groups of five to twelve. The yellowish root contains the psychoactive alkaloid ibogaine.

Iboga is the most prominent **plant hallucinogen** on the African continent. *Tabernanthe Iboga* is itself considered **sacred**. Sites where **offerings** are made to the ancestors are often created between two *Iboga* plants.

Use

Shamans and sorcerers use *Iboga* to enter **trance** and gain information from the spirit world. Tribal leaders use *Iboga*, often consuming it for a full day, to seek advice from the Ancestors. Bwiti followers use it in a sacred **ritual** context to communicate with their Ancestors.

Iboga is central and essential to the Bwiti spiritual practice. It is used for **initiation** to “break open” the heads of initiates allowing communication from their Ancestors and as a visionary sacrament for initiated members. In the initiation ritual, initiates are given one or two massive doses. The intent is to induce physical collapse followed by a deep trance state during which the initiate has visions of contact with the Ancestors in the spirit world. Initiates cannot enter the Bwiti **religion** until they have seen Bwiti, the Ancestors, and the only way to see Bwiti is through *Iboga*.

Initiated members typically take small doses to connect and further consult with the Ancestors, gods, and goddesses. In common usage *Iboga* is a powerful central nervous system stimulant and has a reputation as an aphrodisiac. *Iboga* greatly increases muscular strength and endurance when taken in doses too small to induce trance. Warriors and hunters use *Iboga* on long hunts, grueling canoe trips, and difficult night watches to accomplish feats of extraordinary physical exertion without fatigue.

Preparation

The roots are harvested on the day of the **ceremony**. The root bark is rasped and eaten directly or dried and pulverized into a powder to be ingested. In an alternate preparation, the raspings are soaked in **water** to prepare a hallucinogenic drink through infusion.

Active Principle

The active principles in *Tabernanthe Iboga* are indole alkaloids similar to those found in **Teonanácatl** and **Ololiuqui**, plant hallucinogens found in Central America. *Iboga* contains at least a dozen indole alkaloids, the most active being ibogaine.

Ritual of Receiving the Plant Spirit, or Plant Medicine

The bodies of Bwiti initiates are prepared with white paint from head to toe with dark lines marking the feet, ankles,

wrists, and neck. Dark spots are applied to the arms and chest, while the torso is wrapped in a white cloth in a sarong fashion. The initiates consume large amounts of the pulverized *Iboga* root and then wait, sitting in the center of the ritual **space**.

As the Ancestor **spirits** are invoked, they may be seen in a **mirror** placed at the entrance to the space. As the initiates collapse they are carried to a special house or place in the forest. When they have entered their full visionary trance state they are *banzie*, roughly translated as “angel.” In this state the **soul** of the initiate **journeys** in the spirit world where it visits or is visited by the Ancestors.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

Iboga induces a trance state that is characterized by convulsions, visions, and temporary paralysis. At the excessive doses used in initiation, motor activity is usually impaired to such a degree that the initiate can only sit and gaze into space until he or she collapses. These large doses induce auditory, olfactory, and gustatory synesthesia (the stimulation of one sense provokes a sensation in another sense).

The onset of the deep trance is characterized by a floating feeling as the soul begins to leave the body. As the soul nears the realm of the ancestors and the gods, rainbow-colored spectrums of light surround all objects. Perception of **time** is altered so that the few hours spent in trance feel like many hours or even days.

Ibogaine in excessive doses may eventually arrest respiration. Deaths do occasionally occur during initiations.

Other Plants Related Through Use

Alchornea floribunda, known as *Alan*, is often consumed in large amounts during initiation to help to free the soul from the body, producing the outward sign of the soul’s **journey**, physical collapse. In southern Gabon *Alan* is mixed with *Iboga*.

Elaeophorbia drupifera, known as *Ayan-beyem*, may also be used in the initiation ceremony when *Alan* is slow to take effect. The latex of the plant is applied with a parrot feather directly to the eyes of the initiates. The active principles affect the optic nerve directly and induce **visions**.

Songs and Dances

There are complex ceremonies with **dances** and **songs** that are essential to the Bwiti spiritual practice. These vary greatly by locale because the Bwiti practice unites peoples of many different tribes, who all bring their traditional dances and songs.

Use in Contemporary Time

Through *Iboga*, members of the Bwiti religion can connect with their Ancestors and maintain a direct, personal relationship to their common origins as Africans. This experience changes the once hostile individualism of warring tribes into the unifying individualism of a common origin. Bwiti practitioners are more able to maintain a sense of identity apart from the Western world and stop the destructive influx of foreign ideologies, societies, and religions like Christianity and Islam. See also **sorcery**.

Schultes, R. E. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Icaros

Icaros are **power songs** sung by the **shaman** during **healing** rituals to attract the **spirits** who will do the healing and guide **journeys**. *Icaros* are often associated with *ayahuasca* rituals, because it is the **spirit** of *ayahuasca* and of the other plants in the rain forest who teach the shaman the **songs**. Animals, rocks, **metals**, **weather**, and other aspects of nature also teach *icaros* for summoning their **power** and wisdom. A shaman may know as many as three thousand *icaros*, and each shaman has

a personal *icaros* that invokes his or her essential power.

Icaros are used in any situation in which a shaman wants to invoke power. *Icaros* can be used to diagnose and cure **illnesses**, combat malevolent spirits, extract infections or energetic intrusions, empower plant remedies, find fish and game, and to influence the content of *ayahuasca* visions.

The melody of an *icaros* invokes the specific shamanic powers or spirits; therefore they can be chanted, whistled, or sung to be effective. The **words**, or *mariris*, are secondary to the power of the melody. (*Mariris* has also been defined as magical **phlegm**.)

To learn an *icaros* a shaman drinks *ayahuasca* and allows the spirit of *ayahuasca* to teach the song through the night. If a shaman desires the *icaros* of other plants, they are ingested, usually with the *ayahuasca*, which makes the shaman more sensitive to the songs of the plant.

A shaman must “sing to” the remedy during the **ritual** or there will be no real power to heal. A shaman must know the *icaros* of many spirits to attract the spirits into the rituals and remedies. If one spirit is not enough or is not able to do a healing, the shaman must invoke another.

There are also different *icaros* for different preparations and applications of a single plant. Apprentices must learn all of these variations. In many cultures the **apprentice** must undergo a strict **plant diet**, while remaining celibate and ingesting *ayahuasca* regularly to attune to the plants. In areas where there is a tradition of shamans passing *icaros* on to apprentices, even the apprentices must also receive their own *icaros* directly from the spirits.

Icaros is derived from the **Quechua** verb *ikaray*, which means “to blow smoke in order to heal.” Plant healers, or **vegetalistas**, sometimes use the verb *icarar* in describing part of their healing process. *Icarar* refers to **singing** or whistling an *icaros* on a person, object, or remedy to give it power.

- Bear, J., and White, T. ed. *Shaman's Drum*, Vol. 44, 1997.
- Langdon, E., Jean Matteson, and Gerhard Baer. *Portals of Power: Shamanism in South America*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1992.
- Luna, Luis E. *The Songs the Plants Taught Us*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True Recordings, 1991.

likhááh

The **iikhááh** is a ceremonial **sand painting** created, in part, as a way for the *yeii* (holy spirits) to enter and leave the **ritual** or **ceremony**. It is also a healing tool or type of **medicine**. *Iikhááh* means “they enter and leave” in the Navajo **language**. It is created on the ground in alignment with the entryway of the ceremonial hogan to facilitate this movement of the *yeii*.

Iikhááh are spontaneous creations received from **spirit** in a design specific for a particular healing of an individual at a particular time. The paintings are made from colored sand and powders made from ground rocks and precious **metals**. Each grain of sand is charged with intention and **blessings** through the ritual process, then carefully put into place in the picture. The **power** of the *iikhááh* comes from the spirit **energy** that is called into the painting through the shaman's intention and focus.

The goal of a traditional Navajo **healing** ceremony is to bring the patient back into balance with all things or *hózhó*, which for the Navajo is an ideal of inner peace, harmony, and well-being. The sand painting is constructed of the images and symbols necessary to bring the patient, who focuses on the images, back into *hózhó*.

During a Navajo healing ritual utilizing an *iikhááh*, the patient is first instructed to focus or meditate on images. The patient is then walked around the sand painting in a ritual manner so that he can embody the

energies. The ritual process enables the patient to transcend his own life and **illness** and to identify with the *yeii*, the holy spirits, and world they inhabit, which are embodied in the *iikhááh*. The patient is reminded through this experience of his deeper relationship with the *yeii* and other **sacred** forces that pervade his everyday life. Through this realization and the application of medicines, the patient is brought back into *hózhó* and made whole again.

Traditionally the sand painting is created on the ground in front of the *ätchin*, the slat **altar** that stands as an integral part of all altars created for ritual and ceremony. No two paintings are the same. After the ceremony the sand painting is destroyed, releasing the *yeii* called in to aid in the patient's healing.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Ilimarneq

Ilimarneq refers to the **journey** of the *angakok's soul*, or spirit flight, that occurs during the *torniwoq* or shamanic **ritual** in East **Greenland**. In some regions before entering the deep **trance**, the *angakok* has his hands tied behind his back, ankles bound, and a heavy stone placed about his neck to keep his soul from leaving the **earth** forever.

The *angakok's* soul is assisted in *ilimarneq* by his or her **helping spirits**, often merging with, riding on the back of, or being taken by the hand and led to the desired location in the spirit world. *Ilimarneq* is used for **divination**, to observe events at remote locations in the physical world, to find game, lost objects, or people, to locate an enemy, identify **sorcery**, or to locate and retrieve a lost soul.

Though spirit flight is commonly believed to be the relocation of consciousness to any point in **space**, the *angakok's* consciousness is often relocated to places outside of space and

time. Furthermore, in the stories of the more powerful early *angakok*, spirit flight involved the relocation of the body as well as the soul.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Ilisineq

This is a general term for all forms of **sorcery** or witchcraft in the Arctic regions. Practitioners or *ilisitsoq* are male or female. Witchcraft usually involves secretly connecting the victim to the dead or menstrual **blood**. Hexing can backfire and return to harm the witch if the intended victim's protection is strong enough.

Sorcery involves even more powerful manipulations, including **soul** theft. The creation of a *tupilak* is one of the more powerful forms of sorcery. The *tupilak* is created from parts of dead animals and usually something stolen from the victim. It is empowered with a **spirit** so that it can seek out and kill its intended victim. A *tupilak* is not easily killed; however, like any hex, if not made correctly, it can turn on its originator.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Ilisitsoq

A male or female practitioner of **sorcery** in the Arctic region. They are known to create and empower a *tupilak* or steal souls to cause **illness** or death. *Ilisitsut* (pl) or various dialectical variants. See also *ilisineq*.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Illness

A breakdown in the physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual health of an individual or community. It is a psychosocial and cultural response to **disease** (any primary malfunctioning in biological and psychological processes). Illness includes how the person reacts to his or her disease, as well as how the family and social network react.

Specific concepts of illness differ **culture** to culture, as do the correlating concepts for treatment. For example, the conventional Eastern Asian concept of illness is that a loss of personal **power** allows illness in. Personal power, or **energy**, is seen as the net result of the individual's physical, emotional, social, mental, and spiritual health. The maintenance of personal power is dependent upon the individual's every action, word, and thought.

The shamanic concept of illness is, in general, very much like that of the Eastern doctor. Illness points toward pre-existing problems resulting from months, years, even decades of disease, imbalance, chronic fear, or disharmony. These areas of weakness occur as a result of the bad habits accumulated by holding false attitudes about life and one's place in the Universe.

The illness itself is not the shaman's primary problem. He or she is looking for the weakness or imbalance that allowed the **soul loss** or **spirit intrusion** that caused the original disease. The **shaman** asks the **helping spirits** to diagnose the true nature of the illness and the source of the original imbalance. Then, given that information, the shaman continues to diagnose the remedies and/or **healing** rituals needed to restore balance within the individual and between the individual, his community, and the spirit realms so that neither the illness nor the disease will occur again. See also **diagnosis** and **rituals**.

Eichelberger, B. *Doctor of Oriental Medicine, personal communication*, 1996.

Kleinman, A., and L. H. Sung. "Why Do Indigenous Practitioners Successfully Heal?" *Social Sciences and Medicine* 13B (1979): 7–26.

Illness in North America

Illnesses caused by obvious external or non-spiritual origins were treated directly and effectively with plant remedies, bone setting, massage, dietary adjustments, and **cleansing**. Examples of this type of illness include fractures, dislocations, wounds, some snake and insect bites, skin irritations, bruises, and indigestion.

Illness that persists, does not respond normally to treatment, or has no apparent cause is believed to be caused by one of many in a range of supernatural causes. Common supernatural causes of illness are **sorcery**, **taboo violation**, **energy intrusion**, **spirit intrusion**, **dreams**, omens, sudden fright, and **soul loss**. In certain tribes and areas, other causes become more important. For example, among the **Iroquois**, unfulfilled dreams cause illness, and in the greater **California region**, "**pains**" intrude into the body and cause illness.

Taboo violations are often the result of showing disrespect to some type of spirit. For example **animal spirits** will gain revenge on hunters or fishermen who kill without asking permission or offering **tobacco** to their **spirits**; **fire** will cause **disease** in a person who spits, urinates, or defecates on the ashes; and **plant spirits** may cause illness or misfortune if they are gathered without **singing** the necessary **songs**, praying, or offering tobacco.

Ghosts of the deceased who remain in the earthly realms can cause illness or soul loss. A lonesome ghost drawing friends or relatives in for company causes a disease. Some ghosts may steal the soul of the living for comfort, or the sudden fright of encountering a ghost may cause soul loss.

The intrusion of an energy or spirit into the body of the patient is a major

cause of disease among indigenous North Americans. The task of the **shaman** is to locate this intrusion and remove it. The **disease object** in the intrusion often appears to the shaman as a worm, snake, insect, stick, thorn, stone, or "pain." The intrusion is most often removed by sucking. In some treatments the body is made uninhabitable and the intrusion is forced out by the consumption of bitter **medicines** or incessant forceful singing of spirit songs.

Most often the **sucking shaman** applies his mouth directly to the patient's body, but in some cases a tube or **cupping horn** is used. The object is sometimes inanimate, like a stone or stick, and sometimes animate, in that once removed it moves away or returns to the sorcerer who sent it.

When illness is caused by a spirit it is important that the shaman correctly **diagnoses** the nature of the spirit, because the treatments vary according to type. Common disease-causing spirits are animal, human, malevolent spirits, and the spirits of poisonous roots and plants.

Soul loss is a serious cause of illness that will lead to death if not treated. The soul may get lost during a dream or leave the body so suddenly in a fright or accident it will lose its way back. Soul loss is also caused by **soul theft** performed by sorcerers (malignant shamans), witches, malevolent spirits, or an earth **dwarf**. Some tribes believed that the Jesuit priests stole souls.

Shaman, Medicine Man, Seer, and Priest

In many tribes several types or classes of medicinal practitioners are recognized. Among the **Ojibwa**, for example, there are four classes. The highest ranking were shamans of the **Midewiwin Society** who performed ceremonies and healing rituals. The **wabenos**, practitioners of medical magic, **hunting magic**, love medicine, and the like, received their **power** from the Morning Star and practiced mastery of fire. The **djessakid** were the **seers** and prophets

who received their power from the Thunder and practiced the **Shaking Tent Ceremony**. The *mashki-kike-wini-ni* were herbalists or medicine people.

Other cultures recognized individual shamans and shamans or priests of **medicine societies**. The **Seneca** have thirteen medicine societies still functioning in the twentieth century as do the Zuni. Each society is charged with the treatment of a different disease or complex of diseases and a function, like creating rain.

Medicine

Medicine in the sense of the indigenous North American is not only the remedy, but the treatment, the spirit powers involved, and the **ritual** process by which harmony and well-being are reestablished. Medicine power extends well beyond the biochemistry of a remedy, even when the biochemistry of the remedy is valid by Western medical standards. Medicine power is found in **fetishes**, **charms**, lucky numbers, and omens as well as **medicine bundles**, songs, and **dances**.

Treatment

Treatment varies between shamans, tribes, and **culture** areas. However, the use of **rattles**, **drums**, sucking, singing, dancing, and praying is nearly universal as is the shamans' acquisition of powers to heal from supernatural sources.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Vogel, Virgil J. *American Indian Medicine*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990.

Incantations

An incantation is a magical arrangement of **words** that has the **power** to manipulate actions. The voice is a manifestation of an individual's power. Words charged with that power can turn into **sacred** forces or objects. Speaking an incantation is a way to make one's

intention an active force in the world, for better or worse.

Long **prayers**, like those of the Navajo or Hawaiians for example, are a form of incantation. These are traditional prayers that must be said without error, omission, or repetition of a single syllable from beginning to end. One distinctive characteristic of magic and magical religious acts, like turning wine into **blood**, is the need for exact repetition of words and actions.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Incense

Incense is a material, like cedarwood or copal resin, used to produce a fragrant odor when burned. It can be spices, dried plants, wood, or gums that give off perfume or fragrant smoke when burned. It is used in **ceremony** and **ritual** for **purification** of the **space** and the participants, burned as an **offering**, and used to support the inner state necessary for effective **prayer** or meditation.

Fragrances can instantaneously change the state of consciousness of the individual who smells them. The human sense of smell connects to the oldest part of the human brain. Its neurological pathway is the most direct route to the brain and nervous system. When the olfactory nerves are activated by a fragrance, like incense, the brain and the pituitary gland, which controls the human hormonal system, are directly stimulated and the individual's inner state is shifted. Therefore incense is a useful tool in shamanic rituals. Similarly scented oils, unguents, and perfumes (flower essences) are also useful tools.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Incorporacion

Incorporacion (incorporation) is the Umbandista (Argentinean) word for the **altered state of consciousness** of full spirit **embodiment**. Embodiment is the state of intentional, controlled spirit **possession**. *Incorporacion* is used by authors to distinguish the shaman's possession, an altered state the **shaman** has mastery of, from any state of spontaneous, uncontrolled, or unintentional possession.

The shaman performs **divinations**, **extractions**, **cleansings**, and some **healing** rituals for individuals and the community from a state of *incorporacion*. In *incorporacion* the spirit **energy** is in full possession of the body. The spirit of the medium has moved out of the way to allow the possessing spirit to fully enter and control the medium's **words** and actions. The Umbandista healers are expected to work from this state of *incorporacion*, because their clients are there to speak to the gods, not the mediums.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Indianismo

A Spanish term referring to the common psychological, cultural, and spiritual attitudes of tribal people. Also sometimes referred to as Indianism.

Induction

Bringing one into an **altered state of consciousness** by exposure to a range of intense sensory stimulation. Induction techniques include prolonged, monotonous drumming, rattling, **music**, chanting, dancing, or psychological disruption from sleep deprivation, hunger, **sweat lodge** experiences, or psychotropic substances.

The process of induction can be broken down into three stages. In the first stage, the everyday state of consciousness is destabilized by a disrupting force of intense sensory stimulation. In the second transitional stage the specific

altered state of consciousness is patterned by several factors: intentions, expectations, psychological and physiological condition, and the environmental setting.

In the third stage of induction the consciousness stabilizes in the altered state and the **shaman** is aware of being "there," in the spirit world. As the shaman exits the altered state the brain returns to normal patterns of activity and the shaman is fully aware of being "here," in the physical world. See also **trance** and **vehicle**.

Tart, Charles T. "The Basic Nature of Altered States of Consciousness: A Systems Approach." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 8, no. 1 (1976): 45–64.

Ingukh

A West Alaska **Eskimo** term for a **fetish**, or **power object**. Often the **power** is inherent in the object, like a bear claw or a lightning-struck stone. For other *ingukh*, the **angakok** (shaman) must be called on to conduct a **ritual** to embody power in the object.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Inipi

The **Lakota** practice of *inikagapi wójeya*, or *inipi* for short, is the most widespread **sweat lodge** tradition in **North America**. The Stone People Lodge, as it is also known, was brought to the Lakota by the **spirit teacher**, White Buffalo Calf Woman, with directions for building the lodge and instructions for using it. If done properly, all the powers of the Universe are brought into play in the **ceremony** to the aid of the participants.

Each piece of the lodge and part of the ceremony are connected with a greater power. Where the lodge is

placed, the source of the **water**, the number of sticks, the rocks, the placement of the **fire** and the wood that is burned, etc., all have meaning and power. The lodge is built on the **earth** and with materials that grow from the earth. Water is a connection to the Thunder beings who bring goodness to the people. The rocks bring in the Fire and the **Air** is made apparent in the purifying steam.

Traditionally, every stage of building the lodge is **sacred** work during which **prayers** are said and pieces are purified. For the Lakota lodge, twelve to sixteen willow sticks are placed in a **circle**, bent to create the dome frame, and covered with buffalo skins. The floor of the lodge is covered with sage before entry.

Outside the fire is built and the rocks heated. The hot rocks are passed into the lodge with a forked stick or deer antler and placed in the center. An **altar** is created near the rocks on which the **sacred pipe** rests. The altar is often in the shape of a buffalo **skull** with sage placed in the eye sockets.

The leader of the sweat is responsible for sprinkling the rocks with sweetgrass, which fills the lodge with a smoky fragrance, or water, which fills the lodge with steam. Cold water from a spring is set in a bucket by the rocks with either a ladle or a bundle of sage for the leader to use to douse the rocks with water. The leader is also responsible for calling the **spirits** into the lodge to hear the prayers of the participants.

The number of rocks used determines how hot the sweat will be and the number of rounds determines how long. The sacred pipe is passed around clockwise, usually within each round. Traditionally there are four rounds, though not always. When the ceremony is complete participants may plunge into a river if nearby or rub themselves dry with sage.

Erdoes, R. *Crying for a Dream: The World Through Native American Eyes*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Company Publishing, 1990.

Initiation

Initiation means beginning; its function is to open the novice **shaman** to the other world. Initiation begins a life of direct connection to **spirit** for the shaman. Initiation also means transformation; it causes a radical change in the initiate forever. Initiation creates shamans from those who have been called, and not all who are called will complete the transformation.

Initiations may be spontaneous, begun suddenly by spirit's intervention into the initiate's life, or formalized, set in motion by the initiate's human **teachers** as part of an ordered **training** process. Regardless of the form, initiations have three phases: a beginning, middle, and end. These phases correspond to the following characteristics which are necessary for initiation to occur.

At the onset, (1) the initiate is separated physically and/or psychically from the community and his or her normal life. The initiate is thrust into an unknown situation; (2) he does not know where he is. After using all of his familiar resources, the initiate realizes that he must surrender to the situation and (3) accept an unknown outcome. The initiate will stay in this phase until his **knowledge**, assumptions, and control are overwhelmed by the uncertainty and unpredictability of the situation. The initiate realizes that his life is at risk. He becomes aware that (4) he is alone and unprotected in an unknowable situation.

The middle of the initiatory experience is marked by the realization that there is no turning back and a sequence of revelations (not necessarily in this order) follows this realization:

1. The realization that going forward, further into the unknown, is the only way to avoid death
2. The realization that the parameters have been set by the spirit world
3. The realization that the only option is to give up control (either the ego dies or the whole person dies)
4. The initiate's emotions become huge and overwhelming

5. The initiate's imagination is fully activated, making everything feel extreme
6. The initiate fully realizes his own weakness, wounds, and limitations, and surrenders to the need for help from the spirit world.

From this place of revelation and surrender the initiate is guided to something within himself that was hidden. If initiates can merge with that hidden aspect, they become greater than they were before. They are then able to take action in ways that they were unable to conceive of moments before. With that action, the initiate has sacrificed everything he is for the possibility of becoming something greater and moves from the middle of the initiation to the end.

The completion of initiation begins with death, the death of the initiate's ego self. This death allows a new bonding to the spirit world and the initiate experiences the birth of identification with his soul self. The shaman's **soul**, through its connection to all things, aligns with the will of the **Kosmos**. Something within the shaman (1) is changed forever. The shaman is (2) more alive and sensually aware of life than before. In many cultures (3) outward and palpable evidence of change, like a scar or tattoo, is made on the body, symbolic of the shaman's permanent inner transformation. The shaman (4) will return to this inner bonding between self and spirit during every aspect of his shamanic work and in daily life. The initiation is complete when the shaman emerges from his initiatory death to take his new place in the community and is recognized in his new role by the others.

The initiatory experience is a transformation from which there is no return to what was. It is a bridge to possible selves and not everyone makes it across that bridge every time. The crucial point is the middle of the initiation, during which a fundamental shift in consciousness must occur for the initiate to get to the other side and end the initiatory process. If that transformation does not

occur—due to fear, drugs that numb out the experience, intervention by the well-meaning, or lack of internal integrity and strength—the initiate never reaches the end. Those who don't make it stay in the middle, unable to go back or unwilling to move forward and complete the transformation. As a result, their spirit self will remain in the middle phase, experiencing the ego's **chaos** and fear of the unknown, while physically they will die or go insane.

The importance of the initiation for the shaman is the death of the ego self, which is bound to four-dimensional **space** and **time**. Mircea Eliade, author of *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, the classic study of shamanism, explains in philosophical terms that initiation is a basic change in the individual's existential condition. The initiate becomes another person who is a totally different being. Shamans call the ego the little self because these aspects of their ego and their belief structure limited their "super" human potential. With the death of the little self the shaman gains the freedom to align consciously with the will of his soul and the soul of the Kosmos. The individual is transformed at this fundamental stage, and the shaman becomes "the person he or she came here to be." This necessary loss of the little self is why shamanic initiation is often called the "little death" or "**shaman's death**."

The form of shamanic initiations varies relative to **culture**, geography, and the shaman's form of training. Consistent in all forms of initiation is the moment of surrender to the Unknown and the acceptance of help from a higher source, leading to the initiate's transformation. The following are the four general forms of initiation:

1. Traditional/Cultural

Initiation occurs in graded, incremental steps within the context of a highly ordered shamanic training process. Examples are: the **Tamang** of **Nepal** who must undergo seven stages of initiation; the Warajiri of **Australia**, or the Yamana

of Tierra del Fuego. Within such systems there are tests that demonstrate mastery of each stage before the individual moves on to the next. In some systems each test is an initiation; in other systems only the final test is the initiation. Then there are systems where a spontaneous, life-changing event, like a culturally symbolic **dream** or experience with spirit animals, is the prerequisite for entry into the training.

2. Instantaneous/Spontaneous

Initiation occurs in a sudden life-changing event. This is often confused with **the call** to shamanic work, after which the individual begins his or her training with spirit. Examples of spontaneous initiation are being struck by lightning, a near-death experience, or psychospiritual crisis (psychic breakdown). There are further initiations along the way marking the mastery of particular skills or levels of **power** and a final initiation, during which the novice is faced with **ego death** and transformation, as discussed above.

These initiations are the spontaneous creation of the shaman and his or her teaching spirits. Because they may not occur in the conscious context of shamanic training, or even a shamanic culture, initiates may take years to understand the symbolic meaning of these events. It may take even more time to act on that understanding, due to the presence of prejudice against folk **medicine** and magic and the absence of cultural preparation and guidance.

3. Wounded healer

Initiation occurs in the midst of an unexplained **illness** when the ailing individual allows information, insight, awareness, or power into their consciousness in a moment of surrender. This shift of consciousness enables them to see their illness differently and heal themselves. The **healing** itself becomes the process by which they leave their “little self” behind and emerge anew. The wound may be physical, mental, or emotional and the illness often lasts for three days to seven years.

The latter is typical when the body appears comatose and the former when the body appears ill.

Shamans who have experienced this type of initiation describe their internal experience as a **journey** of their soul. While their body is sick or comatose, they experience their soul traveling in the spirit world where they are trained and initiated into shamanic work by their spirit teachers. After the initiation in the spirit world, they return to their bodies and begin their lives as shamans.

4. Dismemberment

Initiation is conducted by **helping spirits** and occurs in a **vision** or **trance** state, or as part of the **initiatory illness** described above. The spirits dismember individuals, pulling them apart, eating them, or stripping them layer by layer to the bone. Individuals, unaware that the experience is occurring in an **altered state of consciousness**, die. This ego death allows for a shift of awareness and the realization that they are not dead, but experiencing a spiritual rebirth. As the helping spirits put the individual back together, he or she often receives new parts, like eyes or other organs, extra bones, or additions to the body, like **crystals**, **feathers**, or some sort of magic substance that will help in shamanic work.

In some shamanic cultures, particularly in the Arctic region, **dismemberment** is expected and necessary for the initiation of shamans. Dismemberment is not necessary in all shamanic cultures, nor is every dismemberment necessarily an initiation. For example, dismemberment is a common healing experience for contemporary lay people who use the technique of shamanic journeying for their own personal healing. These experiences rarely produce an initiatory transformation in the journeyer, though they often have a healing or empowering effect.

There is no one official initiation for shamans. As long as the form of the initiation allows the function—the irreversible transformation of the initiate—

to occur, then it is a valid initiation. Traditional initiation **rituals** and **ceremonies** are not effective simply because they are traditional, the irreversible transformation must occur. If it does not, then the form has not served the function of initiation and, regardless of tradition, that specific ritual did not serve as an initiation that time.

Initiation should not be understood as a reconnection to spirit, because anything that can be reconnected is by definition separate (and can be disconnected later). This would mean that the initiate remains in the same thought paradigm they began in, believing that separation from spirit is reality. Initiation shifts the shamans from the thought paradigm of separation to the experience of the truth that all things are endlessly and timelessly connected. The shaman re-experiences that which was always true; the reality that there is no separation.

The shaman's task is to restore harmony in the people, land, and spirits that are the flow of energies that make up the connection of all things. For the uninitiated shaman, their view of what is necessary to restore harmony will always be colored by their own needs and desires. In contrast, the initiated shaman's view is clear. The will has been freed in initiation to align with the will of spirit, which enlightens one's self-interest. He acts to restore harmony in the connection of all things through service to the community, both human and spirit.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Hillman, J. *Images of Initiation*. Pacific Grove, CA: Oral Traditions Archives, 1992.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Villoldo, A. "The Inca Medicine Wheel." The Omega Institute, Rhinebeck, NY, Sept 1994. Direct communication.

Initiatory Illness

Initiatory illness refers to the physically overwhelming spiritual crisis that occurs when **spirits** choose a human to become a **shaman**. This illness is characterized by its strange, unexplained nature and the fact that it does not respond to conventional treatment. The duration of the **illness** may be three days, typical when the body appears comatose, to seven years, typical when the body or mind is plagued by lingering illnesses that grow progressively worse over time.

The term is common in discussions of shamanism, though somewhat misleading. The initiatory illness is characteristic of **the call**, which begins the process of becoming a shaman. This process varies **culture** to culture. Initiatory illness is not necessarily the same experience as the individual's **initiation** into being a shaman. This also varies culture to culture.

Initiation marks the irreversible transformation from novice to shaman. This may happen through the individual's recovery from this illness, but it often occurs after years of formal **training**. For example, among the **Zulu** the final initiation marks years of rigorous training and the new shaman's recognition by the community. In other cultures, as with peoples of the Pacific Northwest of North America, the novice trains for years in secret after recovering from his or her initiatory illness before coming out publicly as a shaman.

The initiatory illness usually serves as the first connection between the novice and his or her spirit **teachers** during which the novice is forced to chose to receive training with these spirit teachers to heal. For example a **Mapuche** woman explains that while gathering shells from the reefs she felt a blow to her chest and heard a clear voice declare, "Become a **machi** (shaman)! It is my will!" Simultaneously she experienced internal **pains** so violent that she lost consciousness. She woke from this state certain that Ngenechen (Great

Spirit) had spoken to her and knowing she was to become a shaman.

The unexplained illness may be physical, mental, or emotional. It comes on spontaneously, is often frightening, and is usually undesired by the one stricken. In some cultures the spontaneous experience is provoked through **ritual** practice. Likely candidates are prepared by initiated shamans, as in **Australia**, or they engage repeatedly in traditional activities known to provoke the experience, like **vision quests**, fasting, or sleeping in **caves**.

The initiatory illness is often experienced as a kidnapping or **possession** by spirit, while the body lies as if dead. In some cultures, training occurs during the expanded **non-ordinary reality** time often experienced during **trance** states. In other cultures, the initiatory illness creates the essential internal transformation that both signifies the need for and allows the training to start.

For example, the initiatory illness among the **Yakut** traditionally lasts from three to seven days. During this time the novice's body lies in an isolated place as if dead. The novice experiences his or her **soul** being carried off by the Bird-of-Prey-Mother, a great bird with an iron beak, hooked claws, and a long tail who appears only twice, at initiation, the shaman's spiritual birth, and at his or her death. The novice is aware only of his or her experience with the Bird-of-Prey-Mother. All that occurs in this **journey** is experienced as living reality.

The Bird-of-Prey-Mother takes the soul to the **Lowerworld** and leaves it to mature on a branch of a pitch pine. The soul reaches maturity over the expanded time that can occur in non-ordinary reality. The Bird-of-Prey-Mother returns to bring the matured soul to **earth**, cuts the soul body into bits, and feeds the pieces to the different spirits of **disease** and death. In this way the future shaman gains the **power** to cure the disease that corresponds to each eaten part of his or her body. After the devouring is complete, the Bird-of-Prey-Mother makes the soul whole, reconnecting all

the bones and body parts. The novice wakes from the coma-like state transformed at the existential core of his or her being.

Cross-culturally, similar themes appear in the adventures experienced by the novice while in the trance state induced by the initiatory illness. These themes include: **dismemberment** of the body, renewal of the internal organs and viscera, insertion of magical objects into the internal organs, travel to the **Upperworld** or Lowerworld to communicate with **helping spirits**, descent to the Lowerworld to communicate with the souls of **dead shamans**, and revelations of cures and other secrets of the profession.

Not everyone who experiences an "initiatory illness" is able to transform this spiritual crisis and the temporary mental illness involved into an initiation. The process from illness to initiation is not a given. For example, the **Tungus** novice experiences his or her shaman **ancestors** tearing out and counting all his bones during his initiatory illness. If one is found missing, he will emerge from the trance state uninitiated and unable to become a shaman.

The individual's ability to function in spite of their fear, to make sense of what occurs in the trance state, and to receive training separates the "chosen" from those who need to be healed. There is a transformation of consciousness that occurs when the ailing individual surrenders to the insight, awareness, or spiritual power present in their experience. This shift of consciousness enables the individual to see his or her illness differently and to heal themselves. Surviving this expansion of consciousness without going mad allows the individual to relate to spirit and receive training over their entire lifetime.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Peters, L. "Mystical Experience in Tamang Shamanism." *ReVision* 13, no. 2 (1990): 71–85.

Inka

A highly regimented society that spread northward and southward from Cuzco, Peru, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Inka brought with them a state-imposed code of behavior and a national **religion** meant to insure that all beings lived in good relationship with the empire and the greater **Kosmos**.

Inkan structures, which are now archeological sites, were built as energetic centers of the empire with specific purposes. For example, Cuzco, the heart of the Inka Empire, is built on the **earth's** solar plexus and Machu Picchu is the city of light.

The common people of the Inka Empire participated in the national religion and continued to make **sacrifices** to their local **shrines**, consult oracles, practice **divination**, and seek services of **shamans** and sorcerers. Inkan **priests** were also patronized when the cure of a **disease** required the confession of violations of the codes of behavior and the prescription of appropriate penance.

Sorcerers were practitioners of black magic and manipulative **medicine**, like the creation of love **charms**. They were known to send **energy intrusions** into their victims to cause **illness** and death.

Shamans, utilizing the assistance of their **helping spirits**, healed illness and performed **soul retrievals**. The Inka believed that disease was caused by the intrusion into the body of an energetic object sent by a sorcerer or malevolent **spirit** or **soul loss** caused by winds, malevolent forces, or **soul thieves**.

The shaman first diagnosed the cause of a disease by divination or reading **Coca** leaves or the entrails of a **cuy** (guinea pig). The shaman then extracted the **disease object** by sucking or set out on a journey into the spirit world to recover the lost soul. After the shaman's **healing offerings**, **prayers** and sacrifices were made.

Common **ritual** sacrifices were **Coca**, seashells, and **chicha**. Human **blood** sacrifice is believed to have been of greater importance in the early period of

the Inka Empire. Human beings were sacrificed primarily on important occasions. Otherwise llamas were used as sacrifice for major rituals and **ceremonies** and guinea pigs for minor ones.

Inka **shamanism** continues in an unbroken tradition in the practices of the **Q'ero**, the "Caretakers of the Earth." The Q'ero have remained in monastic isolation, in the mist-shrouded Andes Mountains of southern Peru for five hundred years.

The Q'ero teach the ancient Inkan belief that humans perceive on three levels: the rational logic of the mind, the feelings and senses of the body, and the ability to perceive the "real" world beyond that of perceptions of the body and the mind. When this third perception is activated the individual awakens from the collective **dream** of the reality perceived through small personal thoughts and feelings.

When this state of awakening is attained the individual experiences a reconnection with the essence of everything through the **energy body**. As the individual develops an awareness of energies and the energy circuits within to direct energies, it can be applied for purposes such as healing, re-establishing balance, experiencing non-linear **time**, and perceiving the vibration of the universal harmony in order to see the real world

Villoldo, A. *The Four Winds: A Shaman's Odyssey Into the Amazon*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1991.

Inner Fire

Inner fire is an idea shared cross-culturally. It is that all kinds of people or actions that involve some unexplained magical or spiritual **power** are regarded as burning with inner fire. That inner fire can be cultivated through **diet**, spiritual practices, **ritual** transmission, and cultivating an active relationship with spirit.

Many shamanic peoples speak of the powers the **shaman** receives from **spirit**

as “burning,” “heat,” or getting “very hot.” Often the shamanic **trance** state is not attained until after the shaman is “heated.” The power to generate this mystical inner heat is attributed to both sorcerers and shamans, and to practitioners of magic in general.

The **energy** of this inner fire is referred to by many names: *mana*, *kundalini*, and *num* being just a few. Throughout **Australia**, the Malay Archipelago, and Sumatra, **words** for magic also mean “heat.” Particularly powerful divinities in the Hindu tradition are referred to as “very hot,” “burning,” and “possessing fire.” In Islam a man who performs miracles is “boiling” and a man who communicates with God is “burning.” The idea of mystical inner heat is found in many religious and **mystical experiences**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Inorrortut

Inorrortut is the West **Greenland Eskimo** word for an **animal spirit** that appears in human form.

Institutional Support

Traditional **shamanic healing** practices slowly began to receive support from institutionalized **medicine** in the late twentieth century. The World Health Organization reported in 1977 that the physical and mental health problems of most of the world’s populace were being handled by traditional healers. Examples of institutional support follow.

There are clinics scattered across the western United States that use a variety of alternative healing methods. Two examples are a mental health center in Denver, Colorado, that employs a *curandera* on the staff and a hospital in Stanford, California, that employs a Brazilian healer.

The Malaysian and Thai governments have taken similar steps in responding to

a shortage of physicians. The government is licensing *bomohs* (**shamans**) to work with all but the “serious” cases, which are referred to hospitals.

The National Institute of Mental Health in **North America** finances the **training** of Navajo **medicine** people in Rough Rock, Arizona. The training is twofold, blending traditional Navajo **healing** taught by experienced medicine people and Western psychiatry. The program was devised when leaders in the field on the Western side of the relationship recognized that traditional practices could greatly alleviate the physical and psychological suffering of native peoples. Tribal leaders supported the program because the older medicine people were dying before they could pass on their lifetime of wisdom, **power**, and **knowledge** to younger people who could not afford the cost of the traditional training. See also **transcultural medicine**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Interdependence

The nature of the **shaman’s** relationship with the **helping spirits** is one of interdependence rather than control. The shaman is powerless to heal shamanically without the intervention of spirit. The shaman must approach spirit in **humility**, which is one of the reasons an authentic **ego death** is an essential function of the shaman’s **initiation**. Though the shaman may show off—basically advertise—in competitions or displays of **power** in some cultures, his or her relationship with spirit is grounded in humility.

The shaman must develop mastery over his or her **trance** states. However, this should not be interpreted as control of the **spirits** themselves. In practice mastery is the ability to enter and

exit the trance state at will and to remain conscious, lucid, and functional while merged energetically with spirit while in trance. This ability is based on a mastery of self, ego, and fear, in short on a mastery of personal state.

The notion of mastery over the spirits contradicts most of what we know about how shamanic powers function. The majority of shamans attribute their power directly to the spirits or to a special, non-ordinary **energy**. Many shamans tell of suddenly losing their powers completely as a result of breaking a **taboo** or transgressing in some way such that the spirit withdraws permanently and terminates the relationship. Finally, the helping spirits cause **illness**, madness, and death beyond the initial **initiatory illness** when shamans do not do as their helping spirits require.

Clearly the shaman is not in control of the relationship, but of himself in the relationship. It is also clear that the shaman is in relationship with spirit in a way that is not ordinary. Through initiation and **training** the shaman gains expanded awareness and the skills to enter into this working relationship with spirit. As in any healthy relationship neither party dominates the other. As long as both parties are respectful, strong, and clear, they can fulfill their roles and accomplish the mutual goal.

What spirit gains through this relationship is less clear. The spirits have continued to make contact with humans since the beginning, and the spirits seem to do so of their own accord. **Celtic** faery lore, for example, is filled with the reoccurring theme of the *sidhe*, beings of the Otherworld, needing human contact. For reasons that are not necessarily clear, the *sidhe* actively seek to share their wisdom, power, and secrets with humans, by entering **ordinary reality** themselves and by drawing humans into the Otherworld. It is as if it is necessary for the survival of both species that we communicate and help each other.

Humans and their environment are interrelated on physical, mental,

emotional, and spiritual (energetic) levels. They are interconnected in such a way that the health or balance of one affects the health or balance of the other. This is perhaps why the spirits help the shaman, though we really don't know why. We only know that they do, to the great benefit of humankind.

Achterberg, J. "The Wounded Healer: Transformational Journeys in Modern Medicine." *In Shaman's Path*. Gary Doore, ed. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Cowan, Tom. *Fire in the Head: Shamanism and the Celtic Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Intuition

The ability to recognize patterns in a field of infinite complexity without knowing how the pattern was recognized. Intuition draws on experience to recognize the key patterns that indicate the dynamics of a situation, allowing an individual to size up the situation quickly.

Klein, Gary A. Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998.

Inua

Inua, or **spirit**, is an **Inuit** word meaning "the breath of life" or spirit of life. The Inuit conceive of each spirit as separate and distinct from other spirits. Spirit is the essence and the history of the being it resides in and nothing can exist without it. The Inuit believe that some *inua* are the combined spirits of two or more animals, and that those beings can change form at will as they change environments.

Inuit

An indigenous people of the Arctic regions of **North America** extending from northern Alaska to **Greenland**. Inuit, meaning "genuine people," is the

main Canadian branch of the peoples of the Arctic region collectively known as **Eskimo**. The Inuit had thrived on hunting and fishing in the Arctic for over 7,000 years, but now only 800 of the 42,000 Inuit make a living hunting and still fewer hunt in traditional ways.

Traditional Inuit culture was a highly mobile hunting culture, dependent on the land, the **weather**, the animals, and the migratory cycles of the animals' lives. In the spring seals and **birds** are hunted, in the summer other sea mammals, in the autumn caribou, and fishing takes place year round.

The Inuit world is made up of three inseparable parts: the human, the natural, and the spiritual. Everything in these realms is invested with meaning and existence by its *inuua*, or **spirit**. Even **songs** have substance that can be crafted. These realms are interconnected through names, which are also things. A name is part of one's **soul**, social relationship to others, relationship with an animal species and the environment, as well as a connection to the souls of the deceased in the spirit world. The Inuit explain that a person is born with animals and must eat animals and therefore they are like animals.

The appearance of being a human in this web of interrelationship is generated by the *inu'sia*, an **energy** bubble of **air** that is located in the groin region. The *inu'sia* generates strength and life from the core of the being. Each species has its own *inu'sia* that makes it what it is, a seal, a seal, or a woman, a woman. These *inue* or animal people reach out to one another in harmony when all is right in the world.

First Shaman

In the beginning the Iglulik people were nomadic, gathering their food as they traveled the dark **earth**. They had no need to protect themselves from the problems that arise from slaying other souls to survive because they did not hunt. They did however experience sickness and suffering and it is from this need that the **First Shaman** arose.

A time of famine set in and killed many. The remaining people gathered to determine what to do. One man had been out on the tundra alone asking for help when he entered into a contract with the **spirits** and was given the idea. He was determined to dive down through the earth to ask for help from the Mother of the Sea Beasts.

No one understood him at the time so he demanded to go behind the skin hangings at the back of the sleeping place so that no one could see him. The people heard a great deal of strange noises and when they could no longer wait, they pulled back the hanging skins and saw only the soles of his feet as he descended into the earth. The First Shaman succeeded in his **journey** to the Mother of the Sea Beasts. He brought back game to his people, the famine gave way, and the Iglulik became hunters.

In this way the First Shaman appeared among the Iglulik to secure game for them and to teach the new hunters the rituals and practices necessary to honor the souls of the animals who gave their lives for the Iglulik to live. Iglulik shamans continued to journey and gather **knowledge** of the spirit world, to learn to heal the sick, and to learn the **sacred language** used only for communicating with the **helping spirits**.

The Call

The spirits visit the candidate in a **dream**, from which he or she wakes and becomes quite ill. The candidate withdraws from others and is compelled out onto the tundra alone, unconsciously following the path of the First Shaman. In that solitude, the candidate is visited again by a *tunerak* (helping spirit) who possesses the candidate. Until the candidate can develop a relationship with the *tunerak* and regain control over his or her own soul, he or she is compelled to do mad, unusual things, like wandering naked on the tundra.

When the relationship with the *tunerak* is secure, the *tunerak* begins to

teach the candidate to create the tools and learn the skills he or she will need to be a **shaman**. The novice shaman begins by making his or her **drum**.

Any young man or women who feels called to become an **angakok** can travel to a master **angakok** and offer an appropriate gift saying, "Takujumaqama (I come to you because I desire to see)." The entire family must be involved, observing **taboos** in preparation for and during this period of five or more days. The **angakok** journeys to the spirit world to clear obstacles there and hears the confessions (taboos violations) of the candidate and family to clear obstacles in **ordinary reality**.

Initiation

Angakok refers to both the shaman and the **spirit vision** the shaman uses to see into other realms and times. The purpose of the **initiation** is to transfer **angakok**, also called **qaumanEq**, to the candidate giving him/her light or enlightenment. After this transfer the candidate will be able to journey into the spirit realms without aid. It is understood that the candidate will continue to develop a relationship with his or her **tunerak** and to train in solitude.

The master **angakok** extracts the candidates **inua** (soul) from his eyes, brain, and intestines, so that the spirits can determine what the candidate needs. The spirits transfer the necessary **angakok** to the candidate through the master as a mysterious light or luminous fires that the candidate feels in his body and his head. This enables him to "see in the dark." His or her **inua** returns to the body, from which it can now travel at will.

Transformed Shamans

The **transformed shamans** of the Inuit were either dedicated by their parents as boys or called to the vocation by the **ke'let** spirits as young men. These boys were highly prized and their aptitude was noticed early in life so that their **gender** transformation could progress easily with their **training**.

White Whale Woman was an **angakok** who transformed herself into a woman/man to marry a woman of the **Fly Agaric mushroom** clan. This traditional Inuit story reminds us that earlier Inuit **angakok** were associated with **shapeshifting** and use of the plant **enthogen** known as **amanita muscaria**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Inverted Tree

A tree represented with its roots in the air and branches in the ground is an archaic symbol of the **Tree of Life**.

Invisible World

See **non-ordinary reality**.

Invocation

An invocation is a call sent by a human to the spirit world. To invoke spirit is to call upon the invisible forces that influence human life. An invocation is a humble request. In **humility** humans invoke pity and help without becoming pitiful.

Invocation is a request that spirit intervene so that the **ritual** or activity will be both successful and in harmony with the flow of the Universe. True invocation involves surrender and a release of the human need for assurance that this will be so. When one invokes spirit there must be absolute trust that the request will bring the desired intervention without expectation of how that is accomplished.

Somé, M. P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

iNyanga

The **iNyanga** is one of three classes of traditional **Zulu** practitioners of the

esoteric arts. The *sanusi*, *sangoma*, and *iNyanga* are all responsible for different aspects of maintaining a healthy relationship between the natural and supernatural realms for their communities.

The *iNyanga*, which means “man of the trees,” is similar to a herbalist or pharmacist. The role is inherited, usually passing from father to son. The **knowledge** passed on through the role is considered part of the wealth of the family. The *iNyanga* is also particularly skilled in finding lost or stolen objects. The role is considered the least powerful of the three classes of practitioners because practitioners do not experience *Ukutwasa*, the call from the ancestral **spirits**.

The *iNyanga* is a healer and **moon** person (one who draws **power** from a relationship with the spirit of the moon) who works primarily with physical **illness** and **disease**. *iNyanga* are often referred to as “**witch doctors**” because they are skilled in the techniques of counteracting *tagati*, the hexes placed on tribal members by witches or sorcerers that make people sick. The *iNyanga* can become a sorcerer himself, an *umtagatin zulu allmaloy insone*, a doer of evil deeds, when he uses his skills to harm another. See also **sorcery**.

Credo Mutwa, V. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Ipadú

See *Coca*.

Iroquois

The Iroquois, or Five Nations Confederacy of New York, includes the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and **Seneca** of the original five nations and the Huron. These are the indigenous peoples of the Northeastern woodlands of **North America**. These

people share closely related languages and many cultural patterns.

The Iroquois believe that everything belongs to the spirit and that **knowledge** of life beyond the physical plane is available to anyone who truly knows how to **dream**. Through the dream, the dreamer has access to sources of wisdom that transcend **space** and **time**. The Iroquois were concerned with shamanic realms of dream precognition, dream telepathy, and encounters with the supernatural.

The Dream

Sleeping dreams were held to be the **language** of the **soul**. To ignore the messages sent by the soul left the dreamer in peril. It was important to remember and interpret the dream accurately and, depending on the meaning of the dream, to enact it. It was not unusual for whole communities to base life-or-death decisions on the prophetic dreams of individuals who were held to be gifted dreamers.

Basic to Iroquois understanding is the belief that the human soul makes its natural desires known through dreams. When the desires are expressed and enacted, the soul is satisfied. Conversely, when the desires are ignored, the soul becomes angry and withdraws well-being and happiness that it wishes for the body. When dreams are repeatedly ignored, the soul may revolt against the body causing **disease** or death.

While the dreamer sleeps, his or her soul journeys outside of the body and brings back information from other places and times. Therefore, what was dreamed would occur. By enacting the dream, the dreamer could control its inevitable occurrence rendering the experience tolerable. If ignored, the dream would occur on its own, with disregard for space and time and the physical well-being of the humans involved. When a dream warned of future trouble or disaster the dreamer could change the outcome of the dream through proper enactment and avert danger.

Some Iroquois nations were more orthodox about dream enactment than others. The Seneca, for example, followed the direction of every dream and enacted them exactly and immediately. Other nations observed and/or enacted only the dreams judged important enough to guide the lives of the people.

Dreams were used by hunters to guide them in their hunt. All animal species have an “elder brother” spirit who is the spiritual source and origin of all the individual animals of that species. If a hunter were to see an elder brother spirit in his dreams, his hunt of that animal would be successful.

The dreams of powerful dreamers could also bring about the reversal of long-standing beliefs or behaviors of whole tribes. This type of radical change is the natural result of the belief that dreams provide access to higher sources of wisdom. These dreams had to be acted upon and made real, regardless of the changes the dream demanded of the people.

The Shaman

The **shamans** of the Iroquois nations were powerful dreamers and gifted in unfolding the meaning in the dreams of others. The terms used for shamans reveal their connection to dreams, like *ratetshents*, meaning “one who dreams,” *arendiwanen*, meaning “one who possesses **Orenda** (spirit power),” and *agotsinanken*, meaning “one who sees true.”

Shamans were called to their profession through their dreams. Novices are summoned by the spirits in dreams and then instructed in their **training** through a series of dreams. For example, a dream of a large white bird with its head splattered with **blood** called the dreamer to serve in the Seneca Eagle Medicine Society. A dream of a *kakonsa*, a false face **mask**, called the dreamer to observe the practices and serve in the **False Face Society**.

Iroquois shamans worked to heal the body and the soul, which they believed was multidimensional, having at least

three aspects. They worked with **helping spirits**, *oyarons*, spirits taking animal form, and spirit guides, who took more human form. In their **healing** sessions they routinely dealt with spirit **possession** and de possession (**exorcism** or **extraction**) and the loss and retrieval of the various aspects of the soul.

Training

An individual shaman’s training was defined by his or her *oyarons* who taught through the shaman’s dreams. Training frequently involved prolonged periods of fasting and isolation to induce dreams and **visions** and to allow the focus necessary to apply the teachings, learn the songs, and master the techniques.

Diagnosis

Shamans used dreams primarily to determine the hidden cause of an illness and the appropriate course of action. Remedies prescribed in dreams often involved communal feasting and dancing and/or the ministrations of one of the **medicine societies**. Dreams could also diagnose the cause of the illness as an act of **sorcery** and reveal its origin.

Methods of **divination** were also used. These varied widely influenced by individual preference, the medicines possessed by a shaman, and/or the practices of a medicine society to which he or she belonged.

The Shaman and Dreams

The Iroquois trust that the spirit beings who communicate through dreams do so as clearly as possible. However, because they exist in a formless reality that is infinitely larger and deeper than that of **ordinary consciousness**, they must often communicate through **symbolic language**. The burden of interpretation lies on the dreamer and those trained to help others in unfolding the true meaning of their dreams. The safety and well-being of the individual and often the whole community depended on the correct interpretation and application of the dream to life.

Correct interpretation was particularly important in respect to “big

dreams,” dreams involving contact with supernatural beings or warnings of imminent disaster. It was regarded as a supremely important social duty to help someone unfold the meaning of a big dream and design the appropriate course of action.

Traditionally, shamans and “grandmothers” were the respected specialists in dream interpretation and enactment. The most frequently consulted dream interpreters were the “grandmothers,” older women past menopause who were respected faith keepers and **clairvoyants**. Traditionally, they might use **scrying** with **water** or **fire** to help divine and clarify meaning of the dream.

Interpretation of a dream or the diagnosis of an illness always took into account the two creating forces of the Iroquois Universe: Order and **Chaos**. These two forces are embodied in the Cosmic Twins who share the power of this world. The twin who embodies the creative life force is steady and helpful to humankind. The twin who embodies chaos is changeable and unpredictable, the **Trickster**. The Mohawk call the twins *Tharonhiawakon*, the sky-holder, and *Tsawiskaron*, which roughly translates to whirlwind.

Soul

The Iroquois believe that there are three aspects of the human soul. There is a **vital soul** that sustains the physical body; it is the sensing soul that remains in the body. There is a **free soul** that is reasonable and intelligent and is meant to travel to and from the body independent of space time. The third aspect of the soul varies. Some people have four or five of this latter type of soul aspect at one time and possible none of this type at another time.

The three aspects of the human soul have different natures and destinations at death. The vital soul is of the body and the physical existence. It becomes one with the **earth** after death.

The free soul is a higher spirit that returns to the **Upperworld** where it existed even before the creation of the

earth. The free soul may linger until *ohkiwes*, the Feast of the Dead, is performed, during which all aspects of the soul are released and the bones are reburied. Afterwards the free soul can reincarnate, which the Iroquois recognize during name-giving ceremonies performed for an infant or a captive.

The final aspect of the soul, sometimes called the double, stays close to earth unless appropriately honored in the Feasts of the Dead. This **ritual** is designed to avert problems with ghosts who can cause harm or sickness in the living. All the spirits of the people, from the earliest **ancestors** to the newly buried, are honored and fed spirit food during this **ceremony**.

When the ceremony is conducted properly the soul will leave the earthly realm and **journey** along the Path of Souls, the Milky Way, toward the lands of the dead. Here the nature of the death, for example suicides, warriors killed in battle, people of other nations, etc., determines the final destination for the soul. See also **Haudinashone**.

Gunn, Allen P. *Grandmothers of the Light*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Moss, R. “Blackrobes and Dreamers.” *Shaman’s Drum* 50 (Winter 1998): 53–59.

I-wa-musp

I-wa-musp is the **gender-variant shaman** of Yuki, a people of the northern **California region of North America**. The *i-wa-musp* comprised a special order of **teachers** of the **sacred**. Their primary focus was instructing the children in the legends and moral tales that comprise the oral traditions of the people. After years of **training** they were able to **sing** the entire tribal history in sing-song monotone without error or repetition. See also **transformed shaman**.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*.
Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Iyári

The shared heart memory of members
of **Huichol** families. Iyári is experienced

and reinforced by participation in the
community, **peyote dance** rituals, and
on the **peyote hunt**. This heart memory
is a kind of genetic memory that comes
simultaneously from the past and from
the present family members.

J

Janai Purnima

Janai Purnima is the most **sacred** pilgrimage and full **moon** festival in the Nepalese shamanic calendar. It is also one of the holiest days throughout **Nepal** as it is the “day the deities return.” For this reason it is also the time of year for the most powerful shamanic **initiations**. *Janai Purnima* is the full moon of the lunar month of Saun, roughly August.

For a full month prior to *Janai Purnima* all the deities retreat to the **Lowerworld** to replenish their powers, or *sakti*. The shamans’ **drums** are silent for the whole month. Upon their return to the **Middleworld** the deities will again be able to help humans. Shamans across Nepal travel to holy **shrines** and **power places** to acquire this rejuvenated **healing** power. They perform many **soul retrievals** and healing rituals for other travelers who leave **offerings** and are in need.

The **Tamang** are of Tibetan ethnicity and are the largest ethnic group in Nepal. Nepal is at the geographic crossroads of the Hindu and Buddhist civilizations of India and Tibet. The Tamang have developed a unique blend of these spiritualities, combined with their own much more ancient pre-Buddhist oral **Bön-po** shamanic tradition.

Peters, L. G. “Mystical Experience in Tamang Shamanism.” *ReVision* 13, no. 2 (1990): 71–85.

Japan

In ancient Japan the **shamans** were predominantly female. Men, called by the **spirits** to be shamans, became

transformed shamans who changed their **gender** to fulfill their calling. Much of the history of **shamanism** in Japan, other than the exclusivity to women, is obscure. However, shamanism continues to be practiced in Okinawa today, still mainly by women.

There is much in the symbolism of Japanese shamanism that is found in shamanism globally. In **rituals** the shaman works with a central mast or tree, which functions as the **Tree of Life**, the “road to the gods.” The essential function of the central mast or tree is to provide a path for the **spirit** who enters the shaman during her **embodiment** to come and go from the ritual. This is particularly important when the shaman is working with spirits who inhabit the **Lowerworld**.

The seven **colors** of the rainbow are incorporated into the symbolism of the seven layers of the **Upperworld**. The rainbow itself serves as the bridge connecting the earthly realms to the **sky** and the spirits inhabiting the Upperworld. By climbing the rainbow while in an ecstatic **trance** state, the shaman, serving as **psychopomp**, can deliver the souls of the dead to their final resting place. The Rainbow Bridge is also used as a rendezvous with their spirit **teachers** and husbands.

Training and Initiation

Today, many Japanese shamans are blind from birth. Young girls are **apprenticed** to accredited shamans and trained for three to seven years. **Training** culminates in an **initiation** ritual. In some districts, the initiation involves an exhausting physical ordeal, designed to induce a deep trance during which the initiate appears unconscious. When the spirits have completed her initiation into the spirit world, she is reanimated and reborn a shaman.

To prepare for the final part of the initiation, the new shaman dons wedding garments. She is wed in a mystical marriage to her deity and **helping spirit**. Through her mystical marriage the shaman becomes a “spirit-woman god”

or *mikogami*, and gods will be born of the marriage between the spirit-woman and the god.

In other Japanese initiations, the candidates must construct a bridge of seven arrows and seven boards that connects the earthly realm to the spirit world. She must construct the bridge, complete this dangerous passage, and successfully establish communication with the spirit world. The successful completion of this initiatory test demonstrates her mastery of trance.

Japanese training often involves paradoxical reversals to cultivate trance mastery. For example, novices stand under ice-cold waterfalls or immerse themselves in cold **water** continually for up to a hundred days in winter. This extreme exposure to cold creates a need within the novice for the spirits to intervene and assist in the cultivation of magical **inner fire**. After a time, the novice masters her own inner **fire** and emerges from the icy water refreshed. Similarly, mastery of fire is cultivated so the novice can touch fire and hot coals while her skin remains cool. These reversals are a general sign of a well-developed trance state.

Healing

Japanese shamans work primarily in an embodiment trance state, allowing the spirit to speak through them to the patient. The shaman works with different types of spirits to accomplish different functions. When the shaman invokes the **spirits of the dead** the ritual is commonly called *shinikuchi*, “dead man’s mouth.” In most cases these are the spirits of parents, relatives, lovers, or friends with whom the patient wants to communicate.

The ritual is called *ikikuchi*, “mouth of a living person,” when the shaman invokes the spirit of a living person from far away. **Divination** rituals are called *kamikuchi*, “mouth of the god,” during which the shaman divines the success or failure in the client’s future or the location of lost objects or people.

Shamans also extract **illness** and malevolent spirits in rituals of **purification** and **cleansing**. The shaman also divines any medicines or other remedies necessary to complete the cure for the physical aspect of a particular illness.

Paraphernalia

The **paraphernalia** of the Japanese shaman is similar to that of the shamans of other cultures on the mainland. Her primary **power object** is her **drum**, used to induce trance, **rattles**, a **mirror**, and the *katā.na*, or saber, used to battle malevolent, harmful spirits.

Transformed Shamans

The *winagu nati*, “becoming a woman,” ritual is central to the male shamans’ transformation. The initiates dress in the sacred garments of female shamans and enter a sacred grove, which would be closed to them as men. The function of the *winagu nati* is to initiate the men and complete their transformation into female shamans. These *yuta* are **gender-variant** shamans who are identified by their culture as females.

Gender transformation is also seen in Shinto rites, during which drumming is used as a device to effect **altered states of consciousness** (though the Shinto trance work is not shamanism). In some Shinto rites men serve as *miko*, spiritual functionaries who embody female deities and spirits in **possession** trance states. The *miko* dresses in the sacred feminine garments and jewels of the deity or spirit he intends to embody. A strongly symbolic characteristic of these **costumes** is the endless knot pattern in the square brooches worn at the waist and loins.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Jesako

An **Ojibwa shaman** known for his performance of the **Shaking Tent Ceremony**, a form of **divination**. The *jesako* performs this **ritual** in the *jesakan*, or *djesikon*, a tent made specifically for the ritual. The practice of the *jesako* flourished side by side with the **Midewiwin Society**.

Wissler, C. *The American Indian*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938.

Jivaro

See **Shuar**.

Journey

A **shaman** is a person who enters an **altered state of consciousness** at will to contact and use an ordinarily hidden reality in order to acquire **knowledge**, **power**, and to help other people. The journey is a general term referring to the shaman's experience contacting and using the ordinarily hidden reality. The journey and the **embodiment trance** are the two poles of a continuum of altered states used by the shamans in their work.

The journey is an **art** form. Like **singing**, dancing, drawing, and all the expressive arts, humans have an innate ability to journey. Innate artistic abilities reside in every human and can be developed through **training**. In addition to innate abilities, some people are also gifted in one or more of these areas. This explains why most people can journey, but only a few become shamans. The shaman is to others what the singer who can add nuance and phrasing to exquisite vocalization is to those who only **sing** in the shower. The shaman is the master of the journey.

In the journey the shaman is often filled with an ineffable joy in what he or

she sees, feels, and experiences. In awe the shaman moves through beautiful and mysterious worlds that open before him/her. Journey experiences are like **waking dreams** that feel real and in which the shaman can control his or her actions and direct his or her adventure. The shaman gains access to a universe that is both new and ancient, strange and familiar. It provides the shaman with profound information about the meaning of his or her own life and death and place within the totality of all existence.

Tribal **cultures** make a careful distinction between those who are qualified to heal, to diagnose, or to teach **rituals** and those who, over and above these qualifications, are able to communicate with the powers of the spirit world by journeying from their bodies. A **medicine man** may be capable of telepathy, clairvoyance, or precognition, but he will remain incomplete and in need of further training as a shaman if he can not journey into the spirit world at will.

The ability to journey allows the shaman to become part of everything in creation, to be connected to all things. This is the key component of shamanism. The shamans' "**techniques of ecstasy**" or their mastery of the use of altered states are not just techniques for standing outside one's own consciousness.

There are two qualities which, when experienced simultaneously, distinguish the altered state of the shaman's journey: First, that the shaman is outside of his or her consciousness of self (ego) and is connected to all things; second, that the shaman can communicate with and affect intentional change in the ordinarily hidden reality. This type of journey defines the shaman from other healers and other out-of-body travelers.

The first movement of the shaman's **soul** on the shamanic journey is to move outside him/herself. However, the next step is what truly distinguishes the shamanic journey from other **out-of-body experiences**. In the journey the

shaman has the ability to enter other realms of existence, participate in the lives of the beings who live there, and communicate with **spirits** and the souls of humans. The shaman's ability to send his or her own consciousness into the consciousness of another entity and return to his or her own self at will is the essence of the shaman's journey.

The shaman is considered to have partial control of experience in the journey. In some journeys this experience may be similar to **lucid dreaming** or a variety of psychotherapeutic visualization techniques like guided imagery, guided meditation, "waking dreams," and Jungian active imagination. However, this is not to say these are all the same states, but that there may be overlap and similarities between them.

There is still something unique, undefined, and as yet not duplicable in the **healing** that a shaman can bring to a damaged soul through a journey. To accomplish this healing the shaman often encounters strange worlds, frightening spirits, and life or death battles, as well as profound states of ecstasy in the journey. These experiences all directly affect the life and longevity of the client and the shaman.

Drawing from descriptions in the literature, interviews with a variety of shamanic practitioners, and personal experience, Roger Walsh, MD, PhD, author and professor of psychiatry, philosophy, and anthropology, outlines the general profile of the shamanic journey:

1. The journey is undertaken for a specific purpose, e.g., to heal a client, bring rain in a time of drought, escort the soul of a dead person to the Source, etc.
2. The shaman enters an altered state by means of their particular practice or discipline. The altered state is controlled and the shaman's concentration is fluidly focused, moving freely from object to object while in the journey.
3. Once established in the altered state, the shaman begins his or her journey, experiencing separation from the

body, decreased awareness of the body and environment to greater and lesser degrees, and traveling as a **free soul** or free spirit.

4. The free soul/spirit enters the shamanic cosmology of the particular shaman or shaman's culture, often involving an **Upperworld**, **Middeworld**, and **Lowerworld** though not always, and the shaman's attention is fluidly focused there.
5. The shaman experiences the journey vividly through multiple sensory modalities, visual, auditory, intuitive, sensory, proprioceptive, emotional, etc.
6. In the journey the shaman calls on personal **helping spirits** for assistance.
7. The shaman moves through **non-ordinary reality** as is necessary to discover the source of the presenting problem and resolve it, returning with **energy** in the form of information (e.g., course of action, ritual, remedies), power (e.g., spirit animals or personal power), or lost soul parts.
8. The shaman reenters his or her body and exits the altered state of consciousness at will.
9. The shaman transmits the energy retrieved from the journey by communicating the information or physically returning the lost energy to the client. Some shamans narrate the content of their journey as it proceeds and upon their return they transmit the energy retrieved to the client and/or further interpret particular aspects of the journey.

In the journey, shamans experience themselves as individuals freed from their physical bodies and the limitations of the physical world. The journeying experience often involves traveling with a helping spirit or merging with and traveling as the helping spirit. For example, an Amazonian shaman may experience running as a jaguar through the rain forest or running with a jaguar.

The content and context of the journey experience are complex and coherent, multilayered in meaning and often

rich in humor. The content is consistent with the shaman's learned cosmology and the purpose of the journey. However, the journey is never the same twice, e.g., no two journeys to the **Land of the Dead** are the same.

Shamans use a variety of practices, or **vehicles**, to enter the altered state of their journey: drumming, chanting, dancing, fasting, sleep deprivation, ingesting **psychotropic plants**, concentration, visualization, running, jumping, and engaging in sexual activity. These practices are often used in combination. For example, fasting and sleep deprivation may be part of three- to four-day **dance** rituals or chanting and dancing may be used after ingesting psychotropic plants. The vehicle chosen depends on many variables, including tradition, training, degree of mastery, the purpose of the journey, cultural expectations, and/or personal preference.

The journey is used for **diagnosis**, **divination**, and healing. The journey is one of many diagnostic techniques used to determine the source of the problem and the course of resolution; for example, what herbs to prescribe, how to use them, what rituals to perform, **taboos** to observe, and what spirits or soul parts are involved. The diagnostic techniques used by a shaman depend on training, development, mastery, cultural expectation, and/or innate gifts of the shaman.

Mircea Eliade, author and professor of theology, explains that the shaman is distinguished by the journey, a magico-religious technique that is exclusive to the shaman and may be called ecstatic whether it is to the Upperworld, the Lowerworld, or the depths of the ocean. In practical application it is more accurate to say that the journey is potentially ecstatic because the shaman is in connection with the spirit world while in the journey. However, the actual depth of the trance state used, which affects the completeness to which the shaman slips into ecstasy, is determined by the shaman's diagnosis. The

diagnosis is relative to the healing needed by the patient, not religious beliefs or cultural biases.

Cowan, Tom. *Fire in the Head: Shamanism and the Celtic Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Eliade, Mircea. ed. *Ancient Religions*. New York: Citadel Press, 1950.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1990.

Walsh, R. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. Palo Alto, CA: Transpersonal Institute 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Juggler

The **shaman** in much of the early literature. The shaman's ability to perform extraordinary feats was called "jugglery." All aspects of the shaman's **healing** and **divination** that employed supernatural powers were considered acts of slight of hand or deception. The explanation offered by the shaman that he or she received his or her **powers** directly from the spirit world was disregarded as the superstition of an ignorant, primitive person.

The shaman's **power displays** were given dismissive, condescending names, though they could not and cannot be adequately explained or duplicated by the untrained. For example, shamans performing Spirit Lodge rituals were (and are still) regularly untied from tight bonds as one of many signs of the presence of spirits. This was labeled the "rope-tying trick."

Displays of mastery of **fire** and **sword** swallowing were dismissed though not explained. Conversations between the shaman and the **spirits** that were audible by anyone present during shamanic **rituals** were dismissed as "ventriloquism." The ability of some shamans to cause seeds to grow instantaneously into full fruit-bearing plants or to transform objects from one form to

another was labeled the “plant-growing trick.”

Profound acts of healing in which the shaman sucks the **disease-causing energy intrusion** from the body of the patient are dismissed as “pretending” even when the object removed ran or flew back to the sorcerer who had sent it.

Wissler, C. *The American Indian*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938.

Ju|'hoansi

A group of **!Kung** of the western Kalahari Desert in southern Africa, also referred to as **San**. Ju|'hoansi language uses four click sounds that are represented in the four symbols (|, ʘ, !, ||). The language has many specifics that cannot be assimilated into English. The Ju|'hoansi, the “real” people, are one of the few groups that practice hunting and gathering at least part time. They live in small groups, often extended families, and maintain strong ties to the land and its resources. Their traditional way of life enables them to create and enjoy a sustaining community solidarity.

This way of life is significantly threatened by the massive loss of land to cattle grazing by the Herero and Tswana peoples and to the general encroachment of contemporary life, Western products, and academic education. In the 1990s the Ju|'hoansi have found it increasingly necessary to replace their extensive economy of hunting and gathering, which requires large land areas, with more intensive economies, like small scale animal husbandry and agriculture, which require less land. Their struggle to live on a land that is dwindling is escalating.

As long as they have land to live on, the Ju|'hoansi continue to practice a powerful, ancient **healing** tradition that is fueled by regular and frequent community healing dances. During the **dance**, healing/spirit energy or *n|om* (*num*) boils in the bodies of the men and women who have been taught to activate it and allow its healing potential

to flow through them. A few individuals emerge as healers or *n|omkxaosi*, “masters of *n|om*,” who serve as stewards of *n|om* and guide its flow toward the service of others. The *n|omkxaosi* could be considered the **shamans** of the Ju|'hoansi.

Many values, beliefs, and ceremonies persist because they perpetuate the creation of fundamentally useful social structures even as the Ju|'hoansi change. For example, there is little difference in authority among individuals and substantial equality between the sexes. Each person is responsible for a set of personal tasks and has a voice in group decision-making.

The community healing dance is largely responsible for maintaining the harmony and balance in Ju|'hoansi life. It is a prime example of shamanic preventative **medicine**. The dances are called when individuals need healing or when the community wants to dance. On an average they are performed four or five times a month. Everyone who is within earshot joins in the celebration and deep sense of collective healing.

The dance is a **vehicle** through which the specific sicknesses of individuals are healed and the community's health is maintained. The dance reinforces the interdependence of everyone and of the land on which they live. It provides an experience of the spiritual interconnectedness of all things, an expression of joy, a constructive outlet for tensions, and an opportunity to participate deeply in the spiritual well-being of others.

Ju|'hoansi healing extends far beyond curing individual illnesses, though that occurs. Healing is an integrating and enhancing force that affects the individual, the group, the environment, and, the Ju|'hoansi believe, the **Kosmos** as well. Healing means the well-being and growth of each individual physically, socially, psychologically, and spiritually. To be well is to be able to apply **knowledge** and summon the strength necessary to fulfill one's individual and community responsibilities.

The all-night dance is the center of this healing tradition. Though the Ju|'hoansi are changing due to the constant impact of the world around them, they return to their n|om. The n|om is the same as it was for their **ancestors** even though it keeps changing. As new degrees of complexity and fluidity enter into the dance, it remains an expression of the values embodied in the Ju|'hoansi way of life—knowledge, strength, and the willingness to help one another.

The Ju|'hoansi way of healing through the dance is but one reflection of a profound spiritual dimension that pervades their lives. As the Ju|'hoansi say in their own words, “being at a dance makes our hearts happy.” Thus their hearts remain a calm center in a sea of contemporary change.

Cosmology

!Xu is believed to be the original source of n|om for humankind, and, in special cases, he still is. !Xu is the leader of the **spirits of the dead** and the husband of Koba, the mother of the bees. (The bee is one of the four most ancient symbols of the Great Goddess in the Old World.) !Xu's village is the place healers journey to retrieve the lost and stolen souls of the sick from the g|aoansi, the spirits of the dead who steal souls and create sickness.

The full cosmology of Ju|'hoansi gods and goddesses is not codified. Who the gods are and the nature of the Ju|'hoansi relationship to them is an individual matter. Ordinarily, the Ju|'hoansi do not speak of gods or the spirits of the dead. However, healers enter into direct communication with the gods and spirits, bargaining, insulting, and doing battle.

N|om

Ju|'hoansi healing is based on n|om, the spiritual energy that pervades and strengthens the lives of the Ju|'hoansi. In the healing dances everyone participates in and shares n|om. Though n|om is often translated in the literature as “medicine,” perhaps *manitou* or

Great Mystery are more accurate comparisons.

N|om resides in the bellies of the men and women, and when they dance it boils. “Boiling” means that the n|om moves from the belly, up the spine, out the arms, and into the fingers where it may be used to heal through the laying on of hands. Those who have been taught to activate n|om are able to cause n|om to boil intentionally by dancing strenuously or singing spirit songs with great strength. These individuals are highly respected for their willingness to activate n|om and the courage to endure the pain of n|om moving through their bodies in the service of their community.

N|om can be sensed by experienced healers in a state of enhanced awareness. Otherwise n|om is visible only in its effects. N|om can be “seen” in the actions of beings and in certain things like a **song** or **music**. N|om is not personal, even when boiling in one's body. N|om can not be possessed or controlled completely, very much like the relationship between shamans and spirit powers in other cultures.

However, unlike other shamanic cultures, n|om is not considered a spirit or a power from outside of the individual. N|om is the primary force in the Ju|'hoansi universe, and it is present in all things of power. It is in the dance fires, the healing songs, and the people, particularly the healers. N|om is at its strongest when it is concentrated and boiled, as it is in the healing dances of the Ju|'hoansi.

Healing

Healing for the Ju|'hoansi is primarily an ongoing process of preventative medicine assimilated at the dances. While individuals with specific problems are healed at the dances, the healers in !aia (the healing altered state) go to everyone at the dance, whether they are presenting symptoms of **illness** or not. This method of healing simultaneously cures on the physical and psychological levels while it stimulates

emotional and spiritual growth, which support the individual's well-being and overall good health.

The Ju|'hoansi believe that for healing to be successful it must take place simultaneously on the personal and communal levels. Dances are held to allow this simultaneous healing to happen. The dance allows the direct intervention on the behalf of another and an opportunity to express and release the pent-up energies of conflict so that peace can be maintained between people. For the Ju|'hoansi whose way of life is interdependent, the basic necessities of food and shelter depend on peace being maintained between people.

In the heightened state of !aia healers communicate with the gods, pleading, arguing, and demanding that the gods save the sick from illness. The healers lay their hands on the sick and, letting loose earth-shattering cries of healing, they pull the sickness out of the patient's body. The screams and howls of the healers are expressions of the intense effort and pain involved for the healers, yet the healing work goes on, often for several hours.

The dance is used to treat virtually every illness. In addition, the Ju|'hoansi use medicinal herbs and salves for minor injuries and infections as well as antibiotics acquired from government agencies.

Healing Rituals

The dance revolves around the fire. The structure is simple, designed to facilitate the activation of n|om and allow the entire camp to participate in this energy. As night falls the women begin the dance by seating themselves around the fire. Shoulder to shoulder, legs intertwined, they sing healing songs and clap rhythmically. The all-night dance will usually end before sunrise the next morning.

The men begin to dance, circling around the singers. The women will get up to dance and heal when their n|om moves them to do so. As the dancing and singing intensify, the n|om is activated in those who are healers. As the n|om

boils, the mood of the dance intensifies and the laughter recedes. Working in an !aia state and working with others who need help to enter their !aia state requires great concentration and care. The dancers, mostly men, do most of the healing, though the singers also enter !aia and heal.

Often, in the case of serious illness, a smaller healing dance is called in which one or two healers and several singers work exclusively on the sick person. If that individual takes a turn for the worse, a full community dance may be called to continue to deepen the power of the healing. The Ju|'hoansi also call dances to heal communal illness like rips in the social fabric, arguments between villages, disagreements about the distribution of food, or anything that disrupts the peaceful flow of their normal interdependent daily life. The healing dance is effective on many different levels simultaneously.

!Aia

!Aia is a transcendent state of consciousness in which the healer experiences an altered sense of consciousness. When the boiling n|om reaches the base of the healer's skull, he or she enters !aia. Once in this state, the dancer can heal. The healer can see into the normally invisible aspects of **ordinary reality** and travel into the realms of the gods and spirits of the dead ancestors. !Aia makes healing possible, enabling those with the courage to enter it able to see what is troubling others or causing their illnesses.

Sickness is understood as a process of **soul loss** in which malevolent spirits of the dead, sent by the gods, try to carry the **soul** of a living person into their realm. In !aia the healer enters directly into **non-ordinary reality** and into the struggle with the malevolent spirits on behalf of the sick person. The more serious the illness, the more intense the struggle.

The healer begins by expressing the wishes of the living to keep the sick person with them and the struggle

escalates from there as necessary. If the healer's *n|om* is strong and the spirit willing, the malevolent spirits will retreat and the soul of the sick person is allowed to return.

The bulb of *Pancreatium trianthum* is occasionally used as an aid in learning to enter !aia. This flowering plant has hallucinogenic properties. It is sliced open and rubbed over cuts made in the scalp. *Pancreatium trianthum* is found in tropical and warm regions of Africa and Asia.

To enter !aia you must die. This is the way the Ju|'hoansi experience and explain !aia. In !aia the soul (*moa*) leaves the body and travels into the spirit realm as it does at death. There is only one experience of death, thus these experiences are the same. The Ju|'hoansi distinguish between final death and the death of !aia in their hope that the healer's soul will return and the healer will come alive again.

The Healing Cry

In the midst of the healing process healers cry out, expelling sickness from themselves. This spontaneous expulsion of breath, sound, and rhythmic thumping is an expression of pain, pain felt as the boiling *n|om* works to heal inside and the pain of the dramatic shuddering and convulsive movements that accompany the movement of *n|om* in the body.

The !aia give the healers “**spirit vision**” so that they can diagnose the cause of the illness in the individual or the community. !Aia allows the healer to heal with the laying on of hands and the **extraction** of malevolent energies from the body. !Aia also allows the soul of the healer to enter the spirit world on the behalf of another and negotiate for the return of lost souls.

Training

The healer's vocation is open to all. Most of the men and many of the women will attempt the difficult training. The pain of boiling *n|om* is quite real. It brings the novice face to face with his or her own death. To move

beyond that fear, one must die and be reborn into !aia. This passage is a terror-filled experience of real physical death. About half the men and one-third of the women will succeed in this training.

With emotional and physical support, inexperienced healers may learn to regulate the intensity and speed with which *n|om* boils up inside them so as to keep a balance between the fear of !aia (death) and the intensity of the boiling *n|om*. If the fear can be contained or accepted, the dancer will dance with greater abandon, wanting the *n|om* to boil and become hotter.

The stronger the *n|om*, the stronger the healing power. *N|om* is at its peak when the songs are sung with great abandon and the healers are working with intensity and depth. At this point in the dance, regulation of *n|om* is critical, especially with inexperienced healers.

Healers must first learn through experience to control their boiling *n|om*. “It hurts,” describes a healer. “It is like fire—it burns you.” Dance after dance, they are overwhelmed with the searing pain of boiling *n|om*, legs go rubbery and bodies writhe in rigid convulsions. Others hold the young healers to prevent them from injuring themselves or running into the fire. Eventually the inexperienced healer learns to regulate the *n|om* and to cool it down. Then they can begin to direct the *n|om* and to heal.

The struggle with the spirits who cause illness, misfortune, and death is the essence of the healer's art, skill, and power. Young healers must learn to activate the *n|om* in their bodies, to control the boiling *n|om*, and finally to function with clarity and intention while in the extreme state of !aia. In !aia healing has three main aspects: seeing properly to locate and diagnose the sickness, pulling out the sickness, and arguing with the gods.

Seeing properly enables the healer to see beyond mere appearances to other realities. During !aia the reality of the invisible world dominates perception. The insides of a healthy person are

clearly different from the insides of a person whose soul the spirits of the dead are trying to steal.

Next, the young healer must learn to pull the sickness out of the body of the patient and to release it from his or her own. The hands are vibrated or lightly shaken close to the skin's surface on either side of the location of the illness. Healers may wrap their whole bodies around a person to pull the sickness out. Once it is drawn out the new healer must learn to expel the sickness from his or her own body. This is done with the release of an earth-shattering scream, shaking it from the hands out into space, and the body's instinctive shuddering to expel the pain.

The young healer must learn to bargain and argue with the gods and to do battle with the spirits of the dead. Healers struggle with the spirits of the dead in an effort to retrieve a sick person's soul. This struggle is the art of the Ju|'hoansi healer, working in !aia is the skill, and n|om is the power.

Finally a healer must learn to "slip out of his or her skin" and to travel to the **Upperworld** "like a breath being released." Once freed from the body, the healer's soul must climb fragile threads or "wires to the sky" that lead to !Xu's village. The threads can break and the souls can fall back to earth. This makes it terrifying.

Shapeshifting

Ju|'hoansi healers also speak of **shape-shifting** once they have left their bodies in !aia. Sometimes they become animals, like lions or vultures, to travel farther and faster. As animals, healers

check up on relatives in faraway places and bring healing if necessary.

Healers also use their animal forms to tease and play jokes on other healers. They are able to appear in animal form in ordinary reality to playfully startle their "prey" or to enter their **dreaming** and make mischief. This back-and-forth is perceived as good-natured play among healers, not competition.

N|omkxaosi-Healers

Healers are first hunters and gatherers and secondarily healers. They enjoy no privileges. For some of the most powerful healers life becomes somewhat different as heightened spiritual dimensions begin to pervade their daily lives. These healers dance frequently, sometimes every day. Unlike ordinary healers, these healers can routinely travel to !Xu's village during !aia. They become able to heal themselves as a state of being, without the need for the healing dance. Even as their healing abilities and general wisdom become widely recognized, they do not gain status nor do they feel a need to hoard their power.

Katz, R. "Education for Transcendence: Lessons from the !Kung Zhu/twasi." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 2 (1973): 136–155.

———, Megan Biesele, and Verna St. Denis. *Healing Makes Our Hearts Happy: Spirituality & Cultural Transformation Among the Kalahari Ju|'Hoansi*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1997.

Schultes, R. E. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

K

Kahuna

The highest expert in a particular field in a given *ohana* (family) or island. *Kahuna* means “keeper of the secret” in Hawaiian. When an elderly *kahuna* passed from this life he or she passed on to a chosen student the secret piece of **knowledge** not taught in school. As the elder breathed his or her last breath, the chosen one became the “keeper of the secret.”

The core of the *kahuna* practice is communicating with the spirit world for information about what is needed for **healing** and how to bring it about. The *kahuna* use drumming, dancing, and massage to connect to the **helping spirits** in ecstatic **trance** states and chanting to speak to the **spirits** through **prayer**.

What would now be considered psychology is a large part of the traditional *kahuna's* practice. Balance in the internal emotional life and between the physical and spiritual sides of life was believed necessary to express *aloha 'aina*, the reverence and love for all things that is central to the Hawaiian way of life.

The *kahuna* believe that fear-based emotions such as greed, hatred, and jealousy need to be understood and not suppressed or denied. These emotions need to be brought into balance with love-based emotions like **humility**, patience, kindness, and “seeing the truth of reality.” It is the *kahuna's* psychological job to help the client understand and heal by restoring balance to his or her life.

The **power** of *kahuna sorcery* comes from using the same psychological understanding to create disharmony. *Kahuna* have the ability to use the opening created by an individual's own

suppressed or denied emotions to manipulate or cause harm. Sorcery can also be used to heal. By looking at the disharmony, pain, or **chaos** in an individual, the *kahuna* and client work backward to the suppressed, fear-based emotions that allowed the sorcery in the first place.

Training

Central to Hawaiian **shamanism** is the awareness of the four basic worlds, or levels of experience. They are *ike papakahi* (the ordinary world), *ike papalua* (the psychic world), *ike papakolu* (the dream world), and *ike papaha* (the world of being). All people move in and out between these worlds with little awareness and often mixing the worlds. The **shaman** is not only aware of them and where he or she is relative to them, but he or she cultivates them and uses them with knowledge, the ability to act on that knowledge, and with purpose.

In *ike papakahi*, ordinary or objective reality, the operating assumption is that Everything Is Separate, which is as it appears to be. The *kahuna* assumes that everything has a beginning and an end and that the laws of cause and effect operate on all things. Mastery of this reality allows the *kahuna* to master healing methods like massage, chiropractic, herbs, medicines, nutrition, and exercise.

In *ike papalua*, the psychic or subjective world, the *kahuna* is aware of the connectedness and inter-relatedness of all things. The operating assumption is that Everything Is Connected. The assumptions that follow are that everything is part of a cycle, in transition, and synchronous. Mastery of this world allows the *kahuna* access to telepathic, **clairvoyant**, **clairsentient**, and **clairaudient** skills.

Mastery of these skills enables the *kahuna* to work with **energy** fields, communication with the **helping spirits** of all kinds, and timelessness. Mastery in all of these areas allows the shaman to utilize healing methods such

as acupuncture, acupressure, and energy balancing.

In *ike papakolu*, the dream world or symbolic world, the central assumption is that Everything Is Symbolic. This leads to the secondary assumptions that everything is part of a pattern and therefore exists in relationships to something(s) else and that everything means what one decides it means. This world materializes when the *kahuna* realizes that reality is a dream.

The flow of logic in *ike papakolu* is that everything is symbolic, and dreams are symbolic; therefore, everything is a dream. By developing mastery of this awareness and this world, the *kahuna* is able to enter into the dream and change it. Changing the dream allows the shaman to change everything. Mastery at this level gives the *kahuna* access to the healing methods of dreamwork, **ritual** work, verbal and visualization therapies, placebos, faith healings, and the use of **power objects**.

In *ike papaha*, the world of being or the holistic world, the central operating principle is that Everything Is One. Mastery of this world allows the *kahuna* to identify with other things, like animals, rocks, or spirit **teachers**. The *kahuna* develops the **art of shapeshifting** or simply gaining the knowledge of the new identity. In this world the healing methods available to the *kahuna* are **divination**, merging with an greater healing energy to heal, or merging with the patient and healing oneself.

It is the *kahuna's* objective to operate effectively in all worlds. The shaman moves into the world in which the source of the problems lie. Once there the *kahuna* acts in the ways and in the worlds that are necessary to achieve healing and a return to balance for the patient or community. In doing so, the *kahuna* aligns his or her actions with the seventh principle of Huna, "Effectiveness is the measure of truth."

In a healing session the *kahuna's* first function is to diagnose the psychological, spiritual, and/or physical cause of the **illness**, ailment, or accident.

Given that **diagnosis** the *kahuna* can use any of the following methods: family therapy, medicinal herbs, prayer to the *aumakua* (family spirits), **nature spirits**, and greater gods and goddesses, massage (*lomi-lomi*), and other physical treatments to restore the balance and harmony with the universe. The *kahuna* works with the client and the client's family to restore interpersonal and intra-personal harmony.

There were over 40 different kinds of craft *kahuna*, 14 *kahuna* of the healing arts, as well as *kahuna* counselors, chiefs, spiritual leaders, and politicians. The variety of *kahuna* specializing in different aspects of the **shamanic healing** arts speaks to the Hawaiian's eloquent and highly developed relationship between the ordinary and non-ordinary world. The *kahuna* related to shamanic techniques and methods are:

Kahuna la'au kahea—one who heals psychological traumas and illness through prayer and esoteric practices.

Kahuna na'au ao—teacher of esoteric wisdom and the practices of spiritual illumination.

Kahuna keuho—one who drives off harmful spirits.

Kahuna kaula—prophet, pure energy, carrier of light.

Kahuna ninau 'uhane—one who speaks with spirits.

Kahuna haha—one who diagnoses illness by feeling the body.

Kahuna pa'ao'ao—one who diagnoses childhood illness by feeling the body.

Kahuna haku mele ula—makers of **chants** and **music**.

Kahuna 'ea—one who could raise the dead.

Kahuna pule—expert in prayer or the calling in of spirit and power (*mana*).

Kahuna pale—one who says the life affirming counter-prayer to neutralize the life-draining, harmful prayer.

Kahuna po'i Uhane—expert in spirit catching.

Kahuna makani—one who works with the wind and with the power of mystic spirits.

Kahuna ho'o-noho-noho—a division of the *makani* who conveyed the spirits of the deceased through the process of death.

King, Seide K. *Kahuna Healing: Holistic Health and Healing Practices of Polynesia*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1983.

———. "Seeing Is Believing: The Four Worlds of the Shaman." *Shaman's Path*. Gary Doore, ed. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Lee, Pali Jae, and Koko Willis. *Tales from the Night Rainbow*. Honolulu: Night Rainbow Publishing Co., 1990.

Yardley, L. K. *The Heart of Huna*. Honolulu: Advanced Neuro Dynamics, Inc., 1991.

Kakonsa

Masks of the Iroquois False Face Society. *Kakonsa* are masks of exaggerated, grotesque, or comic human faces. In their earliest forms they may have been portraits of ancestral shamans. Today they sometimes depict the **spirits** of different **diseases**. See also *gagohsa*.

Moss, R. "Blackrobes and Dreamers." *Shaman's Drum* 50 (1998): 53–59.

Kam

The masculine form of **shaman** in the Altaic language. *Utugun* is the feminine.

Kamay

See *camay*.

Kami

A manifestation of the **sacred** in pre-Buddhist **Japan**. These *kami* were associated with the deities of heaven and **earth** and became associated with specific objects, actions, clans, and individuals, as well as **birds**, **trees**, plants, seas, mountains, and so forth.

In ancient usage, *kami* was the awe-inspiring, superior **power** of the mystical emanating from anything outside of

the ordinary. *Kami* refers to this quality in all things: the superior, the good, the deeds of merit as well as the evil deeds, malevolent forces, and mysterious things that are extraordinary.

Grim, John A. *The Shaman*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

Karadji

An **Aboriginal shaman**. Each tribe has a word for shaman. Many tribes have many **words** distinguishing between **gender**, different aspects like rain-making, and healing by sucking or **divination**, as well as words to distinguish between witchcraft, **sorcery**, and healing. Some examples are *wiringin*, *wireenuns*, *ngangkari*, and **clever man** or **Man of High Degree** from the literature.

The Call

Three general methods of selection are found across **Australia** for male *karadji*: community selection, heredity, and selection by the **spirits**. Some tribes favor one over another; however, talent rarely goes unnoticed and undeveloped. *Karadji* selected and initiated by the spirits are considered the most powerful practitioners.

In most tribes a child's natural gifts are noted as well as inclinations toward psychic experiences, **dream** themes, and association with elders and *karadji*. In southeast Australia these early signs of a natural gift are necessary for candidacy. The child undergoes intense **training** in the tribal mythology and the simpler aspects of the shamanic profession. The child also receives a **helping spirit** in addition to that of his or her family or clan.

The profession can be handed down from parent or grandparent to child, however inheritance alone is not enough. The candidate must have natural talent, training, acceptance by the helping spirits, and ultimately the ability to effect cures.

The third method of selection is a spontaneous dream or **trance** experience. These spontaneous experiences necessarily involve the spirits, particularly the **Ancestors** or the **spirits of the dead**. This type of experience, though spontaneous, can be provoked by sleeping in an isolated place near a grave—particularly that of a deceased shaman, or a sacred cave or waterhole frequented by spirits. If the **vision** or dream is interpreted as “a call” by an initiated *karadji*, the candidate is taught what to expect, trained, and eventually initiated into the profession.

Initiation—the Making

Only individuals who have completed their **initiation** into adulthood can be initiated as *karadji*. The specifics of “*the making*” vary tribe to tribe; however, the pattern of shamanic initiation was laid down in the **dreamtime** and is therefore the same across the continent.

In summary, first the candidate is “killed” by the initiation spirits or by the shamans acting for those initiation spirits. How this occurs and whether it is perceived of as a “death” or a trance varies by region and tribe. The initiation spirits dismember the candidate. Body parts, usually the internal organs, bones (**skull**, thigh, ankles), and/or joints are removed, cleansed, and replaced.

Magical objects and substances are added to the candidate’s body. These **animal spirits** and objects (crystals, liquid **crystal**, pearl shells, stones, cords, and spirit-snakes) embody the power of the **Rainbow Serpent** and are the source of the *karadji*’s power. The candidate is restored to life and returns home. He may appear a bit mad for several days as he establishes his own contact with the spirits of the dead and the spirit beings of the dreamtime. If contact is established he returns to **ordinary consciousness** and professional training begins with elder *karadjis*.

Helping Spirits

Every initiated individual inherits his or her family or clan totem animal. This helping spirit can bring the individual

information in a waking or a trance state. In addition, a shaman connects with an individual, personal helping spirit(s), a *yunbeai*, who assists the shaman. The shaman can draw on the *yunbeai* for help in performing healing and magic, transform into the *yunbeai* in times of danger, or send it to remote locations to take messages or gather information.

An initiated shaman can get a *yunbeai* by going to the “*clever place*” of that bird or animal, which is its sacred center in the dreamtime. In some tribes there is no clear distinction between helping spirits and the magical cords and crystals that are the source of the shaman’s power. They are all manifestations of the powers the shaman receives from the spirit world and can all be used as tools.

Tools

The magical substances can be shot or pressed into the body of a patient to aid in the healing or shot into the body of an initiate to send him into trance and as a transfer of power. The magical cord that is sung or slung into the body of the *karadji* during his making is used to travel to the **Upperworld**.

The **bullroarer**, an **ordinary reality** tool, is the voice of *Baiami* of the **Sky**, the Dreamtime being from whom many *karadji* receive their powers. The bullroarer is used in **weather** magic and to induce trance.

Healing

Karadji practice curing, divination, clairvoyance, mind reading, and some rain making. Every shamanic act begins with a **diagnosis**. Complex cases may require time during which the *karadji* consults with fellow practitioners and relatives of the patient. Some healings are accomplished in a **journey** during with the *karadji* travels to the Upperworld to cure the **illness**, locate a lost **soul**, or influence people at a distance.

Extraction

When sorcery is diagnosed and the cause of the illness is determined to be a magical intrusion in the patient’s body,

the shaman must extract the harmful object. The *karadji* calls his helping spirits and the patient is brought into the cleared **space** and supported in a half-sitting position. The shaman stands close by, gazing at the patient and locating the offending object.

The *karadji* suddenly goes off some distance and looking fiercely at the object within the patient, he bends slightly forward and repeatedly jerks his arm outward at full length, with the hand outstretched, to project magical stones into the patient's body from his own. He then dances across the space with characteristic high knee action and repeats the movements that project the magical stones. Finally, the *karadji* returns to the patient, searches for the offending substance and sucks it out. Often the harmful bone, stone, or thorn is displayed. The *karadji* quietly returns his **power objects** to his own body.

The **extraction** of bones and stones during the healing ritual accomplishes two things. First, it demonstrates the *karadji's* victory over the malevolent activities of the sorcerer. Second, it provides an explanation for the illness and a focus for the patient's willingness and desire to get well and be healthy.

Soul Retrieval

Karadji who have the ability to see the spirits of the living and the dead are said to "possess the strong eye." This ability is necessary to find stolen or wandering souls. A *karadji* must have this power to locate and retrieve lost and stolen souls. Souls are stolen by sorcerers and mischievous or malevolent spirits from other tribes. In Arnhem Land where soul theft by sorcerers is prevalent, the *karadji* then uses the Rainbow Serpent and/or one of its earthly representatives to aid in frightening the mischievous spirit or sorcerer and rescuing the soul. The *karadji* returns with the soul and replaces it in the patient's body.

Power Displays

The *karadji's* powers are used to cure the sick, to detect sorcery, to gather

information of social importance, to visit the sky to release **water** stored there to make rain, to influence people at a distance, and to protect the group.

In addition male shamans sometimes engage in **power displays** to show off the heights of knowledge and power they have obtained. This serves in part to build faith in the shaman's abilities and to advertise those abilities. Initiations are favorite times for power displays.

Power displays common for *karadji* include **mastery of fire**, most often expressed by rolling or walking in hot coals without harm. However *karadji* are also believed to be able to travel on cords of fire or to send fire along their cords into something or someone else. This power is believed to extend from the flame of original fire sung into the *karadji* during his making by *Baiami*.

The magical cords are also used in power displays to show off the *karadji's* ability to travel up into the Upperworld, to the sky, or to the tops of **trees**. After gathering his power, the *karadji* lies on the ground below a tree and sends his cord up into the tree. He then "climbs" the cord into the tree, though the "climbing" often involves no movement of the limbs or the body from its incline position other than the **levitation**.

Disappearing and reappearing are also potent displays of power. *Karadji* were known to suddenly disappear from a group and reappear a great distance away. *Karadji* disappear into trees and emerge from within trees. These acts are distinct from the *karadji's* ability to create illusion, making things appear as things that they are not. This power was more often used as a magical aid to warriors in raiding and defending.

Finally the *karadjis* are said to have powers for traveling at speeds and distances that exceed the physical ability of Aboriginals, who are able in general to walk long distances at a remarkable speed. The *karadji* "run" great distances just above the ground traveling faster than a normal runner and arriving without being winded. It is believed that their helping spirits aid them in this feat.

When Healing Fails

When the healing rituals fail, Aborigines believe that the *karadji* was summoned too late to be effective or that the power of the sorcery was significantly greater than the power of *karadji*. The ritual may fail when the illness is the result of the patient breaking a very important, sacred **taboo** or when the illness is caused by spirits of the dead who will not be appeased and thus continue to pull the soul of the patient over into the **Land of the Dead**. However, consistent failures cannot be explained away. Faith in an ineffective *karadji* will eventually wane and he will be discredited by his people.

A *karadji* can lose his connection to the helping spirits, which will result in the loss of the powers necessary to perform effective rituals. This occurs when the *karadji* breaks one or more of the taboos they must follow. For example, he must not drink hot water, be bitten by certain ants, immerse in salt water, or eat certain foods. When these taboos are broken accidentally it is possible for the powerless *karadji* to re-establish his or her link to the helping spirits with the help of other *karadji*.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994.

Parker, K. L. et al. *Wise Women of the Dreamtime: Aboriginal Tales of the Ancestral Powers*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International Limited, 1993.

Karpay

Karpay is "to be initiated" in the traditions of the **Q'ero** people of the Peruvian Andes. The *karpay* always involves a transmission of **knowledge** and **energy**. In this sense initiation is not a measure of spiritual success, like a graduation, but a creation of potential, like the planting of an **Inka** seed in one's **soul**. Anyone can receive the *karpay* rites. The *paq'o*, or **shaman**, is distinguished by what he or she is able to do

with the energy and knowledge transmitted in the *karpay*.

Kikituk

A *kikituk* is a figurine of an *angakok's* (shaman's) **helping spirit** carved from wood or ivory. It is kept in a warm place in the igloo or on the *angakok's* body when he or she travels. When animated by the spirit of the *angakok's* helper, it travels in the *angakok's* body, entering and exiting through the mouth or armpit.

To use the *kikituk* the *angakok* must first call the spirit into the figure, using drumming, **singing**, and dancing. When the *kikituk* is empowered it can be used to heal or to harm others. When used for healing the *kikituk* is directed to bite the afflicted body part to bite into the spirit that is causing the patient's illness. When used for **sorcery**, the *kikituk* is sent to burrow into the victim's body and bite the heart, causing death. See also **Eskimo**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Kila

The *kila* is a special coat that is used by the *angakok* (shaman) of the Copper **Eskimo** to perform **divination**. The *kila* is tied up and, holding it, the *angakok* calls on the **spirits** to enter the *kila* to answer questions for the people. One at a time the members of the audience speak their questions in a form that requires a yes or no answer. If the *kila* becomes heavy, the spirits indicate no; if the *kila* becomes light, the spirits indicate yes.

Different spirits may come and go from the *kila* over the course of the session. At times two spirits may possess the *kila* simultaneously. It also appears that any coat may be used as long as the *angakok* can entice the spirits to enter and interpret their answers correctly. See also *qilaneq*.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Kinaroq

Masks, or *kinaroq*, are important **power objects** for the *tungralik*. Each *kinaroq* houses a **helping spirit** and, when worn during the **dance** rituals, the *kinaroq* allows the *tungralik* to draw the spirit of the mask into his body. This spirit power is called *tunraq* and it enables the *tungralik* to enter a full **embodiment** trance.

Kinaroq are carved secretly, exactly as they are seen in the *tungralik's* **dream** or **journey**. When completed the *tungralik* conducts the necessary rituals to invoke the spirit in the *kinaroq*. Once housed in the mask, the spirit must be "fed" *yutir* (*mana*) on a regular basis.

Some examples of traditional *kinaroq* are animal masks like *kaupaq*, the walrus, used to hunt walrus successfully; *ertjeq*, the white-fox, used to get caribou; *juk*, the human female spirit, used to ensure favorable **weather**; and *kukil-luneq*, the wolf, used to acquire *sernililiti*, "the characteristics of the wolf," such as quickness, scent, and skill at attacking prey.

Dialectical variants: *kenaroq*, *kenarqoq*, *kenaijoq*, *kenaujaq*, *kenagpiik* and *kenarpäk*. See also *aghula*; **Alaskan**; *angakok*; **Eskimo**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Kitchi Manitou

(Also known as *Kitshi Manitou*, *Gichimaido*) *Kitchi Manitou* is presented in the literature as the Great Spirit or God of the **Algonquian** peoples. However, the term does not appear in the early accounts of the spiritual practices of these people and may be the result of an infusion of Christian beliefs into the traditional beliefs of the Algonquian. See also *Manitou*.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Kitetau

Kitetau are the **sucking shamans** of the Chilula tribe of the Hupa in northern California. They are considered the most powerful shamans among their neighbors in the region.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Knowledge

The fact or condition of knowing is not considered knowledge from a shamanic worldview. Knowledge is mastered only when the shaman is capable of putting the information into action in a way that manifests the intended result. Knowledge is gained then through **training**, skill, and experience. The shaman's knowledge of reality beyond the apparent limitations of the physical world is the means by which the **shaman** accesses and directs power.

Michael Harner, anthropologist and world-renowned expert on **shamanism**, explains that shamanism is not a belief system. Shamans live and work in a system of knowledge that is based on first-hand experience. Every **journey** the shaman takes to get information or to heal is part of a series of personal experiments that expands that system of knowledge.

In this system of knowledge shamans talk and interact with "**spirits**." However, shamans do not believe in spirits. Harner explains that shamans "no more believe there are spirits than they believe they live in a house with their family. This is a very important distinction; shamanism is not a system of faith, but of experience." See also **non-ordinary reality** and **power**.

Nicholson, S., ed. *Shamanism: An Expanded View of Reality*. London: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1987.

Villoldo, A. "Healing and Shamanism." in Mishlove, J., ed. *The Shaman's Message*. Berkeley, CA: Thinking Allowed Productions, 1992.

Korea

The Korean people are descended from Tungustic tribes and are racially and culturally distinct from the Chinese and Japanese. In Korea the *mudang* (shamans) are female. Some scholars believe that the Korean shamanic traditions extend from Tungustic roots and other scholars believe the diversification of practices between provinces is so great that there is no clear unifying source. The rituals of the *mudang* involve **costumes**, dancers, musicians, and the shaman's deep **embodiment** trance, or intentional spirit **possession**.

The influence of the Chinese over Korean life began as early as the 12th century B.C.E. Buddhism entered Korea in the 4th century C.E. and became dominant in the 7th through the 10th centuries. In the 10th century Confucianism controlled the government and became the official **religion** from the 13th to the 20th centuries. Given the powerful suppressive force of these governments and state religions and the powerful persuasive influence of the Soviets and United States, what was once the rich shamanic tradition of the female *mudang* (shaman) was transformed in the minds of the people into a backwards practice of superstition and quackery.

Mudang and Ecstasy

Mudang is derived from "Mu" which means "one who performs miracles" or "the performance of miracles." *Dang*, which was added later, means **altar** or **shrine**. The power of the *mudang* is acquired from the **spirits** while she dances in an ecstatic trance state. In this state she is able to divine the will of

the spirits, communicate to determine **diagnosis** and remedies, and perform healings.

Mu-A, or **ecstasy**, is the essence of the *mudang's* ritual performance. Without it the Korean rituals are simply beautifully crafted ceremonial dances. For the *mudang*, *Mu-A* is a sensation that arises from the heart while the *mudang* is in trance allowing her to see and hear with her heart. *Mu-A* is only possible after the death of the ego force on the *mudang* by the spirits.

The First Mudang

There are many stories that tell of the appearance of the first *mudang*. In all of them the first *mudang* were women, usually princesses of the highest rulers, who were mistreated or came into misfortune. They experience some painful ideal or tragedy, which functions as a shamanic **initiation**. From this they gain their shamanic powers from the spirits, usually *Hanunim* who lives in the **Upperworld** and is the highest deity of all the deities in Nature.

In each of the stories there is a close association between the *mudang*, her powers, and the mountains. We see this association around the world. Wherever there are mountains they are a source of power for the **shaman**. In these stories of the first *mudang* we see Mount Tebek function as the **World Mountain** and the sandalwood tree function as the **Tree of Life**. Bear and Tiger, the top of the food chain in Far Eastern Asia, are commonly associated with the *mudang* as **helping spirits**.

Trance, Dance, Music, and Song

The ability to perform intricate ritual dances while in an embodiment trance is the essence of the *mudang's* power and performance. To this end **dance**, **song**, and **music** play a significant role in the practice of *musok yesul*, the *mudang's* **healing** arts. The survival of a new *mudang* depends upon her artistic skill at performing the rituals and ceremonies, acceptance by society, and the efficacy of her healing work.

The primary role of men in shamanic rituals is that of the musician who accompanies the *mudang* as she performs the dances that are inherent in the rituals and ceremonies of her practice. Traditionally, the role of the musician is highly regarded and is handed down from generation to generation within families.

There are two classes of *paksu mudang*, or male *mudang*. However, both are relatively insignificant as they do not derive their powers from trance, but from reciting sacred **mantras**. The first class is populated by traditionally masculine men who are blind or otherwise visually impaired. The second class of *paksu mudang* is populated by **gender-variant males** who dress in women's garments during the rituals. Male shamans specialize in exorcisms and **divinations** involving the use of drums, cymbals, and the forceful chanting of mantras.

Ritual

Korean shamanic rituals have many parts, often twelve or more, and can take from hours to days to perform. They are performed for protection from harmful spirits and disease, the elimination of malevolent or unclean spirits, blessings, to make offerings, and to gain wealth or longevity. Chaesu gut, the ritual of welfare and prosperity, is typical of Korean seasonal rituals, which are performed based on seasonal timing. Through it the people make seasonal blessings, give offerings of the new crops for future prosperity, and show reverence to their Ancestors and family.

Temporal rituals are performed as they are needed. They are rituals associated with pleasant events like birth, weddings, anniversaries, and with tragic life events, like illness and death. For these events to be fortunate and prosperous they must involve the will of the divine spirit. For example, child bearing and childbirth are not the activities of a man and a woman alone for they necessitate the assistance of divine spirit and therefore the assistance of the *mudang*.

Costume

The traditional *mudang's* headdress of stag horns from the Han period indicates an ancient relationship between the *mudang* with the stag spirit. Today the *mudang* has a different costume for each of the spirits she embodies in ritual. The more powerful and accomplished the *mudang*, the more costumes and **paraphernalia**.

Paraphernalia

The *mudang's* paraphernalia varies greatly between provinces; however, most of the objects are natural or simple household items. For the sake of description, paraphernalia can be divided into five categories of use: altar, charms and oracles, divinations, offerings, and musical instruments.

Altar

Folding screens, often with images of spirits, are used to define **sacred space** and pine branches are placed to define the sacred **space** of the altar specifically. Sacred flags made of paper are used to define the five directions: **north, south, east, west**, and center. Various other sacred flags, made of paper or colored fabrics, are used corresponding to the deities invoked in different rituals. Altar paraphernalia also includes tables set with food **offerings**, straw used to make various effigies in the course of different rituals, and images of spirits and deities placed on the altar to symbolize spiritual presence.

Charms and Protection

Charms and symbols drawn on paper are used to prevent the intrusion of malevolent spirits during the ritual. The "sacred branch" made from a bamboo branch with red, blue, and white paper or fabric on it is placed on an outside wall to prevent the intrusion of malevolent spirits into the home. Pictures of bird symbols, some of mythical **birds**, are used to prevent misfortune or ensure good fortune, depending on the image, how it is used, and within which ritual.

A number of items are used in exorcisms. Beech branches that grow in an eastward direction and cooking knives are used to exorcise malevolent spirits from people. A three-meter bamboo pole is used to exorcise spirits from the home while the *paksu mudang* recites **exorcism** mantras. Also a high chair or poles are used to secure the patient so that the spirit cannot force the patient to run away before the exorcism is complete.

Effigies are used in healing rituals in the place of the sick or the dead. They are made of straw or paper and used to house the spirit of the illness so that it can be sent away or the spirit of the patient so that it can be brought back. A straw puppet is used in a similar way. The spirit of the illness is extracted from the body of the patient and placed into the puppet, then the puppet is left at a crossroads or in the forest to dispose of the illness. Jars or bottles are used to capture harmful spirits in the house. The containers are then sealed and thrown away or buried to dispose of the spirits.

Sacred **mirrors**, or *myongdo*, usually made of **metal**, are used for various purposes, primarily to banish spirits. The reflections in these mirrors are believed to be light spirits who have mysterious powers.

Divination

The *mudang* employs a large variety of divination tools before, during, and after, depending on the ritual being performed. Which tool is used is often determined by the ritual. There are six basic forms of divination.

The first form of divination is whether or not an object balances and stands, or falls. Examples are, *G'omsasil*, knowing truth through a **sword**, and *Ch'angsasil*, knowing truth through a spear. In the former the *mudang* balances a large sword on a table; in the latter she balances the *Ch'ang*, a large three-pronged spear.

The second form is whether or not an object moves up or down. The most

common object used in this technique is *soji*, or burning paper. The paper is folded, prayed into, and burned. Upward motion of the burning paper is interpreted as good health and blessings, downward motion as misfortune.

The third form reads the position or arrangement of an object or objects that have fallen. Common methods involve tossing three *P'ansan*, coins with a square hole in the center and Chinese characters on one side, or five split wooden pieces, each piece representing one of the five elements: **Earth, Fire, Water**, metal, and wood, and all together representing the entire universe. The *mudang* also throws six small swords with fabric attached to the hilt. The direction the fallen swords point is read.

The fourth method, *San'ul bonda*, involves counting a random collection of items. These items can be simple, like pine needles (eight or forty-eight) or seeds, or sophisticated, like the *Sant'ong*, the counting cylinder. This cylinder contains stalks with numbers on them which are drawn, three stalks, three times. The numbers are added and related to a hexagram of the *I Ching* from which the meaning of the divination is interpreted. The *Sangu*, or counting tortoise, is a similar instrument from which coins are taken and meaning divined.

The fifth method of divination involves feats of delicate balance and concentration that can only be accomplished with the assistance of spirit embodied in the *mudang*. In these acts the success or failure of the *mudang's* performance is interpreted as the divine message, not the wisdom or skill of the *mudang*. In the death ritual a whole assortment of objects are balanced upon each other and in the ritual of the heavenly palace the *mudang* dances on paper placed across the mouth of a jar of water.

The most common performance of this type of divination is *Chakdo t'anda*, during which the *mudang* walks on sharp swords, or Chakdo, in bare feet. Success in this endeavor is evidence of

divine assistance for the *mudang* and divine favor for the individual or family for whom the ritual is being performed.

The sixth method of divination employs a physical manifestation of the message of the divine as markings in white rice powder. A paper effigy of the deceased is placed on the smooth surface of the rice powder and covered with a white paper of the clothes of the deceased. The *mudang* offers **prayers** and then removes the covering and the effigy. The markings in the rice powder are read. Footprints of an animal are common and they imply the animal form the spirit of the deceased has reincarnated into. If there are no prints of any kind, then the spirit still wanders in ghost form, which is interpreted as a bad sign as ghosts can cause the family members illness and harm.

Offerings

Offerings of food and drink are left on the altar for the spirits and deities. It is of primary importance that these are clean, and though many are common food items, that they are prepared in a sacred way. **Incense** is burned to cleanse the air. Artificial flowers are made from paper and left on the altar as offerings to the spirits.

Fabric and threads are symbols of long life. Fabrics of all kinds, particularly silk, cotton, and hemp, are placed on the altar as offerings to the spirits. Paper cut in different shapes and designs is offered to the spirits.

Coins and paper money are offered to the spirits during various rituals. They will later be used to pay for the ritual preparations and the services of the *mudang*. Various special offerings that pertain to specific aspects of specific rituals, for example the clothing used in the ritual of the sick and the dead to substitute for the patient or the deceased.

Musical Instruments

The **drum** plays an important role, for it is the rhythmic drumming, often accompanied by **rattle** or chanting, that is used to induce the shaman's trance. The *Buk*

drum is played primarily by men and *paksu mudang*, particularly accompanying the ritual recitation of mantras. The *Chango* drum is shaped like an hourglass and played by the *mudang* during ritual. She plays the left head with her left hand and the right head with rod. Another drum-like instrument is made by placing a gourd dipper bottom up in a jar of water. The base of the gourd is played with the fingertips.

Several bells and gongs are used to call the spirits into the ritual and into the *mudang*. The *Baul* or *Bangul*, bells, are a cluster of seven small bells attached to the end of a stick. The *Okhwangse* is a larger brass bell that is sometimes played with a deer antler. The *Ch'ing* is a small, brass gong used in rituals. The *Dongg'ori*, or sounding bag, is woven from reeds and used to call the **spirits of the dead** or to accompany prayers.

Other instruments include the *Ulsae*, or the bell of mirrors. Clusters of round or square metal mirrors are attached to the two ends of a metal crescent-shaped handle. The *mudang* plays the *ulsae* while she dances into trance. The *Chaek'um* is made from two brass cymbals connected by a piece of white fabric and played during ritual. Finally, two wooden flutes are played during ritual; *Ch'ottae*, the large flute, and *P'ili*, the small flute.

Current History

Communism and religion have implanted the belief that **shamanism** is no more than a superstition. Korea's modernization program continues to attack the spiritual content of shamanism and dismantle the *mudang's* reputation. Physical healing is now left for the doctors and a *mudang* who works with physical illness is considered a quack. The *mudang* is expected to cure the tricks of the spirits that result in mental illness and misfortune.

The artistic quality of the performance is becoming more important than the actual access to spirit through the *mudang*. The success and reputation of today's "*mudang*" can be built on

charisma, artistry, and use of the media, not on whether or not the performance succeeds in fulfilling its original healing or divinatory function.

In the current capitalist climate of competition and aggression, the *mudang* is called on to heal the psycho-spiritual suffering induced by materialistic misfortune. The Korean government's embrace of capitalism as the cornerstone of modernization demands an abrupt shift of values in people whose traditional **ethics** emphasize the metaphysical and spiritual. The resulting social confusion and mass urban migration have created a prevailing sense of uprootedness, fear for personal well-being, and tension and jealousy due to the uneven distribution of wealth. Since the 1980s, most of the shamanic rituals performed in Korean cities are performed to bring the client material prosperity.

To complicate the issue, the Cultural Conservation Law, passed in 1961, encourages preserving the original form of the disappearing folk culture and ritual arts. Through this movement toward conservation, a presentational form of each shamanic ritual is designated the official form of that ritual and protected. This program succeeds in preserving a single form of a traditional ritual, and in effect turning the songs, music, dances, costumes, and **ceremony** into a museum piece. This serves to preserve the form without the function or the essence of the **art**.

The history of shamanism, the ritual music, costumes, and dances are taught at institutions such as The Korean Shamanism Research Institutes (Seoul) and The Folklore Institute of Kyonghi University (Seoul). Shamanic "scholarship" demands the perfect performance of the ritual text and procedure, not the efficacy of the ritual. The focus in these institutions has shifted from the results of the ritual to the accurate reproduction of a registered version of a ritual performance.

The power of Korea's shamanic past may actually be preserved by a third

force, the rising nationalism among college students and activists. They criticize the cultural conservation policy for turning their folk traditions into beautiful but lifeless artifacts devoid of spirit. They criticize the government's oppression of the folk culture and hold up shamans as victims of that oppression.

In their own movement of cultural revitalization, the students and activists recognize the transformational power in shamanic ritual if it is allowed to remain a living art form. The students and activists have learned the traditional rituals and successfully used them as a tool for social reform by adapting them to the purposes of their movement.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Lee, Jung Y. "Korean Shamanistic Rituals." In *Religion and Society* 12. The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1981.

Koryak

A shamanic people of the **Chukchee** Peninsula of eastern **Siberia**. A legend tells of the origins of *amanita muscaria*, the **sacred entheogenic** mushroom of the Koryak shamans. Big Raven caught a whale, but did not have the strength to put it back into the sea. Big Raven called out to Vahiinin (Existence) for help. Vahiinin instructed Big Raven to eat *wapaq* **spirits** for strength and with that, Vahiinin spat upon the **earth**. Where the god's spittle landed, small white plants sprung up, each wearing little red hats, spotted with Vahiinin's white spittle. These were the *wapaq* spirits, *amanita muscaria* **mushrooms**.

Big Raven ate the *wapaq*, became very strong, and, liking this feeling, he pleaded with the *wapaq* to grow forever on the earth. Big Raven then instructed the

humans in how to prepare this gift from Vahiyinin, so that they could learn what the *wapaq* spirits had to teach them.

The mushrooms are dried in the **Sun** and then boiled in water to make a liquor. The **shaman** drums, dances, and sings to the *wapaq* spirits and then drinks the liquor. Once she has entered **trance** the shaman is able to divine answers, predict the future and the **weather**, locate lost objects and people, determine the name of a new child or the best place to drive the reindeer herd, and communicate with the Ancestor spirits.

Male Koryak shamans were predominantly **transformed shamans** who dressed as female shamans and carried out the tasks of the female **gender** role in the community. They entered the woman's door to the dwellings and slept on the woman's side of the animal hide. Traditionally, the gender transformation of the Koryak shaman was quite complete.

Schultes, R.E. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 1992.

Kosabandjigan

The cylindrical tent constructed for the **Shaking Tent Ceremony**. Also known as *djesikiwin*, *kosabatcigan* (Cree), *kocapahtcikan*, *kushapatshikan* (Montagnais). See also *djesikon*.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Kosmos

The Kosmos is everything; it is that which contains the cosmos (matter or physiosphere), the bios (life or biosphere), the nous (**psyche** or noosphere), and the theos (divine **domain** or theosphere). This original meaning of Kosmos is the closest English/Greek

word for the shaman's perspective of all that exists in the universe.

Kosmos was reintroduced into our contemporary vocabulary by Ken Wilber, one of the foremost visionaries of our time. Kosmos, originally a Pythagorean term, is usually translated as cosmos, which means only the physical universe. However, Kosmos is all that is and the connection of all that is. It is the patterned nature of all of existence within which the **shaman** travels while in **altered states of consciousness**.

Traditional science agrees that "self-transcendence" is part of the inherent nature of the Kosmos. However, traditional scientists also believed that random chance events (over a great deal of time) explained the creation of the universe. This theory is no longer believed to be true. Further research has shown us that even twelve billion years, the time since the **big bang** birth of our universe, is not enough time for chance to create a single enzyme necessary for the **evolution** of all life on **earth**. Therefore, there is something other than chance driving the self-transcendence of the Kosmos. Wilber believes that it is Creativity, not chance, that drives the constant evolution of our Kosmos.

Creativity in this sense (and on this scale) is most appropriately understood as the unbound and unquantifiable, which Wilber calls Emptiness. Shamans refer to this Emptiness as the Unknown, the Void, and the Source. It is that which created the Creator. For the shaman, Emptiness is accessed through **ritual** in altered states of consciousness. Emptiness is a potent **space** from which the shaman draws his or her **power** and magic.

It is not appropriate to equate the creativity that builds the Kosmos with anyone's God to make the concept easier to understand. Trying to explain the unexplainable is limited by **language**. Any Kosmos-equals-God explanation is limited in a discussion about shamans because **shamanism** predates **religion**.

Religious beliefs about the Kosmos are based on the fundamental idea that humans are separate from God.

Shamanism is based on the experience that humans are not separate from God. To understand shamanism and its relationship to the Kosmos, we must understand the Kosmos from a non-religious, yet spiritual point of view.

The shaman's Kosmos is grounded in Emptiness. From that Emptiness through Creativity comes Form. Creativity recognizes pattern is the randomness of chance and draws forth order in Form. The shaman does the same on a smaller scale. By accessing this Creativity while in trance, recognizing patterns, and drawing forth order the shaman returns our physical reality to harmony with the Kosmos.

The Kosmos has a formative drive, a direction. That direction is what the shaman recognizes as the flow of the Kosmos. When shamans restore harmony by moving energies between the physical and spiritual worlds, they are redirecting these energies back into the inherent flow of the Kosmos.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

!Kung

A people of the Kalahari Desert on the border of Botswana and Namibia. They are also called **San** in general or Bushmen by outsiders. See also **Ju|'hoansi**.

Kupitja

A magical structure worn through the nose of *urtuku*, shamans of the Waramunga tribe of the Northern Territory of **Australia**. The *kupitja* are made by powerful **spirit** snakes from the **dreamtime** and are full of magic and power. *Urtuku* are initiated by **spirits** of the Dreamtime or by shamans from the Worgaia tribe in a secret **initiation** process. The *kupitja* signifies the initiated *urtuku* and is the source of his power.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994.

Kupuri

Lifeforce energy. See **Huichol**.

Kwaatsi

The leather mask of a Hopi *kachina* performer. *Kwaatsi*, meaning "friend," refers to the understanding that these **masks** are alive with the spirit of the *kachina*. They must be fed **offerings** like **corn pollen** and hidden when they are not in use. A *kwaatsi* is a **power object** that must be cared for as a **sacred** being. Also called *twiku*, *itaakwatsim* (pl).

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.



Ladder

One of many symbolic variations of the paths used by the **shaman** to access the Upper and Lower realms of the spirit world. The ladder and its variation the stair are found in countless examples of shamanic ascent to the **Sky** and descent to the **Lowerworld**. The same pathways are used by the **spirits** as they travel from the spirit world to join with the shaman in **trance** and by the souls of the dead as they travel to their final resting place in the spirit world.

Making the ladder literal, the Dusun shaman of Borneo sets up a ladder in the center of the room in which he will treat the patient. Like the central poles erected in the yurts of **Siberian** shamans, the ladder reaches the roof allowing the spirits easy access to the shaman as he or she enters trance.

These **sacred** ladders and stairs are usually described as having a sacred number of rungs or steps, often six, seven, or twelve. The ladder also appears in the final stage of **initiation** of the shamans of many cultures, for example **Korea** and **Nepal**.

The ladder is primarily associated with the final passing of the souls of the dead from the **earth** plane and of the soul of the shaman in the initiatory death, before his or her rebirth as a fully recognized shaman. The ladder then plays a part in the **psychopompic** work of the shaman when it is necessary for the shaman to escort the souls of the dead on their **journey** to their final resting place. Without having successfully completed this passage into death and return to the living in his or her **initiation**, the shaman would be unable to safely or successfully function as a psychopomp.

However, the ladder and stair are only two of many traditional, symbolic expressions for ascent and descent. The **Upperworld** can be reached by rising smoke, a rope, the rainbow, or a ray of sunlight. Another variation found in Melanesia, **North America**, and **South America** is a series of arrows shot into the sky to create a ladder in the air. In **Australia** a long strip of cloth is fixed to a lance that is hurled into the celestial vault, allowing the shaman to ascend the trailing cloth.

The journey of the souls of the dead is different in every shamanic culture; however, it is always long and difficult and fraught with distractions and dangers. Nonetheless, the symbols of this passage repeat in patterns around the world. They are all created from the images arising from the shaman's experience of moving between the worlds in the **World Tree** or along the *axis mundi*.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Lahatconos

The elaborate communal **dance ritual** for the initiation of new shamans among the **Wintun**. Unmarried men and women between the ages of fourteen and thirty-five participated. Those who were taken by **spirit** in a spontaneous **possession trance** during the night-long dance ritual were then taken into **training** by elder shamans. Not everyone who participated was necessarily taken by spirit; the dance ritual was an opportunity for selection by spirit. *Lahatconos* is derived from the Wintu stem *laha*, which means to go into trance.

A *lahatconos* ritual was conducted by elder shamans in an earth lodge evening. A manzanita-wood **fire** is built in the center of the lodge in the evening and the shamans and participants **sing** to invoke the **spirits**. Everyone then dances naked through the night inviting the spirits into their bodies. The arrival of the spirits is heard in a whistling at the top of the lodge.

As the spirits enter the lodge, they find a desirable candidate and enter through the ears. The elder shamans aid spirit's entry by placing **feathers** in the ears and on the heads of the dancers who are taken. When first possessed by spirit the dancer's body jerks convulsively, his or her behavior is crazed, and he or she may salivate or bleed from the mouth and nose. The dancer rarely remembers what occurs during this spontaneous possession trance. Dancers may try to reach the roof, climb the central pole, or leave the lodge.

The attending shamans facilitate the trance states of the novices, helping them in their bid to acquire power. They perform sucking **extractions** on the foreheads, chests, backs, and arms of the novices to purify them. The shamans may transfer **power** to the novice to facilitate the acceptance of the possessing spirit with a feather. Yellowhammer feathers are placed into each ear of the candidate or on the head from where they are seen being absorbed into the candidate's head.

Candidates chosen by spirit during the *lahatconos* will remain in the lodge with the elder shamans for five days. The activities of the five days are secret; however, it is assumed that the candidates are aided in recovery from their spontaneous ecstatic experience and taught to control the entry into and exit from trance, enabling them to call on their new **helping spirits** at will in the future.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Lakota

A people of the northern plains of **North America**. They are one of many Siouian peoples. Several hundred years ago they moved from the South, settled on the Plains, and adjusted their lifestyle to harmonize with the **rhythms** and resources of this new environment. As

they moved across the Plains the buffalo became central to their daily survival and their spiritual life.

The Lakota have a rich ceremonial life. One of the best-known ceremonials is the **Sun Dance**, held at midsummer by the Lakota and other tribes of the Plains. Lakota rituals and ceremonies involve intricate symbolism and many separate **sacred** acts go into the preparation and execution of these ceremonies. This is seen in specific ways in which the ceremonial **paraphernalia** is laid out to create **altars** and in the traditional **offerings** of **blood sacrifice**. The symbolism of *cangkdeska wakang*, the sacred hoop or medicine wheel, is found in most sacred acts. The Lakota associate black with the **West** and the home of the Thunderbeings who send them rain. White is associated with the **North**, the source of the great white **cleansing** wind. Red is associated with the **East**, the source of light and home of the morning star who gives humankind wisdom. Yellow is associated with the **South**, the summer, and the power to grow.

Giveaway

Generosity is a deeply held Lakota value. The Giveaway is a ceremonial expression of this value and is often held in tandem with the Sun Dance Ceremony. In the Giveaway **ceremony** the chief redistributes most of his wealth to others in the community or extended family.

Yuwipi

The **yuwipi** is a traditional **healing ritual** performed by Lakota shamans. The *yuwipi* ritual is a form of the **Spirit Lodge** or **Shaking Tent Ceremony** common in North America. The name *yuwipi*, from the Dakota **language**, refers to the binding and wrapping of the practitioner before he or she enters trance. The Lakota **shaman** uses the *yuwipi* for **divination** and healing.

The Lakota recognize shamans and diviners or **seers** who perform the *yuwipi*. They also recognize medicine people who heal with herbs and plant

preparations, individuals with medicinal powers that are not used for healing, and sorcerers, whose powers are often used to create **illness** and death in others.

Wakan

Wakan is the essential life force in all things. In its manifestation as a fiery spiritual power it is called *wakanda*. “*Wakan*” is also used to denote a sacred person like a shaman, **medicine man**, or a *winkte*.

Wakan tanka, the “great mysterious one,” is the power of the universe or the **Great Mystery**. The **medicine pipe** provides a way for the people to talk to *wakan tanka*. The pipe was brought to the Lakota by White Buffalo Calf Woman who by giving them the bowl that represented the sacred feminine and the stem that represented the sacred masculine showed them the power in balance.

White Buffalo Calf Woman

The coming of *wohpe*, White Buffalo Calf Woman, formalized the compact between humans and animals in which the animals allow themselves to be killed. Mediating this agreement is one of the primary roles of the shaman.

White Buffalo Calf Woman taught the Lakota to plant corn and use horses in the process of killing buffalo. Prior to her arrival the Lakota were a nomadic people with **fire**, bow and arrows, and yucca as a food staple.

Inipi

The Lakota practice of *inikagapi wójeya*, or *inipi* for short, is the most widespread **sweat lodge** tradition in North America. The Stone People Lodge, as it is also known, was brought to the Lakota by White Buffalo Calf Woman. She gave the Lakota directions for building the lodge and instructions for using it. If done properly, all the powers of the Universe are brought into play through the ceremony and to the aid of the participants.

Hanblecheyapi

The Lakota **vision quest**, or *hanblecheyapi*, is the primary means of

gaining power for Lakota shamans. It is a sacred practice they repeat over the years to gain new powers, songs, and medicines. The term is derived from *hanblecheya*, which means “crying for a vision,” the purpose of all vision quests.

The Call

A young Lakota person gains spiritual power from the visions given by spirit during his or her first vision quest. The vision instructs the young person in what he or she came into this life to be. A person is directed to become *wakan*, a sacred person, if Bear, Wolf, Thunder, Buffalo, White Buffalo Calf Woman, or Double Woman appears in the vision. Each of these **helping spirits** brings to the person a different gift that guides them in becoming a shaman, or a *winkte* (*berdache*) or an *Anukite ihanblapi* (**transformed shaman**).

All three of these sacred people are given unique instructions for life and for rituals from their helping spirits. These people were not bound by normal rules of conduct because they are instructed by spirit. Their unusualness is seen as an indication of their sacredness.

Shamans, *anukite ihanblapi*, and *winkte* are distinguished among the Lakota by their direct relationships with spirit. Shamans specialize in divination, the creation of healing rituals, and procuring medicines for different purposes. The *anukite ihanblapi* tended to specialize in some aspect of curing like chanting. Many were given special chants by spirit for curing illness, insanity, and for aiding in childbirth and love medicine.

The *winkte* often specialized in funerary preparations and were the first person consulted after a death in the community. They prepared the dead, made preparation for the necessary **singing** and dancing rites for the living, and prepared the wake, often doing all the cooking themselves. *Winktes* could become shamans, however they usually did not. Nonetheless, they tended to show at least some *wakan* powers for healing.

Transformed Shamans

The *anukite ihanblapi* were the transformed shamans of the Lakota. The name means “they who dream of face-on-both-sides” and refers to Double Woman, the spirit who comes to these bodies during their *hanblecheyapi*. Double Woman calls these boys to their vocation and its required **gender** transformation. As boys and men, the *anukite ihanblapi* dress and wear their hair in the tradition of females in their tribe and serve the community at large as shamans.

Gunn, Allen P. *Grandmothers of the Light*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Lamaism

A Tibetan form of Buddhism. There is crossover from Buddhism to **shamanism** and vice versa in Tibet. The distinction between lamas and **shamans** is in the source of their information. The lama studies the Buddhist scriptures at great length. The shamans’ study takes place in the spirit world through direct transmission of information while in trance. The shamans’ source of information is purely visionary.

Land of the Dead

The Land of the Dead refers to a place in **non-ordinary reality**, or the invisible world, where the souls of the dead travel once they leave the physical body. Many shamanic cultures place the Land of the Dead in the **Lowerworld** and some place it in the **Upperworld**. Others make no such distinction other than its existence in the spirit realms.

The Land of the Dead is of primary importance to shamans, who must know how to get there and how to safely enter, exit, and return from the **domain** of the dead. It is often the place

to which the shaman must travel to retrieve the lost souls of the living. Lost souls may get stuck accidentally as they wander in search of deceased loved ones, while others are taken there by the **spirits of the dead**.

The Land of the Dead is also the destination of the shaman when he or she is acting as a **psychopomp** for a **soul**. The soul may be recently deceased or a lingering ghost. As psychopomp, the shaman guides the soul and assures its safe and complete passage to the Land of the Dead.

Language

One of the shaman’s primary roles is to mediate between the spirit world and the human world. Therefore it is essential that the shaman can clearly and accurately communicate the experiences and messages from **non-ordinary reality** to an audience bound to **ordinary reality**. The basis of human language is metaphorical and clarity is created through comparing the unknown idea or thing to known places, actions, or things.

Shamans often speak poetically and use a vocabulary of **words** far outnumbering the words used by the average speaker of his or her language. For example, a **Yakut** shaman was recorded using 12,000 words, while the average Yakut uses approximately 3,000. The increased vocabulary allows the shaman to communicate the extraordinary qualities of the spirit world through comparisons with and similarities to ordinary places, actions, and things.

The spirits often use a special language to communicate with the shaman. It is considered an ancestral or primal language of spirit that is imbued with the **power** to create. Like all things with creative potential, the primal language also has the potential to be lethal. When spoken under certain circumstances this special language has the power to manifest what is uttered, for better or for worse. Shamans can work with this power to heal through words

and language. A simple, single phrase at the right moment is often the key to unlocking higher consciousness, unrealized potential, or the patient's innate capacity to heal. See also **glossolalia** and **sacred language**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Pennick, N. *Magical Alphabets*. York Beach, ME: Samuel Wieser, Inc., 1992.

Somé, M. P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Lapps

See **Saami**.

Lehs

Lehs is the **Wintun** word for **soul**, the animating life force of the body. It refers to the human soul in the living and as it leaves the deceased. A *lehs* can become a **helping spirit** for a **shaman**. When a *lehs* remains around the living inappropriately or malevolently it is considered a ghost, or **loltcit**. It can be dangerous to come in contact with a *loltcit*. Also known as *les, läs*. See also **yapaitu**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Lehstconos

Lehstconos, or the Wintu Soul Dance, is a particular type of **shamanic healing ritual** involving both **exorcism** and **extraction of energy intrusions**. It can only be performed by powerful shamans. The *lehstconos* involves displays of power with **fire** swallowing by the **shaman** and is considered the most spectacular of the **Wintun** healing

rituals to observe. The *lehstconos* is performed by a single shaman, accompanied by **singing** and percussion performed by the audience, as with other Wintun healing rituals.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Levitation

Levitation is the act or phenomenon of rising or floating in the air. In **trance** states induced by hallucinogens, the person in trance often reports the feeling of leaving the body and floating or flying. To determine whether or not the individual is actually flying, one would have to decide whether the individual is actually the body or the soul.

There are countless stories of the **First Shaman** and the ancient shamans taking their bodies with them on their soul **journeys**. They were said to physically fly through the air, swim into the **earth** to enter the **Lowerworld**, and literally change the shape of their bodies into the forms of other living things. Though we assume that these stories are metaphors, we will never truly know how different the world was after the **Dreamtime**. We will never be able to prove that these magical acts did not happen then.

Lhamana

A **gender-variant male**, or **berdache** (**berdach**), of the Zuñi. The *lhamana* served their people as sages, healers, and **ritual** artisans. In Zuñi tradition, biological sex does not dictate the social role or **gender** that an individual will assume as they mature. Gender is seen not as an inborn trait, but as an acquired trait with a corresponding social role to fulfill. Zuñi believe gender is not limited to two types and all genders have well-defined, traditional roles.

The underlying wisdom of this belief is seen in a key episode in the Zuñi

creation mythology. This story tells of how the *lhamana* was created by the deities for the special purpose of mediation between people and **spirits**.

In a battle between the kachina spirits of the agricultural Zuñi and spirits of the enemy hunters, *Ko'lhamana*, a kachina spirit, was captured by the enemy spirits and transformed into a man-woman being. From this transformation, *Ko'lhamana* acquired peace-making skills that allowed him/her to understand both sides and mediate effectively. Through mediation, *Ko'lhamana* came up with a way for the different lifestyles of the hunters and farmers to both be honored while allowing the people to live together peacefully.

We'wha, born in 1849, was the most famous and celebrated *lhamana* of the Zuñi by contemporary standards, largely due to her travels to Washington, D.C., with her friend, anthropologist Matilda Stevenson. In Washington, We'wha charmed social circles and met the president of the United States Grover Cleveland, without raising suspicion of her alternative gender.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Lhamo/Lhapa

A type of traditional Tibetan oracle who can temporarily embody deities and perform acts of **shamanic healing** and **divination**. The *lhamo* usually embody *srungma*, fierce protective deities associated with **Bön shamanism** instead of the highest ranking Buddhist deities who are embodied by the monastic oracle **priests**. The *lhamo* (*lha* meaning deity and *mo* meaning female) and her male counterpart the *lhapa* usually perform their healing rituals in their own homes for ordinary people.

As with other shamanic healers the *lhamo* is selected by spirit, which often

manifests in the onset of an unexplained mental or physical **illness**. To become a practicing *lhamo*, the candidate must receive the **training** and healing necessary to fully embody the possessing spirit, usually from an initiated *lhamo*. The *lhamo* must also learn to master the **embodiment trance** state.

The *lhamo* is primarily a sucking doctor or a specialist in the **extraction** of poisons, toxic substances, and **energy intrusions** from the patient's body. Sucking is performed directly with the mouth on the skin or with a thin tube. The intrusive substance removed from the body of the patient is spat into a container to be disposed of in a later ritual with hungry **spirits**. Typical physical manifestations of the energy intrusions removed by the *lhamo* include: putrid meat, tar-like blood clots, stones, worms, hairballs, nails, or pus-like liquids.

Given the fierce and compassionate nature of the deities embodied by the *lhamo*, the healing rituals are intense and dramatic. The healing procedures, primarily extraction work, can become brutal and painful in climactic moments depending on the *lhamo* and the deity she embodies. The deity moves so forcefully in the body of the *lhamo* that she may slap or pound on the patient, grab their hair, bite, spit holy water, rub the deities' blood in their face, or forcefully throw holy water on them. The extractions are painful procedures that often leave red marks on the patient's body that later turn to bruises.

The *lhamo* is also considered an exorcist. Some of the brutality of the extraction procedures is understood in **Tamang** culture as attacks on the malevolent **spirit** that is invading the patient's body. The pain is endured because the healings are successful.

The *lhamo's* healing rituals begin with **prayer** and a **cleansing** bath of sage smoke while facing the altar. She begins the process of **trance induction**, each *lhamo* using her unique variation on the general pattern of invoking spirit within the body. Eventually the *lhamo* dons her ritual **costume** and completes

her entry into trance and transformation into the possessing deity.

Once the healing begins patients approach the *lhamo* one at a **time**. A **diagnosis** is made and, when the diagnosis is unclear, a short divination is performed using her **drum**. When appropriate the *lhamo* refers patients to allopathic doctors to have the physical manifestation of an illness treated physically. The *lhamo* often has more than one *srungma*, which are embodied for different healing purposes. Transition from one deity to another is rarely apparent to the patient.

Strong *lhamo* and *lhapa* are versatile healers. They treat the full range of physical, mental, and spiritual illnesses. They are also able to heal at a distance. For this procedure a *khata* is used, a long white silk scarf. A person, often kin of the absent patient, holds one end of the *khata* and the *lhamo* holds the other, often with a picture of the patient. The *lhamo* sucks on her end of the *khata* until the illness is extracted and spit out, just as if the patient were present.

Peters, L. "The Tibetan Healing Rituals of Dorje Yüdrönma: A Fierce Manifestation of Feminine Cosmic Force." *Shaman's Drum* 45 (June–August 1997): 36–47.

Libation

A liquid substance used as a sacrificial **offering**. Common libations include fresh water, honey, milk, oil, and wine, mead, or other fermented beverage.

Life Cycle

The life cycle of the human is often used as a layer of symbolism by shamans working with divination tools. Each layer of symbolism adds meaning to the particular cast of the cards, shells, **runes**, etc. Different cultures orient the life cycle in different ways.

For example, **Celtic** beliefs place the child in the northeast with the spring

festival Imbolc, the youth in the southeast with the summer festival Beltaine, the adult in the southwest with the harvest festival Lughnasadh, and the elder in the northeast with the festival Samhain.

In contrast **Si.Si.Wiss** of the Pacific Northwest coastal region place the child in the **East**, the place of souls coming in, the youth in the **North**, the adult in the **West**, the place of facing fears, and the elder in the **South**, the carrier of knowledge and the place of souls leaving. However the life cycle is oriented by a particular culture it creates a potent layer meaning for divination.

Matthews, J., et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Moses, J. personal communication, 1993.

Liminal States

The term was introduced into anthropology specifically to refer to the critical, transitional state within the **initiation** process. In this state the individual is no longer who, where, or when they were, but are not yet the person they are to become. They are neither here nor there. They are nowhere relative to their familiar, cultural **space/time** construct. Without entering this state, the individual will not experience initiation. Without successfully passing through this transitional state, the individual can not re-establish a sane and balanced relationship with reality.

Recently, anthropologists have begun to use "liminal" to refer to any of the shaman's deep **trance** states, during which the **shaman** communicates with **helping spirits**. However, from the practitioners perspective the deep, working trance states are qualitatively different than the transitional nature of the liminal state. Indigenous peoples usually refer to the shaman and initiates in deep trance states as "dead."

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Loltcit

The common **Wintun** word for a ghost formed from a *lehs*, the **soul** of a human, living or deceased. Contact with a *loltcit* is dangerous. It can cause **illness** from fright or **soul loss**. Symptoms of illness caused by contact with a *loltcit* are weakness and the loss of speech, hysterical laughing and weeping. For this type of illness the patient must see a **shaman**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Lowerworld

From a shamanic perspective anything and everything has, or is, spirit. The **spirit** aspect of everything, which is normally invisible, is experienced directly by the **shaman** through his or her senses while in an ecstatic **altered state of consciousness**.

This invisible world, or **non-ordinary reality**, is experienced by the shamans of many different cultures to have three realms: the **Upperworld**, **Middeworld**, and Lowerworld. These realms are non-linear, with limitless **space** and without **time**.

The Lowerworld is accessed through things that exist physically in **ordinary reality** that go down, like **trees**, tree stumps rooted in the ground, **caves**, holes, natural springs, hot springs, wells and tunnels that lead downward. The shaman's spirit enters one of these openings and travels downward until he or she reaches the intended area of the Lowerworld. The shaman then journeys through the Lowerworld with his or her **helping spirits**. The **power animal** either travels downward with the shaman or joins the shaman in the Lowerworld.

The Lowerworld is inhabited by power animals and other helping spirits, like the spirits of Nature or the **elements**. The shamans enter this realm to retrieve information, helping spirits, and lost souls. The shaman works in a journeying **trance** state, which is often ecstatic, to maintain a presence in the Lowerworld.

In seafaring cultures, like the **Inuit**, Lowerworld **journeys** are journeys to the bottom of the sea to meet the **Mistress of the Beasts** and the spirits of her sea creatures. Here the shaman must pass tests, promise to conduct healing rituals, and please her in order to receive the **sacrifice** of her animals for humans to kill and eat. The Lowerworld is traditionally a place of tests and challenges for the shaman.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Lucid Dreaming

A lucid dream is a dream in which the dreamer is aware that the dream is a dream while it is taking place. This quality of "waking up" in the dream enables the dreamer to act and interact with dream figures with some degree of intention. Mastery of this dreaming state of awareness is a highly valued shamanic skill.

Shamans in various cultures use this dream state as a **divination** tool to diagnose **illness** and clarify remedies. Some use this state as a **healing** tool to work with a patient's soul in the dream state to facilitate healing. In many shamanic cultures this dreaming ability is nurtured in everyone to encourage and enhance their own encounters with **spirits** in the dream state. Since this ability is not limited to shamans, any dreamer who learns to enter the lucid dream state can communicate with entities and energies who are otherwise invisible in the waking state.

The lucid dream state is one of many **altered states of consciousness** used by

the **shaman**. A lucid dream is not the same altered state as a shamanic **journey** or an **embodiment** trance. This does not diminish the **power** of lucid dreaming, but defines it as a different type of shamanic trance. For example, a shaman may dream at night that the cause of the patient's illness is soul theft

and then journey the next day to recover the lost soul of the patient from the **soul thief**.

Taylor, J. "The Healing Spirit of Lucid Dreaming." *Shaman's Drum* 27 (Spring 1992): 54–62.

M

Maban

Magical substances of **power** inserted into **Aboriginal** shamans in **Australia** during their **initiations**. *Maban* are most often manifest in quartz crystals, other magical stones, pearl shells, and little rainbow snakes. They convey the power of the **Rainbow Serpent** or other Creator **spirit** into the **shaman**. With **training** the shaman can use the power of the *maban* for healing, **divination**, clairvoyance, travel in the **dreamtime**, **power displays**, and to gather wisdom and **knowledge**. Also known as *maban-ba* and *mabain*. See also *karadji*.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994.

Machi

A *machi* is a **shaman** of the **Mapuche** people of southern Chile in **South America**. They are predominantly female and **gender-variant males**.

Madu

The **sucking shaman** of the Pomo people of coastal California in **North America**. The *madu*, also called “maru doctors” or **dream** shamans, are one of two types of Pomo shamans. The second type, the *qoobakivalxale*, gain their **power** through the hereditary transfer of songs and the outfit (tools and **power objects**). The *madu* gain their power from spontaneous **mystical experiences** of the *Marumda*, the creator, who transmits the power to perceive **disease** and heal it.

These spontaneous mystical experiences come as dreams or visions usually

during an **illness** and not before middle age. This visionary experience usually comes twice, allowing the *Marumda* or an unnamed **spirit** to transmit to the novice songs and techniques for **diagnosis**, sucking, and curing.

The *madu's* tools are songs, angelica root chewed for protection, and the *dupaxaka*, a long obsidian knife carved for each **healing ceremony** and never used twice. The *madu's* ability to diagnose is often instantaneous as soon as he or she sees the patient. If there is uncertainty, the *madu* will **sing** to embody his power more fully. The *madu* may rub his hands and the patient with the chewed angelica root, then massage, suck, and taste the patient's skin to complete or confirm the diagnosis.

If the *madu* determines that sucking is the appropriate remedy, he or she will proceed with the treatment. The *madu* usually sucks a clot of **blood** through the skin, instead of **pains** or **disease objects**. The *madu* will also perform bloodletting treatments when appropriate. See also **extraction**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Magical Alphabets

Magical alphabets, like **Celtic oghams** and Norse **runes**, were used by the shamans of many different cultures for **divination** and magic. As a set, the characters of a magical alphabet describe the metaphysical nature of reality. Individually, each character is associated with a **sacred sound**, name, and a specific object or quality, like **water** and the flow of the unseen forces of life or **fire**.

These alphabets are used as a shorthand to communicate complex concepts that often defy explanation in **words** alone. As a divination tool, the multiple layers of meaning associated with each character allow the characters, when brought into association

with each other, to reveal the true depth and complexity of reality. In adept hands the esoteric nature of the characters allows these nonverbal expressions of reality to alter the consciousness of those who work with them.

Pennick, N. *Magical Alphabets*. York Beach, ME: Samuel Wieser, Inc., 1992.

Magical Darts

The intrusion of a magical dart or other object into the body is believed to be the cause of **illness** in many shamanic cultures around the world. To intentionally send a dart into another is universally considered an act of **sorcery**. In many cultures the **shaman** uses one of his or her darts to **extract** the offending dart by blowing a dart into the patient's body where it skewers the offending dart and then sucking both darts out together.

In the Amazon region these darts are called *tsentsak*, *chonta*, or *virote*, a Spanish word. Working with darts often involves working with magical **phlegm**.

Mahu

A **gender-variant male** functionary in traditional **Hawaiian** ceremonies and rituals, similar to the North American *berdache*. A candidate was required to succeed in **training** and **initiation** to be recognized as a *mahu*. The *mahu* was androgynous in character, performed a mixture of men's and women's work, and dressed in a blend of male and female attire. *Mahu* were the receptive sexual partners to traditionally masculine men. However, due to their spiritual role within the culture, they were considered different from homosexual men. See also *kahuna*.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Making

Shamanic **initiation** in **Australia** begins only after an individual has completed his or her initiation into adulthood. An individual who has completed this process has been "made a man (or woman)." To be made is to be transformed, which refers specifically to the existential changes that occur during **initiation**. In the initiation of shamans one is "made a **clever man** (or woman)," by further existential changes and the transmission of **power** from the **spirit** world.

Shamanic initiation in Australia follows a general pattern: selection, death or trance, **dismemberment**, insertion of power, rebirth, and working relationship with the spirits established. There are variations by region and tribe, primarily in the site of the initiation and who the initiating spirits are.

In the regions where circumcision is not part of initiation rites into adulthood, the central **altered state of consciousness** experience of shamanic initiation is understood as a deep trance, not as a "death." The initiation **ritual** or some significant part of it is carried out in a burial place to connect the candidate with the Ancestor spirits. Examples include:

South, Murry River

A supernatural spirit, or **spirit of the dead**, initiates the candidate in the bush or the **Upperworld**. The candidate's side is opened by the **spirit** who inserts magical substances and quartz crystals. These become the source of the shaman's power to travel to the Upperworld and to converse with the spirits who dwell there.

Northwest Victoria (Wotjobaluk, Jupagalk, Mukjarawaint, Jajauring People)

Ngatya, a supernatural being who lives in the bush, initiates the candidate by opening his side, inserting quartz crystals, removing fat, and closing the wound seamlessly with **song**. The candidate is sung to wake him while a star falls from the **Sky** into the man's heart,

forever connecting the new **shaman** to the Sky. This **trance** period may last as long as three days.

Southwest and North Coast, New South Wales and Gippsland (Kurnai people)

A **Dreamtime** hero or other shaman initiates the candidate. No incision is made, instead the helping spirit inserts quartz crystals and magic cords into the candidate's body by pressing, rubbing, or **singing** the **power objects** in. Then the candidate is taken to the sky on the shaman's magical cord.

For the Kurnai, there is a distinction made between shamans and *Birraark*. The *Birraark* are made by spirits in the bush and are **seers**, mediums, and bards. Shamans are made by Ancestral spirits in either spontaneous trance experiences or in trance experiences provoked by participation in rituals conducted by other made men.

Southeastern New South Wales (Ngarigo, Wolgal, Yuin Peoples)

Daramulan, culture heroes and Dreamtime Sky beings, initiate the candidate and are the source of his power, which is manipulated in particular through quartz crystals. Other made men train the new shaman.

North Coast, New South Wales

The candidate must fast and observe other restrictions for months. He often sleeps on graves to provoke a visit from the Great Spirit of the Sky. The Sky Spirit cuts the candidate open, removes the intestines, inserts quartz crystals, replaces the intestines, and closes the candidate up.

Northwestern New South Wales (Yualai and Weilwan peoples)

The main initiatory operation is performed by a spirit near a burial ground. The spirit makes a hole in the initiate's head and fills it with a **sacred** stone **crystal** that is associated with the Sky Spirit. The power of this stone is also obtained by swallowing the stone or rubbing and pressing it into the head.

Eastern Queensland

Spirits of the dead, nature spirits, and/or the **Rainbow Serpent** initiate the candidates and remain as the source of the shaman's power. Quartz crystals and magical cords are inserted into the candidate during the making and remain there to be used in the shaman's work.

In the regions where circumcision is part of initiation rites into adulthood, the central altered state experience of shamanic initiation is understood as a death. Examples include:

Western South Australia

A spirit makes the incision in the abdomen and inserts spirit snakes. The candidate visits the Sky by means of a cord. Or the spirit drives a "pointing-stick" into the candidate's head. Or the candidate is put in a waterhole where he is swallowed by *Wonambi*, a great snake from the ancestral Dreamtime who is alive today. *Wonambi* is the guardian of all doctors. After an undefined period of time, *Wonambi* ejects the candidate as a baby in an unknown place.

The shamans of his tribe find him and **sing** him back into adult size in a **circle** of fires. After conversing with the spirits, the candidate is covered with **red ochre** and treated as a corpse. The shaman ritually "breaks open" the neck, wrists, and joints by marking them with a sacred australite stone. A *maban*, or life-giving shell, is inserted into each cut and into the stomach to serve as sources of power. The candidate is then sung back to life.

Western Australia

Similar to the above, but two spirits "kill" the candidate, cut him from neck to groin, take out his organs, shoulder, thigh and frontal bone of the **skull**, and insert *mabain* or magical substances. The ankles are also stuffed with *mabain*.

Central, Northern Central Australia

The spirits kill the candidate, cut open the abdomen, remove the organs, and then replace them with crystals and magical substances. Or the shamans initiate the candidate They extract the

crystals from their own bodies and press, score, and rub them into the candidate's body. The candidate consumes crystals in his food and drink and a hole is pierced in his tongue.

Northwestern Australia, Kimberleys

The candidate is made by the Rainbow Serpent or mythical **water** snake who takes the candidate into the Upperworld. These initiatory spirits give the shaman power and insert *maban* (pearl shells and crystals) into his body, from which he draws power.

When initiated by a shaman the candidate is turned into a baby and taken to the Upperworld where he is killed. The shaman inserts *maban*, quartz crystals, and little rainbow snakes. Back on **earth** the shaman inserts more *maban* through the navel and wakes the candidate with a magical stone. The new shaman then learns how to use his new *maban*, to travel to the sky, and to speak to the spirits of the dead.

Far Western Queensland

The candidates are made by nature spirits who were **Ancestors**, by a water snake, or by shamans. The candidate is "killed" when magical substances are shot into his body.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994.

Mambo

The *mambo* (female) and the *houngan* (male) function as the "shamans" and **priest/priestess** within the **Vodoun** tradition. The *mambo's* role is to intercede in the realm of the *loa*, or **spirits**, on behalf of the living. The contemporary techniques, rituals, and ceremonies of Vodoun are the accumulated **knowledge** of the Haitian and West African people cultivated through trial and error in their application over centuries.

The *mambo* works with the *loa*, who are the major forces of the Universe expressed in anthropomorphic characteristics as they are seen by the Vodoun

culture. In the Vodoun **religion** to "be mounted" and become "the horse" for the *loa* is an honor. This type of **embodiment** trance, or intentional **possession** by the *loa*, allows the *mambo* and initiates to connect with the **spirit** realm and experience that state in which everyone and everything are connected.

A full, transcendent possession by the *loa* in which the person allows the most intimate surrender of him/herself to the *loa* can leave "the mount" with new capabilities, like increased conscious awareness. The *mambo* must cultivate **trance** state abilities well beyond this full, transcendent possession. The *mambo* must learn to enter and exit the trance as needed and without **ritual**, and to hold a clear and strong intention for the merging. Without the intent, the trance state can not be used for **divination, diagnosis**, or healing of the patient.

The "ultimate stage of possession" is achieved only after years of practice at an advanced level of mastery. In this state there is a access to spirit information in a trance state so subtle that only a person who knows the *mambo* personally can detect the minute voice and behavior changes and increased sweating. In this possessed state the *mambo* is lifted to a place where the knowledge of the *loa* is accessible and the *mambo* can move between this state and **ordinary reality** to answer her patient's questions.

Patients come to the *mambo* for both the source of and the cure for a wide variety of physical ailments, existential anxiety, conflicts with people of different cultures, predictions of the future, and a desire to change the **power** loss that generates bad luck.

In a private session with the *mambo*, the **altar** is a focal point of **energy** in the **sacred space** for all kinds of **healing** work. The altar is populated with an eclectic mix of images, including the Christian cross, and bottles of alcohol, placed there as **offerings** to the *loa*.

The **drum** plays an important role in inducing the possession trance in

Vodoun rituals; however, it is not always used by the *mambo* in private sessions. The *mambo* can work in direct contact or at a distance from the patient.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Man of High Degree

An initiated male **Aboriginal shaman** in Australia. See **clever man**; *karadji*; and **shaman**.

Mana

A Maori term for the inherent and invisible **power** in magic that is drawn from its origin in the **Great Mystery**. It is the power or energy that is given will and form in what the shamans refer to as the spirits. *Mana* can be conveyed in almost anything, which allows the creation of **power objects**, but the spirits contain *mana* in a way that they can give it to others. This is the power directed by shamans in the supernatural aspects of their work.

Anthropologists use the term to refer to the invisible life force that pervades and connects all things and forms, animate and inanimate. This life force is fundamental to the worldview of many indigenous cultures around the world. See also **Orenda**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Manang

A shaman among the **Iban Dyak**. The *manang* is typically female; however *manang* can be female, male, or a **gender-variant transformed shaman** called *manang bali*. None of these types of *manang* possesses a particular rank or special powers above the others, though an individual *manang* of any type can become quite powerful and renowned in his or her own right.

A *manang mansau* (ripe) is a fully initiated **shaman**. The *manang mata* (unripe) is still in **training** and not yet fully initiated. The *manang mata* is able to perform some of the functions of the *manang* and to assist the *manang mansau*.

The Call

The novice is called to become a *manang* by the **spirits** in a **dream**. This call cannot be dismissed without angering the spirits who then cause illness, mental illness, or death for the individual.

Initiation

The **initiation** of the *manang mata* to the *manang mansau* is conducted in private, by the *manang mansau* as a group. The novice's head is symbolically opened by the splitting of a coconut shell and other symbolic actions are performed in **ordinary reality**. These actions correspond with actions being taken in the spirit world.

In the spirit world, the novice's head is opened so that the brains can be cleansed and replaced, giving the new *manang* a clear mind to penetrate the mysteries of malevolent spirits and **disease**. Gold dust is inserted into his or her eyes to grant the **power** to see the *semengat* wherever it wanders. Barbs are inserted into the fingers to allow the new *manang* to capture and hold *semengat* and an arrow pierces the heart to soften the heart to others and generate compassion for others suffering in the new *manang*.

Initiations at the completion of different stages of training appear to continue throughout the *manang's* life. These initiation rituals are similar; central to each is the transformation from one state to another, for example regular Iban to *manang*. These rituals mark the *manang's* transformation from one status to another, involving wider-ranging skills or newly acquired powers. In each **ritual** the form represents the transformation that occurs, while the specific symbolic **elements** and functions of the ritual are defined by the powers or skills acquired.

Divination

Divinations are performed at various stages in the **healing** process. The *manang* uses a variety of techniques depending on the apparent severity of the **illness** or the stage in the ritual.

When the *manang* is called to assist, he or she first consults the patient and family members about dreams they have had and the omens they have noticed. Information from this consultation may factor into the **diagnosis** or it may clarify extraneous factors that would hinder the patient's healing if they were not neutralized through a secondary ritual after the initial healing. In some circumstances the neutralization of unpropitious omens and dreams is performed in a ritual in and of itself, which functions as preventative **medicine**, averting the need for further healing.

During the *pelian* (healing ritual), the *manang* uses the quartz crystals, or *batu ilau*, "the stones of light," for **divination**. By looking into these "light stones" the *manang* is able to see into the spirit world and watch what the *semengat* and the *antu* (spirits) are doing. The *manang* can see the location and state of health of the patient's *semengat*, the plant-like form (symbolic of the patient's soul) tended by celestial *manang*, or the place and the reason *antu* may have harmed the patient by placing an **energy intrusion** into the patient's body.

At the close of a *pelian* or *saut* ritual the *manang* performs a divination to determine whether or not the healings have been successful. For example, the flower bud of the *areca* palm is investigated and read or the *pentik* (carved wooden figure) is stuck into the ground and its position, standing or leaning, is read in the morning.

Healing

When an Iban becomes ill a series of progressively more powerful rituals are performed until the patient is healed or dies. In general the ritual progression begins with the *bedara* performed by the family, then the *manang* is called on to

perform the *pelian*, *saut*, and as a last resort the *nampok*.

Illness is interpreted as the result of interference by harmful spirits, energy intrusion, or **soul loss**. The most common diagnosis is that some misfortune has befallen the *semengat* (soul) in the spirit world that keeps it from returning to the body of the patient. To some degree, the more serious the illness, the further away the *semengat* is believed to be. If the *semengat* is close to the body the *manang* may simply coax or entice it back into the body without necessitating the *manang's* entry into trance.

If the *semengat* is determined to have wandered far away or is being held by malevolent spirits, the *manang* will need to enter trance, dispatching his or her own *semengat* into the spirit world to track and capture the patient's *semengat*. In this case, one or more *manang* will prepare for a full night-long **soul retrieval** *pelian*.

To prepare the long handle of a spear is covered with leaves and fixed, pointing up, in the center of the room with the *lupong* (medicine boxes) of the *manang* clustered around the base. They begin to **chant** the appropriate invocations, dancing and moving quickly around the spear until one falls to the floor in trance.

Once a *manang* has entered trance, a blanket is thrown over him and the remaining *manang* and the audience await the result of his **journey**. The *manang's* *semengat* goes down to the **Lowerworld** in search of the patient's *semengat*. When the *semengat* is captured, the *manang* rises, holding it in his hand, and replaces it in the patient through the fontanelle in the top of the head.

Pansa utai refers to illness caused by passing a spirit who strikes the patient or wounds him/her with the dart from a blowpipe, often without the individual's awareness of the encounter. When the *manang's* divination indicates this type of spirit interference, then either the spirit itself or something the spirit has lodged in the patient's body is causing

the illness. The *manang* uses his or her *batu ilau* to locate the injury or intrusion. Other **power objects** from his or her *lupong* are used to stroke the patient's body and remove the pieces of bone, wood, hair, cloth, etc., that are the physical manifestation of the spirit's intrusive object.

If the spirit itself is the problem, then the *manang* has a variety of techniques to exorcise it. The *manang* may offer sacrifices, entice it into a *pentik* (small wooden figure), and dispose of the figure, will it away with invocations to benevolent powers, frighten it, or even summon it to take form and kill it.

In extreme cases in which an incubus or other spirits are ravaging the living the *manang* uses both protection and action. A male *manang* might use his powers of invisibility (protection) on himself. He then entices the offending spirit into physical form in which it is both visible and vulnerable. The *manang* then springs from invisibility into action and attacks the manifest spirit. This healing takes a great deal of power. It is usually performed by male *manang*.

A female *manang* might approach the situation differently. Her actions tend to place more power and effort into protecting the patient and denying the incubus access to the patient by ritually destroying access to the patient. Both solutions are equally effective, and they represent only two of the *manang's* many healing options.

Soul Counterparts in Healing

Among the Iban the *ayu* and *bungai* are two soul counterparts of an individual that affect his or her health. Exactly what they are is not completely clear; however, in general they are "lives" that cannot be seen but are visualized in metaphor as plants that can be tended by the celestial or terrestrial *manang*.

For example, the *bungai* has been described as an invisible plant tended by mythical *manang* that grows in the central post of the extended family's home or somewhere in the spirit world. The *bungai* can be seen by the *manang*

through his or her quartz **crystal**. The shape and health of the plant reflects the health, welfare, and unity of the family it represents. During a *pelian* the *manang* may weed the *bungai*, free it from encumbrances, or wrap its cluster more firmly together, effectively performing the same on the spirit of the family.

Similarly the *manang* is often called to tend to a plant *ayu* in healing. For example, in the case of adoption, the *manang* performs *nusop ayu*, in which the *manang* cuts the child's *ayu* away from that of its birth family and replants it with the *ayu* of its adoptive family. During funeral rites the *manang* performs *besserara*, in which the *ayu* of the deceased is cut from the *ayu* cluster of the living family members.

In some *pelian* the *manang* enters a **trance** state and sends his or her soul to perform these tasks in the spirit world. In other *pelian* the *manang* performs the actions on a plant surrogate in the physical world while a celestial *manang* performs the corresponding actions on the *bungai* or *ayu* in the spirit world.

Paraphernalia

The *manang's* **paraphernalia** is contained in the *lupong*, a basket or box in which the *manang* keeps power objects, **charms** with medicinal powers, and occasionally medicinal herbs. The *lupong* contains stones, glass, pieces of tusk, wood, root, and the most important item, the quartz crystals, or *batu ilau*, used for divination and diagnosis.

The *engkerabun*, or "blinder" is a protective **talisman** kept in the *lupong*. The *engkerabun* is used to render the *manang* invisible to malevolent spirits. It functions in the reverse of the *batu ilau*, which renders the invisible world visible to the *manang*. Much of the *manang's* healing involves various applications of these two abilities together, to make the visible invisible or protect humankind, on one hand, and to make the invisible visible and restore humankind, on the other.

The blossom of the *areca* palm is used to drive away harmful spirits and

to prepare the *manang's* spirit for entering trance. The *areca* blossom disperse harmful spirits from patients during healings, from novices during training, and from the *manang* while in performance of rituals. To aid novices in developing mastery of their trance states, the *manang* whip novices with *areca* blossoms until they fall into trance and drums to assure they are able to return.

The **drum** is also used in any ritual or **ceremony** in which the *manang* will enter into a trance state. The continuous beat of the drum assures that the journeying *semangat* will find its way back to the *manang* and strengthens the *semangat* while it journeys in the spirit world.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Graham, Penelope. *Iban Shamanism: An Analysis of the Ethnographic Literature*. Canberra, ACT, Australia: Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University, 1987.

Manang Bali

A **gender-variant male** or female **transformed shaman** of the **Iban Dyak** people of Borneo. The *manang bali* tradition, which is primarily the transformation of men to women, stretches from the remote past into the early 20th century. "Bali" means to change in form, referring to the *manang bali's* transformation that renders the *manang bali* of a third gender.

In Iban society gender roles are clearly and dogmatically defined. The *manang bali* does not belong completely to either the world of the men or the world of the women. He does not live fully in the real world and is believed to be partly of the world of **spirits**. The *manang*

bali is highly valued as a shaman, paid well, and respected. However, he was also devalued, in that he lacks the social prestige that is defined by gender, and is at times ridiculed.

The First Shaman

Iban mythology tells of a time long ago when three semi-divine beings lived. *Singalang Burong* was the great god of war, *Ini Inda* his sister was the supreme healer, and *Menjaya Raja Manang* was their brother. *Singalang Burong's* wife became ill, and *Ini Inda* initiated her brother, *Menjaya*, so that he could heal his sister-in-law. *Menjaya Raja Manang* became a woman and a healer and saved his brother's wife. *Menjaya Raja Manang* is worshipped by all **manang** and *manang bali*.

The Call

Young men are summoned by *Menjaya Raja Manang* or *Ini Inda* in a **dream**. In this dream the young man experiences himself as a woman, wearing *bekain* (female garments) and *besanggol* (female hair braid) while he performs the mundane and the **sacred** tasks of Iban women.

These young men may also have physical and/or **vision** impairment. The Iban believe that these traits, in addition to gender variance, foster prophetic talent.

Initiation

The **initiation** of the *manang bali* is not significantly different than that of the *manang mansau*. The *manang bali* does not appear to acquire any skills or powers other than those acquired by non-gender transformed *manang* in initiation. The only distinguishing aspects are the substantial initial **offerings** and the closing gender transformation represented in the change of clothing and the new female name.

Traditionally, the *manang bali's* initiation begins with a seven-fold **ritual** offering, which includes pigs, fowls, eggs, jars of *tauk*, etc. Then the initiate, dressed in men's clothing, is taken into a private room where the sacred aspects

of the initiation are performed by the *manang mansau* as a group. The novice's head is symbolically opened by the splitting of a coconut shell and other symbolic actions are performed in **ordinary reality**. These actions correspond with actions being taken in the spirit world.

In the spirit world, the novice's head is opened so that the brains can be cleansed and replaced, giving the new *manang* a clear mind to penetrate the mysteries of malevolent spirits and **dis-ease**. Gold dust is inserted into his or her eyes to grant the **power** to see the *semengat* wherever it wanders. Barbs are inserted into the fingers to allow the new *manang* to capture and hold *semengat* and an arrow pierces the heart to soften the heart to others and generate compassion for others suffering in the new *manang*.

The new *manang bali* is then stripped of male garments, dressed in women's garments and given a new female name. The *manang bali* will wear women's clothing and perform women's cultural task from that day forward. Everyone in the community is required to use the *manang bali*'s new name and refer to the *manang bali* as she. Those who do not are fined.

The *manang bali* must sever all ties prior to taking on her new role. If she had children she must give them their portions of her assets as if she were dead. All ties to her old self, familial and sexual, are completed and wiped clean, so that she may enter her new life unencumbered.

Training

The novice is instructed primarily by **helping spirits** in dreams and **trance** states and secondarily by initiated female *manang* and *manang bali*. The *manang bali* learns everything other *manang* learn. She learns to divine the cause of **illness** with *bata ilau* (quartz crystals) and to perform the *pelian* (**healing** rituals). In these *pelian*, the *manang bali* will enter trance states to retrieve lost souls, remove **energy intrusions**, and exorcise **spirit intrusions**, among other healing and protective actions.

To become *bali*, completely transformed, the *manang bali* must begin to function sexually as the receptive partner with non-gender variant, traditionally masculine men. Marriage between the *manang bali* and traditional men was common and sanctioned within the community. See also **gender variant**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Graham, Penelope. *Iban Shamanism: An Analysis of the Ethnographic Literature*. Canberra, ACT, Australia: Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University, 1987.

Manão

The *manão* is a type of **Ojibwa** healing **shaman** who receives his or her **power** to heal from the *memengwéciwak* spirit. The Ojibwa recognize three general types of shamans: healing, conjuring, and **seers**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Manchu

A people of southern **Siberia** and north-east **China** (formerly Manchuria) who became the modern emperors of China. The Manchu are considered a southern group of the **Tungus**. Manchu shamanic traditions began in the 11th century C.E. and have been practiced for centuries. One derivation of the word **shaman** comes from the Tungus-Manchu world *saman*, meaning "she who knows through ecstatic experience."

The following entry includes items distinct to Manchu shamanism, which

is otherwise quite similar to that of the Tungus.

Manchu mythology is filled with goddesses and female **spirits**. More than three hundred goddesses have been identified. They are creators, shamans, warriors, cultural heroes, **nature spirits**, fertility keepers, and guardians. The most powerful goddess is *Abkia Hehe*, the **Sky Mother**. She gave birth to the universe and created the **First Shaman**, *Nisan*, also a woman, who is still regarded as the most powerful shaman ever.

Abkia Hehe also made the first **drum** and beater from a piece of the sky and a mountain. These became her **sacred** tools. From her drumming came the first man and woman. The shaman's drum and beater remain closely associated with life and procreation. *Nisan* used her drum to enter the **Lowerworld** to retrieve the lost souls of the people and heal them.

Traditionally the Manchu recognize two types of shamans: the *boo saman* or clan shamans, who are chosen by the clan through **divination**, and the *cha saman* or big shamans, who are spontaneously chosen by a powerful **spirit** or the spirit of a deceased *cha saman*. These two types of shamans conduct rituals in the same way; however, the *cha saman* invokes animals and nature **spirits**, performs outdoors, and is considered more powerful.

The clan shamans are trained by other shamans and must pass the test of their **training** and spirit **power** in the final **initiation ritual**. The *boo saman* enter **trance** for divination and to perform the annual ancestral **offering** rituals.

The big (also called "independent" or "selected" in the literature) shamans are trained primarily by the spirits directly while in trance. The *cha saman* enter trance for divination, various types of **healing** rituals, and to perform the more archaic *bigan-i weceku*, rituals for wild spirits.

Initiation

After years of training a new shaman must perform a public initiation to be

recognized by the community. Traditionally, these rituals involved displays of power, particularly **mastery of fire**, like walking over burning coals. Severe cold is also used as a test of the shaman's mastery of **inner fire**. In one winter initiation ritual nine holes are drilled in the ice spaced a regular distance apart. The new shaman must dive into one hole and come out the next until he or she emerges from the ninth hole.

All of the wild spirits who help the independent shamans possess mastery of fire. The eagle spirit is the head of the wild **animal spirits** and Fire Spirit is the head of the wild nature spirits, e.g., mountain, **water**, stars, and **elements of weather**. They all possess the mastery of fire and the shaman derives this power from them.

Drum

The construction of the drum is of primary importance to the newly initiated shaman. The design of the drum, the procedure for making it, the rituals for **purification**, and the appropriate offerings and sacrifices all come to the initiate from the spirits in a **dream**. This dream must be followed exactly in the preparation to construct, the gathering of materials, and the construction of the drum. All unused portions of the tree and the sacrificed animal must be honored, cremated, and buried.

When the construction of the drum is complete, a subsequent dream clarifies how the drum is to be decorated, including **colors**, designs, and **metal** frogs. When the drum is complete, additional animal sacrifices are made and the drum is awakened in an all-night drumming **ceremony** that announces the birth of a new drum to the spirits. Additional rituals are performed to embody the power of the spirits in the drum.

Manchu shamans use two types of drums. The ancient name for the single headed **frame drum** is *wendun*, meaning "vast space" or "female hand drum" and the drumstick, or whip, is the *keshun*. The modern word for this drum is *nimachin*, meaning "male hand

drum." It is approximately 50 centimeters in diameter and round or oval.

The second type of drum is the *tongken*, meaning "big drum." This drum is approximately 40 centimeters in diameter, two headed, and played with two drumsticks while it rests in a stand. This drum is used only in grand **offering** rituals where it is accompanied by hand drums, bells, and wooden clappers.

Mirrors

A **mirror** of copper or glass called the *panaptu*, meaning "soul shade," is used as a divination tool to locate the souls of dead people and spirits in general, to see at a distance, and to divine the needs of the people. The copper *panaptu* is also used as a tool for disbursing malevolent spirits.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Kun, S. "Flying Drums, Dancing Shaman: Shamanic Practices among the Manchu of Northern China." *Shaman's Drum* 25, 1991.

Mandala

Mandalas are graphic symbols of the mystic nature of the Universe. These visual representations are two dimensional blueprints of the multi-dimensional Universe. They function like a portal, providing access to **non-ordinary reality**. A mandala can be seen as a point of communication between the **Upperworld**, **Lowerworld**, and **Middleworld**. In this way mandalas function like the **Tree of Life**.

Mandalas are also receptacles for the energies of deities or **spirits**; they are visual **power objects**. The traditional form of a mandala is a **circle** enclosing a square filled with symmetrically arranged patterns that hold the **energy** signatures of concepts or deities. Simple mandalas, called yantras, are the graphic versions of the energy pattern of a specific deity. Mandalas are used chiefly as an aid to mediation in Hinduism and Buddhism.

Masacarin, M. "Journey Into the Cycles of Time." *Shaman's Drum* 30 (Winter 1993): 40-49.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Mandrake

One of the **hexing herbs** used in the magic and witchcraft of medieval Europe. No other plant in European folklore is more valued as a remedy for a wide range of diseases, evils, and difficulties or more feared for its magical and hallucinogenic properties.

Mandrake was harvested with great care and respect. If not, the root was believed to shriek when pulled from the ground inappropriately, driving naive harvesters mad. In one third century B.C.E. description harvesters began by drawing **circles** around the plant and cutting off only the top part of the root while facing **west**. Then dances and precise **spells** were performed before the remainder of the root was gathered. Another account from the first century C.E. explained that mandrake hid when man drew near, but that it could be drawn out with sacrifices of urine and menstrual **blood** sprinkled on the ground.

There are six species of *Mandragora* of *Solanaceae*, the Nightshade Family. It is found in southern Europe, **North Africa**, and western Asia to the Himalayas. The root is thick and usually forked in such a way as to create the image of legs and arms on a torso. The stemless herb has stalked, wrinkled leaves that stand about one foot high. Small, whitish-green, purplish, or bluish bell-shaped flowers grow in clusters. The yellow berry is quite fragrant. *M. officinarum* plays the most important role as a hallucinogen in magic and witchcraft.

Use

Mandrake is best known as a main ingredient in the potions of witches, whose herbal brews were used for hallucinogenic properties and other effects characteristic of their intoxication.

Potions were added to other liquids to drink or to ointments for absorption through the skin. Mandrake was used medicinally as a panacea in one form or another for a wide range of diseases, evils, difficulties, and situations of disharmony.

Mandrake's usefulness is said to have been determined by the Doctrine of Signatures, a philosophy that an object that resembles a human has supernatural effects on the mind and body of a human. Mandrake, which means "the man-like plant," has roots that often grow in ways that look like a little human figure. The real and perceived medicinal properties of this plant are inextricably tied to its anthropomorphic shape through the Doctrine of Signatures.

Preparation

Hallucinogenic mixtures of the hexing herbs were prepared as potions to drink or ointments to be applied to parts of the body where the blood vessels are naturally close to the skin.

Active Principle

The primary tropane alkaloids found in Mandrake root are hyoscyamine and scopolamine, with atropine, cuscohygrine, or mandragorine present in lesser degrees. Scopolamine is the primary hallucinogenic constituent.

Schultes, R. E. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Manitou

The term used by the **Algonquian** people to refer to the power/**energy**/force that is the resonant relationship between spiritual, natural, and human worlds. In short, it is that which binds the **Kosmos** for which we have no word. *Manitou* is used interchangeably with power, energy, and force.

Manitou also refers to the **helping spirits** of the **shaman** and the **medicine man**. In this sense *manitou* encompasses a wide variety of spirit presences, all

of which can take human form at will. *Manitou* is also associated with a variety of natural occurrences and mythic personalities. The wide range of references demonstrates the transformative power that is an aspect of *manitou*. This richness also suggests that the experience of the **sacred** was found in all things and experiences among the Algonquian peoples.

The *manitou* are often described as having different ranks or degrees of power. The spirit prototypes of all plants, **birds**, beasts, elemental forces, and life circumstances such as Poverty or Motherhood were all of similar rank. This rank includes useful **trees** like cedar and birch; certain roots, plants, and berries; the **Sun**, **moon**, thunder, lightning, meteoric stones, and winds of the cardinal points. The seasons are *manitou*, as are extraordinary circumstances like cannibalism, the heedless self-assurance of elder siblings, the vulnerable aspect found in the mighty. Things of *manitou* may possess different powers, but were held to have relatively the same amount of power. (Also: *manitu*, *manidoo*, *mannittos*, *manito*, *manitoes*.) See also **Ojibwa**.

Grim, John A. *The Shaman*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

Mantra

A **spell**, hymn, **prayer**, ritualistic **incantation**, or mystic formula used devotionally. A mantra can be spoken, chanted, or sung; it is a verbal **power object**. The sacred syllables arranged in the specific patterns of traditional mantras each invoke a deity of that tradition when verbalized. In this way the mantra of a deity is equivalent to the deity itself. Mantras are used traditionally in Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Maparn

Special **healing** powers, particularly of a place in Nature. See also **aboriginal** and **Australia**.

Mapuche

The Mapuche are the **First People** of southern Chile in **South America**. The Mapuche, which means “people of the land,” are largely matriarchal. Though their lives are difficult today, they have survived and their numbers have greatly increased. More than one half million live on reservations in southern Chile.

Central to the Mapuche concept of right action, personally and communally, is the maintenance of a sustained and responsible link between the living and the **Ancestors**. The Ancestor **spirits**, in turn, provide a link to the **spirit** world of gods, goddesses, and natural phenomena. This way of life has withstood the test of time and remained relatively unchanged, in spite of the strong efforts of missionaries to convert the Mapuche, during more than four hundred years of contact with white civilization.

The Mapuche **machis** (shamans) are women and **gender-variant males**. The **machi** excels in the fundamental act that allows shamanic magic to happen: the ability of the **shaman** to literally be a vessel for spirit. The **machis** practice ancient lunar rites of healing, a reminder that the primordial power that all shamans call on is biologically rooted in the **womb**, menstruation, and the **blood** mysteries.

Cosmology

In Mapuche cosmology the gods and goddesses are old spirit people who are invisible and who have rather specific and limited powers. They are conceived of as androgynous beings and/or comprised of sets of husbands and wives, who have children, all of whose exploits are described in the Mapuche mythology.

Ñenechen the Supreme Being or “ruler of the Mapuche” is not to be

confused with the Judeo-Christian God. The Mapuche have other creators. Ñenemapun is the creator and ruler of **earth** and Elchen is the creator of the people. Then there are minor gods who control specific phenomena.

The minor gods who appear to be truly significant in Mapuche rituals are Pillan Fucha and Pillan Kushe, the god and goddess of thunder and volcanoes; Lafken Fucha/Kushe, god and goddess of the sea; Kuyen Fucha/Kushe, god and goddess of the **moon**; and Huilli Fucha/Kushe, god and goddess of the south wind. Then there are pillan who are the **helping spirits** of the *machi*.

These minor gods have considerable force and freedom. The purpose of most Mapuche community rituals is to channel these forces by proper propitiatory rites. In some rituals the people are asking Ñenechen to oversee and direct the activities of the minor gods and their related natural phenomena on behalf of humanity. In other rituals the minor gods are asked to intercede on behalf of humanity before Ñenechen.

Wekufe

The *wekufe* are malevolent forces in general, which the Mapuche believe are always around. The *wekufe* can make themselves visible or invisible instantaneously. They manifest in the forms of certain animals, natural phenomena, or ghosts, by their own power or as directed by a sorcerer. *Wekufe* usually act under the control of a sorcerer, however they may act independently, particularly to kill a sorcerer whose powers are not strong enough to protect her against them. The *machi* must constantly protect herself and her community, living and dead, from contamination by the *wekufe*.

The most common manifestation of *wekufe* is in the form of a normal animal in abnormal conditions. They also manifest as mythical beings like the *chon chon*, a bird with a human head, or a *waillepen*, a large beast of the forest that takes the shape of a huge sheep or a combined sheep-cow creature.

Another subset of *wekufe*, the *cherufe*, manifest as fireballs, comets, shooting stars, and whirlwinds. These phenomena are believed to be possessed by a malevolent spirit and their presence forebodes suffering and death.

Ghosts are the third type of *wekufe*. They are ancestral spirits contaminated by the *wekufe* or by the **spells** of a sorcerer. When the **spirits of the dead** become contaminated in this way, they cease being classed as Ancestors. They can only cause trouble for the living in this state and no longer function as wise ancestral spirits. Two common forms of malevolent, blood-sucking ghosts are the *witranalwe*, a large male figure, usually mounted on a horse who terrorizes the roadways, and the *anchimallen*, a child-sized spirit dressed in white or appearing as a luminous blob.

Ancestor Spirits

The Mapuche attend to the welfare of their ancestors through **ritual** and prayer to maintain the link between the ancestral and contemporary worlds. The ancestors must be kept safe from contamination by *wekufe*. The Mapuche believe that their ancestors will dwell together happily in the afterworld, if their souls are properly handled at death. Some ancestral souls go to *Wenumapu*, the **Upperworld**, and others go to *Nomelafken*, “across the ocean.”

When spirits of ordinary ancestors meddle in the affairs of the living, it is usually because their descendants have failed to carry out a ritual obligation, causing the spirits to return from the **Land of the Dead**. These spirits do not belong in the land of the living and once there they run the risk of contamination and becoming a threat to the well-being of the living.

The danger of the deceased’s spirit being contaminated at death is even greater. In a special **ceremony**, the *amulpellun*, the *wekufe* are first driven from the locality and then the spirit of the deceased is sent on its way into the afterworld. If all goes well, the danger is

greatly reduced and the mourning continues through the four days of *kurikawin*, the wake ceremony.

On the morning of the fifth day after death, the coffin is carried on a bier to the center of a field for the *weupin* ceremony. Members of the community speak, praising the deceased. When the last has spoken the coffin is transferred to the cemetery and placed in a prepared grave. If all the ceremonies of the funeral process are successful, the spirit succeeds in a complete and proper departure to the afterworld, and the living have fulfilled their obligation to their ancestor.

Kalku, the Sorcerer

Sorcerers, or *kalku*, cause the supernaturally induced illnesses, personal misfortune, and death, which the *machi* work to heal. The power comes to the *kalku* as it does to the *machi*, from the spirit world. It comes in dreams and visions or it may be inherited from an ancestor who was also a *kalku*. Conversion to **sorcery** can come through misadventures, like stumbling into a *reñu* (sorcerers cave), soul theft, or an **illness** that exposes the individual to *wekufe* contamination.

To become a sorcerer or shaman a woman must invest years in **training** and practice. The success of either professional is determined by the power of the individual’s helping spirits. Sorcerers and shamans both use an assortment of plants and animals in their practice of malevolent and benevolent medicine respectively. The Mapuche see this polarity in all aspects of life and healing. They also distinguish between good and bad internal organs, bodily juices, animals, and insects.

Machi, the Shaman

To become a *machi* a woman trains years to learn all the necessary esoteric lore, songs, shamanic techniques, and *machitun*, Mapuche curing rites. She must learn to perform **diagnosis** and **divinations** of various kinds and to induce trance. Above all she must

acquire power through her relationship with her *pillan* (the ancestral *machi*) to be able to prevail over the forces of *wekufe* and acts of sorcery.

Acquiring her tools is part of her training. The *kultrun* (shallow **drum**) is beaten almost continuously in some ceremonies and is used to induce the *machi's* trance. The *machi* makes her *kultrun* from a tree, tans the leather for the drumhead, and fill it with **crystals** and stones. One special stone, the *pedra de la cruz*, must be found for the drum. Its natural shape must be of a circled, equal-armed cross, the symbol for the Mapuche **Kosmos**. The head of the drum is painted in blood-red with the equal-armed cross with crescent moons at the ends of the arms which point in each of the four directions.

The *rewe* (carved pole) is the **sacred** symbol of the *machi's* profession. She climbs her *rewe* during ceremonies as she enters a deep **trance** and stands on the top playing her drum and communicating with the beings of the spirit world. The *rewe* is planted into the ground outside her house indefinitely. A three-meter section of a tree is barked, notched to form steps, and set in the ground at a slight tilt that makes it easier to climb. Tall branches may be stuck into the ground around the *rewe* to create an enclosure of 15 by 4 meters for special rituals.

The *machi* also makes a special drumstick to beat her *kultrun* and gourd **rattles**. Sleigh bells may also be part of her **paraphernalia**. Her additional tools are fire and songs.

There is a fire burning in the healing **space** and it is an integral part of the curing. It is used for light, to burn **tobacco**, and to heat and tighten the drumskin. In her trance state, the *machi* may work with the fire with her bare hands, picking up hot coals or rearranging the fire to light her tobacco.

Songs

Songs are invaluable tools for the *machi*. They are an important part of mastering the shamanic lore and ritual

techniques. Songs are used in the diagnosis of illness, divination, autopsy, and in preparing herbal remedies. The songs are given by spirit and a repertoire of magical songs, **incantation**, and chants increase the efficacy of the *machi's* work.

Traditionally, songs are monotonously chanted, with a high, wailing break at stanza endings. Many chants are preparatory chants used to clear the ritual space or dispel the buildup of *wekufe* in the immediate area. Some songs are used to lull *wekufe* into inaction, to chase them away, or to weaken the power of the *kalku* who has harmed the patient. Some songs are preparation for the **singing** of others songs and the gradual buildup of power for the *machi's* entry into trance.

There are trance-inducing songs that lead to the **possession** of the *machi's* body by her *pillan*. These songs begin with special songs directed first to the androgynous "father god" in the Upperworld, then another **song** to the "sweetheart" (partner) of the **Sun**, and finally to the *pillan* spirits of powerful deceased *machi*, some of whom are the *machi's* literal ancestors.

Training of the Machi

A novice must study with an initiated *machi* to learn the **knowledge** and traditions. This is a long, difficult, expensive, and dangerous process. In addition the novice must receive power, which she cannot get from her **teacher**. The *machi's* power comes directly and spontaneously from the spirit world. This summons from the spirits enters the novice's life, unbidden and irresistible. In fact, to resist **the call** is considered a folly that could bring on death prematurely.

The call is recognized in dreams, visions, omens, or in the woman's recovery from a serious illness during which her soul (*am*) comes into contact with malevolent forces and remains unscathed and uncontaminated. The illness may be followed by an ecstatic **vision** during which the novice's soul

travels to the Upperworld where she meets spirit beings who show her the remedies and cures.

When the novice's training is complete she must demonstrate her ability before a gathering of initiated *machi*. These gatherings are held at pre-arranged times during each year for the dual purpose of initiating new *machi* and revalidating the rank of those already of full-fledged status. The festival includes **power displays**, such as walking barefoot on coals and other acts displaying **mastery of fire**.

Initiation of the Machi

The **initiation** of a new *machi* is centered around the ritual climbing of her *rewe* to enter trance and speak with the god/goddesses of Mapuche cosmology. When the *rewe* is set up, the candidate, wearing only her shift, lies down on a bed of sheepskins and blankets. The women attending the ritual **sing** in chorus accompanied by bells. A master *machi* rubs the candidate's body with *canelo* leaves, repeating this ritual massage several times. Then master *machis* extract energies from her body, sucking her breasts, belly, and head with such force that they draw blood. When this healing is complete the candidate dresses and sits while the singing and dancing continue through the day.

The following day a crowd of guests arrives for the celebration. The master *machis* form a **circle**, drumming and dancing one after the other about the center. Then they go with the candidate toward her *rewe* and begin to ascend after her one at a **time**. This ceremony is closed with the ritual **sacrifice** of a sheep.

At dawn the next day the candidate and the master *machis* drum, **dance**, and sing until they begin to fall into trance. One of the master *machi* blindfolds herself to make several cuts in the candidate's fingers and lips with a knife of white quartz. She makes similar cuts in her own body and, touching the candidate cut to cut, she mixes their blood.

After other rites the candidate is adorned with a necklace of greenery and the blood-stained fleece of the sacrificed sheep. Then dancing and drumming, she climbs her *rewe* in trance as the master *machi* follow her. The candidate's two sponsors stand on either side of her on the platform waiting for her trance to reach the state required for initiation. When she demonstrates her ability they strip her of the necklace and fleece, which then are hung on the branches of the shrubs where they will disintegrate over time. When the woman, now officially a *machi*, comes down her *rewe* this time, she is greeted by an immense uproar as soon as her feet touch the ground. Everyone wants to see and touch the new *machi*, to be close to the **energy** of the spirits who have initiated her. A feast follows.

The new *machi's* wounds will heal in a week. She prays to *vlieo*, the *Machi* of the **Sky**, to grant her curative powers, clairvoyance, and the magical objects necessary for healing. For example, she will pray to find a striped or colored healing stone that can be projected into the body of the patient. It can be used in healing to purify the body or as an aid in diagnosis. If it comes out of the body bloody, the patient is in danger of death.

Healing

The healing ways of the *machi* are known collectively as *machitun*. The basis of *machitun* is the circle that connects us to all things, to the Sacred Feminine, the earth, and the **Great Mystery**. The dancing, chanting, drumming, and other percussive sounds used are collectively called the *purran*, which specifically includes the earth dances, the particular drumming rhythms used to induce and maintain trance states, and the songs sung to honor the Source of all life.

Each *machi* has unique songs and dances to call on her *pillan* and to enter trance. She also has unique means for diagnosis. The *machi* usually **sings** and dances to the accompaniment of rattles to enter trance. Her full trance is

obtained atop her *rewe* where she drums and speaks to the beings of the spirit world.

Curing usually takes place indoors in a space with a fire. If the patient is very sick or in a sustained state of fear the *machi* performs rituals to protect the patient from a *kalku* or to protect a spirit visiting the patient from sorcery or contamination by *wekufe*. When sorcery is diagnosed the *machi* rubs and massages the patient's body and then sucks, sometimes to the point of drawing blood, on the parts of the body in which the sorcerer's attacks are lodged. In some healings the *machi* opens the body, feels around in it, and extracts whatever is causing the illness, like a pebble, worm, or insect. The opening closes itself when the offending object is removed.

Many cures do not involve trance or directly grappling with *wekufe*. The diagnosis may call for the application of herbal remedies, a specific dietary schedule, or herbal infusions. The *machi* may perform cleansings by blowing tobacco smoke or pouring medicinal **water** over the patient's body. The *machi* is also asked to interpret dreams and omens, which may or may not involve entering trance.

Community Ritual

The *machi* plays the principal role in *ngillatun*, a community ritual designed to strengthen relations between the god/goddesses of the Upperworld and the Mapuche. The *machi* mounts her *rewe* where she goes into trance, **journeys** to the Upperworld, and presents the wishes of her community to the god/goddesses there. While the *machi* journeys in the spirit world, riders on horseback fight the demons and expel *wekufe*. When the *machi* completes her journey, she describes it in detail and announces whether or not the Sky god/goddesses will grant the wishes of the community.

Plant Hallucinogens

As the *machi* stands atop her *rewe* beating her drum and communicating with

the spirit world it is possible that one or more of several hallucinogenic plants, *Datura*, *Brugmansia*, or *Anadenanthera*, were used to enhance her journey into the spirit world. The Mapuche also use a narcotic tea called *taique* made from the leaves of *Desfontania spinosa*, a shrub with holly-like leaves and red flowers with a yellow tips that grows in the highlands of Central and South America. The Mapuche also used *Tupa*, a hallucinogen made from the leaves of the herb *Lobelia tupa*.

In the past the Mapuche used the fruit of *Gomortega keule* as a narcotic. This small tree belonging to the laurel family, *Gomortega* is found only in central Chile. No studies have been done to determine its active principle.

Tobacco is used extensively by the *machi*, though not to enter trance. The smoke is sent skyward to carry prayers to the god/goddesses of the Upperworld. It is also used to clear the space and the energy around the patient's body before deeper healing work.

Costume

Sacred dress for the *machi* includes a skirt and shawl over a shift and a scarf to cover the head. Some articles of jewelry are also considered sacred and therefore appropriate.

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Faron, Louis C. *The Mapuche Indians of Chile*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.

Noble, V. *Shakti Woman: The New Female Shamanism*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991.

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Mara'akame

The **shaman-priest** of the **Huichol**; *Mara'akate* (pl). The role of the *mara'akame* includes that of the shaman and healer as well as the formal, public role

of the priest, particularly as the leader of the **peyote hunt** and the singer priest at annual community ceremonies.

With the assistance of his or her **helping spirit**, *Kauyumari*, the Sacred Deer Person, the *mara'akame* performs **divinations** to diagnose the cause of **illness** and **healing** rituals. The *mara'akame* is able to **shapeshift** into animal forms and to send his or her **soul** into the **spirit** world while in trance.

The *mara'akame* is chosen by spirit, usually while still a child, and will learn directly from spirit as he or she matures. The individual chosen is one who tends to seek solitude, which is odd for a Huichol, and who is profoundly spiritual by nature. *Mara'akame* were frequently youngest children or only children who do not know their father. That one is chosen does not guarantee he or she will become an *mara'akame*. The candidate must be willing to **sacrifice** physically and materially and to dedicate his or her life to the service of others.

For a candidate to succeed he or she must show great intelligence, strength, and endurance. The candidate must be able to fast, go without sleep, and travel over two hundred miles while caring for the well-being of others on the peyote hunt. Many rituals proceed over a number of days and many chants require thirty-six to forty-eight hours of continuous chanting, so endurance and commitment are essential. The candidate must have an extraordinary memory to learn the chants, **myths**, and songs of the **culture**. The candidate must also cultivate compassion, social sensitivity, and **knowledge** of psychology and interpersonal relations.

The truly critical quality of a successful *mara'akame* is self-control and personal psychological equilibrium. These qualities are necessary to master **trance** states and direct one's own actions and movement while in **altered states of consciousness**. While this is true for all shamans, the *mara'akame* must master, in addition, the peyote-induced trance state.

Given these qualities and the dual role as shaman and priest, the social prestige of the *mara'akame* is clearly earned. The *mara'akame* also enjoys a sense of internal balance, uniqueness, and **power** that may offset the regular sacrifices required by the role.

Acquiring Power

The *mara'akame* is called in a **dream** or **vision** by *Tatewarí*, the **First Shaman** and the Spirit of Fire. Shamanic powers are not inherited, though latent shamanic talent tends to run in families, skipping generations. The *mara'akame* can be male or female, though male *mara'akame* are more common today.

The *mara'akame* acquires shamanic powers to cure and to retrieve lost souls primarily from *Tatewarí* and secondarily from *Tayaupá*, the **Sun**, except in the western regions where they are equally important. *Tayaupá* is considered extraordinarily powerful to the point of being dangerous. In mythology and contemporary rituals *Tayaupá* must be kept from getting too close to the **earth** and scorched.

Tayaupá is not approached with the same familiarity and enthusiasm as *Tatewarí*, but the *mara'akame* does approach the Sun to gain special powers. *Tayaupá* is the only deity who sends misfortune and illness (smallpox, esp.) to humanity as punishment or warning. *Tayaupá* is associated with sacred animals that are also harmful to humans, like poisonous snakes. The *mara'akame* is not immune from the dangers of *Tayaupá*, particularly when retrieving stolen souls from the Sun.

Training

The candidate learns directly from *Tatewarí* over many years. The candidate may also choose to learn myths and songs from an older *mara'akame*, but apprenticeship is not formal. Candidates participate in many ceremonies beginning as children, like all Huichol, and then eventually assisting with the chanting and preparations.

Over the years he or she must master an enormous body of cultural and shamanic knowledge and develop considerable skill in **singing, storytelling,** and violin playing.

Peyote, taken from the time he or she is a child in community rituals, helps to establish contact with *Tatewari*. *Tatewari*, who is also known as *Hikuri*, the Peyote-god, sends messages from the spirit world through visions. The *marakame* must learn to interpret these visions accurately.

When a candidate is guided to complete his or her **training**, he or she begins a five-year period of specific sacrifices, prohibitions, and leadership of the sacred peyote hunt for those five consecutive years. The hunts must, of course, be successful. During this five-year period the candidate must maintain fidelity to his or her spouse, abstain from salt and at times sleep, fast frequently, and observe any specific instructions received from *Tatewari* in his or her own visions.

The leadership of the peyote hunts grows more severe and strenuous with each year as the *marakame* is able to take on more and more of the psychospiritual weight of his or her people and of the pilgrims on the hunts. To fail is a serious matter and the hardships involved in becoming an *marakame* only become more severe. Those who fail are in danger of becoming sorcerers because they have acquired some magical powers but not the strength of character nor the courage of heart to control them. The actual assumption of the role of *marakame* usually does not occur until middle age.

Healing

The *marakame* used the following standard **shamanic healing** techniques: **cleansing** with smoke by **camaying** and healing through sucking, massage, and **soul retrieval**. The *marakame* also functions as the **psychopomp**, traveling with the souls of the deceased to the **Land of the Dead** to assure their safe passage.

Tatewari is called on to cleanse the Huichol, returning those who participate in **ritual** with Grandfather Fire to their original condition of innocence and purity.

Paraphernalia

The Huichol construct two types of **sacred spaces**, the small family temple called the *xiriki* and the community temple called the *tuki*. The *xiriki* house the **urukame crystals** and **offerings**, including: deer horns and tails, gourds of sacred **water**, musical instruments used in ritual, and staffs of office. The deer horns of Kaenyumari are placed on top of both structures.

The *marakame's* personal **power objects** include the *'uweni* or chair that is the sacred place of the *marakame* while he or she chants during **ceremony**. The *'uweni* is constructed with a round seat and a backrest displaying woven designs of the five-petal flower symbol for peyote and trimmed in deer skin.

The *takwatsi* is an oblong woven basket with a fitted lid that is constructed specifically to carry the *marakame's* ceremonial **feathers** and arrows, or *muveri*. The *muveri* are distinguished from weaponry by bundles of hawk, eagle, or turkey feathers tied to them. They are a multi-purpose power objects that are used in cleansing and curing rituals. A full complement is ten, five major *muveri* for singing ceremonies and five minor *muveri* for healing rituals.

The *marakame's* power objects also include miniature deer snares and miniature *'uweni* for the **spirits, rattles**, rattles from rattlesnakes, the violin and other musical instruments.

Myerhoff, B. G. *Peyote Hunt: The Sacred Journey of the Huichol Indians*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974.

Masinisawe

Masinisawe, an **Ojibwa** term meaning "he makes marks with **fire**," is a form of

divination called **scapulimancy**. An animal bone, most often the scapula or shoulder blade, is held near enough to a fire to scorch it. The bone is removed and either the scorch marks or the fissures and lines created by the heat are read. Only initiated shamans can perform *masinisawe*, which is usually practiced in solitude. The shoulder blade from any animal can be used, including the porcupine, marten, lynx, rabbit, beaver, moose, or caribou. This divination technique is often used to find someone who is lost or to foresee the future.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Mask Dances

Dances that played a central role in the psychospiritual well-being and preventative **medicine** of the peoples of the Pacific Northwest from Alaska to Oregon. There are three main types of mask dances: the *swaihwe* and *tal* involve wooden **masks** and the sacred winter ceremonies involve both wooden and painted faces. Permission to **dance** the dances had to be given, bought, or inherited by the families who were the keepers of the dance.

As preventative medicine, one function of the *swaihwe* dances was **purification** and **cleansing**. The Winter Ceremony dances, or “spirit **singing**,” functioned as an opportunity to honor and renew connection with totem **animal spirits** and ancestral beings, both sources of **power** and well-being. Once permission was granted, mastery of the dance and story were necessary to be allowed to dance the *swaihwe* and the *tal* masks.

The dancers of the Winter Ceremony dances were required to complete an elaborate **initiation** process to earn the honor to dance. Full spirit **possession** is necessary, among other skills, to correctly perform these dances. The initiation process employed fasting, sweating,

seclusion, intermediate rituals, testing by those initiated, transmission of power through breath by the initiated, **ritual** death and rebirth, extreme physical challenges, and controlled “possession” by **power animals**.

These dances were both **healing** and entertaining. They conveyed the history of creation, the heroic accomplishments of Ancestors and animals in the survival of humanity, and the social values of the people. Mask dances were used to enhance the impact and power of marriage, potlach, and reception ceremonies.

Barnett, H. G. *Gulf of Georgia Salish*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1939.

Masks

A **costume** worn over the face as means by which the **spirits** are brought into the physical world to interact with humans. Masks can be receptacles for spirit, and when used in this way, they are **power objects**. Masks are often conceived in the visions or **journeys** of the shaman in the spirit world. These masks are not meant to be realistic, but to interpret an idea or **vision** and capture the spirit of it. The creation of the mask brings the spirit of the vision into the physical world for the whole community to see, to witness, and to experience the power.

In general, masks can be used to share visions and oral histories through **storytelling** and dramatization. Other masks, created to hold the energies of specific spirits, can be used as power objects that focus the spirit power on specific tasks. The masks used by shamans in healing rituals are a way for the shaman to draw the spirit powers in the mask into the healing of individuals and communities.

The structure of a mask varies relative to tradition, purpose, and available resources. The most basic mask is face paint. Some masks are constructed to be held over the face, or eyes, like a

masquerade mask. There are hand masks, finger masks, jaw and mouth masks, face masks, and masks constructed to be worn over masks.

Masks used in dancing rituals are often constructed to be worn on the forehead, like a baseball cap, with the mask face protruding out and down over the dancer's face. These masks often have hair, grasses, bark, or some sort of material in strips that hang from the lower rim, covering the dancer's face and shoulders and enhancing the otherworldly effect with the appearance of additional height.

Masks are widely used throughout **North America**, particularly among the cultures of the Pacific Northwest Coast, Northeastern, and Southwestern regions. Some are made of wood and others of skin or cloth. The effect of the mask is enhanced with paint, **feathers**, hair, corn husks, fur, etc.

The peoples of the Northwest Coast area carve elaborate masks of cedar with moving parts mounted on hinges. Parts of the mask fold open or can be manipulated in some way so that the original "face" of the mask is transformed into a second character. These masks are used in powerful transformation stories that tell of heroes who changed from animal to human, human to animal, and from one **gender** to the other to succeed against impossible odds.

Traditionally, shamans carved their own masks, often on the living tree. Today, craftsmen specialize in carving the masks, locating the sacred **trees** for the wood, and the **ritual** process of creating a living mask. The tree spirit and the spirits of the forest are an important part of the process. Cultures that use wooden masks use a particular tree for their sacred masks, like the basswood tree used by the **Iroquois** or the kepuhrangdu tree used in Bali.

Masks play an important role in shamanic rituals. However, the actions of the shaman, not the form of the mask, determine its use. Furthermore, the mask face is the face of the spirit,

but the shaman must dance the dance of the spirit and **sing** the curing songs to embody the spirit and make its powers fully available to the healing.

Masks as Power Objects

Masks are power objects. Images for the mask often come from dreams or journeys during which the spirit instructs the dreamer to create the mask, often also specifying the tree to be used and the rituals to be performed in the process. The wood from sacred trees must be cut in a sacred way at specific times. The mask is created using specific rituals and observing specific **taboos**. Once completed, a ritual is performed to formally invite the spirit into the mask.

When made in a sacred way masks embody the **energy** of spirit and will continue to do so until they are destroyed or disrespected. When a sacred mask is danced the spirit in the mask can enter the body of the dancer or shaman. When the ritual ends, the spirit returns to the mask. Masks provide such an inviting home for spirit that even masks not made in a sacred way have been known to become embodied by spirits.

In many cultures these sacred masks are cared for with respect and treated as living things. These masks are kept in a special location or container, fed regular **offerings**, and amends are made if the mask is accidentally dropped or harmed. The Zuni, for example, chew a variety of seeds and spray them over the mask as an offering to give it life.

It was not uncommon for masks to be made for a specific ritual and then burned after the last dance on the last night of a multi-day ritual. The **fire** provides a means of releasing the spirits embodied in the masks in a way that assures **purification** and the transformation of anything harmful or malevolent. A mask and the spirit within it are the responsibility of the creator, dancer, or shaman who uses it. If the spirit is not cared for, it must be released. Many powerful, sacred masks were burned

rather than allowed to be taken by white men out of reach of the caretaker's ability to properly honor and control the spirit powers in the mask.

Masks Used in Healing Rituals

Masks are used in **healing** rituals to access the spirits in the masks whose powers are needed for the healing. For example, the Iroquois explain that the false face masks of the healing society came from dreams. In these dreams the forest spirits told the dreamer that they possessed the power to heal sickness. The spirits instructed the dreamer how to carve the mask, conduct the feast, make the sacred **tobacco** offerings, and sing the curing songs. When performed as instructed, the spirit powers entered the person wearing the mask to be directed into healing.

Yup'ik masks are also conceived of in the dreams and visions of the shaman. However, these masks are created for a healing ritual and then burned or left in a sacred way on the tundra away from the village. New masks are created each year, carved from wood, painted, and decorated according to the *angalkuq's* (shaman's) **vision**. Many masks represent things the people are asking the spirit world for, like animals for subsistence, good **weather**, or the power of a spirit for healing.

The Yup'ik term, *agayuliyararput*, means "our way of making **prayer**." It refers to the way in which masks and their dances and songs are ways of opening a connection to the spirit world through ritual. See also **False Face Society**.

Fienup-Riordan, Ann. *Agayuliyararput, Our Way of Making Prayer*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1996.

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White, T. ed. *Shaman's Drum*. Vol 36, Fall 1994, pg. 21–24.

Master of the Fish

An aspect of the **Master of the Beasts**. The *payés* (shamans) of **Amazonia** journey to the Master of the Fish to negotiate for the release of fish to feed the people. The *payé journeys* into the **sacred** waterfalls and encloses himself in an air bubble to continue to the bottom of the river. There he negotiates with the Master of the Fish for days. See also **hunting magic**.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Master of the Spirits

The **shaman** is often described as the Master of the Spirits because his control over the **spirits** causes them to help in the shaman's rituals. However, the true nature of the shaman's relationship with the **helping spirits** is one of **interdependence** rather than control. The shaman is powerless to heal shamanically without the intervention of spirit. The spirits take this **power** away with even greater ease than they grant it in the first place.

Even experienced shamans approach **spirit** with respect and **humility**. The **words** spoken and songs sung in **ritual** are largely the shaman requesting help, understating his powers, and asking that spirit bring the powers necessary to accomplish the act of **healing** or magic for which the ritual is being conducted.

The notion of mastery over the spirits contradicts most of what we know about how shamanic powers function. The majority of shamans attribute their power directly to the spirits or to a

special, non-ordinary **energy**. Traditionally, shamans do not claim to be the source of their power or that power will be taken away. Though the shaman may show off, basically advertise, in competitions or displays of power in some cultures, his or her relationship with spirit is grounded in humility.

Many former shamans explain their loss of powers as a result of breaking a **taboo** or transgressing in some way such that the spirit withdraws permanently and terminates the relationship. When shamans do not do as their helping spirits require they and their relations may suffer illness, madness, and death. Author and anthropologist Piers Vitebsky explains that "the relationship between shaman and spirit can be an uncertain one, and the shaman's anguish can be too intense to justify the name of master."

It is necessary for a shaman to develop mastery over his or her **trance** states. It should not be interpreted as control of the spirits themselves. The shaman's powers are based on a mastery of self, ego, and fear, in short on a mastery of personal state.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Master of the Beasts

A **spirit** being who is the guardian or keeper of the animals and their **spirits**. The Master of the Beasts is thought of in some cultures as the collective **soul** or essence of the animals. The **shaman** journeys into the **Lowerworld** or to the bottom of the sea to appease the Master or **Mistress of the Beasts** in the performance of **hunting magic**.

The shaman negotiates with the Master of the Beasts to release animals

in exchange for human **sacrifices**. These sacrifices usually take the form of strict observance of moral behavior and confessions of trespasses against others, however rituals, feasts, **offerings**, and in some cultures humans lives were also exchanged.

Though the Mistress or Mother of the Beasts is the original form, in some cultures she later transformed into the Master of the Beasts.

Ripinsky-Naxon, M. *The Nature of Shamanism: Substance and Function of a Religious Metaphor*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Maya

A people living in independent states covering more than 100,000 square miles of forest and plain in what is now Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador. Today, Maya live throughout this region, though no longer in the independent city-state structure. The history of the Maya is to Central America what the history of the Egyptians is to the Mediterranean region and that of the Chinese is to Asia.

Worldview

The Maya worldview is similar to that of shamanic peoples around the world. The physical world and the spiritual world are seen as two planes of existence, inextricably locked together, in which everything is alive and **sacred**. The physical world is the material manifestation of **spirit** forces and the spirit is the essence of all things material. Objects, people, and places in the physical world acquire dangerous **power** when the connection between the two worlds is made manifest through **ritual** and trance.

For the Maya **time** was not linear, but cyclical. Time plays out in repeating patterns woven directly into the **space/time** fabric of the Universe. The

Maya not only saw the past returning in endless cycles of historical symmetry, but they chose to act on particular dates to replay that symmetry and use that symmetry to draw power from the past into the present time.

To use contemporary terms, one could say that the Maya saw time and space as a matrix of **energy** fields. These fields of energy affect the beings within them, both human and spirit. Simultaneously, the actions of the beings in the field affect the patterns of the matrix. For the Maya, this relationship of inextricable interaction is obvious and they exploited it to their advantage, as all shamanic peoples do to greater and lesser degrees.

Cosmology

The Mayan world is made up of three interrelated **domains** that are each alive and imbued with sacred power. The **Upperworld** is the **Sky**, the starry arch that is represented by the great crocodilian cosmic monster. The **Middleworld** is the **earth**, the human world that floats on the **primordial sea**. The **Lowerworld** is the dark, watery world of *Xibalba*, filled like **ordinary reality** with animals, plants, beings, landscapes, and structures. *Xibalba* rotates above the earth at sundown, becoming the night sky and returns below the earth at dawn, becoming a **mirror** image of the earth and its beings.

Xibalba, though called the Underworld, is understood by the Maya to be the Otherworld, the spirit realm that is visited by the **shaman** in an ecstatic trance state. *Xibalba* and its spirit world population are often represented underwater or as a mirror image of the Middleworld population. Many of the *Xibalba* creatures are depicted in glyphs that designate them as co-essences, or **helping spirits**.

The *wacah chan*, or **Tree of Life**, creates an axis through all three realms, coexisting in and connecting them. The branches of *wacah chan* reached to the highest layers of the Upperworld and the roots touched the deepest layer of

the Lowerworld, providing a means by which the shaman travel between the worlds. *Wacah chan* is represented by the color blue-green and is associated with specific **birds**, gods, and rituals.

The principal axis of the Maya Middleworld is the path of the **Sun, east to west**. Mayan maps are oriented with the east at the top. Each direction is the home of a sacred tree and is associated with a bird, a color, specific gods, and the rituals necessary to honor and work with them.

The four cardinal directions provided the grid for the Middleworld and Maya community. The Maya utilized the matrix of power points in the land, particularly mountains and **caves**, which were created by the gods when the gods created the cosmos. The expressions for the directions and the names vary greatly depending on the Mayan **language** being spoken. The following examples are from the Yucatec language.

Lakin, the east, is represented by *chac*, red, and the tree, *Chac-Xib-Chac*. *Xaman*, the **north**, is sometimes called the “side of heaven” and contains the north star around which the sky pivots each day. *Xaman* is represented by *zac*, white, and the tree, *Zac-Xib-Chac*. *Chikin* is the leaving place of the sun, the west. *Chikin* is represented by *ek*, black, and the tree *Ek-Xib-Chac*. *Nohol*, the **south**, is represented by *kan*, yellow, and the tree *Kan-Xib-Chac*.

The H'men

The *h'men*, meaning the “one who knows,” can be a man or a woman. The *h'men* is distinguished from the **medicine** people who heal only physical **illness** and those who heal only spiritual illness. The *h'men* is a “doctor-**priest**” who is called on to heal physical and spiritual ailments.

Training

The *h'men* is called in a **dream** by the Nine Mayan Spirits, who are heard in the thunder and seen in the lightning. These spirits continue to teach the novice techniques, medicinal plants,

and sacred **prayers** in his or her dreams. The sacred prayers are the most important and powerful tool of the *h'men*. The novice may also **apprentice** him/herself to a master *h'men*. In that way the huge body of knowledge of medicinal plants and sacred plants gathered during the *h'men's* lifetime can be passed on to the next generation.

Illness

The Maya believe that illnesses are caused by an array of obvious physical causes. The non-physical causes include: **susto**, (fright), *mal aire* (malaise), *envidia* (misfortune caused by an enemy), and *mal ojo* (evil eye). Illness is also attributed to **sorcery** and malevolent spirit **possession** caused by sorcery.

Healing

The *h'men* is called on to conduct rituals to affect the **weather** and protect the crops, e.g., to bring rain or to stop the rain or the wind. Some of these rituals may last two to three days. The *h'men* is called on to assist the growth of crops by protecting them from malevolent spirits or strengthening their benevolent spirits.

The *h'men* can ask animals to lay down their lives for the people to eat. The *h'men* is called on for all forms of **healings, exorcism, soul retrievals**, and counteracting the harmful effects of sorcery.

Divination

The *sastun* is one of the most important tools of the *h'men* and is used primarily in **divination** and **diagnosis**. The *sastun* (*sas*, meaning "light" or "mirror" and *tun*, meaning stone) is found in various shapes and forms. The one consistent quality is that the stone has a transparent quality that allows the *h'men* to look into it.

The *sastun* is a **power object** given by spirit, in that traditionally spirit shows the *h'men* the *sastun* or where to find it in a dream. The *sastun* is a channel through which the *h'men* contacts the spirits for divinations and empowering

cures. It can also be used to answer yes or no questions from the patient.

Paraphernalia

The *h'men* uses his or her *sastun* when the direction from spirit is unclear or is not forthcoming. Copal resin is burned and the resulting smoke is used for **cleansing** and clearing. Leaves from the *tzib* che plant are used similarly, stroking the body in sets of nine strokes to cleanse and clear. The *h'men* also uses tallow candles and an assortment of other personal power objects.

Yucatán shamans set up their **altars** as models of the Maya worldview and put them in traditional places of power, the mouths of caves, the foot of hills, or out in open fields. The altar, arbor, or corral created for the **ritual** involves the four **trees** at the four corners, six poles holding up the altar, and blood-letting, now from chickens, turkeys, deer, or pigs. All the shaman acts and rituals of the Maya employ the principle that the place will be opened through the ritual as the central axis that allows communication with the spirit world.

For the Maya, ritual **sacrifice** is the highest act of spiritual devotion. The Maya see their relationship with the cosmos in the **life cycle** of maize, the staple of Mayan life. The maize cannot renew its life cycle without human hands to plant the seeds. The Maya believed that the Universe could not renew itself without the sacrifice of blood.

Maya shamans maintain a link with the ancient gods and help to preserve the language, worldview, and the Maya understanding of the reality of the universe in the face of great pressure from Western **religions** to conform. The shamans help to heal the contradictions in the village priorities that arise from diverse cultural influences. Their actions conserve things of value by constantly reframing and explaining the changes in the world based on fundamental ideas that are thousands of years old.

Arvigo, Rosita. *Sastun: My Apprenticeship with a Maya Healer*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1995.

Hammond, N. *Ancient Maya Civilization*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1982.

Schele, L., and D. Freidel. *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1990.

Schultes, R. E. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Maya Prophecy

This prophecy is very like the prophecies of the Hopi and the **Q'ero (Inka)** in its general message of the coming of a new **time** for humanity and the **earth**. The Maya prophecy, linked to its calendar and astronomy, is complex, exacting, and frighteningly accurate. To vastly oversimplify, the Maya understood time to be cyclical in nature and that cycles are fifty-two years in length.

The Maya prophecy predicted that their own culture's lifespan was to be seven heaven cycles of decreasing choice followed by nine hell cycles of increasing doom. After the ninth hell cycle the "Lord of the Dawn" would return. At the end of the seventh heaven cycle the Spanish conquistadors and **priests** arrived and began the conquest and conversion of the peoples of Mexico.

The atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima at the end of the eighth hell cycle. Humanity is now coming to the end of the ninth, and final hell cycle. The end of the cycles described in the prophecy is also the beginning of the return of the "Lord of the Dawn." This is described as a time of not only new thinking, but of a complete paradigm shift and a quantum leap for humanity.

Hammond, N. *Ancient Maya Civilization*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1982.

Schele, L., and D. Freidel. *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1990.

Mazatec

A native people of Mexico who use **psilocybe mushrooms** extensively in their practice.

Medicine

The **sacred**, mysterious, supernatural **power** inherent in all things. The term is usually used with regard to **aboriginal** North American peoples and generally does not refer to something used for medication. Medicine powers are a normal aspect of daily life and can be found manifest in ordinary places and objects, as well as things publicly recognized as sacred.

Indigenous North Americans understand that there is an invisible power that connects everything in the universe. Everything is alive and contains an animating power. The **Lakota** call this power *wakan* and the **Iroquois** call it *orneda*. Medicine is the aspect of anything associated with this supernatural power. North American shamans use both "medicine powers" and **spirit** powers.

Each individual possesses **original medicine**, which is the unique quality of personal power that arises from the combination of talents, gifts, and challenges innate to that individual. An individual may be granted additional medicine powers as a result of a profound life transformation, dedicated work, or a successful **vision quest** or **initiation**. Any single medicine power granted one of these ways can often be put to more than one use. However, the range of uses or the number of times the individual may use that medicine may be limited by spirit.

Consciousness and wisdom are fundamental characteristics of medicine. This consciousness is innate in all

things and creates a basis for communication and connection between all things. Therefore, medicine can be seen as the thread of the **Great Mystery** that moves within and connects all things.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Medicine Bundle

A collection of **power objects**, medicines, and sometimes ritual **paraphernalia** wrapped in a skin or skin pouch. The contents of each bundle are unique and defined by the purpose for which it was created. The handling and care of a bundle, which is considered a living, conscious being, are **sacred ceremony** that is defined by the owner, cultural traditions, and the nature of the powers contained in the bundle.

A medicine bundle can be owned by a regular person or a **shaman** or other person of power, and is thus privately owned. A bundle can also be associated with a particular ceremony or **ritual**, a **medicine society**, a particular clan, or an entire nation as with the Sacred Calf Pipe bundle of the **Lakota**. These bundles are publicly owned and the honor and responsibility of their care is handed down through the generations, often within families. See also **medicine pouch**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Medicine Dance

The term most often refers to the performances of the **Midewiwin Society** in the anthropological literature. However, it is also appropriate to apply it to the sings of the Navajo or the performances

of the **medicine societies** of the Southwestern region of **North America**.

Technically, the term applies not only to the formal **healing** rituals of these medicine societies and traditions, but to the many creative acts of **shamanic healing** performed around the world by single shamans or groups in which the shaman's **dance** or the dancing of the patient or community is the "medicine" that facilitates the cure. A medicine dance is a shamanic healing **ritual** in which dance is the tool of healing.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Medicine Man

A popular term applied to healers of indigenous cultures, particularly those of **North America**. This term overlooks the fact that there are many different kinds of healers in indigenous cultures and that healers are just as often women as they are men. Female healers may have been less apparent given that they were not as prone to **power displays** as their male counterparts.

The terms medicine man and **shaman** have become interchangeable in the literature. This leads to confusion and propagates misunderstanding. For example, shamans do not always use their powers for **healing**. Nor are all healers skilled in directing supernatural powers.

In European literature *shaman* tends to be reserved for practitioners who access their powers through mastery of **altered states of consciousness** and medicine man refers to practitioners who do not use altered states in their healing work. While this distinction still lumps a great diversity of practitioners together, it does reflect the general truth that most shamans are medicine men, while not all medicine men are shamans.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Medicine Pipe

See **sacred pipe**.

Medicine Pouch

Also called **medicine** bag, medicine sack, **medicine bundle**, etc. A medicine pouch contains **elements** of the shaman's personal medicine. Medicine in this context means those items associated with supernatural power. Like other **power objects**, the items in a medicine pouch are ordinary items which embody non-ordinary power.

The medicine pouch has consciousness. The pouch must be regularly fed with **sacred offerings** and handled in a specific fashion. Breaking **taboos** connected with a medicine pouch can have serious harmful consequences.

Every **culture** has a prescribed way of handling a shaman's medicine pouch after the **shaman** dies. Ideally a shaman transfers the pouch to a new owner before his or her death. In some cultures the medicine pouch and other power objects stay with the shaman's body throughout the funerary process. In other cultures the shaman's **spirit** enlivens the pouch and other power objects in a **ritual** during which they pick their new owner.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Medicine Singing

Medicine singing is a practice of **healing** with **spirit** songs. The songs are gifts from spirit and they are often given to heal a particular illness or to resolve a particular situation. The songs must be sung exactly as received from spirit to be effective. The songs and the right to **sing** them are passed on from generation to generation.

Singing is used by shamans in healing rituals around the world. In North America, medicine singing is also used by non-shamans for doctoring. There are songs for curing and for protection from malevolent **spirits** and acts of **sorcery**. There are different songs for children, adults, and elders.

One must prepare to receive medicine songs by observing rituals of **cleansing** and **purification**, sometimes for as long as a year or more. The songs come spontaneously from the spirits, often during **vision quests** or in **dreams**, and they teach themselves to the singer. Songs can come gently or with great force, often making the singer sick for the first few days as the **song** settles in and decides if the person is fit to sing it. Then it may take decades of singing the song for the individual to actually be able to heal with it. See also **medicine**; **medicine societies**; **music**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

———. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Medicine Societies

An anthropological term used to refer to organized societies of **shamans** or **priests** who perform complex **rituals** or **ceremonies** as a group. These rituals and ceremonies change very little over time, largely because preserving the form is part of the purpose of the society. Individual shamans continue to practice alongside the practices of the medicine societies in most of these cultures.

Versions of ceremonies do evolve between tribes who share the same medicine societies. For example, there is widespread variation of the **Ojibwa midewiwin** ceremony. There are three main types of **Midewiwin Society**: Central **Algonquian** including the Fox,

Illinois, Kickapoo, Menomini, Miami, Potawatomi, and Sauk, the Omaha/Ponca, and the Dakota including the Iowa, Oto, Winnebago, and Wahepton Dakota.

Variation also occurs among the medicine societies of the Pueblo people—the Hopi, Zuñi, Tiwa, Tewa, Towa, and Keres—whose priests perform very complex ceremonial forms. The Navajo *hataáál* is perhaps the most complex healing ceremonial form; however, the *hataáál* is performed by a qualified *hataáali*, not a society.

Each society has a head priest, who in some cultures is a powerful elder shaman and in other cultures is a practitioner distinct from the shamans of that **culture**. The priests and/or shamans of these societies are very powerful and influential. Each medicine society has specific functions and duties, although each also has a healing function. Some societies are specifically for curing, while others are for bringing rain, empowering various medicines, offering **blessings**, and the curing of illnesses caused by something related to their primary function.

Admission into a society has specific conditions and protocols that vary between societies. Each society trains and initiates its candidates, often in elaborate **initiation** rituals. Many societies have numerous levels of **training** and initiation. Advancement between levels is based on performance alone. All of these characteristics differ from culture to culture. However, it is consistent across cultures that initiation, or some part of the initiation, is kept secret from the uninitiated, as are essential parts of the healing rituals and the internal affairs of the society.

Most medicine society rituals and ceremonies have two parts, part performed in secret and the other performed in public. For example, in the southwestern medicine societies the secret rites are conducted in kivas (underground rooms) and among the Ojibwa they are performed in the Midewiwin Society's lodge. The public

part of the ceremony usually involves songs, exact enactment of chants and corresponding ritual actions, dancing often in **costumes, singing, music**, and often displays of **power** by the most accomplished society members. It is not unusual for either part of the ceremony to last for several days.

An altar is created within the designated ceremonial **space**, dividing the public and secret parts of the ceremony or ritual. Altars may be elaborate Hopi altars with **prayer** sticks and sacred offerings, Navajo **sand paintings**, or a buffalo **skull** or other power object symbolic of and sacred to the society performing.

Medicine societies are also called dancing societies, ceremonial societies, or sodalities in the literature.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Mediumship

The capacity, function, or profession of acting as an intermediary between the living and the spirit world. Mediumship alone does not make one a **shaman**; however, shamans may serve as mediums to restore harmony to the individual or community. When a shaman serves as a medium it is called **divination**.

Divination is the act of consulting the beings, or wisdom, of the spirit world to gain information about the past, present, or future in order to facilitate problem solving. Shamans use **altered states of consciousness** and divination tools to perform their divinations.

Both mediums and shamans are called to their **profession** by the spirit world. The spontaneous initiatory **possession** is often interpreted as **illness**. For individuals who resolve this crisis, the next phase is to learn to induce and control the possessions, not just rely on spontaneous generation. The medium must be able to induce **trance** and to practice in a community context, so that

he or she can help others when they are ill or in need of guidance from the **spirits**. The medium must also learn the internal control to end the trance state and return to his or her ordinary consciousness.

Evidence of full possession and the spirit's presence may be expected by clients, especially among the Buddhists, Taoists, and Hindus in Asia where the tradition of spirit mediums remains unbroken. The medium's state of consciousness may vary from full awareness and memory of the process to no awareness and complete amnesia. The medium's voice, expression, accent, **posture**, and behavior may all change dramatically and suggest that the original person and personality have been replaced by one quite different.

In a survey of 188 cultures, mediumship was found in over half of them. These cultures that use altered states often draw clear distinctions between various levels of trance. The Umbandistas of Argentina, for example, distinguish three levels of trance. The first is *irradiation* (irradiation) during which the medium is basically him/herself. At this stage the spirit **energy** is reaching the medium, but does not have control over the medium's body. He or she may have **intuitions** about problem solving or experience strange sensations in certain body parts.

The second stage is *encostamiento* (to be beside). At this stage the spirit energy is "leaning" on the medium and has control over the medium's body. The medium begins losing memory of what he or she is witnessing and control over his or her body.

In the final stage, *incorporacion* (incorporation), the spirit energy is in full possession. The spirit of the medium has moved out of the way to allow the possessing spirit to fully enter and control the medium's **words** and body. The Umbandista healers are expected to work from this state of *incorporacion*, because their clients are there to speak to the gods, not the mediums.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Mesa

A bundle of **power objects** that function as a portable **altar** and are used in small personal and large group rituals of **Q'ero** shamans, high in the Andean mountains of Peru. For use the *mesa* is unwrapped and its contents placed ritually on the cloth. Typical contents include the *q'uyas* (stones) and objects that embody the power of *Pachamama* (the **Earth**), the *apus* (the mountain spirits), and the shaman's **teachers**, both human and/or **spirit** beings.

The Q'ero shaman's power comes from his or her ability to communicate with the *achachle*, the spirit that lives in everything. The **shaman** must cultivate his or her personal energy to be able to attain this state of **sacred** communication with *achachle* in the different energies in the environment. The Q'ero shaman goes through many levels of **training** and **initiation** and the *mesa* is at the core of this practice.

Mesayoc

There are particular lines of **knowledge** and levels of development for which it is helpful for the *paq'o* to have a teacher, or *mesayoc* (master). All of the next three levels of *paq'o* are capable of extraordinary **healings**, both physical-like paralysis and drug addiction, and spiritual-like psychic and psychological abnormalities. In addition to healings the *pampa mesayoc*, the *alto mesayoc*, and *kuraq akulleq* each use their relationship with the supernatural in unique and increasingly more powerful and enlightened ways.

Mescal Beans

Mescal beans were used thousands of years ago by the **First Peoples** of Mexico and the North American Plains and Southwest. Caches of the beans have

been found in the Rio Grande basin dating between 1500 B.C.E. and 200 C.E.

A hallucinogenic drink was prepared from the bean and consumed during the Red Bean **Dance**, a dance **ritual** performed for **divination** and visions. The Red Bean Dance and use of the mescal bean gave way to **peyote** and the practice related to it. This transition occurred in part because peyote is a much safer hallucinogen.

Mescal beans are the seeds of the *Sophora secundiflora* tree. The active constituent in the mescal bean is cytisine, a highly toxic alkaloid. Cytisine is not known to be hallucinogenic by chemical standards; however, it is present in several hallucinogenic plants whose active principle is still unknown.

Schultes, R. E. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Mesoamerica

The cultural and geographic region of Central America limited by **aboriginal** farming to the north and Mayan-speakers to the east. All Mesoamerican peoples share a variety of traits that are absent or rare elsewhere in the New World.

These traits are highly specialized markets, a game played with a rubber ball in a special court, hieroglyphic writing, accordion-folded books of fig-bark paper or deerskin, a complex calendar, **knowledge** of the movement of planets (esp. Venus) against a background of stars, bloodletting from the ears, tongue, or penis, human **sacrifice** by removing head or heart, belief in an multi-layered upper and lower worlds of spirit, a universe oriented in the four directions and center, specific **colors** and gods assigned to each of these five points, and a highly complex pantheistic **religion** recognizing **spirit** in nature, mythical gods and goddesses, **ancestors**, and the living royalty.

The Olmec of the Yucatán peninsula developed the template of complex

cultural traits of the Mesoamericans in the Early Preclassic period, 1500–900 B.C.E. The term was first defined by Paul Kirchhoff in 1943.

Coe, Michael D. *The Maya*. London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1999.

Schele, L., and D. Freidel. *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1990.

Mestizo

People of the Americas who are of mixed Indian and European blood. Though not a traditional native group, they are included here because Mestizo shamans of the upper Amazon, called **vegetalistas**, have vital contemporary shamanic practices employing the plant hallucinogen **ayahuasca**.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Metal

A substance with powerful protective functions in shamanism. The ringing of metal, fashioned into bells, cymbals, gongs, and other jangling objects, was used to drive away harmful **spirits** and the harmful effects of malevolent **sorcery**, **spells**, and curses. Metal objects, primarily of iron or copper, are found in the **paraphernalia** and sewn to the **costumes** of shamans in **Africa**, across **Siberia**, **China**, **Japan**, and parts of ancient Europe.

Metallurgy, which involves the transformation of matter through **fire**, is a central, magical element in the mythology of these peoples. The **blacksmith** is often associated with the **shaman** as an older sibling who, like the shaman, is tortured, tutored, initiated, and given transformational powers by the spirits.

These metal discs and figures and copper **mirrors** have souls and they do not rust. The uses and magical meanings of the metallic objects vary between tribes and from **culture** to culture.

Generally these **power objects** offer protection and the mirrored discs allow the shaman to see and capture souls. For example, the caftan of an Altaic shaman is made of a goat or reindeer skin and hung with a number of miniature iron objects, like bows, arrows, and animals, and copper discs, which frighten harmful spirits.

The caftan of a Siberian shaman is hung with iron discs to protect the shaman from the blows of malevolent spirits. Other iron or copper figures represent mythical animals, a pectoral disc represents the **Sun**, a pierced disc represents the **earth** and the shaman's entry into the **Lowerworld**, and on the back a lunar crescent and chain hang. Each item symbolizes an aspect of the shaman's **spirit** power and strength to resist the attacks of malevolent spirits and sorcerers.

The **costume** of the **Yakut** shaman, similar to that of the **Zulu sangoma**, is hung with thirty to fifty pounds of metal ornaments, which make quite a racket when the shaman dances into trance. These objects embody the shaman's powers to cure: large round discs representing female breasts, the liver, heart, other internal organs, **sacred** animals, **birds**, and a small metal canoe containing the Spirit of Madness who helps the shaman to cure metal **illness**.

In some cultures metal represents a level of development and mastery beyond the shaman's initial **initiation**. For example, after the fifth level of initiation a **Buryat (Buriat)** shaman receives a new cap with a crown of iron bands and its two ends bent to represent two horns. Also after the fifth level of initiation her birch "stick-horse" is replaced by one made of iron, its end sculptured into a horsehead and decorated with metal bells.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Mexoga

The **transformed shamans** of the Omaha people of **North America**. The *mexoga* belonged to a brotherhood of **gender-variant male** healers who served the community as shamans. These men were considered a different gender than the men of the tribe. They dressed and wore their hair in the tradition of the women in their tribe.

The *mexoga* is called to his vocation in childhood. The boy is visited by the goddess of the **moon** in a **dream**. In this dream she asks him to choose between the warrior's bow, symbolic of the masculine gender role, and the burden strap, symbolic of the feminine gender role. If the boy chose the burden strap in the dream, then the boy was destined to become a *mexoga* in life.

Sometime after the dream of the goddess of the moon, the boy is stopped on the road by a matronly woman. This woman is the physical **embodiment** of the goddess of the moon and she knows this goddess's ways. She addresses him as daughter and becomes his **teacher**, instructing him in the mysteries, shamanic techniques, and ways of the moon.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Middleworld

From a shamanic perspective anything and everything has, or is, **spirit**. The spirit aspect of everything, which is normally invisible, is experienced directly by the **shaman** through his or her senses while in an ecstatic **altered state of consciousness**.

This invisible world, or **non-ordinary reality**, is experienced by the shamans of many different cultures to have three realms; the **Upperworld**, **Middleworld**, and **Lowerworld**. These realms are non-linear, with limitless **space** and without **time**.

The Middleworld is the non-ordinary reality aspect of the physical Universe we live in. In it the spiritual, mental, and emotional energies of life flow in patterns that are apparent to the shaman while in an altered state and available to work with. To access the Middleworld the shaman simply leaves his or her body, enters trance, and journeys through the realm.

The Middleworld is inhabited by the spirit aspect of everything in our physical world. It is also populated by ghosts of humans who have not completed their **journey** after death and other lesser **spirits**, depending on the cultural perspective. **Power animals** and other **helping spirits** populate this realm when they choose to or when called on by humans for help. The spirits of Nature, the **elements**, and things in our world, like the **earth**, **Moon**, and **Sun** also populate this realm.

Shamans perform extractions, exorcisms, and **cleansing** healings in the Middleworld. For these healings the shaman enters an embodiment **trance** in which the helping spirit enters the shaman's body to work on the patient.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1990.

Midewiwin

The **healing ritual** of the secret **medicine society**, or **Midewiwin Society**, of many different peoples of the Great Lakes region in **North America**. Among the **Ojibwa**, rituals last for seven to eight days and consist of the activities of a group of Mide shamans who work together in public, private, and secret sessions during the ritual.

In preparation for the ritual all the shamans who will participate cleanse themselves in a **sweat lodge**. This is followed by a processional, full of symbolism and chanting, to the *midewigun*, the lodge in which the Mide ritual and ceremonies are conducted. The shamans rattle turtle shell **rattles** throughout the

processional to call in the **spirits** of goodwill and to disperse harmful malevolent spirits.

When the four rounds of the processional are complete the shamans enter the *midewigun* and seat themselves according to the four orders of Mide shamans. The curing begins with from two to four nights of private sessions depending on the **illness** being cured, then proceeds into one or two days of secret healing sessions, and closes with a day session that is open to the public.

After the curing the patient distributes gifts to the shamans according to order and office. Then, in a final healing session, each **shaman** shoots a *migi*, a **sacred** power shell, into the patient to assure strength and good health. The Midewiwin concludes with a feast and dancing.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Midewiwin Society

The secret **medicine society** of many peoples of the Great Lakes region in North America. The Midewiwin Society developed a strict hierarchic structure for **training** medicine people, shamans, and **seers**.

Initiation

Initially, anyone who demonstrated healing gifts or plant medicine **knowledge** was accepted. Eventually training was limited to the highly gifted and those chosen by the *manitou* (spirits). The spontaneous selection in a dream was considered most proper as it ensured *manitou* approval of the candidate. Patients who were cured by the Mide Society were invited to train after testing for the *manitou* approval.

It was also possible to pay for entry. Each level of **initiation** had a price; the higher the level, the greater the price. However, payment did not guarantee the candidate would acquire the necessary approval of *manitou* necessary for

gaining real **power** and mastery of the *mide's* skills.

Initiation of the Patient-Candidate

At the *midewiwin* healing **ritual**, there are many days of healing during which the sick patient is expected to be cured. On the final day, during a public **ceremony**, the *mide* shamans close the healing ritual by “shooting” the patient with **migis** (shells) from their *midewayan*, **medicine bundles** to give the patient strength and lasting health. The patient drops into a **trance** as if dead, which reenacts the primordial death of **Nanabush** during the first *midewiwin*. This is also the initiation process at each stage of the *midewiwin* training.

The patient-candidate is awakened now filled with an infusion of *manitou* power in the form of *migis* shells. The patient, by virtue of the healing process, is now prepared to be a candidate into the sacred society of shamans. This process parallels that of the initiate within the *midewiwin* and the solitary Ojibwa seeking *manitou* to grant him/her shamanic powers.

Tests are made to ascertain if *Mide Manitou* is pleased with the ceremony and the candidate. Tests primarily involve animating normally inanimate objects, for example, making beads roll themselves, wooden dolls move unaided, or the *midewayan* (mide medicine bag) speak. The success of these displays of power indicates *Mide Manitou's* acceptance of the candidate into Midewiwin Society.

Training

There are believed to be eight levels of Midewiwin training; however, the highest four are completely shrouded in secrecy. Training for each of the first four stages requires the transmission of a precise body of knowledge from the *midewiwinini*, *mide*—mysterious principle—*winini*—man, to the initiate through specific initiation rituals. These four stages produce four levels of medicine people.

The teachings that can be taught are passed on orally and on a symbolic

birchbark script. Each stage involves learning a large body of knowledge and the preparation for the central initiation ritual of that stage. In the initiation ritual, the teachings that can only be experienced are passed on by the highest *midewiwinini* through the *migi* he shoots into the initiates. The initiates are later awakened by the *midewiwinini*. They vomit the *migi*, which is now theirs, and begin to live a life enriched by the teachings and the existential changes brought on by their experience of rebirth.

Though the initiate's status and existence have been changed by ritual, he or she must now prove his or her powers publicly. When all four initiations are complete and mastery demonstrated, the new *midewiwinini* receives a shell that protects against sickness and misfortune, the symbol of the *mide's* status.

The four stages of teaching, greatly simplified, follow. In the first stage the initiate must learn the plant lore, songs, and **prayers**. They must fast and sweat to prepare and provide the **offerings**, without mistake, at the Midewiwin spring ceremony. During this ceremony the initiation ritual takes place. In this ritual the initiate is “shot” with the sacred *migis* and collapses as if dead. In this state the initiate receives a **vision** and a **spirit song**. The *midewiwinini* awakens the initiate and the “newborn” must prove his or her newly acquired powers publicly. Completion of this stage is honored by the presentation, to the initiate, of a medicine bundle, filled with **power objects** and things that symbolize the initiate's personal powers.

In the second stage initiates learn another body of knowledge and preparation for the next initiation ritual. Through this second death and rebirth, the initiate receives an opening of powerful psychic abilities. The initiate must now master sight and hearing beyond the physical ranges of the senses and the ability to distinguish good from evil, read the future, find lost objects, touch people at a great distance, and transcend the limitations of **time** and

space and enter **altered states of consciousness**.

In the third stage initiates learn another body of knowledge and preparation for the next initiation. In this third death and rebirth initiation the initiate becomes a *yeesekeewinini*, one capable of invoking and communicating with higher beings in the spirit realm. When this stage is mastered the initiate can embody the power of Thunder which enables him/her to communicate with the *Mide Manitou* of the **Upperworld**.

In the fourth stage initiates learn another body of knowledge and preparation for the next initiation ritual. In this fourth death and rebirth the initiate receives the power to awaken the first three stages of powers in others. When this stage is mastered the initiate can fly, transform into the animal forms of his or her *manitou*, suck **illness** from the body, and demonstrate **mastery of fire**. The training is considered complete and the new *midewiwinini* is permitted to teach and test others, though he or she must return periodically to the Midewiwin Society ceremonials to regenerate his or her power. After completion of the training, some *midewiwinini* specialize. The *meskekeewinini*, *meskeek* meaning "liquid dose," heals with plant remedies prepared in both liquid and dry forms and can be considered a **medicine man**. The *meskekeewinini* also cures with bleeding, cupping, and the basic healing of ulcers and fresh wounds.

The *midewiwinini*, considered the shaman, heals the illnesses caused by **spirits**, sorcerers, and other energies from the invisible world. They work in trance states induced with drumming and rattling and use the power of their medicine bag, *migis*, and their **helping spirits**. The *midewiwinini*'s practice is not solitary if he or she lives near others of the Midewiwin Society and participates in the *midewiwin* healing rituals.

The *yeesekeewinini*, *yeeseke* meaning "prophecy," is the diviner, prophet or **seer**. They work in trance states, induced by drumming, and draw their

power from helping spirits. They address their question directly to the *Mide Manitou*. The *yeesekeewinini*'s practice may be solitary, due to the nature of that calling.

The **drum** used by the Midewiwin in ceremony is called *mitig wakik*. It is used to induce sustained trance states that allow the Midewiwin access to various modes of perception. Trance states are used to instruct candidates in shamanic lore, magical manipulation of objects, and herbal therapeutics.

The Midewiwin training preserves the knowledge of herbs, medicine songs, and shamanic techniques for prolonging life. One fundamental principle underlying Midewiwin healing is that life is prolonged by right living and use of herbs which were intended for this purpose by the *Mide Manitou*. This herbal lore is woven into all the teachings of the Midewiwin, in the narration of stories of the powers of the *manitou*, the songs and chants, and the techniques for manipulating of objects directing power.

Haines, E. M. *The American Indian (Uhnish-in-na-ba)*. Chicago: The Mas-sin-na'-gan Company, 1888.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

———. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Migi

A small white, **sacred** shell from the saltwater species, *Cypraea moneta* or money cowrie, used by shamans in **midewiwin initiations** and **healings** as a means to transfer **energy**. The *migis* carry a spark of life; the smaller the shell the more potent the charge. Each member of the Mide Society have a number of *migis*.

The *migis*, also called **medicine** arrows, are discharged from a *wayan*, the hide of a small animal like an otter.

The **power** of the *migi* is neutral; the effect of the *migi* is determined by the shooter. *Migis* are sent into victims to cause **illness** and into a patient to ensure good health. During healings *migis* are extracted from the patient as part of the cure.

When members of the **Midewiwin Society** gather for competition and **power displays**, *migi* duels are held between initiates. In these dancing duels, the dancers shoot *migis* at each other until only one remains standing.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Mihi

The Cubeo term for *ayahuasca*. The vulture is the animal **spirit** the Cubeo associate with *mihi* and its use. In *mihi* rituals the participants embody the **spirit** of the vulture as they enter the *mihi*-induced **trance** state. They **dance** bird-like, whistling and speaking in the "he, he, he" sounds of the vulture **spirits**. An effigy of the vulture flies from the roofbeam in the center inspiring the men and women equally to soar.

The powers the Cubeo associate with the vulture are derived from the fact that it effortlessly soars so high that it appears to enter the **Upperworld**. Much like the eagle of North America, the vulture is gifted with extraordinary sight. It can drop from great heights back down to **earth** with lightning speed and pinpoint accuracy.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Furst, P. T. "Feathered Crowns of Power." *Shaman's Drum* 29(Fall 1992):40-47.

Mikenak

In the **Shaking Tent Ceremony** the *djes-sakid* (shaman) asks *Mikenak* the questions from the audience, who leaves to obtain the answers. When *Mikenak* returns a whistling **sound** can be heard

by all attending as *Mikenak* falls from the top to the bottom of the *djesikon* (tent). *Mikenak* is heard conversing with the *djessakid*, who then shares the answers with the audience. Also: *Michika*, *Mishtapeu* (Montagnais), *Mikana* (Menomini).

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Minggah

A tree that embodies a **spirit** who is one of the *wirreenun*'s (**Aboriginal shaman of Australia**) **helping spirits**. The *minggah* is a refuge for the *wirreenun* in times of danger. The *wirreenun* and the *minggah* have a complex and **sacred** relationship. The heath and magical ability of the *wirreenun* is often dependent upon the condition of the *minggah*. Therefore, acting against one can harm the other.

Parker, K. L. et al. *Wise Women of the Dreamtime: Aboriginal Tales of the Ancestral Powers*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International Limited, 1993.

Mirror

Mirrors are found in the equipment and sewn to the costumes of shamans of many different cultures. The use of the mirror varies. For example, Tuvan shamans use the mirror for **divination** and **diagnosis**, looking into it clairvoyantly to see the spirit world causes of the physical world problems. Buriat shamans use mirrors to concentrate **healing** energies directly over the body parts that need healing. Other shamans use the mirror to see the souls of dead people. The **Zulu sangoma** wears copper mirrors on his or her **costume** so that when the progenitors of humanity return from the stars they will know who among the humans to talk to. See also **metal**.

- Credo Mutwa, V. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.
- Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.
- Van Deusen, K., and T. White, ed. "Shamanism and Music in Tuva and Khakassia." *Shaman's Drum* 47 (Winter 1997–98): 22–29.

Mishikan

The **spirit** of Turtle who performs a pivotal role in some versions of the **Shaking Tent Ceremony**. *Mishikan* acts as a messenger and translator between the **djessakid** (shaman) and other spirit beings. *Mishikan* takes the **djessakid's** questions to the **spirits**, addresses them in a non-human **language** and returns with the spirit answers translated into a language the **djessakid** understands.

Mishikan is known for its humor. During the **ritual** *Mishikan* jokes and plays with the other spirits who try to push each other out of the tent, making it shake even more violently. *Mishikan's* voice is said to sound like "the noise of pulling the fingers over a strip of birch-bark." Also: *Michika*, *Mikenak*, *Mishtapeu* (Montagnais), *Mikana* (Menomini).

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Mistress of the Beasts

A **spirit** being who is the original guardian or keeper of the animals and their **spirits**. The Mistress of the Beasts is thought of as the collective **soul** of the animals or the essence of a particular animal species, depending on the **culture**. The **shaman** journeys into the spirit world to appease the Mistress of the Beasts in the performance of **hunting magic**.

The shaman negotiates with the Mistress of the Beasts to release animals in exchange for human **sacrifices**. These

sacrifices usually take the form of strict observance of moral behavior and confessions of trespasses against others, however **rituals**, feasts, **offerings**, and in some cultures humans lives were also exchanged.

Though the Mistress or Mother of the Beasts is the original form, in some cultures she later transformed into the **Master of the Beasts**.

Ripinsky-Naxon, M. *The Nature of Shamanism: Substance and Function of a Religious Metaphor*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Monophasic Culture

Western psychology, philosophy, and **culture** are predominantly monophasic. They draw their worldview almost exclusively from one state of consciousness, the usual waking state. Other cultures around the globe, e.g., **Australian Aboriginals**, Ecuadorian **Achuar**, West African **Dagara**, and disciplines within cultures, e.g., Jewish Kabbalah, Buddhist *Abhidharma* psychology, and Vedantic philosophy, draw their worldview from multiple state of consciousness. These worldviews are polyphasic and they draw on contemplative and **dream** states as well as the waking state to inform their view of reality.

Walsh, R. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. Palo Alto, California: Transpersonal Institute 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Moon

A **helping spirit** of great **power** for the **shaman**. In some cultures the moon is the primary initiator and **teacher** of shamans. A majority of cultures relate the moon, its cycles, and its everchanging power to the female **gender** and

feminine qualities. However, some cultures like the **Inuit** and the ancient Norse people perceive of the moon as male and see masculine qualities in its nature.

Male or female, or perhaps both, the moon is a spirit being from the **dream-time**. The patterns of the shaman's relationship with the spirit of the moon were laid down in that ancient **time** before time.

The moon presents teachings of **rhythm** and its waxing and waning cycle is the oldest way of marking time. The moon teaches through example the importance of periodic rebirth in maintaining balance in life and the awareness that continual cycles of change are the natural order of things.

The moon exerts real physical influence on the **earth** and on women, controlling menstrual cycles and the rhythms of the tides. Thus the moon affects fertility, **water**, and the **sacred** fluids, like semen and **blood**, that affect the abundance of human, animal, and plant life.

Høst, A. *Learning to Ride the Waves*. København: Scandinavian Center for Shamanic Studies, 1991.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Morning Glory

The seeds of the Morning Glory, *Ipomoea violacea*, are highly valued for their hallucinogenic properties in the Zapotec and Chatin areas of Oaxaca and southern Mexico. *Ipomoea* is also used in Central America and western **Africa**. The Chinantec and **Mazatec** call the seeds *Piule*, the Zapotecs, **Badoh Negro** or *Badungás*, and the ancient Aztecs, *Tlililzin*. The **Aztecs** considered *Ipomoea violacea* and *Turbina corymbosa* the **Ololiuqui**.

Morning Glory is a flowering annual vine common in horticulture. The

trumpet-shaped flowers range in color from white to red to purple, purple-blue, and blue. The ovoid fruit contains elongated, angular, black seeds. Morning Glory is found in western and southern Mexico, Guatemala, the West Indies, tropical **South America**, and in tropical and warm-temperate zones around the globe. *Ipomoea* is often cultivated in the gardens of the shamans or others who sell the leaves and seeds.

The Spanish invaders of Mexico found the **ritual** use of *Ipomoea* offensive. The ecclesiastics were particularly intolerant of the practice and proceeded to suppress and eradicate it. The people took the sacred rituals into the hills, saving the essence of the rituals and merging other **elements** of their spiritual practice with the Christianity imposed on them.

Use

An infusion of these seeds is used in shamanic rituals to communicate with the spirit world for **divination** and **diagnosis**. When entranced, an individual is in communication with the spirit of the Morning Glory plant and that spirit speaks through them.

When *Ipomoea* is to be given to the patient, the **shaman** prepares the infusion and administers it at night. The source of the patient's problems and the appropriate remedy are diagnosed by the shaman from an interpretation of the patient's **words** and visions during the course of the intoxication.

Preparation

The seeds of *Ipomoea* are six times more potent than those of *Turbina corymbosa*. They are often called macho (male) and those of *Turbina* are hembra (female). The usual dose of *Ipomoea* is seven seeds, or a multiple of seven. At other times it is thirteen as with *Turbina corymbosa*. The seeds are ground and placed in a gourd of water to make an infusion. The particulate matter is strained out before the liquid is consumed.

Active Principle

The active principles are the lysergic acid alkaloids, lysergic acid amide and lysergic acid hydroxyethylamide. They are indole alkaloids. Lysergic acid amide differs only slightly in structure from lysergic acid diethylamide or LSD. LSD is a semi-synthetic compound and the most potent known hallucinogen.

Ritual of Receiving the Plant Spirit, or Plant Medicine

Traditionally, *Ipomoea* is administered to a single individual in a secluded, quiet place at night. The shaman prepares the hallucinogenic infusion, creates the ritual **space**, and helps the patient find the correct focus for his or her encounter with the spirit of *Ipomoea*. The patient drinks *Ipomoea* and remains secluded, waiting for the spirit to reveal what he or she needs to know. After the **trance** has run its course, the shaman interprets the cause of the **illness** and the necessary remedies from the patient's trance state experiences.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

Badu-win, the "two little girls in white," are the unique characteristic of the *Ipomoea* trance. They are **spirits** who speak through the *Ipomoea* trance, revealing the cause of the illness and necessary remedies.

Ipomoea intoxication begins rapidly, giving over quickly to visual hallucinations. Full trance is characterized by a state of "sleep" that is filled with visions, often grotesque, and occasionally movement as if sleepwalking. The intoxication lasts approximately three hours. During that time the individual is dimly aware of his or her surroundings, which is the reason the ritual takes place in solitude. There are seldom unpleasant side effects. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **plant hallucinogens**.

Schultes, R. E. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Mudang

A Korean **shaman**. The *mudang* are female. They use **dance, song, music**, and **embodiment trance** states in the practice of their **healing art**, *musok yesul*. The survival of a new *mudang* rests not only on her ability to master her trance states, but also on her artistic skill, the quality of her performance of the complex rituals, her acceptance by society, and the efficacy of her rituals.

There are two classes of *W'on mudang*, or "real shamans." There are those *mudang* who acquire **power** through hereditary lines and those *mudang* who acquire power directly from **spirit** outside of a shamanic lineage. There is also a *S'on mudang*, or **apprentice**, who is not yet a "real shaman." In general there are four classifications of *W'on mudang*. There are those who only perform **divination**, those who perform only rituals, and those who are capable of performing both. These three classifications involve the acquisition of power through trance states. The fourth class is those who acquire power through **sacred mantras** and practice that power through the reading of the shamanic scriptures. This fourth class is primarily the *paksu mudang*, or male shamans.

The Call

In **Korea the call to shamanism** manifests in unusually harsh fate or misfortune or a physical or mental illness. If the call is ignored or the illness misdiagnosed, it continues with increasing intensity. The way in which the call manifests varies regionally. Illness brought on by spirit **possession** is necessary for validation in the **north** and hereditary lineage becomes more important in the **south**.

The lineage and ability to embody spirit are still valued; however, the standards for possession are changing. For a contemporary "*mudang*" personal charisma, an artistic gift, an interest in **ritual**, and ordination by another *mudang* are considered validation since physical healing is no longer expected

from the shaman. The artistic quality of the performance is becoming more important than the actual access to spirit through the *mudang* and whether or not the performance succeeds in fulfilling its healing or divinatory function.

Training

Ordinarily, the teaching occurs within a guild made up of a well-established *mudang* and her performing group of dancers and musicians. The *simjasik* (novice) must master divination, making **amulets (power objects)**, dancing, the playing of musical instruments, chants, the preparation of food **offerings**, and the creation of paper flowers and figures. The *simjasik* is guided through the **training** by her *simbumo*, **teacher** or spiritual mother.

The *simjasik* must learn the appropriate robes, offerings, dances, gestures and chants to call in each of the different deities in performance of divination rituals. Traditionally, these complex performances last for several hours. The *simjasik* learns by first aiding his or her godparents in the rituals with other *mudang*, then performing one particular task within a ritual, and then, continuing to add to her knowledge task by task until the all facets of the complex rituals are mastered.

Living the life of a *mudang* within the "family" of the *simbumo*'s performing group is a major part of the *simjasik*'s training. The *simjasik* learns the cosmology and different functions of the deities as she helps in the kitchen to prepare the food offerings for the deities. She learns social skills simultaneously as she learns divination and ritual skills. She may even begin her own practice while still in the home of her *simbumo* when she has learned to perform full rituals independently. The *simjasik* must also learn *todum'i*, an interrogation technique. In the event that the deity does not appear, a skillful session of *todum'i* enables the *mudang* to gather sufficient information to provide an answer for the person seeking help.

Initiation

In the final **initiation** ritual the *simjasik* will be tested to see if she is possessed by an evil spirit or a deity. Her mastery of trance will be tested by her ability to create and ascend a seven rung **ladder** of swords in her barefoot without harm. Finally the identity of the deities who express themselves through the *simjasik* when she is in trance are determined. The identities of the spirits determines the new *mudang*'s status in the shamanic hierarchy.

Healing Ritual

Korean shamanic rituals have many parts, often twelve or more, and can take from hours to days to perform. They are performed for protection from harmful spirits and **disease**, the elimination of malevolent or unclean spirits, **blessings**, to make offerings, and to gain wealth or prosperity.

Physical, mental, and spiritual illnesses are all believed to be caused by malevolent spirits in the home or body of the patient. A particular disease, like smallpox for example, is believed to be caused by a particular spirit for whom a special form of ritual must be performed. Overall, rituals for the healing of **illness** are designed to purify the body, home, and/or surroundings and restore well-being to the relationship with the ancestral or other disease causing spirit.

The cause of illness within a family, for example, is often determined to be angry ancestral spirits or the presence of unclean spirits. The *mudang* performs a ritual to restore peace to the home and to protect the family from harmful spirits. Angry spirits are appeased through offerings and **prayers**. If the cause is determined to be the latter, the *mudang* performs a ritual to remove the unclean spirits and another to make offerings to the ancestral spirits and the spirits of the mountains to appease any spirits who might be contributing to the family's illness.

In the case of a terminal disease or a deadly disease without any clarifying symptoms, the diagnosis is that Sal, the

spirit of killing has entered the body of the patient. The *Sal* spirit is believed to be very dangerous and there are many forms. There are many different rituals performed, however they are all designed to remove the *Sal* from the body and send it away safely.

The *mudang* is considered quite effective in the treatment of mental illness, both psychosis and neurosis. The spirit that causes psychosis is called *Ch'ungwi*. There are several rituals designed to exorcise this spirit from the patient depending on the exact diagnosis. One ritual removes a mentally ill spirit, another exorcises evil spirits, a third removes destructive spirits, and a fourth removes evil spirits.

In these rituals the *mudang* approaches the patient with her sacred *g'om* (**sword**) and *ch'ang* (spear) as if she were going to behead the patient with the sword and impale the patient's heart of the spear. In this way the possessing spirit is removed from the head and the heart of the patient. **Fire** is also used to exorcise the possessing spirits, however this ritual is dangerous and truly terrifying for the patient.

Neurosis is believed to be caused by a *Ch'ukhi* spirit possessing the brain of the patient. If a *mudang* is not called to perform the ritual to capture the *Ch'ukhi* spirit in this first stage of the illness, then over time the spirit will move from the head to the stomach and kill the patient. The *Ch'ukhi jabi* is a complicated ritual that must be repeated seven times during the full sunlight of the day for three consecutive days.

There are many different rituals performed for the dead. They are all very complicated in form and practice. Overall they function to insure that the dead **soul** is at peace and that the homes of the living are protected from the harmful influences of the dead who have not reincarnated in a new form. The rituals involve both **cleansing** and protection as well as aiding passage of the soul of the dead by creating a bridge or clearing evil spirits from the gate of the dead. In many of these rituals the

influence of Buddhism on Korean shamanism is apparent.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Lee, Jung Y. "Korean Shamanistic Rituals." In *Religion and Society* 12. The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1981.

Multiple Soul Belief

The theory that tribal peoples believed in a body soul, a **vital soul**, and a **free soul** in each individual. In this theory the life of the body was due to the body soul, the animation of the body was due to the vital soul, e.g., in its absence the body appeared comatose, and the free soul wanders in dreams and day dreams without adversely affecting normal bodily functions. This theory was presented by ethnographers in an attempt to explain the distinctions tribal peoples make in the many functions of soul in their daily life and in where different parts of the soul go after death. However, not all researchers of tribal peoples agree with this theory. They see these different souls as different points along a spectrum of experience of how the dynamic relationship between the body and soul functions.

We cannot be certain that tribal cultures believed in the existence of several souls in one individual. We can be certain that their life and survival was based on the experience that soul inspires everything; that all forms—humans, animals, plants, geography, **weather**, everything—were containers for spirit. That understanding was lived by tribal people. It was not simply a belief. Tribal peoples obviously understood the fundamental relationship

between the body and the soul. What we do know is that tribal peoples were able to discern beyond this simple duality and make a very clear distinction between the body, the **psyche**, and the soul that transcends both.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Mushrooms

Simple plants from the Fungi division. However, they are one of only two divisions of the entire plant world that create substances that are hallucinogenic when ingested by humans. All of the plant **entheogens** used by shamans around the world are either mushrooms from one division of the Fungi or an Angiosperm, the highest evolved flowering plants. See also *amanita muscaria*; **psilocybe mushrooms**; and *Teonanácatl*.

Music

What music actually is is unknown, yet it can affect breathing, skin temperature, muscle tension, and states of consciousness within a few minutes. German poet, Heinrich Heine, explains that music exists in a place of **power** between thought and phenomenon. Music arises from something between **spirit** and matter and is both like and unlike each. Music is simultaneously a kind of spirit that requires manifestation in **time** and a kind of matter that can do without **space**.

Music is an essential tool in shamanic work. For example, in **Amazonia** the **payé (shaman)** plays the panpipe or **bow** before and during the **healing** rituals to please the **spirits** and access their power and guidance. The *payé's* chants are an essential element that allows him to speak directly to the spirits of the **sacred** hallucinogenic plants used in

the *epená* (snuff) and *ayahuasca* (drink). These chants, or *icaros* help to create and maintain the **ritual** container and to guide the patient, who is also in an **altered state of consciousness** from ingesting the plant **medicine**.

Tone and **rhythm** affect the individual and his or her ability to experience **alternate states of consciousness**. **Singing**, chanting, **mantras**, toning, **prayers**, and the sounds of sacred instruments, like Tibetan bowls, bells, bowed strings, flutes, digierido can all aid in accessing transcendent realities.

Music is the only human expression that affects so many components within the body in ways that alters our physical state. Music may affect multiple dimensions of the body because the primary function of the ear is not hearing, but balance, movement, and the constant arrangement of our perception of time and space.

Don Campbell, musician, educator, and innovator in **transpersonal** music therapy, believes that music is an essential tool for psychotherapy because it provides a direct line to the unconscious, as do all the expressive arts. Music and its expression through drumming, chanting, singing, and **storytelling**, has always had a profound connection with the human **soul**.

The creation stories of indigenous peoples around the world explain that in the beginning was the **Sound**, and the Sound was the sound of Spirit who caused the world of matter to take form. Innovative research by geneticist, Susumu Ohno, shows us that the body itself is made of music. Musical notes were assigned by Ohno to each of the four bases making up the nucleotides of human DNA, instead of the usual names or letters. Ohno also assigned the key, timing, and duration of the notes so that they could be played. Human DNA was then laid out as a series of notes and played. The resulting musical composition was recognized as melodic music. The body, which is made of vibrations of **energy**, is not random noise, but music.

Dossey, Larry. "The Body as Music." *UTNE Reader* 68 (March–April 1995): 81–82.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Mystical Experiences

Mystical experiences are characterized by a loss of the sense of individual identity which gives over to an experience of self as part of Nature, God, the universe as a whole, or the **Kosmos**. A mystical experience is not composed of thoughts. A mystical experience is known completely, without linear thought, throughout the entire being—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual.

Phenomenologically there is no difference between some psychedelic revelations and mystical revelations. **Entheogen**-induced experiences, in particular, share the same feel and communicate through the same type of "**language**" as mystical experiences.

There is some scholarly debate as to whether or not shamans experience *unio mystica*, the classical, ecstatic mystical union with God described in the mystical traditions of the high **religions**. Some scholars state that mystical union with the Divine is not found in shamanism. However, neither is religious thought and the belief systems upon which it is based, typically an anthropomorphic, usually masculine, God who is separate from Nature, the **Earth**, and humankind. Therefore, there is no reason a pre-religious individual would frame his or her mystical experience in the context of a high religion or use religious metaphors to attempt to communicate that experience to others.

Pre-religious people, like the **shaman** and members of traditional shamanic cultures, experience God and Nature as One, not as two or even as a

union of two. His or her mystical experience would be framed in that context, using metaphors drawn from a life experience in which the spirit world is not separate from the every day world.

Furthermore, one must never lose sight of the universal truth that a true mystical experience can not be accurately written or spoken about. Like the Tao, the Tao you can describe in **words** is not the true Tao. Practically speaking, records of mystical experiences would be very hard to preserve in the oral traditions of shamanic cultures.

For many scholars, particularly today, it is clear that shamans have ecstatic **journey** experiences of an intensity and character to be considered genuine mystical experiences. This is not to say that the shaman experiences *unio mystica* every time he or she enters into a journey of **soul flight**; he or she does not. *Unio mystica* is not the goal of the shaman's journey. The goal of the shaman's **trance** practices is **divination** or **healing**. *Unio mystica* is a common side benefit of the shaman's practices.

Cross culturally, mystical experiences share the common idea that truth is reached by means other than sense information and that other information is accessed through spontaneous or intentionally induced **altered states of consciousness**. The following list includes some of the many names for the mystical experience: cosmic consciousness, *kensho*, oceanic feeling, *nirvana*, *samadhi*, *satori*, and unitive consciousness.

Cleary, T. S., and S. I. Shapiro. "The Plateau Experience and the Post-Mortem Life: Abraham H. Maslow's Unfinished Theory." *Journal for Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1, (1995): 1–23.

Hultkrantz, A. "A Definition of Shamanism." *Temenos* 9 (1973): 25–37.

Maslow, Abraham H. *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*. New York: Penguin, 1994.

Walsh, R. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. Palo Alto, California: Transpersonal Institute 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Myth

Patterns for perceiving, experiencing, and expressing the relationships between the visible world and the forces, patterns, and intelligences of invisible world. These relationships have existed since before the creation of the **Kosmos**. The word "myth" evolved from the Greek concept of *mythos*, which refers to psychic and psychological realities that pattern themselves in archetypal themes upon which cultural beliefs and systems have been based.

Myths are not fictitious tales with invented characters and events. They are the patterns of our world and our experience of it. These patterns came from the **dreamtime** and the stories of the Dreamtime **Ancestors** from this time before time.

There are parallels and symbolic connections between the vastly older Dreamtime stories and the mythologies of more recent cultures. For shamanic peoples, time happened in the beginning and myth speaks of the patterns initiated at that beginning. The events of that beginning time are still happening and will continue to happen as long

as there is life on earth. People that acknowledge to power of these mythic stories can become conscious and powerful players in their continual unfolding of mythic patterns.

Shamans can use myth in **healing** because they understand that myth is the reality lived by the ancestors of the patient. Involving a patient in the retelling or reenactment of cultural mythology allows the patient to identify with mythic characters who offer prototypes and pathways back to health and well-being. Shamans use traditional mythology as a paradigm for the patient's **illness** that provides a rationale and gives meaning to the patients suffering. The myth also provides a paradigm for treatment, **offering** the path of the hero as the prescription for healing.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Parker, K. L. et al. *Wise Women of the Dreamtime: Aboriginal Tales of the Ancestral Powers*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International Limited, 1993.

Peters, L. G. *Tamang Shamans*. New Delhi: Narola Publications Ltd, 1998.

A woman in traditional Andean attire, including a red headscarf and a colorful, patterned shawl, stands in a grassy field. She has her eyes closed and her hands held out in a gesture of prayer or ritual. In the foreground, a fire burns brightly between two large rocks. The background shows a vast, open landscape under a clear sky.

An Encyclopedia of Shamanism

Volume Two
N–Z

Christina Pratt

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N

Nadle

The **gender-variant** individuals among the **Dineh**, or Navajo, of the North American southwest. *Nadle* means “changing one” or “one who is transformed” and refers to the androgynous or hermaphroditic nature of these individuals. The Dineh believe that the *nadle*, as part of natural beauty in the order of the universe, has a special contribution to make to the people.

Traditionally, the *nadle* in his or her role as mediator keeps the men and women together in a unit that supports healthy child rearing and cultural continuity. Ceremonially, the *nadle* performs a special role in the night **dances** before the winter solstice.

Navajo **shamans** and *nadles* are distinguished in Dineh culture by their direct relationships with **spirit**. Shamans are not necessarily *nadles*; however some *nadles* became powerful shamans. More often *nadles* specialized in some aspect of curing. For example, the *nadle* healers were considered excellent chanters. They had special **chants** for curing **illness** and insanity and for aiding in childbirth.

The wisdom that supports the Dineh value for and respect of the *nadle* was laid down in their mythology. In the Third World there lived twins, Turquoise Boy and White Shell Girl, each androgynous boy/girl beings. They were the first *nadles*. Only with this help from the twins did the **First People** began to farm, make pottery, weave baskets, and shape tools from stone and bone. The people were thankful for the inventiveness of the *nadles* for it improved the quality of their lives.

Over time White Shell Girl entered the **moon** and became Moon Bearer. Turquoise Boy stayed with the people, teaching them to grind corn, cook food, and weave cloth. Then a great flood came and threatened to kill them all. Just in time Turquoise Boy found a large hollow reed, through which the people climbed into the **Fourth World** and were saved from the great flood.

Moon Bearer brought them another reed in time for the people to climb to the Fifth World, the present world of the Dineh. The Dineh perspective is apparent from this creation story; the very survival of the people was and is dependent on the inventiveness of the *nadle* and his or her ability to see old things in new ways. See also **transformed shaman**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Nagual

Nagual refers to both the helping **animal spirit** of the **shaman** and to shamans who have the ability to shape-shift into the animal form of their helping spirit. Nagual, used by the native peoples of Mexico and Guatemala, is derived from the **Aztec** word, *nahualli*, which refers to the quality of being disguised or masked. See also **helping spirits; power animals; shapeshifting**.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Nagualism

An anthropological term derived from **nagual**, a **helping spirit** of a **shaman** in Central America. A person or people who practice nagualism work with guardian **spirits**, helping spirits, or spirit familiars as a source of guidance, protection, and personal power.

Naming

Naming, or the acquisition of a new name, is used to mark the completion of an existential transformation. In **shamanism**, naming ceremonies are performed to mark the **initiation** from child to adult, for professional initiations later in life, and as an aspect of some **healing** processes.

Naming at initiation signifies the wholly different orientation to the world that is created. It marks the death of the child/novice self and the successful birth of the new, re-oriented self. The gift of a new name signifies the existential nature of this transformation, that it is more than a change that could change back. Initiation is a transformation from which there is no return.

Similarly, in cases of mental or a nearly fatal **illness**, giving the patient a new name connects the patient to an identity that is not associated with illness. The naming **ceremony** takes place after the successful removal of the **spirits** or energies that caused the illness. For example, Tserin-zaarin, a Mongol **shaman**, uses naming as a part of his healing process with mentally ill patients. The new name signifies the transformation of the patient through the healing process. The identity the patient knew as mentally ill and the vessel the troublesome spirits might try to return to is gone with the old name. Tserin-zaarin is reputed to be especially good at healing mental illness in this way.

Nanabush

The founder of the **Midewiwin Society**. Nanabush is a cultural hero of the central **Algonquian**, who was given the task of founding the **medicine society** by the Creator Spirit.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Nande'ru

A *nande'ru* is a **shaman** of the **Avá-Chiripá**, an indigenous people of what is now Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil in **South America**. *Nande'ru* meaning "our fathers" is more formal. A common term *paí* and the master shamans are referred to as *paí guazú*.

Natema

See *ayahuasca*.

Native American Church

The Native American Church was established in the United States in 1922 with 13,300 members. The membership has now grown to more than a quarter million member. The religious practices of the church center around the sacramental use of the **entheogen** peyote in a vision-questing ritual that combines Christianity, Native American beliefs, and high moral principles. These practices have helped to unify more than forty nations of Native Americans in the United States and Canada.

Through the Kiowa and Comanche peoples, **peyote** use spread into **North America** from Mexico. This became particularly important in the last half of the nineteenth century when the Native Americans were confined to reservations and forced into missionary schools, causing the disintegration of their cultural and spiritual heritage.

Faced with potential genocide, a number of leaders from various nations saw the peyote practice as a way to unify the people with each other and the spirit world of their **Ancestors**. A new kind of peyote-based spiritual practice emerged and was adapted to the particular needs of the contemporary Native Americans. In an attempt to protect their rights to free religious activity in the face of opposition from missionaries and local governments, Native Americans organized these peyote practices into the legally recognized the Native American Church.

The role of the peyote sacrament within the church is two-fold. First, peyote induces physical and psychological well-being and alters consciousness so that the individual experiences his or her Oneness with God. Secondly, peyote acts as the divine messenger, enabling the individual to come into direct communication with God, without the mediation of the **priest**. See also **vision quest**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Nature Spirits

Nature spirits are one of several kinds of **helping spirits** (energies of the invisible world) that the **shaman** works with while in an **altered state of consciousness**. A nature spirit is the spiritual aspect of any form found in nature, e.g., **trees, water, sun, moon, sky**, wind, mountain, stones, etc. Shamans recognize that all things throughout the **Kosmos** are connected as a whole. They experience that whole as the creative life force of the Kosmos. All aspects of that whole are imbued with that **spirit** or life force. Thus, animate or inanimate, all aspects of nature are believed to contain spirit.

Generally, the spirits of nature are believed to dwell in the physical form, for example, the **Shuar** of the Amazon believe that Inti, the spirit of the sun, is the physical sun and lives in the physical sun. When a spirit of nature leaves its physical form to work with the shaman, it may be seen in human form or its nature form. Examples of **cultures**

who look to the nature spirits as helpers, **teachers**, and the source of **healing** powers are the Shinto of **Japan**, the **Huichols** of Mexico, and most of the peoples of **Southeast Asia**.

All shamans draw the **energy** they use for healing from Nature, regardless of the specific helping spirits they work with. In many cultures this is reflected in the belief that Nature itself is a helping spirit. For example, the **Dagara** of West Africa recognize Dawera, the Nature spirit, as one of the five elements, each of which has a **shrine** and a priest(ess) tending the shrine. Dawera is all things, the animals, plants, and the geography. Dawera is called on to bring magic, major changes, and a connection to the **Great Mystery**. See also **Africa**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Somé, M. P. *Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman*. New York: Penguin Group USA, Inc., 1995.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Navajo

See **Dineh**.

Neirika

The portal that unifies the **spirit** of all things and all worlds. All life came into being through the *neirika*. The *neirika* is the portal through which everyone passes at their death.

The **Huichol** believe that access to the *neirika* is located physically in the human head. The *neirika* is both a passageway and a barrier between the physical world and the world of spirit. *Neirika* is also translated to mean "mirror" and "face of the deity."

The *neirika* is represented as a stone disk (**power object**) and as a disk shape in Huichol **art**. This disk may resemble the **peyote** cactus, the **sacred** plant **entheogen** of the Huichol. The disk

shape *neirika* also represents the center of the four directions, emphasizing its orientation and place in the center of all things.

Myerhoff, B. G. *Peyote Hunt: The Sacred Journey of the Huichol Indians*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Neo-Shamanism

The definition of neo-shamanism is in flux. Neo-shamanism refers most often to the blending by contemporary Westerners of elements from different shamanic traditions with elements from other belief systems to create a new complex of beliefs, **rituals**, and practices. These beliefs, rituals, and practices are not necessarily directly related to **shamanism**. They are drawn from a wide range of shamanistic and non-shamanic spiritual forms in which the **shaman** is usually an idealized metaphor, not a practicing shaman in the literal sense.

Neo-shamanistic practices are eclectic and amorphous. Practitioners do not try to avoid the appropriation and mixing of rituals and practices from existing shamanic **cultures**. In this sense, neo-shamanism is not an aspect of **contemporary shamanism**, primarily because it does not involve a shaman.

Some scholars use neo-shamanism to refer to the revival of shamanism in traditionally shamanic cultures where the new practices of these shamans take non-traditional forms. In this sense neo-shamanism is an aspect of contemporary shamanism. It is the inherent nature of shamanic practices to transform over time. The revival of shamanism in indigenous shamanic cultures is a natural aspect of shamanism. See also **core shamanism**.

Nepal

Nepal is located on the southern slopes of the Himalayas, landlocked to the north by Tibet (now part of **China**), to the south and west by India, and to the east by Sikkim. Peoples of many ethnic groups live in Nepal, primarily speaking three languages: Munda (Austro-Asiatic), the **language** of the oldest inhabitants; Tibeto-Burmese, the language of the descendants of peoples from Tibet; and Indo-European.

In Nepal *bompos* (**shamans**) and *lamas* (**priests**) exist side by side and share similar rank and privilege, which is a unique situation in contemporary societies. The *bompo* and the *lama* both function professionally on a part-time basis, each representing different societal interests.

The *bompos* primarily use **embodiment** trance states during their **healing** rituals. They are conscious of their experiences and have complete recall of what the gods, **spirits**, and **ancestors** say during the **trance**. The *bompo's* **soul** is said to observe the trance state experience, standing back and watching him/herself perform. The *bompos* describe this state as "staying in the heart" while the gods speak through you. See also **Lamaism; ritual; Tamang**.

Peters, L. G. "An Experiential Study of Nepalese Shamanism." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 13, no. 1 (1981):1–26.

———, and D. Price-Williams. "Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism." *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 3 (1980): 397–413.

Nerfalasoq

Nerfalasoq is a West Greenland **Eskimo** term for a divining **angakok** (**shaman**). The *nerfalasoq* finds hidden or lost objects in a divination **ceremony** in which he or she does not use a **drum**. The *nerfalasoq* lies on his or her back to enter **trance** and discover the location of the object in question. See also **divination** and **Greenland**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Netdim Maidü

The *netdim maidü* is a dreamer or **seer** of the Northern Maidu who is able to communicate with the **spirits** of nature and of the dead. A **yomuse (shaman)** was also a *netdim maidü*, however a *netdim maidü* was not necessarily a *yomuse*.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Ngaju Dyak

A Dyak people of southern Borneo. The **balian** and **basir** are the **shamans** of the Ngaju Dyak. The *balian* is female and the *basir* is a **gender-variant male transformed shaman**. Both the *balian* and *basir* embody the *sangiang*, deities, while in **trance**. Masters of trance, these shamans use **embodiment** trance states to allow the *sangiang* to speak through them directly and journeying trance states to travel to the **Upperworld** to visit the "village of the gods."

Neither the *balian* nor the *basir* embody the **souls** of the dead. These **spirits** are embodied by another class of practitioner called the *tukang tawur*. The *balian* and *basir* are "chosen" spontaneously by the *sangiang* and acquire their shamanic **powers** through this spiritual event. Traditionally, neither can serve as a shaman among the Ngaju without forging a **sacred** relationship with the divine in this way.

The Ngaju Dyak worship *Mahatala-Jata*, an androgynous deity. *Mahatala* is the male aspect, a hornbill who lives on a mountaintop and rules the Upperworld. *Jata* is the female aspect, a water snake who lives in the sea and rules the **Lowerworld**. The two aspects are joined by a jeweled bridge, the rainbow, and so

joined become the total Ngaju godhead, *Mahatala-Jata*. Both the *balian* and *basir* embody *Mahatala-Jata* while in trance and allow the Ngaju to access their godhead.

The *balian* and *basir* served the temple as hierodules, one who functions as a sacred sex partner for those who worship at the temple. During this sacred sexual activity, *balian* and *basir* were seen as the embodiment of *Mahatala-Jata*, the androgynous deity. Through sexual union with the *balian* or *basir*, a Ngaju man was brought into the presence of his god. See also **journey**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Ngungi, the Crippled Smith

Ngungi, the **Zulu** God of Iron and **blacksmith** of the gods, has one lame leg and only one eye, both sacrificed in his efforts to gain **knowledge**. He is a great creator, artist, and symbol of the **sacrifice** demanded on any path of knowledge.

The story of Ngungi begins with the boy, then stupid, being raised by hippopotamuses. His father took pity on the boy and sent him to look for knowledge. The boy traveled far and wide, had many adventures, and many **teachers**. Ngungi gained great wisdom and knowledge because he learned from his adventures and from the sacrifices he was forced to make along the way.

Mutwa, Credo Vusa'mazulu. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Non-ordinary Reality

Non-ordinary reality is **ordinary reality** as it is perceived from an **altered state of consciousness**. Non-ordinary reality is the aspect of life and the world that is normally invisible, which is perceived by the **shaman** while in **trance**. Also called

the spirit world, invisible world, spirit realm, **Dreamtime**, and Otherworld.

Accessing non-ordinary reality through an altered state of consciousness is basic to **shamanism**. An altered state of consciousness is a state of consciousness experienced as different from the baseline for that individual. The reality perceived from this cognitive state is non-ordinary reality.

Consciousness, in this sense, refers to an individual's total pattern of thinking and feeling at any given time. **Ordinary consciousness** is an individual's day-to-day experience of thinking, feeling, and wakefulness versus sleeping or **dreaming**. This ordinary consciousness serves as a baseline for that individual.

In an altered state of consciousness the individual feels a clear qualitative shift in his or her consciousness and a difference in the quality (or qualities) of how his or her mind is processing information and experiences. Mental functions are able to operate that do not operate at all in ordinary consciousness, and perceptual qualities are spontaneously accessed that have no ordinary counterpart.

The capacity to experience altered states is a basic, psychobiological human potential. All normal human beings have this ability, just as humans have the ability to **sing, dance**, and create **art**. Altered states arise from the manipulation of universal neurophysiological structures of the human body. Therefore access to non-ordinary reality is also universal.

Michael Harner, founding director of the **Foundation for Shamanic Studies**, explains that non-ordinary reality is part person and **culture** specific. The information and the experience of obtaining it in non-ordinary reality is tailor-made to the individual in the altered state. Other people may not perceive the same personal and cultural symbols.

However, behind these culturally diversified interpretations of non-ordinary reality a number of common

features do emerge. For example, the shamans of many cultures experience the **Land of the Dead** or the **Tree of Life** in non-ordinary reality. There are no objective structures in non-ordinary reality, in the sense that several observers will have identical experiences there. However, it is possible to find constant patterns in non-ordinary reality as it is experienced through altered states of consciousness.

When the shamans talk of non-ordinary reality, they do not mean to imply that it is disconnected from this world. They see non-ordinary reality as the "why" of this world. For the shaman, non-ordinary reality represents the true nature of things and the true causes of events in the world. The **power** of a shaman is directly proportional to his or her insight into non-ordinary reality. See also **journey** and **shamanic altered states of consciousness**.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Horrigan, Bonnie. "Shamanic Healing: We Are Not Alone. An Interview of Michael Harner." *Shamanism* 10, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 1997).

Nonosi

The *nonosi* were a special class of Southern Paiute **shamans** whose **hunting magic** enabled them to control the movements of game, thus aiding the hunters in successful hunts.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

North

The north is a directional **energy** used by **shamans** in their **ritual** work and the creation of **sacred space** within ordinary **space**. The north is one of six directional energies (**east, south, west, north, above, and below**) which together

define the location of the seventh point, the center. Shamans must remain aware of their center at all times to keep from becoming lost while traveling in the boundless and ever-changing realms of **non-ordinary reality**.

Each of the directions is associated with an element, season, time of day, **color**, animal, diety, etc. These associations show both consistency and variation across **cultures**. The energy of the north is steady and rhythmic, like the heartbeat of Mother Earth. For many cultures, though not all, the element associated with the north is **earth**, the season is winter, the time is night, the **life cycle** passage is the child, the **power** is power, and the **journey** is one of wisdom and the discovery of essence.

North America

North America was home to a vast diversity of indigenous societies, ranging from small bands of hunter-gatherers in some areas to advanced civilizations of farming peoples in others. Ancient North American earthworks, five times as large as Stonehenge, reveal the remains of cities that existed at the time Rome was still a village in Italy. The histories of these varied peoples are found in their literature, oral traditions, **dances**, **rituals**, and ceremonies. Their stories, **songs**, and legends are living things, sources of **power** referred to in the first person.

Hundreds of different **languages**, economies, spiritual practices, and social patterns covered the continent. Any generalization about a cultural tradition is but a loose pattern that may not apply to a neighboring people while it does describe the practices of people farther away. The distinctions among native communities are many and the differences are vast. At the same time there are similarities, particularly related to **shamanism** and **healing** practices.

Shamans everywhere are guided by the **spirits** who are in no small part defined by the land and geography of a region. The shaman also plays a role in

the guidance of the people. People of similar geographic regions will be guided in similar ways through their shamans who are working with similar spirits. Variations in form will arise because of locale, language, and history, while the functions and practices of the rituals and ceremonies will be similar.

The spiritual attitudes that arise, which are the root of psychological and cultural attitudes, also develop in similar patterns. In indigenous North America, these patterns are two-way communication with **spirit** beings who grant power, **knowledge** of the planet, and the complex interrelatedness of the planet's ecosystems, and the profound understanding that all of these components are alive. These patterns led to a practice of mutual respect and interchange among spirits, humans, animals, and mythical beings, kinship, and an expectation and acceptance of the hand of spirit in all things.

As the Europeans embarked on a continent-wide effort to control and assimilate the indigenous peoples of North America, the shamans were systematically targeted and killed and their practices outlawed. This effectively stopped the innovative and generative aspect of shamanism. Until that time shamans across North America received direct intervention from **helping spirits** in their healing rituals and received new dances and songs to be used as tools for curing.

In some regions the practices and ceremonies that worked were kept and preserved as **medicine** for the present and future, often through the formation of **medicine societies**. The number, complexity, and importance of these ceremonies varied, though most were highly organized and elaborate among the more sedentary tribes who lived in permanent dwellings.

Even in the **cultures** with these powerful medicine societies, the individual shaman continued to practice. The individual shaman's unique contribution was the ability to communicate with the spirit world and receive new

rituals, songs, and other “medicines.” A shaman’s status was based on how effective his or her healing rituals were and the extent to which they refrained from practicing **sorcery**.

Illness in North America

The indigenous people of North America believed **illness** was caused by an individual or community falling out of harmony with the spirit world in some way. To avoid this, many tribes practiced an array of social **taboos** directing human interactions with Nature, the animals, and spirit power. Typical violations that could lead to illness were expressing jealousy, possessiveness, or greed; neglecting rituals and **prayers** of gratitude and honor to Nature and the spirit world; and inappropriate contact with supernatural power.

In California and the neighboring southwestern regions, illness was caused by **energy intrusions** translated as “**pains**” that were also the source of the shaman’s power. Witchcraft and sorcery were also common causes of illness and misfortune.

When illness or misfortune did arise, the people turned to the shaman to communicate with the spirit world to diagnose the cause and the remedy needed to restore health and harmony. The prescription could be a healing ritual with the shaman or a **ceremony** performed by a particular medicine society. Once harmony was restored to the spiritual aspect of the situation, shamans and often other healers attended to the physical aspects. Practicing with shamans were medicine men with herbal and plant remedies, bone setters, and healers who worked with a form of massage.

Many Shamans

In North America shamans of many **genders** were recognized: female, male, and **transformed shamans**, as well as the **gender-variant berdache** who was often a specialist in a type of curing. There are very few North American cultures that

did not use the unique powers of the transformed shaman. For the cultures that did, generally the transformed shamans are believed to be the strongest spiritually, the women are considered the next strongest, and the male shamans the least strong spiritually.

Berdache

The role of the **berdache** (*berdach*) is not unique to North America, however its manifestation and acceptance is widespread there. In North America, women also were persons of consequence; they were not a gender of second status to men. The rare exceptions to this generalization existed in the areas where the majority of food was supplied by men through hunting or fishing.

Indigenous women had high status as leaders and shamans, and there was no shame in a male taking on a women’s role and characteristics. A man was not giving up male privilege; he was showing his ability to transcend the limits of masculinity. The ability to master the realms of masculine and feminine greatly enhanced his status. More important, the “choice” to become a **berdache** is made by spirit. It is a recognition and expression of the true nature of that individual’s **soul**.

The **berdache** was often the one to oversee funeral rites. This involved preparing the bodies of the dead physically and spiritually, preparing the funeral rites, leading the **singing** and dancing rites, and often preparing and cooking for the wake. In some cultures like the Yokuts, the **berdache** alone prepared the bodies for burial and conducted the ceremonial dancing and singing rites.

The role of the **berdache** as an honored person of high order was found in cultures from the Pacific Northwest to the southeast and from the Great Lakes across the Plains and into the southwest. The word for **berdache** in each language, like *badé* of the Crow or *ayekkwew* of the Cree, meant simply “neither man nor woman.”

The taboo systems of the indigenous people rarely involved sexual behavior other than restrictions against incest and regulation of marriage relative to clan lines. Sexuality was not seen as solely for the purpose of reproduction nor was it restricted by the institution of marriage. There was a range of gender variation and related sexuality across North American cultures.

The indigenous peoples saw no opposition between matters of the spirit and of the body. Everything was held to be **sacred**. Sexuality was a gift from spirit, to be enjoyed and appreciated. The expression of sexuality was an expression of one's **original medicine**. There was a lighthearted ease of sexual experimentation among the sexes; every act of intercourse implied by definition the involvement of the souls of the partners and of spirit.

Art as Medicine

Across North America, song and dance were medicine; they were tools the shaman used to cure. The most elaborate ceremonies are still commonly known as "sings" and "dances." There are dances to mark, celebrate, empower, mourn, entertain, and heal. Dances and songs are handed down through the generations, a currency of the shamans and the Medicine Societies.

Music, then, played an important role in North American shamanic rituals and ceremonies. Wind and percussion were the two most common types of musical instruments. With the exception of the Apache, one had to travel south to find stringed instruments. The wind instruments are comprised of flutes and whistles; the whistles being used primarily by shamans giving **power displays** and treating illness and by warriors during war society and other ceremonials. The percussion included **drums** of several designs and various sorts of **rattles** designed to call on different spirit powers.

Masks were widely used throughout North America, particularly among the

cultures of the Pacific Northwest coast, northeastern, and the southwestern regions. Masks can be receptacles for spirit, and, when used in this way, they are **power objects**. The creation of the mask brings the spirit of the **vision** into the physical world for the whole community to see, to witness, and to experience the power. See also **death and dying; False Face Society; illness in North America; mask dances; medicine man; midewiwin; Shaking Tent Ceremony**.

Densmore, F. *The American Indians and Their Music*. New York: The Woman's Press, 1936.

Gunn, Allen P. *Grandmothers of the Light*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Wissler, C. *The American Indian*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938.

Nti-si-tho

Nti-si-tho is the **Mazatec** name for **Teonanácatl**, which is several species of hallucinogenic **mushrooms** that have been employed as plant **entheogens** since ancient times in Mexico and Guatemala. *Si-tho* means "that which springs forth" and *Nti* is used to show reverence and endearment. Together *Nti-si-tho* means "the little mushroom (that) comes of itself, no one knows whence, like the wind that comes we know not whence nor why."

Nti-si-tho is associated with **water** and the rainy season because the mushrooms tend to sprout after the rains and, symbolically, because the mushroom-induced **trance** enables the **shaman** to travel the river of death to speak with the **spirits**.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Num

(Also: n|om) The spiritual **energy** that pervades and strengthens the lives of the **Ju|'hoansi**, also known as **!Kung** and **San**. When the Ju|'hoansi **dance** in **ritual** the *num* **power** rises out of the **earth** and travels up the spines of the dancers as it "boils." Those who have mastered the boiling *num* can direct it

through their hands for **healing**. The Ju|'hoansi **shaman** derives his power from within himself, from the *num*, not through the control or utilization of **helping spirits**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.



Oak

The oak tree is the Celtic **Tree of Life** and a central part of the Celtic cosmology and **culture**. The mighty oak serves this role because it is believed that only good energies can pass through it. Therefore, the Celtic **shaman** must stay on very good terms with the oak and pay it tremendous tribute to be allowed to use it for moving between the worlds.

The Celtic shaman draws strength from the Great Oak, connected through it to all things and able to travel to all places between the worlds. The shaman stands in the center of the Celtic universe when he or she stands in the center of the Great Tree.

Celtic mythology is filled with heroes who draw strength from the Tree of Life in its many forms. Irish hero Cuchulainn strapped himself to a stone monolith when his last battle was going badly. Connected in this way to the Tree of Life, he drew the strength needed for battle from it.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Object Intrusion

One of the major causes of **disease** among the indigenous peoples of **Asia**, **Africa**, **South America**, and **North America**, with the exception of some **Eskimo** tribes who believe that **soul loss** is the cause of **illness**. The illness is believed to be caused by an **energy intrusion** that has inserted itself into the body of the patient. See also **extraction** and **pains**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Odin

The great Norse **shaman** who hung himself from the **Tree of Life** *Yggdrasil*, the Ash, for nine days and nine nights to obtain wisdom and shamanic **powers**. The understanding Odin received from the spirit world while hanging in **trance** enabled him to unravel the secrets of the **runes**, a divinatory alphabet. After this event Odin was able to master the arts of the *seidr*, a Norse **divination** ritual performed only by female *volvas* to access the secret of wisdom from the spirit world. See also **ritual**.

Cowan, Tom. *Fire in the Head: Shamanism and the Celtic Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Hoppál, M., and O. J. von Sadovsky. *Shamanism: Past and Present* (Vol. 1 & 2). Fullerton, CA: International Society for Trans-Oceanic Research, 1989.

Offering

An offering is a symbolic manifestation of a **prayer**, or gratitude, extended to the **spirits**. Traditional offerings usually take time to create. During that time, the individual concentrates on the message of the prayer so that the offering embodies that message and extends it into the spirit world. The primary purpose of an offering is to increase the efficacy of whatever prayer, **ritual**, or other **sacred** activity the individual is engaged in.

The purpose of an offering is fairly consistent cross-culturally. However, the form of the offering varies **culture** to culture. For example, typical offerings would be flowers, rice, and rice wine in **Southeast Asia**, prayer flags in Tibet, **Coca** leaves in **South America**, the best portions of the harvest or a feast in **Africa**, or prayer sticks or **tobacco** ties in

different regions of **North America**. In some situations a ritual or ritual celebration may function as a communal offering. **Song** is one form of offering that transcends the differences of cultures and times. See also **embodiment**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Offerings, Hallucinogenic

The shaman's use of sacred **plant hallucinogens** should not be confused with offerings brought for the shaman's helping spirit. Mind-altering substances, like alcohol and opium, may be consumed by the **shaman** while in **trance**. In such cases the helping spirit is in full **possession** of the shaman's body and the **spirit** is "consuming" the substance.

The substances are brought and consumed as offerings for the spirit to entice the spirit to help the patient. The shaman is not affected physically by the often heroic amounts consumed by the spirit through the shaman's body in such sessions. When the spirit leaves the shaman's body, all potential chemical effects of the offerings leave with the spirit.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Ogham

The ancient alphabet of Ireland and the western parts of ancient Britain. Ogham letters are used in magic and **divination**. They are believed to have been a tool for the **Celtic** shamans, the **Druids** (keepers of the folk wisdom), and the bards (poet-singers whose role it was to keep the tribal history, traditions, genealogy, spiritual laws, and to honor the deeds of great leaders in verse). The use of the ogham symbols was passed on through these oral traditions as part of the **training** in each of these callings.

Ogham is known as the secret **language** of poets or the tree alphabet, since each of the letters is called by a Gaelic tree name. It is an alphabet of twenty original letters plus five more, probably added at a later date; together they are considered *eochna exsi*, the keys of **knowledge**.

The creation of the ogham is attributed to *Ogma Sun-Face*, the god of inspiration and poetry. The original order has also been changed over time and from use. There are many different lists of letters that ascribe different meanings to them and, in so doing, imply different systems of knowledge that can be accessed through the letters. There are lists that relate the ogham letters to systems such as desirable human qualities, body parts, **trees**, riddles, and elements of the shamanic experience. There are probably many more lists that are lost or were never recorded.

The complexity of this simple alphabet of slash marks and shapes comes from the vast and multilayered range of symbolic reference required to be able to not only read the letters and **words**, but to actually derive the intended meaning. The translations of ogham writings are full of magical nuances that tie the alphabet to the magic of the **shamans**, bards, and wizards of the time.

Divination

The ogham was used in divination by inscribing the ogham letters on billets of wood, drawing or casting the billets, and interpreting the resulting symbols. There are specific records of it being used to determine the sex of an unborn child and guilt or innocence in crimes with no witnesses.

The ogham is unique in that instead of having separate characters, the symbols of ogham are arranged along a line known as the *druim*. The characters are all in contact with this line, either above, below, or through it. Conventionally the ogham is written vertically from bottom to top. If written horizontally, as on an artifact for example, the

upper side of the *druim* is considered the left and the lower side considered the right. The ogham script is written and read from bottom to top or left to right.

One very important esoteric aspect of ogham is the use of certain objects, like **birds** and **colors**, or places, like pools of **water**, to expand the meaning of the letters. Each letter also corresponds with a weapon or other military equipment, sciences, cosmology, spiritual states of being, times of the day, herbs, etc. In former times, individuals initiated into Bardic or Druidic practices could communicate with one another simply by mentioning the animals, birds, or weapons that corresponded with the letters. Unsuspecting listeners could not understand what was being said. An example of esoteric ingenuity was the creation of an ogham sign language known only to those initiated in its use.

The mystical basis of the oghams is in the trees that correspond with each symbol of the alphabet. The names are based on archaic Gaelic tree names. Like all the magical alphabets (Greek, Hebrew of the Kabbalah, Nordic **runes**, etc.), each individual ogham has not only a name and **sound**, but represents a specific object or quality. A summary of the meanings of the twenty original ogham letters follows.

The first letter is Beth, named for the birch tree, which is associated with **purification** and the color white. Beth is one of the month oghams, of which there are thirteen (a relic of the old way of reckoning **time** according to the phases of the **moon**). Magically, Beth is used to protect against all harm, physical and spiritual. It allows the bad to be dealt with and cleared away so that a new beginning can take place, unhindered by leftovers and unfinished business.

Luis is named for the rowan or quickbeam tree, traditionally considered a magical plant, the **Tree of Life**, and a tree of 'quickenings.' The bird associated with Luis is the duck; the color

gray, and the festival Imbolc, celebrated on February 1. This time is the quickening of the year when the days are noticeably longer after the darkness of winter.

Fearn is named for the alder tree, which symbolically bridges the space between the **Lowerworld** in the **earth** and the **Upperworld** in the air. The tree is also connected with **sword**-making and prized by smiths for giving the best charcoal for **metal**-smelting. The color is blood-red and the bird the seagull. The gull's calls were imitated to summon the wind and the alder was used for making whistles also used to call up the wind.

Saille is named for the Sally tree or white willow, which is associated with the growth of lunar **power** and rooting in water. Saille is the ogham of linking, a watery symbolism which brings itself into harmony with the flow of events, most notably the phases of the moon. In divination its power is great at night, except when the moon is visible during the day. Esoterically this eminent flexibility demonstrates a harmonious amenability to the conditions to which it is subjected. The bird is the hawk.

Nuin (Nion) is named for the gray and the black **ash**, which are associated with rebirth and the passage between the inner and outer worlds. In the Norse traditions the ash is the **World Tree**, Yggdrasil, the cosmic axis that links the Upper, Middle, and Lower worlds. The bird is the snipe and the color is clear.

Huath (Uath) is named for the whitethorn or hawthorn, the Goddess's tree of sexuality. The name means 'terrible' and refers to the destroying aspect of the Threefold Goddess. Huath is the ogham of protection against all ills, invoking the power of the Otherworld. The bird is the night-crow and the color is purple.

Duir, is named for the common **oak**, considered the most powerful tree in many European spiritual traditions due to its connection with the **sky** gods. For the Druids, every part of the oak is **sacred**. The color is black and the bird

the wren, also sacred to the Druids. Magically, this important ogham signifies strength. Traditionally, it is the ogham that enables one to see the invisible and to become invisible; to allow entry of those who should enter and to exclude those who should not. In a magical way, it can also refer to things of great strength that are hidden from view at present.

Tinne is named for the holly tree, the cypress, or the rowan. Magically, the character Tinne brings strength and power, but in a balanced manner. It has a strong male element, more specifically connected with fatherhood and the consequent ability for **souls** to be reborn. The bird is the starling and the color gray-green.

Coll is named for the hazel tree, which is associated with knowledge and gaining information. The hazel is also associated with the shaman, the crane, and the color nut-brown.

Quert is named for the crabapple, which is associated with the celebration of the eternity of life. The color is mouse-brown or apple-green and the bird is the hen.

Muin (Min) is named for the thorny thicket and the bird is the titmouse, a bird of thickets. The color is variegated. Magically, it signifies the ability to range over a wide area and gather together those things that might be needed. Once gathered together, these things are assimilated, leading to inner development.

Gort is named for the native ivy, most particularly in its flowering season. The color is blue and the bird the mute swan. Symbolically and magically, Gort represents the changes that are necessary for growth and the requirement that all things be related to the earth.

Ngetal is named for the reed used by the scribes of ancient Ireland to make pens. Ngetal is the ogham of Sashimi, the festival of the land and the beginning of the new year in the Celtic calendar. The greatest power of Ngetal is as the preserver. As the pen that preserves

memory and knowledge, it also signifies conscious precision and the maintenance of order in **chaos**. The bird is the goose and the color is yellowish green.

Straif is named for the blackthorn or sloe tree, a tree of major magical powers connected with punishment and strife. Straif signifies power in both the visible and invisible worlds. It provides the strength one needs to resist and defeat adversity and to control or ward off supernatural and paranormal powers. Straif is perhaps the most powerful ogham for overthrowing all resistance to one's will. The color is purple-black and the bird the thrush.

Ruis is named for the elder or bourtrees, another tree of great power in divination. The bark and flowers were also used for their **healing** properties. The elder is held sacred for its connection with the dark aspect of the Mother Goddess, the Hag. Symbolically, Ruis signifies the three aspects of time present in the Threefold Goddess. It is an ogham of the unity of all time. The color is red and the bird is the rook.

Ailm is named for the elm tree. Ailm represents the god-like strength that one needs to rise above adversity, like the elm tree, to create a viewpoint from a higher level: the god-like capabilities of healing and perception of future trends. The color is blue and the bird the lapwing.

On (Ohn) is named for the gorse of furze, which can be found in flower in almost every month of the year. Thus it is an ogham of continuous fertility. It represents the carrying on of one's activities despite the surrounding conditions. Magically it represents the collecting together and retaining of one's strength through adversity. The color is saffron yellow and the bird the cormorant.

Ur is named for the heather, which means fresh, new, and moist. Magically Ur brings this luck and freshness to any venture to which it is applied. It becomes the entrance point to the inner worlds. The color is purple and the bird the skylark.

Eadha is named for the aspen or white poplar, known to be hardy and able to live in a wide range of habitats. The oghams speaks of this quality of hardy resistance to variety of seemingly inhospitable conditions. Magically it is seen as a preventer of death. It is a facilitator of the individual's curative powers, providing access to the real essence that underlies the sometimes misleading outer form. The color is silvery white and the bird the whistling swan.

Ioho (Idho, Iubhar) is named for the yew tree which is green throughout the year. It is considered the tree of eternal life, sacred to various divinities and saint of death and regeneration. The ogham has the meaning of the unity of death and life, the rebirth which comes, figuratively or physically, as a result of death. The color is greenish brown and the bird is the eaglet.

Like other alphabets, the oghams are arranged in a specific character order. Originally the twenty characters appear to have been arranged in four divisions of five. Today twenty-five characters are used and arranged in five groups of five. The last five characters: *Koad*—the sacred grove; *Oir*—the gooseberry, *Ui*—the honeysuckle, *Pethbol*—the guelder rose; and *Péine* (also Amancholl, Xi, Mór)—the witch hazel, are diphthongs. Their magical components are less well established than those of the first twenty characters.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Pennick, N. *Magical Alphabets*. York Beach, ME: Samuel Wieser, Inc., 1992.

Ogichidanimidiwin

The *ogichidanimidiwin*, or **Ojibwa Chief Dance**, is performed to enlist the aid of *manitous*, who are the protectors of the particular group of people, in the **healing** of a sick person or in warding off impending sickness. The *ogichidanimidiwin* is performed when someone

dreams that sickness was about to invade the community, which was a common and devastating occurrence after the Europeans came to **North America**. It was also performed when the **spirits** prescribed the **ritual** as a cure for a patient's **illness**. See also **dance** and **dreaming**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Oglala

See **Lakota**.

Ohgiwe

The Feast of the Dead or **Ghost Dance** of the **Iroquois**, one of three major rites of the *diehoono* or Tutelo. Traditional Iroquois believe that an aspect of the **soul** can remain in the earthly realm as a ghost after death. The *ohgiwe* is performed the day after the burial, which is the fourth day after death, to appease this **spirit** and release it from the earthly plane. Otherwise the ghost wanders among the living, possessing them and causing **illness**. If this is the case, then the *ohgiwe* is performed as a cure.

The *ohgiwe* is performed twice a year in the spring and fall as a form of preventative **medicine**. Through the **ritual** acts that comprise the night-long *ohgiwe*, the ancestral spirits are appeased and any ghosts are cleared from the earthly realm. The *ohgiwe* also functions as a private **healing** ritual for those afflicted with ghost sickness. In this case part of the ritual is held in the lodge of the patient.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Ojibwa

(Also Ojibway, Chippewa, Chippeway, Anishinabeg) The Ojibwa, an **Algonquian**

people of the northern and western Great Lakes region of **North America**, were one of the largest nations of **First Peoples** north of Mexico. Some Ojibwa (the last syllable is pronounced 'way') prefer their more ancient name for themselves, **Anishinabe**, meaning "we people." The Ojibwa joined with the Ottawa and the Potawatomi in a loose confederacy known to white traders as the Three Fires. In the histories of each of these tribes they were originally one tribe.

In traditional Ojibwa **culture** every person acquires a guardian *manitou*, or **helping spirit**, through personal **vision quests**. The powers of these *manitou* are drawn on for protection, identity within the clan, and success in hunting, beadwork, pottery, childbirth, etc. Thus, each person maintained a relationship with spirit and the **sacred** without normally consulting **shamans** for guidance. The Ojibwa shaman was a specialist, distinguished by the amount of power obtained from a number of *manitou* and his or her ability to direct that power into healing, conjuring, or **divination**.

In North America the shaman and the **priest** have distinct and sometimes antagonistic functions. Among the Ojibwa, this distinction is sharply drawn. The priest can be considered a keeper of **ceremony** and the priest's position is secured through **knowledge**. The shaman can be considered a creator of **ritual**. The shaman's position is secured through the ability to enter trance states and bring the powers of the supernatural to the aid of humans.

The shamans of the Ojibwa evolved over time, beginning with the archaic *meda*, or **family shaman**. Each isolated Ojibwa band often depended on their family shaman to cure the sick, divine for the hunt, and generally meet all the pressing needs of the group. The *meda* created a **drum** to use for inducing trance. The drum also represented the mythic cedar tree that is the cosmic axis that connects the mysterious realms, providing a path for the *meda* and

the healing power of the *manitou* (**spirits**).

The *tcisaki*, or *djessakid*, evolved as a specialist in performing divination and the **Shaking Tent Ceremony**. The *tcisaki* constructed the conjuring lodge of tree poles as instructed by his or her *manitou*. One tree, with its branches remaining, extends higher than the others, suggesting again the mythic cedar tree, the path for the *manitou* the *tcisaki* calls on in the divining ritual.

Later the **Midewiwin Society** evolved from the **training** and practices of Ojibwa shamans. The Midewiwin Society coexisted with the practices of the *tcisaki* and other specialists. The Midewiwin Society is one of the oldest healing societies of the Ojibwa. It is known for performing the *midewiwin*, the great healing ritual. This ceremony is not found among the northern Ojibwa or the Ojibwa who migrated to the southeast.

Mide, which means "mystic" or "mystically powerful," is one of three classes of Ojibwa shamans. These shamans are the healers who call on **helping spirits** to effect cures during the *midewiwin* ritual. They also administer herbal remedies, which are always empowered with a **medicine** song. These **songs** are given to the shaman in **visions** and **journeys** by the *manitou*. In some areas the Ojibwa had an uneasy relationship with the *mide* who were seen as a potential threat because their power enabled them to overcome those who lacked magical skills.

Primarily the *midewiwin* (shamans) were called on for healing. The Ojibwa looked to five possible causes for **illness: sorcery, spirit intrusion, energy intrusions, breach of taboo, or soul loss**.

Midewiwin Paraphernalia

The Ojibwa shaman did not have a common **costume**, though some societies wore costumes while others wore nothing. Records of ceremonial songs were kept in pictographs on birch bark scrolls for teaching. Round hand drums

with straight strikers, various **rattles**, and a large drum carved from a log and partially filled with **water** were used. The water drum was played with a curved striker primarily during *midewiwin* rituals and ceremonies.

There is a persistent notion that is difficult to trace in the literature that the *midewiwin* had four higher, secret levels and that the chief *midewiwin* practitioners and **teachers** were women. The *midewiwin* teaching is the path of the mysteries, and service to that path required a willingness to earn the power of the *manitou* by doing them favors, the ability to fast, to **dream**, to trust the supernatural workings of luck, the possession of a powerful sense of the absurd, and an unswerving self-discipline that often meant a lifetime of abstinence from certain foods and activities enjoyed by others.

The *a-go-kwa*, the gender-variant shaman of the Ojibwa, was called to the role in dreams, like other Ojibwa shamans. After a boy dreamed the *a-go-kwa* dream, he would forsake all male customs and adopt the dress and mannerisms of women. This transformation of **gender** would continue throughout his training and his lifetime.

Soul

The Ojibwa believe that the development of the **soul** is a central duty in the life of every man and woman. They experience the soul as an immortal substance that must grow while residing in the finite and perishable physical body. The growth of the soul is inspired by the harmony of heart and spirit achieved in life.

Death

At death, the Ojibwa believe that the shaman's help is necessary for the soul. The souls of the newly deceased need guidance to rise to the challenges of reconciling their life and to overcome the dangers along their journey to the Otherworld. The shaman is central in the rituals performed to entice the soul out of the routines of their old life and

to appease them so that, upon accepting their death, they do not continue to demand attention from their relatives, take revenge on the living, or torment their enemies in their sleep. It was the shaman's role to enter into the spirit realms, to accompany soul on its journey, and to assure the successful completion of that journey. See also **death and dying**.

Grim, John A. *The Shaman*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

Gunn, Allen P. *Grandmothers of the Light*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Ojuna

The masculine form of **shaman** in the Yakut **language**. **Udoyan** is the feminine. See also **Yakut**.

Ololiuqui

Ololiuqui, made from the seeds of *Turbina corymbosa*, is a principal **plant hallucinogen** for the Chinotec, **Mazatec**, and other peoples of the Oaxacan region of Mexico. Its use can be traced back to the **sacred** ceremonies of the **Aztecs**, who call it **coaxihuitl**, meaning green snake or snake plant. *Turbina corymbosa*, or *Rivea corymbosa* as it is also known, is found in the warm, tropical zones of the Americas.

Turbina corymbosa is a large, woody vine with heart-shaped leaves and many bell-shaped flowers. The flowers, three-quarters to one-and-a-half inches long, are white with greenish stripes. The round, brown seeds are hallucinogenic and analgesic.

The Spanish invaders of Mexico found the **ritual** use of *Ololiuqui*

offensive. The ecclesiastics were particularly intolerant of the practice and proceeded to suppress and eradicate it. The people took the sacred rituals into the hills, saving the essence of the rituals and merging other elements of their spiritual practice with the Christianity imposed on them.

Use

The Chinatec name for *Ololiuqui* is *A-mu-kia*, meaning “medicine for divination.” *Ololiuqui* is used in a ritual to communicate with the spirit world for **divination** and **diagnosis**. When an individual is entranced, he or she is in communication with the *Ololiuqui* spirit who speaks through the individual. The message is interpreted by the **shaman**.

When *Ololiuqui* is to be given to the patient, the shaman prepares the infusion and administers it at night. The source of the patient’s problems and the appropriate remedy are diagnosed by the shaman from an interpretation of the patient’s **words** and **visions** during the course of the intoxication.

Turbina corymbosa is used for a wide variety of medicinal purposes from curing syphilis to removing tumors, to stimulating the **healing** of dislocations, fractures, and pelvic problems in women. The powdered seeds also have a variety of medicinal uses.

Preparation

Thirteen seeds are ground and placed in a gourd of **water** to make an infusion. The particulate matter is strained from the drink and the infusion is consumed or added to an alcoholic beverage and consumed.

Active Principle

The active principles of *Ololiuqui* are the lysergic acid alkaloids, lysergic acid amide, and lysergic acid hydroxyethylamide. They are indole alkaloids. Lysergic acid amide differs only slightly in structure from lysergic acid diethylamide or LSD. LSD is a semi-synthetic compound and the most potent known hallucinogen. LSD is one hundred times

more potent than the usual dose of *Ololiuqui*.

Ritual of Receiving the Plant Spirit, or Plant Medicine

Traditionally, *Ololiuqui* is administered to a single individual in a secluded, quiet place at night. The shaman prepares the hallucinogenic infusion, creates the ritual space, and helps the patient find the correct focus for his or her encounter with the spirit of *Ololiuqui*. The patient drinks *Ololiuqui* and remains secluded, waiting for the spirit to reveal what he or she needs to know. After the **trance** has run its course, the shaman interprets the cause of the **illness** and the necessary remedies from the patient’s experiences with the spirit of *Ololiuqui* while in trance.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

Intoxication begins rapidly, giving over quickly to visual hallucinations. In the early stages, giddiness may be followed by a weariness. Full trance is characterized by a state of “sleep” that is filled with visions, often grotesque, and occasionally movement as if sleepwalking.

The intoxication lasts approximately three hours. During that time the individual is dimly aware of his or her surroundings, which is the reason *Ololiuqui* is traditionally administered in solitude. There are seldom unpleasant side effects. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **Morning Glory**.

Schultes, R. E. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Omi

The **soul** of the **Tungus** after death. **Chanjan**, the soul of the living, becomes *omi* after death. *Omi* means *becoming or being formed*. After death the *omi* are escorted by ancestral **spirits** to the land of the *Omi*, the source of the Tungus river of kinship, where they reside until they choose to reincarnate.

If the ancestral escort does not appear or if the *omi* escapes its escort, the **shaman** must intervene and convey the *omi* to its proper destination. Otherwise the *omi* can cause harm to the living or slip into the body of a woman and try to reincarnate before its time. See also **psychopomp**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Omphalos

Omphalos is the Greek word for navel and refers to a focal point or central part, as in the umbilicus. Symbolically, the **Tree of Life** is said to grow at the omphalos, the place of connection to all things. Literally, omphalos often refers to a **sacred** stone found in temples or **shrines**. Typically, the stone is shaped like a beehive, associating the stone and the temple with the goddess in one of her most ancient forms, the queen bee, civilizer of mankind.

Omphalos can also describe a beehive-shaped sanctuary space found in the **initiation** histories of many **cultures**. For example in India, it is called a *stupa*. The shape of the egg or beehive is a symbol of the transformation, birth, and rebirth through initiation.

The sign associated with the omphalos and its symbolic nature as the **earth** navel, the point of connection of all things, is a small **circle** or dot within a circle. It is found painted on the heads of **frame drums**, worked into jewelry, and stamped into coins.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Oneane

Corn pollen used as a sacred **offering** by the Zuni. See also **sacred**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Onotcikewinini

Divining **shamans** of the **Ojibwa** who use no special **paraphernalia** to foretell coming events, such as the imminent arrival of travelers to the camp, the movement of enemies, or the coming of rain, for example. These **seers** are distinguished from the *djessakid* who perform the **Shaking Tent Ceremony** for **divination**. The *onotcikewinini*, which means “foretelling man,” coexists with the *djessakid* in Ojibwa **culture**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Ordinary Consciousness

Consciousness, in this context, is an individual’s total pattern of thinking and feeling at any given time. Ordinary consciousness is an individual’s day-to-day experience of thinking and feeling. It is the experience of being awake versus sleeping or **dreaming**. This ordinary consciousness serves as a baseline for that individual from which to differentiate **altered states of consciousness**.

A discrete state of consciousness, like ordinary consciousness, is a system. This system has two basic components—structures and energies. Structures are the various human potentials that are expressed, suppressed, tapped, or untapped. Energies are the energetic flow routes of awareness, attention (partially directable awareness), and biological and psychic energies that keep the structures connected and interacting with one another in a relatively stable and habitual pattern.

Ordinary consciousness is a construction, not a given. This construction has a very large number of arbitrary

aspects in it whose value are personally and/or culturally relative. Humans almost universally assume, consciously or unconsciously, that their culturally created consciousness is reality. This assumption often extends to the belief that their ordinary state of consciousness is somehow the best or the optimal state of consciousness for all.

However, ordinary is a relative term and the construction of consciousness is a somewhat arbitrary process relative to person and **culture**. Each individual achieves an ordinary consciousness as part of the process of learning to function within their culture's consensus reality (the reality a human learns to perceive as it is defined and perceived by the powerful forces that influence humans) during their process of enculturation.

Ordinary consciousness is the state of consciousness the **shaman** leaves from and returns to after working in **trance**. See also **energy**.

Tart, Charles, T. "The Basic Nature of Altered States of Consciousness: A Systems Approach." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 8, no. 1 (1976): 45–64.

Ordinary Reality

Reality as it is perceived from the cognitive state of normal consciousness. It is a consensus reality that is defined within each **culture**. What is ordinary to someone from one culture may appear to be **non-ordinary reality** to someone from another. There is no absolute ordinary reality.

Ordinary consciousness varies from person to person and may vary considerably between different ethnic groups. Some cultures have a highly refined awareness of different mental states. For example, the Buddhist Abhidhamma lists one hundred and eight different states of mental cultivation. Contemporary Western cultures recognize three states of consciousness: ordinary, sleeping, or **dreaming**. Other

states of consciousness are considered symptoms of mental **illness**.

Orenda

The **Iroquois** term for the mystical force that is inherent in all matter and **spirits**. It is the magic in power or the potential inherent in power. *Orenda* is an anglicized word used by scholars for the Iroquois word that varies in the different dialects of the people of the Iroquois nations.

Orenda is a mystical force that cannot be understood with the rational mind, but can be manipulated to create change in the physical or spiritual realms. Orenda is the force the **shaman** manipulates to create **healing**. *Orenda* is neutral and can be directed by people to benevolent or malevolent ends.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Original Medicine

Original medicine is the unique quality of personal **power** that arises from the combination of talents, gifts, and challenges innate to each individual. All **medicine** powers arise from the consciousness that is innate in all things in our living universe. An individual may be granted additional medicine powers as a result of a profound life transformation, dedicated work, or a successful **vision quest** or **initiation**.

When an individual is fully expressing who they are they are said to be "full of power" or "expressing their medicine." The original medicine of each individual is duplicated nowhere else on the planet; it is the uniqueness of each human. While the presence of original medicine within each individual is a given, whether or not an individual will live fully and bring his or her original medicine to the world is not. Individuals who do not live in integrity with their original medicine eventually suffer **soul loss**.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Oruncha

See **Arunta (Aranda)**.

Oshadageaa

(Also *haguks*—Cayuga and Onondaga). The **Seneca** term for Dew Eagles, giant spirit eagles or “cloud dwellers” who are the patron spirit of the **Iroquois** Eagle Society. *Oshadageaa* have the **power** to restore vital life force to the dying, the elderly, and those afflicted with wasting **diseases**. The Eagle Society performs the Eagle Dance in cases of serious, life-threatening **illness**.

The **healing** powers of the *oshadageaa* are invoked during this healing **ritual** through the **singing** of a **power song** called *gane ondaadon* (“shaking a fan”) in Seneca and *ganegwae gaena* (“striking a fan song”) in Onondaga. Thus the Eagle Dance is also called the Striking Dance. See also **dance** and **song**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Otavalan

See **Quechua**.

Otgun

(Also *oki, okki, otkon, utgon*) The use of **Orenda** for malevolent purposes.

Orenda, the **Iroquois** term for the mystical force that is inherent in all matter and **spirits**, is neutral. It can be directed by people to benevolent or malevolent ends. *Otgun* is also used to refer to malevolent beings, animals, and people. In some groups it refers to a **spirit** that has attached itself to a **shaman**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)

The out-of-body experience (OBE) is an **altered state of consciousness** characterized by the perception of all objects arranged in such a way that they are being viewed from a point of consciousness outside of the physical body. The experience of observing doctors performing an operation on one’s own body from the ceiling of the operating room is an example of an anesthesia-induced OBE. There is a clear distinction between OBEs and the **trance** states of the **shaman** due to the different phenomenology of each experience. An OBE is experienced relative to the physical world and the **soul** moves invisibly through the physical world. The shaman’s trance states are experienced relative to the spirit world and the shaman’s soul moves freely into other realms as well as in the physical.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

P

Pachakuti

The time of transformation. According to ancient **Inka** prophecy the end of the 20th century is the time of gathering and reintegration of the Peoples of the **earth**. It is a time of upheaval and great change that will make it fertile for a new seed of awareness and bring profound alterations in the way humanity perceives the core structures of the universe.

The **Q'ero**, descendants of the Inka who live 17,000 feet up the mist-enshrouded mountains of south-central Peru, recognize that there are three types of human intelligence/**power**: *yachay* (**knowledge**) developed in the Europeans, *munay* (love and feeling) developed in the indigenous South Americans, and *llankay* (the ability to manifest) developed in the North Americans. Each of these peoples needs the intelligence and power of the other two to be whole. This time of change, *Pachakuti*, will create the potential for Wholeness by bringing all three powers together.

Pachakuti is a very important moment for all humanity, particularly those who have strayed from a balanced life of purpose and meaning. *Pachakuti* is a time to realign the world in renewed order and harmony and to open to new ways of seeing the world. To this end the Q'ero now open their teachings to all others in preparation for the day the Eagle of the North and the Condor of the South fly together again. See also **Andes, South America; North America; South America**.

Paho

(Also: *baho*, *paaho*, *paavaho* [pl.]) A Hopi prayer stick that is made to embody a **prayer** for moisture. There are many types of *paavaho* made by different Hopi for different purposes in different ways. Only persons with authority and the required spiritual **power** can make ceremonial *paavaho*. Most *paavaho* are made from a required type of stick, specific **feathers** in a particular **sacred** arrangement, and hand-spun cotton twine.

Paholawu is the **ritual** of making a *paho* and it is a sacred undertaking usually conducted in a kiva. The success of Hopi ceremonies is based in part on the prayers given to the *paavaho* as they are made. Once assembled the *paho* is sanctified by smudging it with smoke, sprinkling it with cornmeal, spraying it with honey, or some combination of these acts. Completed *paavaho* are stuck into the ground at designated sites, some of which might host several hundred *paavaho* at a time. See also **ceremony; embodiment; spirits**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Pains

The indigenous peoples of north-central and north-coastal California have a view of **disease**-causing agents that is unique to **North America**. **Illness** is believed to be caused by the intrusion into the body of "pains," as they are referred to in the anthropological literature. These same pains are also the source of the shaman's **power**, so much so that the measure of a shaman's power is directly proportional to the number of pains held in the body. This notion of pains as the cause of illness and source of power extends to the west and south to the Southern Paiutes of Nevada where pains are called *pakankii*.

Pains are **energy intrusions** sent by a **spirit**, sorcerer, or someone with intent to harm the victim. They manifest in a variety of forms, frequently forms clear and sharp at both ends. They are able to fly from source to victim and continue to move even after being extracted from the body of the victim/patient.

Pains are distinguished from the energy intrusions that cause illness in other **cultures**. Pains are like simplistic **spirits**; they are in and of themselves supernaturally powerful. Other energetic intrusions are given power by the spirits or sorcerers who create them; their power is not innate. These intrusions manifest in ordinary forms, like sticks and stones whose presence in the body is harmful and disease producing.

As with energy intrusions, the shaman must locate the pain in the patient's body and suck it out, or extract it in some way. Unlike other energy intrusions the extracted pain is a potential source of power for the shaman. After a shaman has extracted a pain he or she either destroys it or keeps it within his or her own body to determine whether or not the power can be transformed to a useful power.

After the **extraction** in the **healing** ritual, the shaman usually displays the pain for the patient, family, and other participants to see, then swallows it. If it appears to the shaman that the pain will not become a source of power, it is destroyed. Once a shaman has transformed a pain to a source of power, he or she is able to vomit it up, display it, and swallow it again at will.

Traditionally, women of this region become shamans through symbolic **dreams** of pains. For example, a dream of mountain can be interpreted as a dream of the source of pains or a dream of a sunset can be interpreted as a dream of the color of pains the novice will acquire. After a novice receives her first pain in a dream, she must learn to control it so that it does not become a disease-causing agent in her body.

In this unique way, the shamans of California gain healing power through

the acquisition and control of pains. Additional pains can be acquired by dancing and fasting at isolated spots or by extracting them from patients. The most powerful shamans have collected and gained control of many, many pains. See also **California region; dance; ritual; Wintun**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Paksu Mudang

The **gender-variant male** shaman who performs as a woman and dresses in women's garments while conducting **exorcism** rituals. The *paksu mudang* is one of two classes of male **shamans** in **Korea** where the *mudang* (shamans) are predominantly female. The other class is populated by traditionally masculine men who are visually impaired. Male shamans specialize in exorcisms and work with the forceful chanting of **mantras**. They rarely use **trance**, which is the **domain** of the *mudang*. See also **chant; gender variant; ritual**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Paq'o

The *paq'o* are the **shamans** and spiritual leaders of the **Q'ero** who live high in the Andes of Peru. They serve an area or region. There are many levels of *paq'o* involving many, many years of **training**. One of the higher levels, the *pampa mesayoq*, is the "shaman" as defined in this volume. See also **Andes, South America**.

Paraphernalia

Paraphernalia refers to the personal belongings and articles of equipment used by **shamans** in their work. The paraphernalia used by a particular

shaman varies relative to **culture**, **helping spirits**, expertise or rank, and personal preference.

Examples of common paraphernalia include clothing, headdresses, stones, knives, **swords**, **divination** tools, **crystals**, whistles, **soul catchers**, musical instruments for inducing **trance**, **mirrors**, alcohol, candles, **incense**, pipes, **amulets**, spring **water**, grain, fruit, flowers, equipment for delivering prepared **plant hallucinogens**, and a vast variety of personal **power objects**.

Some items have both a universal function and unique cultural function. For example, the **drum** is used by shamans around the world as a tool to enter trance. However, some shamans decorate their drums with their map of the invisible world or use the drum directly as a divination tool.

Many objects in a shaman's collection are functional and essential to the success of the **ritual** work, like the drum, **rattle**, or smoke. The function of the item in the **healing** ritual determines whether it is essential and when. For example, alcohol offered as a **libation** in a Haitian ritual may or may not be deemed essential to that ritual, while **trago** (cane alcohol) used in a Quechua **cleansing** is essential for that healing.

Some paraphernalia is determined strictly by an individual shaman's unique **powers** and the need to embody and support it. A shaman may be guided by his or her helping spirit to find an object in a particular place or to make it in a particular way. Shamans will use a traditional object, like a sword, or an ordinary object, like a stone, in an innovative way if directed to do so by **helping spirits**.

In any shaman's collection of paraphernalia there may be items whose presence is determined by the culture. The presence of these ceremonial objects or **costumes** puts the audience and patient at ease. These things help the shaman to engage the audience and draw them into the **sacred space** of the ritual; however, the shaman could work successfully without them.

Some paraphernalia is used by shamans to provide symbolic representations of the formless and ineffable nature of the **sacred** in the material world. It is the shaman's role to communicate the sacred; however, that is not always most effective when done directly. Nor is it always possible in the midst of a healing ritual to speak. Shamans can achieve nonverbal communication during their rituals through the use of their paraphernalia. See also **embodiment** and **Quechua**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Pattern Recognition

In the shaman's world all things have **spirit** and everything is one. A person, a stone, and a thought are all made of the same stuff. They are all **energy** and they are all connected. These connections create patterns of energy that are recognizable in **altered states of consciousness**. The **shaman** works with these patterns or forms of energy in **trance**. For example, a spirit who helps the shaman is one pattern of energy; the cause of an **illness** is another; and the shaman is another.

Everything is seen as a necessary part of the whole. However, it is the shaman's job to distinguish between the enemy and the ally, between benevolent and malevolent **spirits** and energies. The shaman's work is often interpreted through a system of good and evil, but in a more accurate and practical sense the shaman is using a system of pattern recognition.

The energetic pattern of an ally is different than that of an enemy; benevolent energy feels different than malevolent energy. In this way the shaman can distinguish, for example, the difference between a wise **ancestor** who has crossed over at death and returned to aid the shaman and the spirit of an ancestor who is unresolved about his or her life or death and hangs around the

living trying to gain resolution or revenge, which creates problems for the living.

The shaman's ability to distinguish between an enemy and an ally in the spirit world does not lie in knowing who's good and who's evil, but in pattern recognition and the ability to accurately sense energy forms. Often the shaman must "sense" through layers of deception and trickery to accurately define the true nature of a pattern or energy form.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

Pawágan

The *pawágan*, *pawáganak* (pl), is a guardian **spirit** who comes in a power **dream** or during a childhood **vision quest** to the **Ojibwa**. *Pawágan*, which means "dream visitor," refers to both the spirit and the spirit **powers** obtained from the spirit through the vision quest or power dreams. These **spirits** usually appear in a human form and are referred to as "grandfather."

All Ojibwa children are encouraged to seek *pawágan* through power dreams from the age of six until the spirit powers come. It is especially important for boys to gain the protection of a *pawágan* given the dangers inherent in hunting and warfare. Between the ages of ten and fourteen years, any boy who had not acquired his *pawágan* spontaneously was sent on a vision quest each spring until the **helping spirit** was acquired.

A site was selected in the woods and a platform, or *wázisan* ("nest"), was constructed there in a tree for each boy. The boy remained in the *wázisan*, often for more than week, until his *pawágan* presented itself in a power dream or **vision**. The content of these power dreams was not shared with anyone or the power acquired would be withdrawn from the boy. Even so, all powers

received in this way from the *pawágan* were contingent upon the fulfillment of obligations and the adherence to **taboos** defined by the *pawágan*. See also *manitou*.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Paxé

In ancient times the peoples of the southwestern **North America** prepared a **plant hallucinogen** called *paxé*. *Paxé* was made by mixing **peyote** (*Lophophora williamsii*) with herbs and **samin** (little red beans, *Sophora secundiflora*).

Payé

Payé means imbued with shamanic **power**. Things and animals are referred to as being *payé* or a little *payé*. *Payé* is a title given to shamans throughout much of **Amazonia**; however, *payé* does not always equal shaman in use.

The *payé* usually works with sacred **plant hallucinogens** to learn directly from the **spirits** of the plants how to use the vast variety of rain forest plants for entheogenic and medicinal purposes. The *payé's* role in the community is based on the power and accuracy of his or her work in **trance** with the spirits and energies of the invisible world. See also **ayahuascero**; **entheogen**; **plant diets**.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Peak Experiences

Peak experiences are intense, climactic human responses to the experience of one's connection to all things. They are poignantly emotional and at times exclusively emotional. They are characterized by an element of surprise or

disbelief and a quality of a *first time* experience or a miracle.

Peak experiences are often transcendent, mystical, or religious experiences that are not dependent on location (church or temple) or beliefs (**religion** or faith), nor do they necessarily imply supernatural intervention. Peak experiences arise from a particularly lucid state of mind that is achievable in almost any activity, when the activity is raised to the individual's threshold level of perfection.

The terms "religious" or "mystical" do not describe the full range of peak experiences. The same quality of peak experience can be triggered by stimuli or situations other than those in religious or mystical contexts. For example, experiences of nature, of the creative, of love, of sex, of death or despair, of insight, of performing live, or of watching a live performance of **art** or athletics can trigger a peak experience.

Peak experiences are hard to share with others who have not experienced the ecstatic state of a peak experience. People turn to shamans, in part, to have their peak experience resolved into a greater cosmic framework so that they can understand and use it. Others who have not had peak experiences turn to **shamans** to connect with the **sacred** through the shaman's ecstatic state, experiencing a peak vicariously.

Peak experiences come unexpectedly and do not necessarily contribute to the progress of all those who seek transcendent states of consciousness. Peak experiences are best understood as a tool for personal development, not a way of life. Applying what is gleaned in a peak experience to one's life can lead to a more sustained transcendent experience. The compulsive pursuit of the peak experiences alone may result in neglecting the very paths that will ultimately lead the individual to a more sustained transcendent experience of life.

At the turn of the century, peak experiences were considered abnormal or pathological by Western psychologists.

While it is true that the mentally ill may have peak experiences, peak experiences themselves are not proof of mental **illness**. Peak experiences are more a characteristic of healthy individuals than of neurosis or psychosis.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that not having peak experiences is actually a sign of illness. A life without peak experiences may indicate a state in which the individual is not functioning as a full human or not sufficiently integrated. Not asking the questions that lead to peak experiences may be a sign of abnormal existential health. A healthy individual who adequately fulfills the concept of being human should experience spontaneous, peak moments in life.

The content of the peak experience and the experience itself reveal the nature of reality, humankind's relation to it, and the values inherent in it. Peak experiences transcend morals, **ethics**, and dualities, like the distinction between good and evil. They reveal how these parts of life that appeared at odds in the moments before the experience now fit together into the whole.

The characteristics of a peak experience are known completely, without linear thought, throughout the entire being. In short, they are grokked. The following is a list of twenty-five characteristics of peak experiences:

1. The entire universe is perceived of as an integrated and unified whole in which the individual recognizes his or her place.
2. The quality and quantity of concentration is greater and more focused, resulting in enhanced perception of total sight, **sound**, and feeling. The inherent equality in things emerges from this totality, replacing the human habit of arranging things in a hierarchy of importance.
3. In this state of heightened awareness of one's own being, the being aspect of the external world and external objects becomes apparent. Everything exists as an end in itself, not as a value defined relative to humans.

4. The independent reality of objects and people is more readily apparent as the individual's perception becomes less egocentric.
 5. The peak experience is self-validating and self-justifying. Its intrinsic value may be experienced so intensely and completely that it renews the intrinsic value of life and justifies living.
 6. Peak experiences are recognized as an end, not a means. This affirms that there are things, objects, or experiences that are worthwhile in themselves, thus renewing the awareness that life is worthwhile.
 7. Awareness of **time** and **space** is altered. There may be a perception of timelessness and/or spacelessness, a complete lack of consciousness of time and space, or an awareness of eternity and universality.
 8. The world is seen as a whole. Evil, pain, **disease**, and death are accepted, understood, and seen in their proper places in the whole, as unavoidable, necessary, and belonging.
 9. Through this profound acceptance of the whole, the individual is freed from the need to judge, blame, condemn, or be disappointed, and can respond with pity, charity, kindness, and perhaps sadness or amusement.
 10. The spiritual values of which the world is made become apparent. For example, the world does not merely exist; it is also sacred. Reality, then, is perceived as being composed of intrinsic values, which are absolute and can be defined in terms of each other but cannot be analyzed or broken down further.
 11. The awareness of one's place in the greater being of the whole inspires a more passive, receptive, and humble consciousness than is normal for the individual.
 12. The peak experience inspires in the individual feelings of wonder, awe, reverence, **humility**, surrender, and worship.
 13. The individual perceives of unity and integration in the world and tends to move toward fusion, integration, and unity within himself, resolving or transcending the dichotomies, polarities, and conflicts of life.
 14. The individual experiences a transient loss of fear, anxiety, inhibition, defense and control, perplexity, confusion, conflict, delay, and restraint.
 15. The immediate effects or after-effects on the individual can range in intensity from life changing to therapeutic to no effects at all.
 16. The individual experiences an increased awareness of "heaven" as an ever-available state that exists all the time all around.
 17. The individual experiences a tendency to move toward uniqueness, the real self, or to become more real.
 18. The individual experiences increased awareness of "free will," of being the responsible, active, and creative center of his or her own activities.
 19. Peak experiences allow those who have clear and strong identities to transcend the ego and enter a selfless state of consciousness.
 20. The individual becomes more loving and accepting, and, as a result, more spontaneous, honest, and innocent.
 21. The individual transcends the experience of living under the laws of the physical world and becomes aware of the influence of psychological laws.
 22. The wholeness of the peak experience frees the individual from striving, needing, or wishing for more.
 23. During and after the peak experience, the individual feels lucky, fortunate, and graced to have had the experience.
 24. The dichotomy between humility and pride tends to be resolved in the peak experience.
 25. The individual experiences "unitive consciousness" and the sacred essence of all worldly experiences and things.
- See also **ecstasy**; **mystical experiences**; **plateau experiences**; **trance**.

Cleary, T. S., and S. I. Shapiro. "The Plateau Experience and the Post-mortem Life: Abraham H. Maslow's Unfinished Theory." *Journal for Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 1–23.

Maslow, Abraham H. *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*. New York: Penguin, 1994.

Persecution of Shamans

There is a long history, worldwide, of the death and persecution of shamans by invading **religions** and governments. **Shamanism** has survived through adaptation in some areas and retreats onto wholly undesirable land in other areas, yet some scholars ask why isn't there more shamanism today?

Michael Harner, anthropologist and founder/president of the **Foundation for Shamanic Studies**, explains that the persecution of shamans and the suppression of shamanic practices were quite strong. Even in the nineteenth century, it was still a criminal offense to own a **drum** in parts of Europe. Human history shows us again and again that the threat of death, banishment from one's community, and systematic persecution are often enough to wipe out entire **cultures** or, at the very least, to send practices for cultivating **power** and individual freedom deeply underground. Either way, it is only a matter of a single lifetime, that of the few living traditional **shamans**, before the practices are lost.

The systematic persecution of shamans was enforced through laws, banning shamanic practices like drumming, and death. These things are a matter of record. What must also be noted is the extent to which the conquering governments and religions successfully undermined respect for the shamans and the shamans' worldview.

Even before the systematic persecution, anyone who was called by **spirit** to become a shaman was deeply reluctant to follow that path. The life of the shaman involves far too much sacrifice

in the best of situations for an individual to follow that path when the respect and social support for the role are also removed. There is little reason for the next generation to respond to a call that brings disrespect, disregard, social ostracism, possible imprisonment, and a very real threat of death.

Nonetheless, shamans have absorbed, assimilated, and reinterpreted new belief systems again and again all over the globe. They have adapted primarily to be tolerated by the locally dominant government and/or religion. Adaptation often meant barely saving their wisdom, their teachings, and their lives.

Adaptation has allowed **contemporary shamans** to remain effective as healers even after their cultures have changed. Shamans adapt to gain the trust of new clients where the old ways have been discredited and dismissed as superstition. For example, many shamans in **Tuva** are also Buddhist **priests**. Shamans have also adapted to understand the **psyches** of clients, changed through the client's adaptation. Many shamans adapted by blending religion into their practices because missionaries came with religious beliefs they professed were "right." Entire cultures were swayed by the new and powerfully compelling concept of "right." It was not initially apparent that accepting the "rightness" of these religious beliefs necessarily defined their spirituality as wrong.

As societies and shamans evolved and adapted over time, a variety of specialists appeared to try to fill the holes created in the social fabric by the suppression of shamanism. Many of the shaman's traditional roles were picked up by healers, priests, mediums, and sorcerers specializing, respectively, in medicine, **ceremony**, spirit **possession**, and malevolent magic. Most of the shamans' roles and skills were retained by these specialists except one, journeying. None of the shamans' successors **journey**. Without the journey, the art of shamanism and the ability to create vital **healing** ritual is lost. See also **ritual**.

- Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.
- Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.
- Walsh, R. "What Is a Shaman? Definition, Origin, and Distribution." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 21, no. 1 (1989): 1–11.

Peyote

Lophophora cactus is found in two distinct species, *williamsii* and *diffusa*, and both are used as peyote by the indigenous peoples from the southwest coast of **North America** to the Sierra Madre and from Mexico north to what is now Arkansas. The **Huichol** of Mexico say that eating peyote "will give one heart" and greatly increase the *kupuri*, or life-force **energy**. They revere peyote above **Teonanácatl**, **Morning Glory**, **Datura**, and all other **plant hallucinogens** of that region and have built the social and mythological structure of their **culture** around peyote and the experience of the **trance** state it induces.

Lophophora cacti are small, spineless, top-shaped plants measuring up to three-and-a-quarter inches in diameter. *Lophophora* is found in scattered locations of dry, calcareous soil in the stony desert regions of Mexico and Texas. Each section of the cactus grows a flat areole with a tuft of hairs. Whitish or pinkish flowers, called *tútu* by the Huichol, grow from the center of the crown, the part of the plant that is harvested for use. *Lophophora williamsii* is usually blue-green with five to thirteen ribs, while *Lophophora diffusa* has a gray-green to yellow-green crown with infinite ribs and curves. If harvested properly, the roots continue to reproduce.

The use of peyote, medicinally and as a sacred **entheogen**, is an ancient practice in the Americas. Archaeologists discovered peyote in Texas preserved in a way that suggests ceremonial use more than three thousand years ago in

the United States. There are reports of the use among the **Aztecs** even earlier. Peyote use is recorded with the Chichimeca, who inhabited the desert plateaus of northern Mexico, and the Toltecs at least two thousand years ago and with the Tarahumara long before that. Tarahumara symbols of peyote ceremonies are found in ancient lava rock carvings in **Mesoamerica**.

There is some scholarly discussion about who first discovered the use of peyote and how that practice then spread to others. The indigenous peoples who used peyote traditionally explain that peyote came to them from the gods in the time of creation and that the peyote spirit taught different peoples how to use it, independently of one another.

Regardless of where it came from, the medicinal and ceremonial use of peyote was firmly rooted in the spiritual practices of the native populations of Mexico and the Southwest long before the New World was "discovered" by Europeans. Religious and cultural persecution, first by the Spaniards and then by white Americans and more missionaries, drove these practices into hiding in the hills and valleys that are home to the Huichol, Tarahumara, Cora, and others where peyote use persists today.

In addition, peyote use has spread well beyond the areas of its original use due to the unifying force of the **Native American Church**. Within the practices of the Native American Church, peyote is shared as sacrament by peoples of diverse Native American nations. They gather to experience the ecstatic union with **spirit** and direct communication with the spirit that is characteristic of the peyote-induced altered state. Established in 1922 with 13,300 members, the membership of the Native American Church has grown to more than a quarter-million.

Peyote is called many names, including *hikori* by the Tarahumara, *wokowi* by the Comanches, *señi* by the Kiowas, and *peyotl* in Nahuatl, the

native **language** of the Aztecs. Though it has been called “mescal,” peyote should not be confused with **mescal beans** that are psychoactive and highly toxic or mescal liquor that is distilled from agave cactus.

Use

Peyote is used by various indigenous peoples as a means to enter trance and communicate directly with spirit. Regional and individual variations are seen in its use and the **rituals** and **dance** ceremonies that accompany its use. Healings are often performed by **shamans** in the context of these rituals and ceremonies. While in a peyote-induced trance state **shamans** can manipulate *kupuri* and the patient’s relationship to the web of energy that connects all life and effect a cure.

Peyote is also used medicinally. It is prepared in an variety of ways to treat a variety of **illnesses** and physical distress. Peyote is also eaten for medicinal purposes, though usually in smaller amounts than when eaten for its entheogenic properties. In some cultures peyote is eaten outside of ritual or medicinal context, to restore energy and stay awake, to go without food or **water** for days, or to fight without fear, under the protection of the peyote spirit.

Peyote dance ceremonies serve as a form of preventative **medicine** on both the personal and the social levels. Ingesting peyote and dancing is a form of **prayer** that enables dancers to connect to each other in mystical and spiritual dimensions. When they dance, they are united with each other and with the spirit that connects all things. This is the “One Heart” that the Huichol mara’akate (shamans) speak of and it is the reason peyote is held in such high regard by the peoples who use it.

Preparation

The crown is cut from the root of the cactus so that the roots sprout new crowns. Peyote cacti with multiple heads are not uncommon. The crowns

are then eaten raw or dried. The crowns are also prepared as a tea or a mash. The dried, disk-like heads are known as Peyote Buttons or Mescal Buttons.

For the Huichol, preparation and consumption of peyote is almost always done within a strict ceremonial context. During the **peyote hunt**, peyote is not eaten until the shaman indicates that the time is right to do so even though the pilgrims have been fasting for days. The pilgrims first stalk it, hunt it like deer, and then, after all of the ritual obligations are performed, eat the fresh peyote before continuing with their annual harvest. Peyote is preferred freshly harvested, and four to thirty crowns may be consumed by a dancer in the course of a typical **ceremony**.

Active Principle

The primary active principle of *Lophophora williamsii* is mescaline, or trimethoxyphenylethylamine. It also contains as many as thirty alkaloids, mostly phenylethylamines and isoquinolines. *Lophophora diffusa* is morphologically and chemically much simpler, with mescaline still the primary active principle.

Mescaline is responsible for the spectacular, vibrantly colored **visions** induced by both species of cacti. It is nonvolatile; therefore, the peyote does not lose its potency when dried or stored. Traditionally, the peyote gathered once a year in the Huichol peyote hunt is dried and stored for use throughout the year.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

Peyote induces a trance state characterized by spectacular visions with kaleidoscopic **colors**, **sounds**, feelings, and flavors. These strong hallucinogenic effects come with only mild aftereffects relative to other plant hallucinogens. The first phase of the trance state is characterized by feelings of contentment and the increased sensitivity of all the senses. The onset of the second phase is marked by a great calm,

muscular sluggishness, a shift of focus to introspection and meditation, and for some interaction with figures, scenes, or animated objects.

Peyote visions differ depending on the amount of peyote eaten and the level of spiritual awareness of the individual. The second phase of **phosphene** perception is believed to be the direct communication with the spirit world, and not everyone who consumes peyote can make the transition into the second phase. This transition is often described as a passage through darkness, a tunnel, or a doorway that must be navigated by the individual, not experienced passively.

Ritual of Receiving Peyote

For the Huichol, the first ritual of receiving the **sacred** cacti is performed at the harvest during the peyote hunt. The lead **marakame** blesses the ritual objects with sacred water, the candles and copal **incense** are lit, and everyone prays to the five directions. Fresh peyote is placed in votive bowls. With **feather** wand and sacred water the **marakame** purifies everyone, touching peyote to their cheeks, throat, and wrists. Then the pilgrims remove the white tufts, leave them as **offerings**, peel the tough skin, and eat from the first peyote of the hunt.

In the villages, the traditional peyote ritual is primarily a dance ritual that appears to have changed little over the centuries. Although the importance of peyote as an entheogen varies among the peoples who use it, the dancing does not vary in importance to the traditional ritual. The Cora, for example, begin by clearing and sweeping a space large enough for all the men and women who will dance. The “leader of the **singing**” is seated in the center with the lead musician and each of their assistants.

Peyote is consumed by all who participate. A tray of peyote and a peyote drink are prepared for the dancers. The dancers dance around the **circle** or in place marking time with their feet. The

musician and singer continue with the dancers throughout the evening without exhaustion. No one stops or leaves the circle from early evening until well after dawn. Some ceremonies last two to four days.

The Tarahumara name for their peyote dance ritual means “moving about the fire.” The peyote, the fire, the dancing, and the dancers’ prayers are the most important elements of the ritual. The Tarahumara hold the dance at any time of the year, often incorporating it with other festivals, yet always dancing for health, tribal prosperity, or simple worship. **Healing** rituals are often carried out within the dance. The full night of dancing with peyote is followed by a day of feasting.

Songs and Dances

The dances are the physical **embodiment** of the dancers’ prayers and their experiences in the spirit world during their peyote-induced trance. The **songs** are all given to people by the peyote spirit. To receive a song is considered good luck. The songs are the **words** of peyote and are shared with the whole community. All of the songs sung throughout the night praise peyote for its protection of the tribe and the beauty and unity it brings to the people.

Use in Western Medicine

Mescaline is used in contemporary psychiatry. It is similar in structure to norepinephrine (norepinephrine), a brain hormone. The chemistry of mescaline is relatively simple, 3, 4, 5, trimethoxyphenylethylamine, and is easily synthesized. See also **altered states of consciousness**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Schaefer, S. B., and P. T. Furst, eds. *People of the Peyote: Huichol Indian History, Religion and Survival*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1998.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Peyote Hunt

The annual gathering of **peyote** by the **Huichol**. Once a year small groups of ten to fifteen pilgrims are led by an experienced *mará'akame* (**shaman**) on a **journey** that repeats the same journey taken by their **ancestor**, *Tatewarí*, who led the original peyote hunt. Through the peyote hunt the Huichol participate in a **sacred** pilgrimage to the home of their Ancestors in *Wirikuta*, the origin of the sacred life of the Huichol.

The pilgrims travel as the Ancient Ones did, abstaining from sex, sleep, and eating only peyote and tortillas. Those who make this arduous journey travel for several days over two hundred miles. They journey "to find their life" at *Wirikuta* where all are one. The pilgrimage is often made by novice shamans seeking sacred visions and special shamanic **powers**. However, many pilgrims are family members, often traveling with children, so that they are taught through experience family and cultural values.

Preparation

The pilgrims prepare for the journey through a **ritual** of recapitulation and **purification** with *Tatewarí*, the spirit of fire. Each participant, including the *mará'akame* who will lead the hunt, publicly recapitulates all of the sexual encounters of his or her entire life, without resentment or jealousy. This ritual does not involve shows of guilt, shame, or blame. Even people who are not making the pilgrimage participate in this ritual of **cleansing** and renewal.

The *mará'akame* knots a string for each encounter. This string with the knots of the entire group is burned at the close of the ritual. With the burning, each participant is cleansed by *Tatewarí*

and returned to his or her state of presexual innocence. The preparation ritual ensures the safety of the group on their dangerous passage.

Negative experiences during the peyote-induced **trance** state are rare. However, the most common reason for having an unpleasant experience is not naming all of the people with whom one has had sexual relations during the preparation ritual. To recapitulate incompletely is in essence a lie to the community; however, to do so in ritual is to lie to a god.

Ingesting peyote opens a channel of communication to the gods, who if lied to will have something to say about it, which results in an unpleasant hallucinogenic experience. Thus, peyote reinforces the importance of proper participation in rituals, traditions, and in one's interactions with others.

Gathering Peyote

Tatewarí, the first *mará'akame*, led the first expedition to collect peyote at *Wirikuta* where the hallucinogenic cactus grows abundantly. Each pilgrim carries a basket filled with **offerings** of peyote to the Ancestor gods and goddesses at *Wirikuta*. The same basket will be used to transport the fresh peyote back home. Pilgrims also carry a **tobacco** gourd, gourds for carrying sacred **water** from *Wirikuta*, dried peyote, and the tortillas they will eat on their journey.

Today, much of the two-hundred-mile trek is done by whatever transportation can be arranged. Little else has changed. The pilgrims still travel, abstaining from water, sex, sleep, and food, other than the tortillas, throughout the journey.

When the pilgrims are in sight of the sacred mountains of *Wirikuta* (near San Luís Potosí), the hunt begins to take on otherworldly dimensions. The *mará'akame* begins to **chant** and pray. The pilgrims ritually wash and pray for rain and fertility. As the chanting continues the pilgrims begin to enter lightly into **altered states of consciousness** and the Ancient times become superimposed on present time.

As the journey continues the *mara'akame* opens the portals into the spirit world, first the Gateway of the Clashing Clouds and then the Gateway of the Clouds. This passage, though only literally several feet, is often filled with emotion for the pilgrims who are now returning, physically and spiritually, to the place of the origin of their ancestors.

When the pilgrims arrive at the place of the peyote, the *mara'akame* begins the ceremonial preparation for the hunt. The *mara'akame* tells stories of the peyote tradition and invokes protection for the hunt. Everyone lights candles and prays, while the *mara'akame* chants, filling everyone with the power of the spirits of the Ancestors. New pilgrims are blindfolded, and all are led through the threshold and into the hunt.

When the *mara'akame* has seen “the deer tracks” (the first peyote cactus), he draws his bow and arrow and shoots the cactus. The peyote is found. The pilgrims raise candles in the direction of the ascending **sun** and make their offerings to the spirits and to *Hikuri*, the peyote. The *mara'akame* continues his chants and the pilgrims pray and cry out to the gods to accept their offerings.

The first peyote found is shared by all, then everyone begins collecting until the baskets are full. The cactus is always cut away from its roots so that it will grow again “from its bones.” The gathering may continue into the next day. When the baskets are full the hunt is closed as are all portals opened to get to *Wirikuta* in a ritual fire.

When the pilgrims return home each family member in the rancho is blessed with sacred water and give peyote chosen especially for them so that they may also share in the visions and experiences of the pilgrims who undertook the sacred journey for all.

Myerhoff, B. G. *Peyote Hunt: The Sacred Journey of the Huichol Indians*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Peyotéro

A pilgrim who participates in the traditional **Huichol** peyote hunt. See also **peyote** and **peyote hunt**.

Phlegm

In many South American **cultures** the shaman's magical **power** is accumulated in an abstract, invisible substance contained in phlegm. Among various peoples of the upper Amazon, for example, one aspect of the shaman's power is stored as *yachay*, a thick white phlegm in the upper part of the stomach. The **shaman** accesses the powers stored in the phlegm by regurgitating it.

This regurgitated phlegm contains magical objects (arrows, thorns, rock **crystals**, shells, insects, etc.), spirit helpers, which aid the shaman in **healing**, and *tsentsak* (**magical darts**). Once in the mouth of the shaman the *tsentsak* can be blown into people either to aid in extracting **illness** or to lodge itself and generate illness. Regurgitating *yachay* for the **apprentice** to drink is the primary means by which the shaman passes **knowledge** and power on to an apprentice.

The word *yachay*, is derived from a verb meaning “to know.” Shamanic power arises in part from knowing how the world really is and in part from the ability to manipulate these processes. *Yachay* embodies both the power and knowledge necessary to perform shamanic acts of healing and magic.

The Shipibo-Conibo of eastern Peru explain that *qhenyon* (phlegm) embodies knowledge the shaman gains through **visions** and **training** over his lifetime. In training the *quenyon* is sucked from the mouth of the shaman by the apprentice who must then

accumulate and store the substance in his body. The *quenyon* becomes the new shaman's power that he will add to over his lifetime. See also **embodiment**; **extraction**; **South America**.

Langdon, E. Jean, and G. Bear. *Portals of Power: Shamanism in South America*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1992.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Phosphenes

Phosphenes are luminous lines, zigzags, grids, vortices, flashes, nested curved lines, and spots of lights that characterize the **visions** in the early stage of **trance**. They can be seen with the eyes open or shut. The visual phenomena of the journeying trance states change as the journeyer progresses more deeply into trance. Phosphenes are characteristic of the first stage of the three distinct stages of trance. See also **journey**.

Pindé

See *ayahuasca*.

Pisaut

Pisaut is the West Greenland **Eskimo** term for life force, or *mana*, that manifests from the *inua* or **soul**. In a **soul retrieval** healing, the *angakok* (shaman) restores the patient's *pisaut* by retrieving the lost *inua* from the spirit world and returning it to the patient's body. See also **Greenland**; **healing**; **soul loss**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Placings (for spirits)

Objects used to house spirit **power**. Placings can be permanent or temporary. Permanent placings are used for **spirits** that could be passed on, like clan

spirits, or for spirits an individual hopes to have a permanent relationship with, like master spirits, without whose help the **shaman** would die of lack of power and protection while performing shamanic **rituals**.

The placings are present when a shaman performs rituals as they are a source of power. They can be created, like a carved tiger or bear, or used as found. Placings are **power objects** when they are in use housing a spirit.

Shirokogorov, S. M. *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus*. Brooklyn, NY: AMS Press, Inc., 1980.

Plant Diets

Observing a strict plant diet is a fundamental part of the traditional process of working with plant **teachers** in the Amazon regions. The **diets** are prescribed through **visions** given to the **shaman** by the **spirit** of the plant while the shaman is in a **trance** state induced by a **plant hallucinogen**.

A shaman observes a very restricted diet specific to the plant, for example, rice, plantains, and **water**, for the designated time to learn to work with a particular plant. During the plant diet period the only other thing the shaman consumes is the plant itself, to experience its effects on the body, and *ayahuasca*, to aid the shaman in attuning with the spirit of the plant.

Some plants need only one dieting period to convey the **knowledge** and information necessary for their safe use and preparation for a variety of medicinal applications. Other plants or plant preparations, like *ayahuasca*, have so much to teach and so much knowledge to convey that their diets may be repeated many times. Even experienced shamans will undergo a plant diet when they want to learn to use a new plant.

Each plant has its own diet, with specific foods, thoughts, and activities required for a specific number of days. Some diets extend into months and many require seclusion from family,

social activities, and sex. For some plants there are different diets for learning different ways of preparing and applying the same plant.

During the diet, the student is taught how, when, and where to harvest the plant: what parts of the plant to use; and how different parts of the plant can be used to treat different problems. The shaman also learns how to prepare the plants, which sometimes involves numerous steps, and how different preparations can be used to treat different problems.

Dieting is supervised by a shaman who can intervene when necessary to restore harmony between the student and the energies of the plant teacher. The diet is designed by the **plant spirit** to release old emotional patterning and fears that block the student's ability to communicate with the plant teacher. When these energies are released they can clash with the plant energies in ways that result in physical or emotional trauma. The shaman can intervene to restore balance and communication between the energies.

Once a diet has begun, it must not be broken in thought or action. To break a commitment with a plant teacher is like conducting a **ritual** without closing it. The spirits always do something to remind the people that they are still there. Plant spirits may cause accidents and bad fortune in the life of a student who breaks his or her commitment. Only a shaman who is on intimate terms with the plant spirit who has been betrayed can heal the relationship between the person and the plant.

Plant Hallucinogens

Hallucinogenic plants have been used by people around the world for tens of thousands of years. They are a diverse group of plants that are in general toxic, narcotic, and nonaddictive. Approximately 150 species of plants are known to be used for their hallucinogenic properties and at least one is found in almost every area of the globe.

There are very few **First Peoples** who did not use hallucinogenic plants. **Australia**, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands are the only areas where hallucinogenic plants are found in the local flora, but there is no known usage of them as hallucinogens by the **aboriginal** populations. The Polynesians did use *Piper mythesticum* to make the hypnotic drink *Kava-kava*. However it is not a true hallucinogen. There is also no known usage of hallucinogens with the **Eskimos** who have strong shamanic traditions, but very little plant life of any kind.

Plant hallucinogens work because they are "toxic." A toxic substance is broadly defined as a plant, animal, or chemical substance ingested for other than purely nutritional purposes that has a noticeable biodynamic effect on the body. Relative to **shamanism**, intoxication must be understood as a broad range of biodynamic effects, including sensory stimulation, shift in sense of self, and awareness of one's place in the **Kosmos**.

Plant hallucinogens are also used medicinally and in medicinal preparations with other plants. The difference between a **medicine**, a hallucinogen, and a poison is often the dosage, and in many cases the preparation. **Shamans** clearly understand that a proper dosage and specific application or preparation of a **plant medicine** is medicinal, while a stronger dosage and preparation is narcotic, while an even stronger dosage can be deadly.

Hallucinogens are nonaddictive and narcotic, which means technically (not legally) that the substance terminates its effects by depressing the central nervous system after one or more phases of stimulation. Many kinds of hallucinations are experienced during the phases of stimulation including: visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, gustatory, and biomechanical. A single plant hallucinogen may induce several kinds of hallucinations simultaneously or in different phases.

Some plants induce experiences of such psychophysiological complexity

that they can not be accurately classified as hallucinations, which are generally visual and auditory. These plants are the **entheogens**, a term created because no other single term addresses the full range of sensory experience or the spiritual and magical aspects of the effects induced by these plants. The trance **experiences** induced by entheogens can be indistinguishable from traditional, mystical religious experiences.

Some plant hallucinogens can induce what contemporary medicine would consider psychotic states, or artificial psychoses. In this case the active agent can be called psychotomimetic. *Psychotomimetic* effects are normally temporary, though occasionally permanent effects are reported due to misuse, overuse, or overdose.

Our intention is to present the plant hallucinogens from the perspective of the people who have been using them for thousands of years and not to limit this discussion to the point of view of people who have only been studying them for a few short decades. From the shaman's experience and perspective the plant hallucinogens alter an individual's relationship with **space, time, self, and the Universe**. There is no loss of consciousness. However, there is a change in which an individual's perception of reality and consciousness itself can be deeply altered by these **sacred** plants.

This shift in consciousness allows the shaman, and the patient when he or she also ingests the hallucinogen, to enter into the realm where the true **spirit** nature of the **illness** or **disease** resides. In the shaman's world sickness and death originate in the spirit world, not from some removed physical or organic cause. The illness can be "seen" in a form that allows accurate **diagnosis**, a clear remedy or process for removal, and ultimately a **healing** resolution.

Chemical Factories and Initiation

All plants are chemical factories. The plant hallucinogens produce specific

and complex chemical substances that promote healing and expand human consciousness. Plants that create hallucinogenic substances occur in the angiosperms, the highest evolved flowering plants, and in one division of fungi, which are simpler plants. The active chemistry of various plant hallucinogens is listed in the body of the individual entries.

The activity of hallucinogenic plants is induced by a limited number of chemical substances that act on the central nervous system in specific ways. The effects are temporary, lasting until the body can metabolize or excrete the active substance. These chemical substances are closely related in chemical structure to hormones present in the brain, like serotonin and noradrenaline, that play essential roles in the biochemistry of the brain's activities.

The science of how these related chemical substances function in the brain, particularly the powerful entheogens, is not completely understood. It has been proposed that these hallucinogens, having the same basic structure as normal brain hormones, may act at the same site in the nervous system as the hormones do. This is based on the assumption that similar "keys" fit the same "lock." If so, the psychophysiological functions associated with those brain sites would be altered, suppressed, stimulated, or otherwise modified.

While exactly how the entheogens work may remain part of the **Great Mystery**, shamans continue to use how they work for essential steps in **training** and **initiation**. In some **cultures** hallucinogens are used in training as an intermediate step in opening the initiate's awareness of and connection to the spirit world. Many diverse shamanic peoples speak of opening a hole in the head to allow spirit to come in.

After years of training and experience in various trance states, some shamans develop the ability to access the desired altered state through will and intention alone. Many master

shamans choose when to use the plant hallucinogens and which plant to use. In some cultures one plant hallucinogen is used regularly in shamanic rituals while other hallucinogens are used only as needed for severe situations. In other cultures hallucinogens are rarely, if ever, used.

Consciousness Altering Is Not Consciousness Expanding

In this era of pharmacological psychology it is important to understand the difference between psychoactive drugs, like antidepressants, stimulants, and other mood-altering drugs, and the psychoactive **plant medicines** used in traditional shamanic practices. Psychoactive drugs are *consciousness-altering*; they switch awareness from one point of focus to another. The individual's consciousness is switched by the drug from a pattern that is painful, like depression, to another pattern that feels significantly less painful or more empowered.

Hallucinogenic substances, like the plant medicines, function differently. They are *consciousness-expanding*; they widen the perceptual focus and bring the attention into the moment. They do not switch between patterns running in the same state of consciousness. They induce an **alternate state of consciousness**. They expand consciousness to include awareness of the painful pattern, a perception that it is only a pattern, the other patterns running simultaneously, an awareness of a larger context into which these patterns all fit, and the expanded point of view that there is an even larger pattern moving within the self, and another pattern in the space around the self into which all patterns weave together with everything.

In a state of expanded consciousness the individual's pain is still present; however, it is perceived differently. It now holds less value relative to the expanded point of view. The pain is seen in the context of a greater Whole and recognized as part of that Whole. Every experience then, of pain or pleasure, is

only one experience in a vastly expanded spectrum of sensations and experiences. See also **altered states of consciousness**; *amanita muscaria*; *ayahuasca*; *Brugmansia aurea*; *Brunfelsia*; *Datura*; **Deadly Nightshade**; *epená*; *Iboga*; *Ololiuqui*; **peyote**; **plant spirits**; **San Pedro**; *Teonanácatl*; *yopo*.

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Plant Medicines

There are two general classes of plant medicines; those that are regarded as **sacred** and those known and used by the general population. The sacred plant medicines are primarily the hallucinogens with some medicinals and are used exclusively by or under the strict guidance of the **shaman**. The general plant medicines are primarily medicinals with some mild preparations of hallucinogens and are used by anyone with **knowledge** of plant remedies.

In many **cultures** the herbal or plant doctor is a different profession than the shaman, though in these cultures the two types of healers usually work together. Whether a shaman or plant doctor, these indigenous healers may know and employ over a hundred species of medicinal plants. Each of

these species may be used in many different ways to treat a variety of illnesses.

Indigenous peoples have always considered the plants sacred, particularly those that alter the normal functions of the mind and the body. In the native pharmacopoeia there are many plants that aid the physical **healing** of the body. However the **entheogens**, which help to heal the **soul** as well, are considered doctors in their own right.

In the shaman's worldview, sickness and death originate in the spirit world. Plants that allow the shaman to contact the spirit world are then the basis for his or her healing practice. Because the plant entheogens enable humans to speak to the **spirits**, they are called the "plants of the gods" or the "flesh of the gods."

The chemistry and bioactivity of the plant medicines are not the primary source of their **power** to heal. The primary power comes from the creative union of the plant's spirit and the shaman's spirit. The **words** and **songs** the shaman **sings** while preparing and ingesting or working with the spirit of the plant in the **medicine** are essential to the remedy. Without **singing** to the plant, the shaman knows the remedies would be weak. The words carried by the breath of the shaman are believed to have their own creative power.

The shaman's spiritual beliefs, or worldview, are the basis for that creative union with the **plant spirits**. The way the shaman works in union with medicinal and hallucinogenic plants is a direct application of his or her spiritual beliefs in the physical world.

The shaman can use either the physical attributes or the spiritual attributes (or both) of any plant. For example, in **Amazonia**, *kana*, the reddish berries of *Sabicea amazonensis* (Rubiaceae), is an important additive to sweeten the bitter **ayahuasca** drink. This uses the plant's physicality.

Kana is also the center of **initiation** rituals that use the plant's spirit. *Kana* berries are used in initiation because the shaman believes that each fruit is a

heart and that these hearts are strung together like the fruits of the *kana* vine. These hearts are the people of each generation connected by the vine. By eating the *kana* fruit one is connected to the ancestral source of life. In these **rituals** the shaman **camays** (blows the Oneness of All Things) into the red berries and then administers them to the newborn whose heart is being connected to the community or to young men whose hearts are being connected to manhood and all the **Ancestors** who have gone before him.

This example illustrates the greater power in the plant medicines. The plant medicines allow the people to actualize and ingest their spiritual beliefs, their mythology, and their ancestry. From this relationship with the plants the individuals draw strength and the shaman draws magic.

The knowledge of general plant medicines is often widespread throughout the shaman's community. Women in the Amazon, for example, are often the keepers of a wide knowledge of medicinal plants, as well as the cultivation and collection, collection songs, preparation, and usage. Women harvest or collect plants for the general use of the community and often for the shaman specifically. The herbalist is frequently the shaman's wife, though women may also be shamans in their own right.

In indigenous cultures worldwide, the traditional healers could identify hundreds of species of plants by touch, smell, or appearance alone, a feat no university-trained botanist could do. Studies have shown that the Chacobo tribe in Bolivia used 95 percent of the tree species in their local ecosystem; the Tembe people of Brazil used 61.3 percent of the local tree species; and the Káapoor tribe used 76.8 percent. These studies did not take into account the use of plants other than **trees**.

Often these "untrained" healers identify different uses for different "kinds" of the same plant, though a botanist would consider them all the same species. For example, shamans

who work with *ayahuasca* distinguish between different parts of the plant, describing and making use of distinctly different healing or hallucinogenic properties of the plant. They can often distinguish between almost every species of tree in the rain forest merely by the smell, appearance, or feel of the bark.

Many theories have been put forth to explain how these healers know so much about the plant medicines. One theory is that they learned by trial and error. However, this does not explain the variation in parts of plants, preparations, dosages, etc., nor have these people been around long enough, statistically speaking, to have gathered the apparent amount and complexity of information.

Other theories may apply in some cases, but clearly do not explain the vast sum of knowledge being used. "Bitters" or taste may have guided people, since bitterness often indicates alkaloids, which represent the most important chemical components in modern medicine. Another theory is that color equals chemical potency. If a plant substance displays a peculiar color it may contain an interesting chemical. The Doctrine of Signatures is the theory that a plant or plant part that looks like something may somehow be good for treating that thing.

Other scholars suggest that the people learned by observing local animals in nature. However, stories of animals showing humans how to use the plants probably refer to the shaman's **journeys** with **animal spirits**, since these animals taught the humans things far more complicated than what the animals actually do themselves. Others suggest that the people learned through **dreams** and **visions**, and this is perhaps closest to the truth.

The shamans and plant healers explain that they learned to use the plants from the plant spirits themselves, particularly by opening themselves to the wisdom of the plants by ingesting **plant hallucinogens** and

engaging in **plant diets**. And by opening their hearts and minds to the plants, shamans have played a key role in the development and refinement of indigenous plant medicines now in use in Western pharmacology. Almost every plant species used by Western medicine was not discovered through science and research, but was originally discovered and used by indigenous peoples. See also **illness**.

Plotkin, M. J. *Tales of a Shaman's Apprentice: An Ethnologist Searches for New Medicines in the Amazon Rain Forest*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1993.

Schultes, R. E., and R. E. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Plant Spirits

Plant spirits are the spiritual aspect of wild plants that may or may not take the form of the plant in **non-ordinary reality**. Like other **helping spirits** (energies found in the invisible world) plant spirits can assume other forms in the spirit world. Plant spirits are a kind of **nature spirit** which is a kind of helping spirit that the **shaman** works with while in an **altered state of consciousness**.

Plant spirits derive their **power** from the **Sun** and the **earth**. Unlike **power animals**, which are **helping spirits** available to all people, plant spirits tend to be available only to shamans and other healers who work with the **healing** powers of plants.

The primary importance of the plant spirits lies in their ability to teach the shaman how to use them. The shaman connects with the plant spirits in an altered state to learn the different applications of the plant for healing the body and the **soul**. The shaman must learn what part of the plant to use, when and how to harvest it, if and how to cultivate it, the **songs** necessary for collection, preparation, and use of the plant, etc.

The amount of information the plant spirits offer is endless.

Human **teachers** can pass large bodies of information about working with **plant medicines** on to **apprentices**. If an apprentice also learns to enter an altered state and connect with the plant spirits to renew the information, correct healing **rituals**, and learn ways to treat new problems, he will become a shaman as well as a **medicine man**. If the apprentice learns only to apply the collected **knowledge** of the teacher, but not to communicate with the plant spirits themselves, then he or she will become a medicine person, but not a shaman.

In some **cultures** the plant spirits are used as helping spirits in the shaman's other healing work, like sucking **extractions** or **soul retrievals**. In other cultures they are primarily teachers. See also **medicine; plant hallucinogens**.

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Plateau Experiences

A plateau experience is a profoundly serene and calm response to a miraculous or awesome experience, relative to the perspective of the individual. This sense of serenity is sustained over time. Like **peak experiences**, plateau experiences are often transcendent, mystical, or religious experiences that are not dependent on location (church or temple) or beliefs (**religion** or faith), nor do they necessarily imply supernatural intervention.

Serenity, defined as relaxation and awareness of the moment, is the distinctive component of plateau experiences. Plateau experiences involve retaining a sense of the ordinary while experiencing a non-ordinary fullness of life. This profound serenity is experienced in contrast to the usually intense,

climactic, and explosively in-the-moment qualities characteristic of peak experiences.

Preconditions for the plateau experience are an awareness of the temporariness of one's own life, an openness to the miraculous, and the somewhat detached perspective of the witness who sees life in the context of the eternal world and is grateful for it. Plateau experiences are a blended experience of pure enjoyment and happiness with a noetic and cognitive element. The plateau experience is a pleasant, contemplative experience of witnessing and appreciating the unitive experience of life, the Universe, and oneself in that Wholeness.

Plateau and peak experiences differ particularly in relation to death. In the peak experience the individual often confronts his or her fear of death. If successful, a part of the pre-peak, identified self dies and the individual experiences a rebirth of his or her authentic self. In the plateau experience individuals are often making peace with death. The revelation of the experience is to see their own mortality in relation to the eternal truths that make up the essence of the world in which they live.

One can learn to live in the state of unitive consciousness; however, it is a lifelong effort. It is earned only through long, hard work and the experience of living, learning, and maturing over time. The particular "spiritual discipline" one follows in this lifelong effort is not as important as the commitment, discipline, work, study, and willingness to take the time to cultivate transcendence.

The content of the experience and the experience itself reveal the nature of reality, humankind's relation to it, and the values inherent in it. Both plateau and peak experiences transcend morals, **ethics**, and dualities, like the distinction between good and evil. They reveal how these parts of life that appeared at odds in the moments before the experience now fit together into the Whole.

The qualities of plateau experiences are known completely, without linear thought, throughout the entire being. In short, they are *grokked*. The following are the defining qualities of plateau experiences. They are shared by peak experiences:

1. The entire universe is perceived of as an integrated and unified Whole in which the individual recognizes his or her place within that Whole.
2. The quality and quantity of concentration is greater and more focused, resulting in enhanced perception of total sight, **sound**, and feeling. The inherent equality in things emerges from this totality, replacing the human habit of arranging things in a hierarchy of importance.
3. In this state of heightened awareness of one's own being, the Being aspect of the external world and external objects becomes apparent. Everything exists as an end in itself, not of a value defined relative to humans.
4. The independent reality of objects and people is more readily apparent as the individual's perception becomes less ego-centered.
5. An altered awareness of **time** allows an awareness of eternity and universality.
6. The world is seen as a whole. Evil, pain, **disease**, and death are accepted, understood, and seen in their proper places in the whole, as unavoidable, necessary, and belonging there.
7. Through this profound acceptance of the whole, the individual is freed from the need to judge, blame, condemn, or be disappointed and can respond with pity, charity, kindness, and perhaps sadness or amusement.
8. The spiritual values and truths of which the world is made become apparent. For example, the world does not merely exist; it is also **sacred**. Reality, then, is perceived as being composed of intrinsic values, which are absolute.
9. The awareness of one's place in the greater Being of the Whole inspires a more passive, receptive, and humble consciousness than is normal for the individual.
10. The individual perceives of unity and integration in the world and tends to move toward fusion, integration, and unity within himself, resolving or transcending the dichotomies, polarities, and conflicts of life.
11. The individual experiences a transient loss of fear, anxiety, inhibition, defense control, perplexity, confusion, conflict, delay, and restraint.
12. The individual experiences an increased awareness of "heaven" as an ever-available state that exists all the time all around.
13. The individual experiences a tendency to move toward uniqueness, the real self, or to become more real.
14. The individual becomes more loving and accepting and, as a result, more spontaneous, honest, and innocent.
15. The individual transcends the experience of living under the laws of the physical world and becomes aware of the influence of the psychological laws.
16. The wholeness of the peak experience frees the individual from habitual neediness that results in constant striving or wishing for more.
17. The individual experiences "unitive consciousness"—a sense of the sacred in the secular. See also **ecstasy; mystical experiences; trance**.

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Pogok

The *pogok* is a **fetish**, carved from wood and created to embody a **spirit** or **energy**, like the **masks**. It is created and used by a **tungralik** (**shaman**). The *pogok* is usually burned after being used in a **ceremony** to release the spirit or energy within it, allowing it “to go to sea.” See also **Alaskan**; **embodiment**; **Eskimo**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Polyphasic Cultures

Polyphasic cultures draw their worldview from multiple states of consciousness. Contemplative and **dream** states as well as the waking state inform their view of reality. Examples of polyphasic cultures around the globe are Australian **Aboriginals**, Ecuadorian **Achuar**, West African **Dagara**, and examples of polyphasic disciplines within **cultures** are Jewish Kabbalah, Buddhist *Abhidharma* psychology, and Vedantic philosophy.

Western psychology, philosophy, and culture are predominantly monophasic. They draw their world view almost exclusively from one state of consciousness, the usual waking state. See also **monophasic culture**.

Walsh, Roger. “Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness.” *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Popal Vuh

The only remaining book of the Quiche Maya or the Book of Council of the Mayan people. The *Popal Vuh* contains stories, history, law, and poetry that together explain the essence of the **Maya** living experience, like the Old Testament Bible or the Koran.

The Maya developed a rich and expressive writing system to record their history. Maya scribes carved limestone, engraved jade, incised bone, and inscribed shell. They also wrote on accordion-folded books made from beaten bark, surfaced with a thin layer of plaster. Only four of thousands of books of Maya **knowledge** survived time and the Spanish conquest. They are all calendar almanacs for timing **ritual** except for the *Popal Vuh*.

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Possession

Possession refers to the state of being controlled by a **spirit** or other force. Spirit possession is spontaneous, unintentional, and uncontrolled by the individual being possessed. This state has no purpose other than that of the possessing spirit and is considered an **illness**. The possessed individual is often rendered useless to himself or others and is without control over this **altered state of consciousness**.

In contrast, the state of possession used by the **shaman** is intentional and controlled. The shaman controls the entry into, duration of, and exit from the altered state. It is induced to serve a particular purpose in the **healing** ritual and the shaman is able to direct the **trance** experience toward that purpose. This state of intentional, controlled possession is spirit **embodiment**.

There is an intermediate state of possession which is uncontrolled but intentional and usually induced in a **ritual** context. This altered state is used primarily by novice shamans as a stage in **training** and by non-shamans in **cultures** that value and sanction connection with the Divine through spontaneous possession.

For example, in Indonesia the ability to surrender to states of possession and trance is encouraged from childhood. Throughout the islands people engage in various stages of possession, showing various degrees of ability in using these possession trances. In the beginning, the possessed may appear violent, thrashing and convulsing. As the individual develops the ability to focus and surrender, the thrashing gives way to a controlled possession, during which the individual can be pierced with a **sword**, beaten, or burned with coals and suffer no ill effects.

What makes the possession an act of **shamanism** is the shaman's ability not only to surrender to spirit, but to do so with a purpose and to accomplish that purpose while in trance. The purpose may be **extraction**, **divination**, or a healing ritual for the individual or community.

The explanation for where the shaman's spirit goes while in a possession trance varies culture to culture and shaman to shaman. For example, in Asia it is believed that the individual's spirit leaves the body and travels in the spirit realm. This creates the space for the otherwise disembodied spirit who is called in to help the humans in attendance.

There are areas of the world where full possession is culturally expected of shamans. For example, possession trances are expected throughout Indonesia, in **China**, Haiti, Udamba, and in **South America** from the **Candomblé** practitioners. Shamanic rituals often include a step in which proof of possession is displayed, such as piercing the skin or holding hot coals.

The relationship between the individual and the entering spirit defines the character of the trance stage. The first, transitional stage is characterized by dizziness/lightheadedness, precarious equilibrium, somatic (body) alterations, and cognitive disorganization. The spirit and the normal consciousness of the individual are connected, but they do not share the individual's body.

In the second stage, the spirit has entered the body and its discrete identity emerges. This stage is characterized by the change from the individual's identity to that of the entering spirit, co-identities, unusual behavior (expressions of the possessing spirit), unusual experience, and dissociation by the individual.

The third stage of total possession is transcendent and is available only to those who have mastery over the possession trance. This stage is characterized by the breakdown of the self-body awareness, alternate modalities of experiencing, total involvement, consciousness expansion, and increased **energy**. The process of passing through increasingly deep states of possession may last from just minutes to half an hour.

Both possession and embodiment are considered "the seizure of divinity." However, the former is an illness and the latter a means to cure it. Embodiment is the intentional, controlled possession of an individual who is trained to access spirit through trance and interpret that connection for the good of the community. Possession is also considered the direct touch of god, but is given no greater meaning for the individual or the community.

In general, people have a deeply rooted, human need to experience the presence of the "Divine." It is believed that the "Divine" has manifested when the shaman's ego detaches itself from the body and the merging spirit is allowed full possession. Through possession the shaman serves as a **vehicle** or mouthpiece for the gods and allows the patient to witness a manifestation of the "Divine." See also **mediumship**.

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Postures

There are four postures used universally across **cultures** to enter various **trance** states. They are standing, sitting, walking, and lying supine.

Standing for long periods of time with focused intention is used to cultivate the inner stillness necessary to enter into full **power** and connect with one's own **spirit**. Sitting postures are used to meditate when seeking wisdom in the face of paradox, perspective, guidance, or inner direction.

Walking (or moving) with intention induces a paradoxical state of inner focus and complete surrender which encourages creative solutions, intuitive insights, and communion with the unknown. Lying supine is the most **healing** posture the body can assume. The lying posture provides access to journeying and **dreaming** altered states.

In addition to the four universal postures, Felicitas Goodman, professor of linguistics and anthropology, has used thirty-one different body postures taken from mythology, experiential research, and archaeological data to induce specific trance states. In Goodman's research, participants are instructed to adopt a particular posture while a **drum** or **rattle** is played to induce trance states.

Goodman's results show some constancy over many years. However, her work has not proved replaceable by other researchers. It is not clear that these postures were used by **shamans** to induce trance states. It is possible that these postures are the result of

shamans working with particular **animal spirits** in trance states induced through more common means. It is also unclear whether or not these postures that are found represented throughout human history were practiced for the same purpose over time. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **journey**.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Goodman, Felicitas D. *Where the Spirits Ride the Wind: Trance Journeys and Other Ecstatic Experiences*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990.

Poswimkya Society

One of two curing societies among the Hopi, the other being the Yayatü. The Poswimkya was the only Hopi society performing cures by sucking and using **Datura** medicinally and to induce **trance**. Though the Poswimkya **fetishes** are still kept at Walpi, the **sucking shamans** of this society were inactive by the 1890s. See also **Yayatü Society**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Powa

One of two types of supernatural **power** recognized by the Hopi. They differentiate between the power of **tuuhisa**, wielded by the **tuuhikya (shaman)**, and the power of **powa**, wielded by the **priests** of Hopi ceremonial societies. Powa is neutral; it can be directed to benevolent or malevolent ends.

The **healing** and purifying aspects of **powa** are controlled by the priests and exercised in the annual ceremonies of these Hopi societies. **Powa** is the root of various Hopi words like **powata**, to cure or make perfect; **powaka**, sorcerer or to

use *powa* for **sorcery**; *powalawu*, sacred **ritual**; and *powatawi*, **sacred** song. See also **ceremony** and **song**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Powaka

A Hopi witch or sorcerer. The *powak taka* is a witch man and the *powak wuqti* is a witch woman. The *powaka* create **illness** by shooting *tukyaini* (**energy intrusion**) into the bodies of their victims, which the **shaman** must remove in a sucking **healing** ritual. See also **ritual**; **sorcery**; **sucking shaman**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Powamû

An **exorcism** healing **ceremony** performed by the Hopi *Powamwimkya* (*Powamû* society). Members of this society also perform **purification** rituals, called *powatañwû* or *nayochiwa*. See also **healing** and **ritual**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Power

Shamanic power is defined by the shaman's ability to direct supernatural forces to influence the outcome of natural happenings. The shaman's ability is based on **knowledge** that is in part understanding how the world functions and in part having the ability to act on those functions. The **shaman** accesses and directs power through his or her knowledge of the supernatural or invisible reality and its relationship to the physical world. Intellectual knowledge is not enough to access power.

Shamanic knowledge involves the ability to act and is gained through **training**, skill, and experience. Knowledge is mastered only when the shaman is capable of putting the information into action in a way that manifests the intended result.

Power is hard to acquire. Power is always available; however, it usually comes only to individuals who seek it through personal action and sacrifice. To acquire power one must approach the **spirits** with **humility**. Power demands the cultivation of the virtues of humility, honesty, sincerity, endurance, kindness, sensitivity, awareness, and courage of heart.

Power is easily lost. The "spirits," the special, non-ordinary **energy** through which the shaman receives power, can easily take it away. Shamans can suddenly lose their powers completely as a result of breaking a **taboo** or transgressing **spirit** in some way such that it withdraws permanently and terminates the relationship.

Power can take its toll. Proximity to power requires precautions. Even the accidental misuse of power can cause sickness or death. Since the shaman is filled with power, he or she is often not harmed while immediate family members are the ones stricken. For this reason, shamans often send their offspring to relatives to be raised or they begin their **healing** work after their children are grown. The **helping spirits** can cause **illness**, madness, and death when shamans refuse to do as their helping spirits require.

North American shamans distinguish between "medicine powers" and spirit powers while using them both. **Aboriginal** North Americans understand that everything is alive and contains an animating power that connects everything in the universe. For example, the **Lakota** call this power *wakan* and the **Iroquois** call it *orneda*. Medicine power is the aspect of anything associated with this animating and connecting power that can be used or directed by the shaman.

In **South America** different **cultures** conceive of the shaman's power differently. For example, the Culina shaman's power, his *dori*, is formless in his body and manifests as small stones outside of his body. The Shipibo-Conibo shaman's power is *shinan*, which is created by accumulating and storing *nihue*, the colored energies seen in **trance** and the individual power of plants and animals. The Shipibo-Conibo believe that the world contains a finite amount of *nihue* and *shinan*. The shaman's role is to store and redistribute the *nihue* via his *shinan*.

Power, or *dau*, is cultivated by Siona shamans during several months of isolated training with **plant hallucinogens** in the jungle with a master shaman. When an **apprentice** has reached a certain level of knowledge and power he is able to travel to the highest power in the universe where he is shown a book with all the medicines in it.

Power, though it is established and accumulated in different ways, is the ability of the shaman to conceive of and direct supernatural forces. This knowledge of power is the key concept linking **shamanism** cross-culturally.

Acquisition of Power

Helping spirits are the primary source of power for shamans, though not in every culture. The spirits are not random. The shaman develops a working relationship with one or more helping spirits with whom the shaman may work for his or her entire lifetime. Helping spirits tend to take the forms of animals, mythical animals, plants, **dead shamans**, **ancestors**, cultural heroes, and gods and goddesses. Helping spirits often change form, transforming from human to animal and into beings combining aspects of the two.

Helping spirits are experienced as autonomous spirit entities who supply knowledge and power to the shaman beyond the shaman's ordinary wisdom and strength. Helping spirits tend to take forms that are meaningful to the shaman; however, they are not mental

constructs or archetypes. When a shaman communicates with an animal or plant helping spirit, he or she is communicating with the conscious aspect of the power of that animal or plant species, what would be called **soul** in a human.

Shamans do not pick their helping spirits. The spirits pick the shaman. The following are ways the shaman connects with helping spirits, though the shaman is never in control of what helping spirits, if any, show up. The primary means of connecting with helping spirits is to enter an **altered state of consciousness**, or trance. Shamans use both journeying trances, wherein the shaman's soul enters the realm of the helping spirits, and **embodiment** trances, wherein the helping spirit enters the shaman's body in the physical realm. The shaman connects with helping spirits through altered states induced in many ways, primarily by drumming, dancing, and ingesting plant hallucinogens. Shamans also use vision questing, which takes many different forms in different cultures, to connect with helping spirits.

Some shamans gain their powers through relationships with special, non-ordinary energies that are not helping spirits. These shamans do enter altered states to perform their shamanic work; however, they do not experience autonomous spirit helpers. For example, the **San of Africa** cultivate the ability to call up a power named *num* from the earth. When *num* is sufficiently heated it travels up the healer's spine and into the hands rendering the healer able to heal with this power through touch.

The indigenous peoples of northern coastal and north-central California and Nevada share the concept of "**pains**." Pains are a non-ordinary energy that is both the **disease**-causing energy and the energy the shaman collects to gather power. Once a pain is acquired, the shaman must learn to control the pain to be able to use it in healing.

Ingesting plant hallucinogens is in and of itself a means of gathering power, not just connecting with helping spirits. For example, in South America where the use of *ayahuasca* is prevalent, the *ayahuasca* is itself also a doctor. The plant hallucinogen has power, will, and knowledge of its own to offer the shaman in addition to the extraordinary powers granted by inducing an altered state.

Shamans travel to places of power to gain power from the spirits of the place. Power manifests in special places, some are natural **sacred** sites and some are **shrines**, charged with the **prayers** and **offerings** of thousands of people. Often spectacular, out-of-the-ordinary features of nature are regarded as sacred, as are natural springs and **caves**. These natural places of power are often the sites chosen for **vision quests**.

In some cultures shamanic powers can be inherited. In other cultures students can purchase teachings from a master shaman. However, within these traditions the shamanic powers that are inherited or purchased are not considered as strong as the powers received spontaneously and directly from spirit.

Training and the Mastery of Power

Although spirits may do the actual healing work, shamanic power depends on the shaman's ability to control his or her trance states. The power of the spirits is limitless, but there are limits to an individual shaman's ability to manifest that power. The shaman's concentrated effort and accuracy in interpretation plays a significant role in shaping the results of a healing **ritual**.

Shamanic power is an energy form of pure consciousness that is directed in the altered state. Without training and experience this energy can easily have unintended results. The way this pure energy is used and how it manifests in **space** and **time** to help or to heal is determined by the combined wills of the shaman and the helping spirit.

Power operates according to specific sacred rules that must be followed by

the shaman if he or she is to direct that power. Those rules can only be understood in a state of being during which the shaman directly experiences a connection to the sacredness in all existence. Once understood, it takes great discipline to exercise the rules well.

In most cultures the spirits teach the shaman how to achieve the necessary state of connectedness and to direct power. In other cultures the training also involves a master shaman passing on a magical substance that embodies knowledge gained through **visions** and personal sacrifice to the apprentice.

Storing Power

Power resides in **power objects**, **songs**, **dances**, specific actions, and magical substances. The spirits teach shamans the songs and dances that call in specific powers or that carry the healing power for specific illnesses. When performing these dances or songs the shaman accesses the related powers.

Power can manifest in objects that occur naturally or reside in objects created to contain power, like **masks** or **talismans**. These sacred objects can become endowed with power naturally, for example, the *tunkan* is a stone with very special powers that is created wherever lightning strikes the ground, or the power is called in through ritual.

In many cultures power is passed on from shaman to shaman through magical substances or objects. In the Peruvian Amazon, for example, the shaman stores *yachay*, a thick white **phlegm**, in his upper stomach. *Yachay* contains helping spirits and **tsentsak**, **magical darts** used in healing or harming. *Yachay* is a means of storing power related to knowledge. That power is passed from shaman to apprentice by drinking the shaman's *yachay*.

Handling Power

Power must be approached with caution to protect oneself and to protect the power from being diminished by pollution or contamination. In cultures where people work with power objects,

there are protocols for handling power, power objects, for singing **power songs**, and approaching places of power. For example, acts of personal **purification**, from simple meditation to bathing, fasting, vomiting, and sweating, to more complex rituals of **cleansing** are completed before approaching or handling anything of (or containing) sacred power.

There is also protocol for handling shamans. The shaman gathers power through ritual. Those ritual experiences endow the shaman with many powers and perspectives that keep the shaman protected and powerful. Charged with power in this way, the shaman may be dangerous to others who are too weak or are not protected by similar energies. In some cultures there are taboos around touching the shaman, the shaman's possessions, and the common objects the shaman uses, like dishes.

Restoring Power

Shamans must replenish their own power and power objects regularly. They do so through cleansing, through a literal connection to nature, like submerging in a sacred spring or taking retreat on a sacred mountain, and through ritual. On a daily basis shamans restore power by taking care to always complete the cycle of energy they are using by honoring the energies available to them, giving thanks, and making offerings of gratitude to the energies they draw on. Shamans also use physical disciplines, diet, fasting, and enemas to restore their power. See also **drum; journey; medicine; power places; power, abuse of; power, variation in amount of**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

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Power, Abuse of

The shaman's relationship with **power** is more than just the accumulation of vast quantities of power. The quality of what the **shaman** does with the power determines the shaman's standing in the community. Power is, of itself, neither good nor bad. All power is available for misuse or abuse. Therefore, the right use of power is always a concern in any shamanic act.

Shamanic techniques are morally neutral. The intention behind the use of a technique determines its benevolence or malevolence. Most **shamanic** cultures draw a distinction between shamanic acts and acts of **sorcery**. However, it is left to the individual shaman to determine how he or she will act in each situation.

In some cultures the distinction between shamans and sorcerers is unclear largely because of the way **illness** is defined. In these cultures the source of all illness and accidents is believed to be an act of aggression by a shaman in a neighboring community. **Healing** almost always involves **extraction of** the source of the illness and sending it back to the neighboring people and their shaman. Therefore, a refusal to "attack" the neighboring shaman is a refusal to heal one's own people.

Even regular people who are not shamans can abuse their power through actions that show disregard or disrespect of the preciousness and interconnectedness of life. **Taboos** regulating actions, like incest or murder, as well as prescribed actions, like returning every

seal bladder after a kill so that another seal can regenerate, guide individuals in the areas where their actions in the physical realm have profound negative effects in the **spirit** realm or on the community as a whole. See also **sorcery**.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Somé, M.P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Power, Variation in Amount of

In every shamanic **culture**, distinctions are made between **shamans** relative to the amount of **power**. In most cultures the distinction is based on the type of **spirits** the shaman works with and in what type of **trance**. In some, but by no means all cultures, this distinction also falls along **gender** lines. For example, Sora shamans of the lesser traditions are male and work mostly in a **divination** trance state. Sora shamans of the greater traditions are female and work mostly with spirits in deep **embodiment** trances, conducting funerals and healings.

In other cultures the more powerful shamans are black shamans who work with **spirits of the dead** in deep trance states. Shamans of lesser powers are white shamans who work only with **Upperworld** spirits in light trance or **prayer**. This distinction is common among Indonesian peoples and in Siberian cultures like the **Yakuts**, Buryats, and Tatars. The white shamans work only with spirits of the Upperworld and function primarily as **priests**. Black shamans work with all spirits of the **Lowerworld** and **Middeworld** and function as shamans as defined in this text. Whether one becomes a black or white shaman is not the shaman's choice, but is determined by the spirits and the way in which they choose to work through the shaman.

In other cultures distinctions are drawn at the level of **initiation** the shaman has successfully completed. As a result shamans may specialize in the areas of shamanic work in which they are best supported by their **spirit** help. In areas of Lapland, **Africa**, and **North America**, for example, shamans fall generally into three groups. There are those who specialize in divination. The next level includes those who cure through prayers, **blessings**, and **power retrieval**. The most powerful group includes shamans who work with **soul loss** and the spirits of the dead.

In every culture shamans traditionally work with an assortment of other specialists. Some examples of these healers are, herbalists, bone-setters, midwives, wise people, **dream** interpreters, and people who foretell the future. Today this list would also involve naturopaths, chiropractors, medical doctors, etc.

There are variations in shamanic power even among shamans who all work in deep **altered states of consciousness** with the spirits of the dead. For example the **Inuit** explain that the more pain and suffering a shaman takes upon himself during **training**, the greater his powers will be in his practice. All shamans adjust the length and depth of their **journeys** according to their power. If they do not have the power to succeed in the **healing**, a shaman of greater power is called on to complete the healing. In some cultures the shamans work in groups to effect a cure with their accumulated powers and skills. A shaman's powers depend on strength, ability, and capacity to understand the true nature of the **Kosmos** as shown by spirit.

Powers once gained can diminish or be withdrawn if dishonored or treated with disrespect. There is a direct correlation between the strength in the shaman's personal belief in spirits and the manifestation of **medicine** powers. When a shaman's belief in the spirits is undermined, for example by conversion to any of the high **religions**, the

shaman's ability to display his or her medicine powers is weakened.

Mature shamans may eventually develop abilities that initially they could only perform while in an altered state, such as the ability to see into the spirit world while in their ordinary state of consciousness. Nonetheless, the boundaries and limitations of any shaman's powers are defined by his or her relationships with **helping spirits**.

The work of any one particular shaman will change over time. The shaman's life is a path of mastery. The shaman's skills and power will grow in direct relation to the evolution of his or her spiritual awareness and trance experience over time. Because of the importance of initiation and ego transformation in the shaman's work, variations among shamans of one ethnic group will often be greater than the variations between shamans of different ethnic groups. See also **black and white shamans** and **Buryat (Buriat)**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

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Power Animals

Power animals are **helping spirits** in animal form who guard and protect the **shaman** in the physical world and in the spirit world. Though it is not possible to define any helping spirit in an absolute sense, a power animal is best understood as the spirit of a species of animal, e.g., bear, giraffe, or anaconda. Power **animal spirits** are one source of the type of power the shaman draws on from helping spirits to use in **healing**.

Power animals serve as conduits for wisdom, guidance, and information

from the spirit world. When the shaman uses an **embodiment** trance for healing or conducting **ritual**, it is often the power animal who works through the shaman. In many **cultures** the shaman develops a deep relationship with one particular animal who then summons other helping spirits or allies as they are needed to perform specific aspects of the shaman's work.

The shaman knows that there could be no power for healing without the spirits of animals, plants, and Nature. Shamans believe that the animals are manifestations of a natural power that is stronger and wiser than human beings. However, shamans do not lift animal spirits up to the status of deities, nor do they lower them to the status of a mere psychological metaphor. The shaman is empowered by his or her relationship with the power animals. Their relationship is a partnership.

The partnership with the power animals is not easily forged. The shaman must prove himself worthy of the power the animal spirit offers and then learn from the animal spirit how to use that power. In many cultures, strict **taboos** must also be observed by the shaman to maintain the relationship with the power animals, e.g., not eating the flesh of the animals that help them. In all cultures, offering gratitude and respect for the power animal's help in human matters is fundamental to maintaining the working relationship.

Ancient **cave** paintings reflect the use of ritual by humans to evoke the mysterious **sacred** powers of different animals. Gaining access to the special qualities of the animal spirits is one facet of the extraordinary relationship between the shaman and the power animals. The power animals are also **teachers**. They may teach the shaman **power songs** and/or give the shaman the **words** to invoke power (to call power in) or to cast power (to send power out). Still other shamans learn the **language** of the animals and at times speak that language while in **trance**. In some Australian tribes

acquiring the power to speak to **birds** and animals is one mark of shamanic abilities.

Totem spirits, who are inherited through a family line, and **tutelary spirits** are specific types of power animals. Power animals are also referred to as guardian spirits, allies, and spirit helpers. The fact that an individual has a relationship with a power animal does not make them a shaman. Most children have guardian spirits and, in many cultures, all adults must connect with a helping spirit as an aspect of their **initiation** into adulthood.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Power Displays

Power displays is a general term for any display of supernatural feats by a **shaman** using one or more medicine **powers**. Power displays are generally part of a competition and therefore usually outside of the context of a **healing** ritual. A shaman displays what he can do with the aid of his **spirit** help to make those skills a matter of public record. These feats have been well documented around the world for many centuries by non-indigenous observers. Because the intensity of these displays has declined, scholars believe that the supernatural abilities of shamans were far greater in former times.

Power displays are most often public demonstrations or competitions among shamans. Examples of common power displays include, but are not limited to, displays of **mastery of fire**, immersion in boiling liquids, eating hot coals, death in the fire and rebirth, or flying across the **sky** as a burning fireball,

changing from form to form in **shapeshifting** contests, or causing the head of one's **power animal** to protrude from the mouth, shooting, killing, or maiming oneself or another and then regenerating the maimed part or resurrecting the dead, swallowing arrows, knives, slats, or sticks without harm, chewing completely and swallowing objects (stones, bones, etc.) or body parts (eyes, hands, etc.) and then reproducing them whole and functional, or causing animal skins or other inanimate objects to walk, fly, or **dance** about.

A shaman's success is based on his or her ability to handle the powers given by spirit. Across **North America**, for example, shamans of many different **cultures** gathered together to publicly display and often to compete with supernatural powers. In some geographical regions, these performances of power would serve to rank the shamans within their particular areas. These competitions were also an opportunity for a shaman who felt his powers were not being recognized to display them for the community.

These public competitions between shamans brought forth some of the most spectacular human feats ever recorded. These amazing displays of power, were for the most part just displays. In a sense they were advertising and did not serve a role in the healing, **divination**, or **medicine** work of the shaman. The competitions were primarily among male shamans and, though there are accounts of women competing equally with men, they are much less frequent. Female shamans do not appear to have needed to demonstrate their spirit powers in the same way.

On occasion these displays of power were associated with actual healing **rituals**. Usually performed at the beginning of the ritual, the power display served to gain the confidence of the patient and to clear doubt from the minds of those in the audience. For example, *midewiwin* **initiations** were

opportunities for older shamans to display their skills, ensuring **humility** in the minds of the initiates. Similarly, the **Shaking Tent Ceremony** involves many displays of power, for example the shaking of the tent itself and the way in which the shaman is magically freed from the chords with which he is bound in the beginning of the **ceremony**. See also **decline in power**; *midewiwin*.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Power Objects

A power object is a physical object in which **power** resides. The object itself can be naturally occurring or created by hand. The power within the object can be naturally occurring or invited in by the **shaman** through an **embodiment** or empowerment **ritual**.

Power is found manifest in many natural things such as stones, meteorites, plants, shells, and animal parts like claws, **feathers**, hide, bones, teeth, or fur. The **Lakota tunkan** is an example of a naturally occurring object with naturally occurring power. The *tunkan* is a stone that is found where lightning strikes the ground. The *tunkan* is endowed with its unique powers by the lightning when it strikes.

Power is made manifest through ritual in other objects. The **sacred pipe**, the most familiar North American power object, is created by hand from sacred stone. Power is embodied in the pipe through rituals. That power is then activated when the stem is connected to the bowl. The ritual **masks** of Bali and the False Face masks of the **Iroquois** are also examples of power objects created by hand, as are **drums**, **rattles**, and parts of the shaman's **costume**.

Some power objects occur naturally and are enhanced through ritual. For example, *huacas* are stones gathered by shamans in **South America**. The shaman is often directed in **dreams** to

the exact stone and exactly where to find it, though that may be many days walk up a mountainside. *Huacas* are selected because of their own inherent power. Then, they are charged through ritual.

Power objects do not represent power. They are the power. To work with the object is to access the power contained within it. A power object is not a thing; it is alive. The living **spirit** in the object teaches the shaman what he or she needs to know to work with and care for the object. This is particularly important for new objects or for objects around which there are no traditions for care and handling.

Power objects can be created for single use or for all time. Many power objects are created for a specific purpose or ritual and then destroyed in the ritual process or after the ritual is complete. Other objects, like **medicine bundles** or False Face masks, are handed down for generations. Whether an object is empowered temporarily for the duration of the ritual or **ceremony** or permanently is determined by the purpose(s) for which the power object will be used.

The power in the object can be directed toward benevolent or malevolent ends. Power objects can be used to enhance any **energy** and then to direct that energy. They are used for **healing**, magic, or as a means to carry a particular energy into a ritual or ceremony.

There are protocols and **taboos** involved in working with power objects. The objects are living, and therefore they must be "fed" **offerings**, **prayers**, and gratitude, and cared for. When the life of a power object is complete, the power embodied in the object must be released. For example, the ancient Mesoamericans created holes in power objects and the tops of the heads of stone statues to release the power embodied there, effectively "closing" the object.

The use of power objects is not idolatry. In idolatry, the original revelation is codified and the connection to the

spirit power in the object is not necessarily still alive. The **sacred** relationship with that power gets lost in concretization of object as a symbol and codification of the related rituals. The shaman's work with power objects is a vital, spontaneous relationship. To disrespect the living power within the object through idolatry would result in the power leaving completely or staying and causing problems, injury, and accidents.

There are many stories of the mistreatment or dishonoring of a power object causing problems that range from mischief to death. For example, *Kukapihe* (the Death Stone), a sacred stone thought to be originally from Egypt, was brought with a companion stone to the island of Hawaii in the thirteenth century by Pa'ao, a **kahuna** priest. The palm-sized, white, oval, glazed stone is believed to embody the spiritual forces of the god Ku. Its female companion stone was held by **kahuna priests** on the island of Kauai.

In time *Kukapihe* was passed to Kamehameha the Great who passed it to his son, Kuamo'o, who passed the stone to his son, Kaniho, a **kahuna** (shaman) and **teacher of contemporary shaman** Daddy Bray. Kaniho promised the stone to Bray, but on Kaniho's death it was not relinquished by his grieving widow. In the three months that followed the stone began to intensify the fearful energies of the widow's family. After the third death in her family, she gave *Kukapihe* to a nephew to deliver to Bray and the dying stopped.

Power objects must be maintained just as the physical body of the shaman must be maintained. When properly maintained, power objects can be used to enhance other energies, like emotions, mental concentration, or intention. In the act of enhancement the power object may take on the energies involved. If those energies are malevolent, fearful, or disharmonious, the object will need to be cleansed. On the other hand, energies that are benevolent or life affirming can charge the object, adding to the power of the

object. See also **amulet; charm; False Face Society; fetish; Mesoamerica; talisman**.

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Maslow, Abraham H. *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*. New York: Penguin, 1994.

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Power Places

Power manifests in special places, some are natural **sacred** sites and others are man-made **shrines**, charged with the **prayers** and **offerings** of thousands of people. Often the spectacular, out-of-the-ordinary features of Nature are regarded as sacred, as are natural springs and **caves**. These natural places of power are often the sites chosen for **vision quests**.

Shamans travel to places of power to recharge, cleanse, and replenish their **energy** and power. In some places the power manifests as **spirit** beings who "live" in that place. In other places the power is of the place itself, in a sense the place has its own beingness. These places are believed to be the places where the gods have stopped, touching the **earth** and leaving their essence.

Power places must be approached with a certain amount of caution. There are often protocols, such as **cleansing** before entering, and **taboos** regarding behaviors that are inappropriate relative to the powers of the place. For example, Native Americans of many different tribes traveled to what is now the Zion canyonlands for **ritual**. However, they always left at night because sleeping overnight in the canyon was taboo. Power places are best avoided by the unprepared.

Langdon, E. Jean, and G. Bear. *Portals of Power: Shamanism in South America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Power Retrieval

In the broadest sense, power retrievals and **extractions**, which involve returning or removing **energy** from the patient respectively, are the two kinds of **shamanic healing**. However, power retrieval generally refers to the shaman's efforts to reunite the patient with **spirit** energies to guard his or her health and to help the individual to live out his or her soul's unique purpose in this lifetime.

The **powers**, or energies, retrieved are usually **helping spirits**, like **power animals** or **ancestor** spirits. Power retrievals can also involve retrieving the power of an internal organ, an acupuncture meridian, an archetype, a chakra, or a dissociated part of the patient's personality.

There are three general types of powers, or energies, that the **shaman** retrieves from **non-ordinary reality** for his or her patient. The simplest energy is information, for example, a **diagnosis** of the presenting problem, answers to the client's questions, remedies, or **healing** rituals. Retrieving this energy is called a **divination**. The most complex energy is part of the patient's vital essence, like a lost soul or soul part. The return of this energy is a **soul retrieval**. The return of any powers, or energies, that are not lost souls, soul parts, or information is a power retrieval.

The process of a power retrieval is very much like that of a soul retrieval:

1. The shaman connects with a helping spirit and enters his or her working **trance** state, thus entering non-ordinary reality.
2. The shaman diagnoses the problem and discovers where the necessary power of the patient can be found (divination).
3. The shaman asks the helping spirits to take pity on the patient, finds the necessary power, and returns.

4. The shaman returns the power to the patient's body, usually by blowing it into the patient's heart and the top of the head.

5. The shaman thanks the helping spirits for their assistance, exits the trance state, reenters **ordinary reality**, and closes the **ritual** space.

The kind of helping spirit that responds to the shaman's plea varies by person, **culture**, and geography. Some examples are **animal spirits**, **nature spirits**, ancestor spirits, and elementals. The helping spirit offers itself of its own volition.

There are many traditional and contemporary causes of power loss. Possible symptoms of power loss are depression, weakness, lack of mental alertness or self-confidence, and chronic **illness** or mishap. Power loss leaves the individual vulnerable to contagious **disease** and harmful, energetic intrusions.

Power loss also occurs when an individual's behavior has created disharmony with the spirit world. To heal, the individual must take action in ordinary reality to return to harmony with the spirit world and reconnect with spirit. The shaman divines the necessary ritual actions the individual must take.

Shamans replenish their own power (energy) through their connection to Nature, for example submerging in **sacred** springs or taking retreat on a sacred mountain. They complete the cycle of energy-sharing by honoring the energies available to them, giving thanks and making **offerings** of gratitude to the energies they draw on. Shamans maintain their power (energy) through their daily physical discipline and **diet**, including what they eat, fasting, and enemas.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Stevens, J., and L. S. Stevens. *Secrets of Shamanism: Tapping the Spirit Power Within You*. New York: Avon Books, 1988.

Power Song

A power song is a **song** taught to the **shaman** by a **spirit** for the purpose of calling on that spirit to gain access to its **power**. By **singing** the song the shaman calls the spirit into his or her body or into the **ritual** space. The power song taught to an individual by his or her own spirit is used to instantaneously gather personal power. The singing of a power song should always be done with correct attention and focus and never assumed lightly.

Being granted the power of song by spirit is an honor that must be earned. For example, North American shamans take **vision quests**, in the hope, but not the guarantee, that spirit will honor them with a **sacred** song. Power songs belong to the individual to whom they were given, and it is an abuse of power to **sing** another person's song. See also **power, abuse of**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Prayer

Prayer is a sincere and humble act to beseech, petition, confess, praise, or give gratitude to **spirit** through thought, word, **song, dance, or sacred** actions or **postures**. Genuine prayer requires enormous effort and will on the part of the individual praying.

The power of prayer is enhanced by cultivating within one's being and expressing through one's actions the virtues of **humility**, honesty, sincerity, courage to be loving, endurance, kindness, sensitivity, and awareness. These virtues are so essential to the efficacy of prayer that the elders of traditional

indigenous **cultures** begin to teach these virtues in early childhood. Praying is a fundamental social activity in these cultures.

Genuine prayer also requires the ability to focus attention inward, to center, and to calm the normal activity of the mind. This capacity to go within is essential both to the ability to pray and to find the answers to one's prayers and questions.

The efficacy of prayer can be enhanced by the preparation and **sacrifice** of appropriate **offerings**. Inappropriate, insincere, or excessive offerings are not received by spirit and thus do not enhance the power of prayer. Genuine prayers require a large amount of time to practice and prepare. Time is invested in creating offerings, centering the self, and activities to cleanse, such as fasting or participation in a **sweat lodge purification**. It is not unusual for an individual within an indigenous culture to spend several hours a day engaged in prayer or preparation to pray.

Through this focus and preparation the prayer becomes strong. It takes form as a real thing in the consciousness. If the prayer becomes strong enough, it is conscious, taking on a life of its own in the world. It is believed that the prayers of the shaman are all sufficiently strong to become conscious things in the world.

Lyon, William S. "North American Indian Perspectives on Working with Sacred Power." *Shaman's Drum* 16 (Mid-spring 1989): 33-39.

Priest

A keeper of **ceremony** whose position is secured through **knowledge**, the priest is distinguished from the **shaman**, who is a creator of **ritual** and whose position is secured through the ability to enter **trance** states and bring the **powers** of the **spirit** world to the aid of people.

While it is accurate to refer to shamans as priests and vice versa in a few **cultures**, like that of the **Q'ero** of Peru, these terms are more commonly used in ways that confuse the deep distinction between these two roles. Not all shamans function as priests, though some do. Very few priests have the **training** or skill to function as shamans. In many cultures the roles, training, and **initiation** are quite distinct. They work with different powers and are called by different names in the **languages** of their cultures.

Within the context of **shamanism**, the use of the term "priest" often leads to confusion, as indigenous priests are as different from those of Christianity as they are from shamans in their own culture. Although the term "priest" is frequently used in the literature, it has inherent weaknesses when applied to shamanism.

Priests are liturgical officiants whose authority does not rest on personal or direct experience with the deity or supernatural. They preside at ceremonies and over congregations using a fixed system of beliefs, writings, and codified rituals. They support and preach a religious belief system without the power to adapt or change that system.

Shamans, though often characterized as priests, are distinguished from priests in that the shaman's authority rests on his or her personal experiences with the deity and the supernatural. Empowered by this direct relationship with the supernatural, the shaman is able to conduct both rituals and ceremonies and to adapt the spiritual discipline over time as directed by spirit.

Primal Bisexual Divinity

A primal bisexual divinity is a deity who changes **gender**, is of both genders simultaneously, or is without gender. The name was used by author Joseph Campbell to describe those deities who are an important reoccurring theme in the **myths** of indigenous peoples.

Gender transformation is one of many transformations common in the **helping spirits** primary to **shamanism**. The primal bisexual divinity is often the initiator from whom the **shaman** and the **transformed shaman** receive his or her **powers**. Examples of primal bisexual divinities from different **cultures** follow:

The **Inuit** goddess, White Whale Woman, transformed herself into a woman-man to marry a woman of the Fly Agaric clan. (Fly Agaric is the *amanita muscaria* mushroom, a sacred **plant hallucinogen** used by shamans in the northern regions.) The **Koryak** of **Siberia** tell many stories of transformation involving **Fly Agaric mushrooms** and Raven. Big Raven, the Creator, his wife Miti, their son Eme'mqut, and his wives, appear in many stories involving gender transformations.

Hidatsa shamans, both females and **gender-variant males**, enter **trance** and embody a triune goddess who manifests as a magpie. This triune goddess is in part Village Old Woman (creator of women), in part Holy Woman of the Four Directions, and in part Holy Woman Above.

The *balian* and *basir* (shamans) of the **Ngaju Dayk** of Borneo embody Mahatala-Jata, an androgynous deity. Mahatala is the male aspect, a hornbill who lives on a mountaintop and rules the **Upperworld**. Jata is the female aspect, a watersnake who lives in the sea and rules the **Lowerworld**. The two aspects are joined by a jeweled bridge, the rainbow, to create the total godhead. The shamans of the **Iban Dyak** work with the spirit of Menjaya Raja Manang, the world's first healer. Menjaya was a male who became a female, or androgynous being, to be able to heal his brother's wife. See also **mushrooms**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Primordial Sea

Primordial sea refers to the theme that all life arose out of a fundamental substance of creation that existed before the beginning of the Universe. This theme is woven through the creation **myths** of almost every **culture**. The exact nature of this fundamental substance is unknown. Thus all of life arose from the **Great Mystery**.

Psilocybe Mushrooms

Several species of **mushrooms** containing the psychoactive constituents psilocybine and psilocine, which are unique to these mushrooms and not found in other plants. These mushrooms are found throughout the Americas and Europe.

Psilocybe mushrooms have been employed as **sacred** plant **entheogens** since the time of the ancient **Aztecs** in Mexico and Guatemala. Few psychoactive plants are more revered. They continue to be used by **shamans** in these regions to enter **trance** and gain guidance from **spirit** during **healing** rituals.

The Aztec name, *Teonanácatl*, means "divine, wondrous, or awesome mushroom." As a term of endearment and reverence these mushrooms are also known as Little Flowers of the Gods. See also **ritual**.

Psyche

The psyche is a construct of Western thought that is defined simultaneously as the **soul**, the self, or the personality. The psyche is believed to be made up of the id, the ego, and the superego, including both the conscious and unconscious components.

The psyche is the vital principle of corporeal matter that is a distinct mental or spiritual entity coextensive with, but independent of, the body. Shamanic **cultures** generally experience mental and spiritual entities coexisting with, but independent of, the body. These aspects are usually seen as separate parts of the multiple human soul.

The shamanic explanation of the soul is culture specific and, where the information is available, it is found within the individual entries.

Psychomythology

Psychomythology is the expression of an individual's life **dream** or personal **myth** through his or her inherent wisdom and love nature. Psychomythology is the innate story of the **psyche**, an aspect of the self that is composed of three parts: *logos*, inherent wisdom; *eros*, love nature; and *mythos*, life dream or myth.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Psychonavigation

A meditative technique for journeying in a light **trance** that does not use **sonic driving** or **psychotropic plants**. It is necessary to have the ability to relax the mind and the body and to have faith that the process will work.

J. Perkins explains that to psychonavigate means to travel through the **psyche** to a place where you need to be. This place can be the **non-ordinary reality** version of a physical place: where one finds game, fresh **water**, or a site for a home. Or it can be a non-physical place: where one finds answers, receives **healing**, or finds creative inspiration. See also **journey**.

Perkins, J. *Psychonavigation: Techniques for Travel Beyond Time*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1990.

Psychopathology and Shamans

Since first contact, people of European descent have judged **shamans** to be hysterics, schizophrenics, mentally deranged, psychotic, idiots, fantasy-prone, charlatans, or epileptics because of the shaman's use of **altered states of consciousness**. There is ample evidence

today that shamans are not as a group mentally ill; however the shaman's mental health is not the issue. The questions is whether or not the trance states used by the shaman in ritual are in themselves pathological.

In recent research, careful attention has been paid to the specific qualities of **shamanic altered states of consciousness** as compared to those of pathological altered states. Through this research it is clear that shamanic altered state experiences differ significantly from the experiences defined in traditional categories of mental **illness**.

Shamanic Possession vs. Hysteria

Shamans in a state of spirit **possession**, or **embodiment** trance, often exhibit shaking seizures, distorted physiognomy, speaking in an unknown **language**, or erratic behavior. These qualities are close to the classic description of symptoms of hysteria. However, unlike hysteria, the shaman can intentionally induce and terminate the embodiment trance. The shaman exhibits mastery, or control, of the altered state and is able to use the altered state purposefully.

Shamanic possession states are not false or acted out. They are authentic, unique experiences with qualities that range from quite lucid, leaving the shaman with consciousness during the trance state and memory afterward, to complete amnesia, leaving the shaman without awareness or memory of what occurs during the trance.

Shamanic Journey vs. Schizophrenia

The shamanic **journey**, or **soul flight**, involves a profound sensory experience of **non-ordinary reality**, usually with a strong visual component and communication with non-ordinary reality beings, or **spirits**. These qualities appear to be delusions or hallucinations which are associated with schizophrenia and other more serious disorders.

However, unlike a schizophrenic, the shaman controls the journey, inducing and terminating it at will, all the while aware that he or she is in non-ordinary

reality and using the altered state purposefully. Unlike delusions, the journey experience is clearly distinguished from **ordinary reality** events.

John Walsh, doctor of psychiatry, philosophy, and anthropology, has shown through detailed phenomenological mapping of a range of altered states that schizophrenic episodes and the shamanic journey differ significantly in control, concentration, self-sense, quality of the experience, content, and quality of distortion.

Shamans exhibit controlled entry into and exit from trance and partial control over the content of their experience, while schizophrenics experience a dramatic reduction of control in all aspects of their episode. The shaman's concentration increases and flows from event to event in the journey, while the schizophrenic's concentration significantly decreases.

In the journey the shaman experiences his or her **soul** focused and empowered by a connection to all things, while the schizophrenic experiences a disorganization and disintegration of self accompanied by an unpleasant inability to distinguish self from others. The shaman's feelings during the journey experience range from occasionally frightening to often ecstatic, while the schizophrenic's feelings during an episode are rarely positive and often unpleasant, distorted, and inappropriate.

The content of the shaman's journey is organized in a way that benefits others, sometimes profoundly. Though the shaman is not always able to communicate while in trance, the trance is controlled and the communication coherent upon return. The content of the schizophrenic's experience is of no benefit to himself or others. It is highly disorganized, awareness of the environment is distorted, and communication is incoherent. In short, shamanic journeys enable the shaman to contribute to the **art**, intellect, physical well-being, and spiritual leadership of the community, while schizophrenic episodes leave

the individual significantly challenged in his ability to function socially.

A survey of the most current research shows that there is a clear distinction between the intentional altered states of the shaman and the pathological altered states entered unintentionally by the mentally ill. The shaman's mastery, or control, of trance is the important, distinguishing psychological criterion whether the shaman employs a possession or a journey trance state.

Initiatory Crisis

The **initiatory illness** of the novice may be considered a temporary pathological state. During this spiritual crisis the altered state experience is spontaneous, unintentional, and experienced as reality. The novice's experience is often terrifying, but also follows initiatory patterns like **dismemberment**, death, and rebirth or his or her soul being taken into the **spirit** world by the spirit **teacher** to learn to be a shaman.

It is the fact that the individual successfully resolves this temporary break with ordinary reality that makes them a shaman. If the **illness** were not successfully resolved, the individual would be considered spiritually ill in a traditional shamanic **culture**, not a shaman. It is through the resolution of this first, spontaneous crisis that the novice learns to control the trance state and masters the techniques for working in non-ordinary reality.

The psychological phenomena of the shaman's work in trance states is unique, but not pathological. This unique quality is not accurately addressed by any particular school of psychiatric or psychological thought. To understand it, we will need to raise the cultural blinders that color and confound our attempts to clearly understand shamanic traditions. If we can engage in research with a heightened awareness of our own cultural bias, perhaps the strength of a shaman's mental health and force of spirit will emerge from the confusion. See also **soul loss**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Jilek, W. "The Psychiatrist and His Shaman Colleague: Cross-Cultural Collaboration with Traditional Amerindian Therapists." *Journal of Operational Psychiatry* 9, no. 2 (1978): 32–39.

Lommel, A. *Shamanism: The Beginnings of Art*. Michael Bullock, translator. New York: McGraw Hill, 1967.

Peters, L. G., and D. Price-Williams. "Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism." *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 3 (1980): 397–413.

Walsh, R. "Mapping States of Consciousness: Comparing Shamanic, Schizophrenic, Insight Meditation, and Yogic States." *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on the Study of Shamanism and Alternate Modes of Healing*. Independent Scholars of Asia, Inc. 1989.

———. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Psychopomp

As a psychopomp, the **shaman** transports the **souls** of the dead home, assuring that soul's safe and complete **journey** through the death process. The shaman enters an altered state in which his or her soul leaves its body to accompany the souls of the dead to the home of the **Ancestors** or the **Land of the Dead**.

Each traditional **culture** defines the death process in its own way. The specifics of a shaman's psychopomp work, i.e., when or where he or she goes, etc., is influenced by that culture's beliefs about the soul, death, and the process of dying. However, psychopomp work always involves a journey or **soul flight**, which is the necessary tool for the shaman's soul to enter the **spirit** realms where he or she can serve as a guide.

In almost all traditions the soul lingers near its former home or by its body's gravesite. For a short time after death the soul will continue to be receptive to the physical world. During this period, many tribes have traditions to guide the soul home, to the Source-of-all-life, with **prayers, chants,** recitations, and preparations in the physical world, like making ritual **offerings** or disbursing or destroying the deceased's possessions so that nothing remains to hold the soul to the physical plane.

Malidoma Somé, an author and West African shaman, explains that for the **Dagara** a communal expression of grief has the **power** to send the deceased to the realm of the ancestors and to heal the hurt produced in the **psyches** of the living by the death of a loved one. The communal expression provides the opportunity for grief to reach the important cathartic peak that grief must logically lead to. In this case the shaman conducts the communal **ritual** which functions as the psychopomp by containing, generating, and directing that grief to serve as an **energy** that transports the dead home.

In most cultures it is believed that ancestor **spirits** will come to meet the newly deceased and guide that soul through the completion of the death process. When the ancestors do not come or the rituals or funerary traditions are not performed, or are performed incorrectly, the soul of the deceased may get lost and wander. If this happens, souls become unable or unwilling to complete their death process unaided. At this point the shaman must be called in to act as the psychopomp.

The need for a psychopomp may also arise in **healing** rituals with the living. If a patient is plagued or possessed by a misplaced spirit of the dead, the shaman may need to escort that spirit to the Land of the Dead after freeing it from its connection to the patient. This type of healing for the dead is often necessary to complete the healing for the living.

The following are two examples of psychopomp work by Yukagirs shaman of **Siberia**. In the first case the shaman enters a **trance** to contact the spirit of the dead to confirm that she wants help. The shaman then narrates her request for help and her pleas that she is afraid to go alone for all who are gathered, before embarking on the journey to guide that soul home.

In a second example, the soul needing help has been dead for forty days, long past the appropriate time for her return home. In this case the shaman must offer a **sacrifice** of brandy, then negotiate, and ultimately trick the necessary **spirits of the dead** so that they will receive the wandering soul and allow her entry into the Land of the Dead.

The rituals and funeral customs performed after death are based on the realization that upon death the consciousness, finding itself unexpectedly disembodied, is reluctant to give up its established place in the family. It needs time to accustom itself to the new situation. During this time the deceased's soul may try to attract the souls of relatives so that it does not feel alone. The soul does not instantly realize that it no longer belongs with the living and that it is time to return home. See also **altered states of consciousness**.

Eliade, Mircea, ed. *Ancient Religions*. New York: Citadel Press, 1950.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Somé, M.P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Psychotherapeutic Practices

Traditionally, one of the shaman's many roles was to guide the psychotherapeutic **healing** of their patients. In many

cultures today patients are crossing the boundaries between the shamanic systems of indigenous peoples, holistic systems, and the scientific system of Western cultures. For example, on most reservations in **North America**, the Native American population uses the best of both traditional and Western systems, thus creating a need for transcultural medical procedures.

This self-selection process is particularly pronounced in the area of psychotherapy, where the origins of mental **illness** are largely supernatural and social from the point of view of traditional healing systems. In North America, for example, the indigenous population exhibits greater confidence in traditional **medicine** people and **shamans** than in alien psychotherapists.

The indigenous practitioner anchors his or her practice in the spirit world, a world the indigenous person knows from daily experience to be the most powerful force, interrelating all aspects of life. The psychiatrist, on the other hand, anchors his or her practice in a system of beliefs and references drawn from a foreign culture whose limited belief in the spirit world renders the psychiatric system significantly less creditable for the indigenous person.

Tribal cultures see **soul loss**, power loss, **spirit intrusion**, and **possession**, all shamanic diagnoses considered mental illness by Western medicine, as problems involving the whole social network, the individual's place within it, and within the spiritual forces of the **Kosmos**. The shaman's traditional treatment is simultaneously spiritual and psychological. For example, by removing the **spirit** or inanimate object that has intruded into the patient's body a Washo shaman is capable of curing a range of psychoneurotic disorders or disorders with psychosomatic components.

In some areas of medicine contemporary methods closely parallel shamanic methods: use of medicinal herbs, **dream** interpretation, behavior

therapy, family therapy, hypnotherapy, and psychodrama. In the area of psychotherapy in particular, the similarities can outweigh the differences.

However, the essential difference lies in the value placed on the spiritual dimension of a person, of his or her **disease**, and of the cure. The shaman, who places the health of the individual spirit foremost, will engage in **soul retrievals**, **psychopomp** work (escorting the **soul** of the dead on the **journey** to the other world), spirit integration, communication with **spirits**, **extractions** of spirit intrusions, and **cleansings**.

The shaman is also concerned with the health of the communal spirit and the individual's relationship to the community and to the Kosmos. For this the shaman designs **rituals** and ceremonies to reconnect the individual to the community and the **earth**, to cleanse the community after violation of **taboos**, and facilitate the individual and communal awareness of spirit, life purpose, service, and harmony with Nature.

Shamanic healing rituals simultaneously address the healing of complex psychological-emotional-spiritual crises on multiple levels. Rituals do not untie these intricate, painful knots as conventional therapy and analysis seek to do. The shaman cuts through the source of the crisis with ritual and the guiding hand of spirit. See also **ceremony** and **transcultural medicine**.

- Eshowsky, M. *Shamanism*. Mill Valley, CA: Foundation for Shamanic Studies, 12:1, 1999.
- Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.
- Hultkrantz, A. "Interaction Between Native and Euroamerican Curing Methods." *Shaman's Drum* 31 (Spring 1993): 23-31.
- Lommel, A. *Shamanism: The Beginnings of Art*. Michael Bullock, translator. New York: McGraw Hill, 1967.
- Maslow, Abraham H. *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*. New York: Penguin, 1994.

Psychotropic Plants

Psychotropic plants contain naturally occurring chemicals that act on the brain, changing the way the brain and possibly the mind functions. These plants are also referred to as **plant hallucinogens** and **plant entheogens**. When prepared and ingested properly psychotropic plants convey humans into temporary **altered states of consciousness**, which for some individuals are ecstatic.

Some of the earliest forms of **shamanism**, dating back to the Paleolithic Age, may have involved the use of these plants. While this use of psychotropic plants to enter **shamanic altered states of consciousness** was and is common in shamanism, what a trained **shaman** can do under the influence of the **sacred** plant preparations is not common. To “see” accurately while in an altered state and to act with what one “sees” in that altered state requires hard work, lengthy **training**, personal sacrifice, and, most important, a special kind of psychological predisposition. See also **plant medicines**.

Puile

Puile is the Chinantec and **Mazatec** name for the **plant hallucinogen** made from the seeds of **Morning Glory**, *Ipomoea violacea*, for use in **divination** and shamanic **rituals**.

Purification

To cleanse the body, mind, and/or **spirit** of contaminating substances, thoughts, or energies that are harmful, disruptive to the acquisition of **power**, or that prevent a person from establishing a relationship and communication with spirit or power. **Space** and objects, like **ritual space** and **power objects**, can also be purified or cleansed. The appropriate purification rite depends on what is being purified and why.

Purification rites range from the simple acts for cleaning to the complex rituals usually performed for **healing**. Acts of purification include: smudging with a burning piece of sage, cedar, copal, **tobacco**, or some other plant, a spoken formula, **singing a sacred song**, *camaying* with alcohol or flower **water**, taking an emetic, participation in a **sweat lodge** ceremony, abstaining from sexual intercourse, fasting, dietary restrictions, and participation in ten-day-long rituals designed specifically for purification. See also **camay; ceremony; cleansing**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.



Qanimasoaq

Qanimasoaq, meaning “one who shivers with fever,” is the West Greenland **Eskimo** term for sorcerer. A sorcerer who only casts **spells** is called a *serrasoq*, or witch. See also **Greenland** and **sorcery**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

QaumanEq

QaumanEq is the special ability of the Iglulik **angakok** (**Eskimo** shaman) to see what others cannot see, to “seeing with **spirit** eyes.” *QaumanEq* is the ability to see in the darkness, both literally and metaphorically. An *angakok* with *QaumanEq* is filled with a light or **energy**. This enlightenment enables the *angakok* to perceive energies, people, and events, in the past, present, and future.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Q'ero

The Q'eros—or “long hairs”—are a **Quechua**-speaking people who live clustered in five small villages, located at approximately 17,000 feet up the mist-enshrouded Andes of south-central Peru. Living in the high altitude and rugged terrain, the Q'ero have remained in monastic isolation for over 500 years, protecting the unchanged cultural and spiritual traditions of the Q'ero. The

Q'ero were essentially unknown to the Western world until 1949.

Q'ero was first a place, the home of the first man and woman, Inkari and Collari, created by Kamaq. Inkari and Collari eventually move, have children, and send their first-born son back to Q'ero to live. Later they visit Q'ero and designate its people the keepers of their spiritual traditions, those of the **Inka**.

It is unclear whether or not the Inka are the descendants of the Inkari and Collari and the original Q'ero people. It is clear that today's Q'ero are the direct descendants of the Inka and that Inka **shamanism** continues to be practiced in an unbroken tradition by the Q'ero people. Long ago their **ancestors**, a small group of ancient Inkas, climbed high up into the mountains. There they created a very isolated sanctuary for the safekeeping of the ancient prophecies and traditions they believe hold key teachings that will be important for the survival and **evolution** of the world.

The Q'eros refer to this time, the end of the 20th century, as *take onkoy*, the gestation of the luminous body of the world. The Q'ero are determined to share their traditions and practices with the rest of the world to reunite the great spiritual traditions of North and South (hemispheres) and gather together the peoples of the Four Directions. From this coalition can come the essential transmission of spiritual **power** needed for *take onkoy* to become a reality.

Wirachocha and Ayni

Wirachocha is the supreme creative **energy** that brought forth the universe, through which divine will and divine thought were transmitted to humans. When humans use their divine will and divine thought in every moment they can live life as an expression of *Wirachocha*, the superior energy that flows through the universe. In that humans become capable of transforming themselves into *Illapa Runas*, Beings of Light. This is the desired state of consciousness and the path to it

results in a way of life in harmony with others, the planet, and the cosmos.

The **knowledge** of this path is called *Pachacutecq*, the return to Divine Origin, *Wirachocha*. Q'ero **shamans** see life and the universe in these cosmic terms. For example, the **soul** is seen as a subtle, cosmic energy that exists in humans. When a child is born, this energy, called the *ánimu*, enters from the top of the head and warms the child's **blood**, giving it life. At death, the *ánimu* leaves through the top of the head and melds again with the cosmic weaving of *Wirachocha*.

Any human who attains a high state of consciousness can learn to vibrate his or her own energy at a frequency that is in harmony and balance with all things. That frequency of harmony and balance can be transmitted to everyone and everything around, including the *Pachamama* (**earth**). The actions of this individual become **sacred**; they are in *ayni* (perfect reciprocity). Achieving this state an individual can merge with all-that-is, love, and life the energy of the Universe.

Q'ero Realities

The Q'ero explain that there are two realities: *panya* and *yoqe*. *Panya* is all that we associate with the world; it is **ordinary reality**. *Yoqe* is all that we associate with the spirit world; it is **non-ordinary reality**. Through *yoqe* the shaman connects with the enigma, the **Great Mystery**, and the unfolding of unknown energies that are everpresent in all things.

Pacha (the **Kosmos**) is divided into three worlds. *Hanaqpacha*, the **Upper-world** or superior world, is filled with superior energy that flows through the universe, called by various names: *texemuyo*, *wira-cocha*, *paha kamak*. *Ukhu-pacha*, the **Lowerworld** or interior world, is populated by invisible beings, beings who existed before the universe took its form, and elemental beings. *Kaypacha* is *Pachamama's* world or the surface world populated by all the animal, plant, and geographic beings of the earth.

The power of the *paq'o* (shaman) comes from his or her ability to communicate with the *achachle*, the **spirit** that lives in everything. The *paq'o* must cultivate his or her personal power/energy to able to link with different powers/energies in the environment to attain this state of sacred communication. At the core of this practice is the *paq'o's mesa*, an altar-like arrangement of *q'uyas* (stone's **power objects**) and the *icaros* (sacred **songs**).

The Q'ero Spirit World

Primary in the spirit world of the Q'ero is *Pachamama*, the earth, and the *apus*, the **spirits** of the mountains. *Pachamama* is the expression of the female cosmic energy and is associated with the blood, birth, and death. The *apus*, are the expression of the male cosmic energy and are receivers of celestial powers.

The *paq'o* also communicates with the spirits of nature, for example, *kuichi* (the rainbow), *malqu* (**trees**), *mayo* (river), *kocha* (sacred lakes) and the four **elements**: *allypa* (earth), *unu* (**water**), *wayra* (winds), *nina* (**fire**). Entering into the sacred relationship of *ayni* with the spirits of Nature promotes well-being of self and others.

Paq'o—The Shamans

The *paq'o* of the Andes are spiritual leaders who serve an area or region. They are organized into a system of concentric **circles** of power. In the center with the smallest circle of power is a *paq'o* who serves a small village, then the *paq'o* who serves a larger village, and finally the *paq'o* who encompasses the larger circles of power serves a region, and so on.

Every living being in the universe has a relationship of service to other beings. The **training** of a *paq'o* begins by serving a very small mountain from his or her area. When that energy is mastered he or she moves on to a larger mountain in the area. Finally he or she begins working with the spirit of a region. At each stage of development

the power of the *paq'o* increases commensurate with the power of the mountain or region that they serve. The *paq'o* is always learning, training, and receiving **karpay** (**initiation**) from beings of greater and greater power throughout his or her lifetime.

Selection

There are entryways, formal and informal, to become a *paq'o* in the Q'ero tradition. The traditional path is followed in a formal way, receiving teachings and the corresponding energy transmissions from a master. There are also informal paths, for example being struck by lightning and surviving. In this case the transmission can come from the lightning and training must follow. The transmission can also come from the spirit world, manifesting as a feeling inside the individual that he or she has been called to become a *paq'o*. All paths are strange and difficult and traverse a lifetime.

Karpay

Karpay is "to be initiated" and always involves a transmission of knowledge and energy. In this sense initiation is not a measure of spiritual success, like a graduation, but a creation of potential, like the planting of an Inka seed in one's soul. Anyone can receive the *karpay* rites. The *paq'o* is distinguished by what he or she is able to do with the energy and knowledge transmitted.

Karpays are the rites of passage of the *kurak akulleq*, one of the highest level of *paq'o* in the Inka traditions. They contain the mystery teachings that can not be told, but can be known. For those who can "see" into the mystery, *karpays* convey sacred knowledge that can not be shared, but can be experienced.

Teachings and Teachers

There are particular lines of knowledge and levels of development for which it is helpful for the *paq'o* to have a **teacher** or **mesayoq** (master). For example, one of the fundamental skills of the *paq'o* is to see fields of energy. The *mesayoq* can

awaken that sight and teach the *paq'o* to use it to read connections within the fields of action and to interact with those fields.

The *mesayoq* teaches the use of **Coca** leaves for **offerings** and for **divinations** and techniques to reconnect with the matrix of the Kosmos. The *mesayoq* teaches the meditative techniques to connect with the *achachle* that lives in all things like meditating on the lap of *Pachamama* to draw in strength from earth or to working with *Pachakamac*, the **Sun**, to draw in that concentrated energy.

Awakening the Luminous Body

Another fundamental skill the *paq'o* must learn is the cultivation of the luminous body, or *kausay poq'po* (energy bubble). The *kausay poq'po* is the energy field that surrounds the body; the center is the *qosqo*, located around the belly area. The luminous body must be awakened, cleared, and healed so that it can grow and transform as the *paq'o* does.

The Q'ero perceive of all energy as neutral, not negative/positive or good/evil. The *paq'o* must learn to discern between qualities of energy: *hoocha* (heavy) or *sami* (refined). The *qosqo* is used to move the energy. Heavy energy must be transmuted and is fed to *Pachamama*. Refined energy is drawn from nature or *hanaqpacha*, the Upperworld and redirected where it is needed. *Sami* can be directed into a person, a community, or into the natural environment to correct energy imbalances and blocks so that energies can return to a harmonious flow.

Initiation

There are many levels of initiation for the *paq'o*. Each initiation lasts from fifteen days to a month and involves walking through the high mountains and going to sacred sites to experience teachings. Initiates participate in many **rituals** designed to connect them to resident spirits and to receive transmissions. They also experience the energies

directly, for example meditating on the cosmos under the night **sky** or bathing in very cold mountain lagoons.

The initiates are tested in many ways, all of them hard and not all of them apparent. There are tests of fire, knowledge, and love. There are tests to determine their physical readiness, the preparation of their hearts, and their ability to be compassionate.

Levels of Training

When the *paq'o* has mastered the fundamentals of energy and working with the local *apus*, the next level of training is to learn to use *q'uyas* (stone's) for **healing** and therapy. There are many different *q'uyas* and many different applications. For example, healing energy can be transmitted through a *q'uya* or the *q'uya* can be used to cleanse heavy energies from the body. The *paq'o* learns mystical techniques to give the *q'uyas* a purpose and meaning that allow it to be used in the healing.

Certain rocks are distinguished as *q'uya* because they have a particular feeling to the *paq'o*. The most powerful rocks are found high in the Andes and the *paq'o* may be guided to them in **dreams** or **visions**. *Q'uyas* can be stones struck by lightning or stones given by a river, a lake, or *Pachamama*. Some large *q'uyas* are stone **altars** used at sacred sites where the *paq'o* engage and direct the forces of Nature.

The next level of *paq'o* is the *kuya hampeqs*, the herbalist healer who has mastered the art of working with plant powers for healing. The *kuya hampeq* is the physician of the Andes who is an expert on the use of plant energies and **plant spirits** to cure **illness**.

All of the next three levels of *paq'o* are capable of extraordinary healings, both physical—like paralysis and drug addiction—and spiritual—like psychic and psychological abnormalities. In addition to healings the *pampa mesayoq*, the **alto mesayoq**, and *kuraq akulleq* each use their relationship with the supernatural in unique and increasingly more powerful and enlightened ways.

The *pampa mesayoq* is an expert healer and is perhaps the shaman of the *paq'o* as the role is defined in this volume. His or her main relationship is serving *Pachamama* and using rituals to direct and maintain Her energies. The *pampa mesayoq* works with medicinal plants, performs divinations with *Coca* leaves, creates and uses **talismans**, and works with animals, plants, trees, rivers, and other aspects of the geography of the earth.

The *alto mesayoq*, of which there are three levels, specializes in the cultivation of his or her relationship with the *apu*, the spirits of the mountains. The *karpa* of the *alto mesayoq* involves the consecration of his or her being to the service of the mountain. As a consequence it is the *alto mesayoq* who listens to and speaks directly with the *apu*, who is the only being who knows the whole prophecy of **Pachakuti**. Each *alto mesayoq* is also consecrated into the service of a star, which, with the *apu*, serves *alto mesayoq's* guide.

The *kuraq akulleq*, which means the great elder or master, is one of the highest levels. There are very few who master it. There are two levels of *kuraq* above this; both are even more rare and cannot be named. The *kuraq akulleq* is a great visionary who works primarily with the superior energies of *hanaq-pacha* and the celestial filaments. It is a very prophetic and charismatic role.

The *kuraq akulleq* can be a man or a woman. The male *kuraq akulleq* is more visible to the outside world; however, it is usually the female *kuraq akulleq* who moves the celestial filaments. Working with these celestial energies can bring about miraculous long-distance healings. The *kuraq akulleq* are also known to use earthquakes and other energies of Nature to create transformation.

Tools

The primary tool of the Q'ero shaman is the cultivation of his or her own **energy body** to use as a tool to direct the energies of the physical and spiritual environment. Within that practice the *paq'o*

does use actual tools that aid in communion with the elemental spirits of nature and the frequencies of celestial energy.

The Mesa, K'uyas, and Icaros

The *paq'o's mesa* is a bundle of **power objects** that function's as a portable altar and is used in small personal and large group rituals. For use, the *mesa* is unwrapped and its contents placed ritually on the cloth. Typical contents include stone's and objects that embody the power of *Pachamama*, the *apus*, and the *paq'o's* teachers, both human and/or spirit beings.

Q'uyas are stone power objects. They can be large enough to serve as altars at a sacred site and small enough to be folded into the *paq'o's mesa*. *Icaros* are sacred songs taught to the *paq'o* by the spirits or by his or her teacher who receives the song ultimately from the spirits. **Singing** the *icaros* is a way to call on the energy of the spirit who gave the song and receive and/or direct that energy.

Despacho and Kint'u (Coca)

A *despacho* **ceremony** is a traditional Andean offering to *Pachamama*. Performing the *despacho* is part of nearly every Q'ero ceremony. It is the formal way to give thanks to and to honor the energies of *Pachamama*, the *apus*, and Nature.

The *kint'u* is an offering of *Coca* leaves that can be used in different ways during the *despacho*. The *k'intu*, made of three *Coca* leaves, is a formal way of sharing *Coca* which is a sacred act of spiritual and energetic bonding.

Rattle, Whistle, and Pisco

The **rattle** and whistle are used to call on the spirits of Nature and to establish a sacred relationship with them to use during a sacred ceremony. *Pisco*, strong Peruvian alcohol made from the skin and seed of grapes, is used for **cleansing**.

Coca

Coca is the most sacred plant of the Andes. "To chew *Coca*" means to

meditate. One of the highest levels of *paq'o* is called the *kuraq akulleq*, which means "the great chewer of *Coca* leaves," or great master. *Coca* leaves are used for divination, as offerings, and as **vehicles** to carry **prayers** and *ayni*, perfect reciprocity, in ceremony.

Coca leaves are used for divination to determine a person's destiny and to **diagnose** illnesses. The leaves are held to the mouth and prayed into or asked the questions, then allowed to fall onto the *manta*, or ceremonial cloth. The leaves, their shape, coloration, dispersion, and relative relationships, are all read. There is an entire system of symbols associated with reading *Coca* leaves; however, to read the leaves well, the *paq'o* must cultivate *Coca q'awaaq*, **clairvoyant** abilities.

During the *despacho* a participant receives a *k'intu* made from three *Coca* leaves from the *paq'o*. The *k'intu* is held to the mouth and prayed into, blown into, and then slowly chewed and tucked into the cheek. The *k'intu* is not always chewed. It can be used as a vehicle for *ayni* during the *despacho*. The prayers, breath, and energy sent into the *k'intu* are given in reciprocity for the help and guidance received from the **nature spirits**. Charged in this way the *k'intu* are returned to the *paq'o* who incorporates them into the *despacho*.

Pachakuti—the Time of Transformation

According to ancient Inka prophecy the end of the 20th century is the time of gathering and reintegration of the Peoples of the earth. It is a time of upheaval and great change that will make it fertile for a new seed of awareness and being to mature into profound alterations in the way humanity perceives the core structures of the universe.

The Q'ero recognize that there are three types of human intelligence/power: *yachay* (knowledge) developed in the Europeans, *munay* (love and feeling) developed in the indigenous South Americans, and

llankay (the ability to manifest) developed in the North Americans. Each of these peoples needs the intelligence and power of the other two to be whole. This time of change, *Pachakuti*, will create the potential for Wholeness by bringing all three powers together.

Pachakuti is a very important moment for all humanity, particularly those who have strayed from a balanced life of purpose and meaning. *Pachakuti* is a time to realign the world in renewed order and harmony and to open to new ways of seeing the world. To this end the Q'ero now open their teachings to all others in preparation for the day the Eagle of the North and the Condor of the South fly together again. See also **Andes, South America, and South America**.

Bennett, H. Z. "From the Heart of the Andes: An Interview with Q'ero Shaman Americo Yabar." *Shaman's Drum* 36 (Fall 1994): 40–49.

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Qilaain

(Dialectical variants: *qilaun*, *qilaut*, and *qitlaun*.) The *qilaain* is the **drum** of the East Greenland **Eskimo** *angakok* (**shaman**). It is the only instrument used by the *angakok* and is fundamental to the process of inducing trance.

The *qilaain* is made from a wooden hoop, approximately 18 inches in diameter, over which is stretched a piece of skin, preferably the skin of the stomach of a polar bear. A handle or *kattiilua* (also *kalilua*) is lashed to the wooden rim of the drum. The *angakok* may choose to add an **amulet** to the *qilaain* to improve the **power** of his or her **singing**, e.g., the stiff **feathers** from the root of the beak of the raven are inserted

under the lashings, or *killikirpia*, for this purpose.

The *qilaain* is played by striking the lower border of the wooden hoop, not the drumhead, with the *kättiwa*, or drumstick. During the *torniwoq*, the shamanic **rituals**, the *qilaain* is usually played by the assistant, freeing the *angakok* to **dance** about, call his or her **spirits** for help, and enter trance. The *angakok* calls his or her **helping spirits** with the *anaalutaa*, a simple wooden stick that is tapped on the floor to call in spirits and to send others away. See also **Greenland** and *torngraq*.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Qilajoq

One who consults the **spirits** in the *qilaneq* divination **ceremony**. The practitioner is not necessarily a **shaman**, but someone who has acquired a *qila*, or "**spirit** of the **earth**," as a **helping spirit** and is empowered by the *qila* to perform the **divination**. Variations of this ceremony are found throughout the Arctic region in Eskimo **cultures**. Plural: *qilajut*, also called a *qilalik*. See also **Eskimo**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Qilaneq

The most common **divination** ceremony in the Arctic region, performed in many variations in different Eskimo **cultures**. In this **ceremony** the *qilajoq* lays the patient, or a relative of the patient, on the floor facing up and fastens a belt around the head or foot. The patient relaxes on the floor and the *qilajoq* begins to ask his or her *qila*, **helping spirits**, questions, for example, to diagnose the patient's **illness**.

When the question is asked the practitioner calls on the **spirit**, raising the belt and body part to which it is fastened. If the body part grows too heavy to raise, the **spirits** are present and they have answered “yes.” If the body part maintains its normal weight and is easily lifted the spirits have answered “no.” See also **Eskimo**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996.

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Qologogoloq

The *qologogoloq* is a **charm**, created and used by **tungralik**, whose **power** is inherent. It is carved from wood and can be an animal figure, an object, or a **mask**. The *qologogoloq* is used and reused in a variety of ceremonial ways. See also **Alaskan** and **Eskimo**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Qoobakiyaxale

(Also *koobakiyahlale*.) The *qoobakiyaxale* is the outfit doctor or singing doctor of the Pomo people of coastal California in North America. Singing doctors were skilled at extracting poisons from a victim's body. (The literal translation of *qoobakiyaxale* is “performer for somebody poisoned.”) Generally, it was thought that a **qoogauk** (sorcerer) introduced the poisons to the victim. A variety of poisons were known: plants, herbs, **mushrooms**, rattlesnake juice in water, pinole poison from lizards and snakes, touch with a coyote paw, **oak** blossoms mixed with ground human bones, and snake blood. These poisons could affect someone by being put on their clothing or hair, on money or

beads, or in food or drink. The Pomo believed that only the singing doctor had the skill and the **power** to extract the poisons. Because of this, he was a man to be respected.

The *qoobakiyaxale* is one of two types of Pomo shamans. The second type, the **madu**, were known as dream doctors or sucking doctors. They gained their power from spontaneous **mystical experiences**. The power of the *qoobakiyaxale*, on the other hand, was supposed to have started with creation and was passed down to him through the hereditary transfer of **songs**, the objects in his outfit, and the **knowledge** of how to use them.

The *qoobakiyaxale* began **training** in early childhood, learning the proper **sacred** songs, locations of various herbs, and their preparation. As the apprentice matured, many more years were devoted to the serious study of the profession, some doctors learning well over 1,000 different songs. When the apprentice was proficient and the mentor prepared to retire, the outfit was passed down to the apprentice. This outfit was the source of the *qoobakiyaxale's* power.

The power objects of the outfit were kept in a sack made from the whole skin of a deer, which was usually stored in a special little house, out of the reach of those who lacked the knowledge of how to use the powerful objects held within. A typical *qoobakiyaxale* outfit included:

1. The **cocoon rattle**. The *qoobakiyaxale* always shook the cocoon rattle to keep time as he sang. Some Pomo also called the *qoobakiyaxale* the “rattle doctor.”
2. A three- to four-inch obsidian or flint blade that was rubbed with herbs determined by the nature of the **illness**, heated, and pressed into the painful body part while the doctor sang continuously.
3. Rocks taken from mineral springs, which were heated, rubbed with herbs, and used much like the blade.

4. Two or three head nets.
5. A hat with many kinds of feathers, e.g., owl, woodpecker, raven, yellow hawk, emerald **bird**. The feathers were worn and also used as healing tools.
6. A sharpened stick, usually of manzanita wood, used to pin the **feather** hats to the head net.
7. A breechcloth of braided laurel.
8. A stone pestle, usually about six inches long, used with the mortar to grind up paints or medicinal herbs.
9. A hollowed out stone, used both as a mortar and bowl. The patient was fed herbs and **medicines** directly from it.
10. Additional items, e.g., various herbs, seeds, roots, greases, paints for ritual attire, eggs of the turtle not yet laid, coyote paw, bulbs of a kind of wild onion, seeds of a small red pine, pine sugar, rattlesnake and bull snake heads, a liquid-filled moleskin, fragments from the hill of a certain ant, powdered whalebone, and the cremated bone of a person killed in violence.

Four days is typical for the *qoobakiyalxale's* **healing** ceremonies, which were most often conducted in the patient's home. The family of the patient erected a pole and placed the payment around it, the amount varying depending on the seriousness of the cure. This payment—which traditionally consisted of beads and sometimes baskets, blankets, or food—remained untouched until the healing was completed. The doctor returned the beads if the patient later died from the illness he was supposed to heal.

The singing doctor usually had an assistant, whose main purpose was to use small sticks to count off the number of songs. (The doctor had to sing all healing songs four times before moving on to the next one.) After a few songs, the doctor sang a sack-opening song, and with it named every object in his sack, taking each out and spreading it

on the bare ground by a fire. The Pomo believed that if the doctor sang the songs incorrectly, he could fall ill, or even die.

The most common illnesses required the application of various herbal mixtures either by rubbing the preparation into the patient's skin with a heated blade or stick or inserting the mixture into a small incision in the skin. When finished, the *qoobakiyalxale* left his outfit with the patient to continue the healing, returning several days later to check on the patient's progress. The *qoobakiyalxale* either retrieved his outfit and payment or continued his treatment. If the patient failed to recover after several visits, the doctor reassessed his **diagnosis**. For the duration of healing ceremonies, the *qoobakiyalxale* was forbidden from eating meat and grease, and from drinking water.

Qoobakiyalxale were called upon to treat any type of illness, in addition to those caused by **sorcery**. He could, for instance, cure an illness caused by violating a restriction or taboo, or by an ordinary cause.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Qoogauk

The Pomo term for a sorcerer or witch, rare among the Pomo. The *qoogauk* is one who sends poisons or **pains** that the **shaman** must extract. See also **sorcery**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Quechua

Quechua is both a people and a **language**. The language is the language of the **Inka** empire that spread north and south from Cuzco, Peru, in the 15th and 16th centuries following Inkan

conquest. Quechua continued to spread into Ecuador without conquest and into the tropical rain forest of both Ecuador and Peru. Today there are many Quechua-speaking peoples spread north and south along the Andes of Ecuador and Peru and into the Oriente of both countries.

Cosmology

Thousands of years ago, *Viracocha*, the creator of all things, created men and women. They lived wild in **caves** with the other animals. *Inti*, the **Sun**, looked down and took pity on the humans. *Inti* sent *Manco Capac*, his son, and *Mama Ocllo*, his daughter-in-law, to teach the humans how to build villages, grow crops, and build society. To this end, humans were taught laws to live by.

Above all other laws was the directive to never build more or grow more than was needed and to act always as guardians of all things on *Pachamama*, the **earth**. *Manco Capac* and *Mama Ocllo* taught the humans to live in a way that was responsible for and conscious of the fact that they were connected to all things—all the plants, animals, mountains, stone's and to *Pachamama* herself. These laws were passed on to generation after generation of Quechua, who see themselves today as protectors and caretakers of the earth.

Like the **Q'ero**, the Quechua speak of ***Pachakuti***, a time of great change at the end of the 20th century. It is the time envisioned in **dreams** of the **ancestors** of the Quechua who saw the Eagle of **North America** and the Condor of **South America** flying in the same **sky**. To this end the Quechua offer the secret teaching of the Condor and the heart to their brothers and sister in the land of the Eagle.

Canelos Quechua

The Canelos Quechua are a people of the Ecuadorian Oriente. They refer to themselves as *Sacha Runa*, "human of the rain forest." The **shamans** of the Canelos tribe are renowned for producing the most powerful, and therefore the most valued, ***tsentsaks***. Shamans

from many different tribes travel for days to receive these powerful **magical darts** and to train with these shamans, or ***yachajs***.

The strong *yachaj* has mastered over time **training** and discipline and a level of personal control that allows him to balance his **knowledge** with his **visions**, both ordinary visions of the future and those shown to him by the **spirits** while under the influence of ***ayahuasca***. He is able to accurately relate his visions to cultural knowledge and to relate his personal insights and reflections to both the knowledge and the visions.

The *yachaj* is engaged in a continuous process of cultivating self awareness and *yachana*, "to know, to learn." The first step is to control within himself the process of reflection and creative endeavor, or *yuyana* (*yuyarina*), "to think, to reflect." Growth in the *yachaj*'s consciousness is seen in his ability to creatively maintain a dynamic balance between his visions, *muscuna*, "to dream, to *see*," and his knowledge of things outside of himself, *ricsina*, "to know, to experience, to perceive, to comprehend."

Men and women who control this process within themselves are able to use the foundation of their cultural knowledge, their laws, to relate experience and vision to other systems of knowledge. They move up in status to paradigm builders and creators of change. They become masters of their profession and create the most powerful and/or valuable tools of their professions. These strong *yachaj* are able to simultaneously maintain native paradigms and expand those paradigms to create change in the world today.

For example, the *yachaj* continue to look to the traditional cosmic forces that generate strength and health and those that cause weakness and **illness**. As a result they are the best diagnosticians in the area. From this insight they recognize that **diseases** new to the indigenous people (tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough, and influenza) and some old one's (malaria, measles,

chicken pox) are caused by forces beyond the traditional. So, logically and rationally, **healing** powers beyond these shamans must be used. The *yachaj* tend to be strong supporter of programs that make Western techniques and **medicines** available to their people.

Otavalan Quechua

The Otavalan Quechua live high in the Andes where their shamans call on *Pachamama* and the energies of the mountains, like *Grandmother Cotacachi* and *Grandfather Imbabura* to assist them in their healing sessions.

To **camay**, to forcefully blow the unity of all things into someone or something, is central to Quechua healing. The technique is used ubiquitously to bring anything, but particularly humans, back into balance with the unity of all things. This practice is derived from the Quechua awareness that all are one, and to fall out of balance with that unity in any way is the fundamental source of all illness.

To **camay** the breath of life is fundamental. The shaman also **camays** with different substances to cleanse, empower, or sift the **energy** of a person or part of a person. Traditional substances include **trago** (cane alcohol), fragrant oil, flower water, spices (cinnamon), flower petals (carnations), and flame created by **camaying** a fine mist of **trago** across a candle flame.

In a typical healing session, the shaman's **altar** is spread with many **huacas** (stone **power objects**), a candle, fresh eggs, fruit, flower petals, spices, and **trago**. There are freshly cut branches (stinging nettles) or flowers to the side. The shaman **camays** his or her altar, spraying a **cleansing** mist across everything and begins to whistle his **power songs**.

The shaman whistles or **chants** songs to call in the **helping spirits** that help the shaman to enter **trance**. Quechua shamans move in and out of trance and between lighter and deeper trance states as are needed to perform the acts of healing necessary. Though

they do not ask for information before their **diagnosis**, they do speak to the patient during the healing to convey necessary information.

The process of diagnosis is unique to each shaman. For example, some use a candle rubbed all over the patient's body and burned, while others use a special *huaca* or simply enter into trance.

Patients disrobe for the healings, and the shaman proceeds using a variety of techniques dictated by the diagnosis. The shaman **camays trago**, very often through the flame of a candle, engulfing the patient in a ball of **fire**. Flames are **camayed** onto branches of stinging nettles and shaken vigorously against the bare body.

The shaman continues selecting specific **huacas** to massage the patient with and draw out harmful energies. Eggs are used in a similar fashion. The shaman rubs eggs all over the body to collect harmful energies or places them against the part of the body affected and sucks the energies out through the eggs. These eggs are quickly broken on the earth or into a clay pot and offered to the spirits outside of the healing **space**. The shaman brushes and shakes leaf bunches all over the body to cleanse it. At the completion of the healing, herbs may be prescribed to be taken internally or in the bath to support the body's adjustment to the shaman's healing.

When the shaman diagnoses **espan-tu**, a sudden fear or trauma, **soul loss** is expected. The shaman will enter the spirit world, retrieve the lost **soul**, and returns it to the patient. See also **Andes, South America**.

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Whitten, Dorothea S., and Norman E. Whitten, Jr. *Art, Knowledge and Health: Development and Assessment of a Collaborative, Auto-Financed Organization in Eastern Ecuador*. Cambridge, MA: Cultural Survival, Inc., 1985.

Quetho

The *berdache* (*berdach*) of the Tewa Pueblo people of the North American southwest. A *quetho* (pronounced, *kwihdoh*) is identified as a child who has a special relationship with the spirit world. They are inclined to be androgynous and gentle, resisting socialization into male or female **gender** roles. As they mature *quetho* are not assigned a male or female sex by the elders. See also **gender variant**.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Q'uya

Q'uyas are stone **power objects** used in the shamanic practices of **Q'ero**

shamans. They can be large enough to serve as an **altar** at **sacred** sites or small enough to be folded into the shaman's *mesa*. There are many different *q'uyas* and many different applications for **healing** and therapy. For example, healing **energy** can be transmitted through a *q'uya* or the *q'uya* can be used to cleanse heavy energies from the body.

Certain rocks are distinguished as *q'uya* because they have a particular feeling to the **shaman**. The most powerful rocks are found high in the Andes and the *paq'o* may be guided to them in **dreams** or **visions**. *Q'uyas* can be stone's struck by lightning or stone's given by a river, a lake, or *Pachamama*, the **earth**. See also **Andes, South America**.

R

Rai

Spirit beings in **Aboriginal** Australia. *Rai* are **spirits of the dead**, pre-existent spirit children, and **spirits** who will be reincarnated. *Rai* can act as **helping spirits** for the **shaman** and/or as initiating spirits. *Rai* are distinct from the hereditary helping spirit received from family or clan during **initiation** into adulthood.

In the southwest, Kimberley Division, shamans are initiated by the *rai*. The *rai* cuts the initiate open, removes the internal organs, and hangs them up. The empty torso is filled with magic cooking stones, covered in paper bark, and put over a hot earth-oven. When done, the *rai* replaces the organs, leaving the magic stones inside, and closes the initiate up.

The *rai* then takes the initiate and dips him in a **sacred** water place and inserts more magic stones through his navel and temple, giving the initiate "an inner eye of magic" that allows him to see what is normally invisible. The *rai* also teaches him to use his magical cord to travel to the realms of the **dream-time**. See also **Australia** and **water**.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Rainbow Serpent

In **Australia**, the **Aboriginals** tell of a Rainbow Serpent being who brought great **blessings** to humanity. *Ungud*, the

Rainbow Serpent, is simultaneously male and female and is the **soul** of all beings who can act creatively. *Ungud* cooperated with the Milky Way to create the world and humankind. It is the huge snake living in the **earth** at the beginning of time and the rainbow across the **sky** today.

The Rainbow Serpent at its most basic symbolizes the spiraling cosmic **power** that is the creative force from which emerged our world and humankind on that world. It is an extension of universal serpent **myths** that permeate the beliefs of all peoples, past and present. These mythical serpent creatures are recorded in many countries: the dragons of **China**, the *naga* of India, the *taniwah* of New Zealand, the **water** serpents of the **San**, and in the myths of Europe, ancient Greece, Egypt, and the Indonesian and Melanesian islands.

Belief in the Rainbow Serpent is universal among Aborigines and strongly associated with the **shaman** throughout Australia. In some tribes the Rainbow Serpent takes the shaman to a place under the waterhole for several days to teach him **songs** and **dances** for the tribal **healing** rituals. The **crystals** inserted into the shaman's body during his **initiation**, the source of the shaman's power, are found where the rainbow touches the earth.

The Rainbow Serpent is simultaneously the mythical being living in the spirit world and the water dwelling snakes that live in the natural world. These ordinary manifestations are known throughout Australia by many names, including *bunyip*, *akaru*, *takkan*, *wogal*, and *brimures*. The serpent is associated with the **sound** of the **bullroarer** and the shaman's ability to call the rain.

The Rainbow Serpent is the initiating spirit in some Aboriginal tribes, transforming boys into men and men into shamans. In puberty rites, the Rainbow Snake takes the boy from the women, swallows and regurgitates him, releasing the initiate into the **circle** of

men. In some tribes the Rainbow Serpent is replaced in the male puberty rites with *Ingurug*, the Old Woman or All-Mother.

In the initiation of shamans a master shaman takes the initiate into the **Upperworld**, seated astride the Rainbow Serpent. There in the Sky small rainbow serpents and quartz crystals are inserted into the initiate's body, filling him with the Rainbow Serpent's power. After this operation the initiate is brought back to earth, again riding the Rainbow Serpent. The master shaman inserts more magical objects into his body and wakens him by touching him with a magical stone. The new shaman must now learn to control the powers inserted within.

In **Africa** there are stories of a great serpent, shooting rainbows from its body as it moves, told by people of Nigeria, Mozambique, Namibia, Natal, and many countries of West Africa. This serpent brought the earth mother to this world. In Western Africa they say the earth mother traveled through the world in the mouth of the Rainbow Serpent, creating mountains, valleys, and stars.

The Vedaps of Northern Transvaal believe that *Nyoka* the python first taught men and women how to make love, again associating the serpent with creativity and life force. Love-making is considered a **sacred** teaching and one of the greatest gifts bestowed on humankind by the Creator spirit.

Around the world shamans ride the serpent into the earth, through the **Dreamtime**, and climb the serpent's rainbow to enter the Upperworld. The Rainbow Serpent appears as the celestial anaconda who brought the first man, woman, and the *ayahuasca* to **Amazonia**. It is Quetzalcoatl, the plumed creator serpent of the Mesoamerican people. Everywhere the Rainbow Serpent is found associated with shamans, their extraordinary powers, and the essential creative force of the **Kosmos**. See also **Mesoamerica** and **ritual**.

Buchler, I., and K. Maddock. *The Rainbow Serpent*. The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1978.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Rama Puran Tsan

The **First Shaman** of the Magar people of **Nepal** who appeared in the fourth age of Nepalese cosmology and fought with nine witch sisters concluding in a truce agreement. In that agreement the witches could continue to cause **illness** for humanity, but could no longer extract payment and **blood** sacrifices. In exchange, the **shamans** would be able to heal humanity of these illnesses. See also **sacrifice**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Rattles

Rattles are one of the oldest musical instruments, believed to be created originally to imitate the **sound** of rain. There are three classes of rattles. The first is any vessel filled with objects that move about, making a "rattling" noise when shaken. The rattle may or may not have a handle attached. The vessel can be round, box-shaped, highly decorated, or constructed like a small **drum**. Dried gourds and seed pods are common sources of natural rattles.

The second category consists of objects suspended so that they clash together. Rattles of this type are not always held in the hand, but are often constructed to be worn while dancing. The third category is a rasping stick or a notched stick that is scraped with a second stick common in southwestern **North America** where a basket is used as a resonator at the bottom of the notched stick. This category also includes wooden clappers common on the Pacific northwestern coast of North America.

Rattles are used by **shamans** universally in their **healing** work. They are used to induce **trance** or call on particular **helping spirits**. In healing they are used to attract energetic intrusions that need to be removed from the patient's body and to disburse unwanted energies stuck around the patient's body.

Rattles with **metal** pieces, like sistrums, also have powerful protective functions and were used to drive away harmful **spirits** and the harmful effects of malevolent **sorcery**, **spells**, and curses. The rattle can also be used in the beginning of a healing **ritual** to cleanse and purify the space and the patient before proceeding.

The rattle is used with the drum in most areas where **shamanism** is found. In **South America** the rattle is found primarily by itself and is used with **plant hallucinogens**. Generally speaking, in South America the handle of the rattle symbolizes the **World Tree** and the vessel represents the **Kosmos**. The seeds or pebbles inside the vessel are helping spirits and **Ancestor** spirits. By shaking the rattle the shaman calls on these spirits to assist in the work.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Red Ochre

Ochre is earth or clay containing impure iron ore creating a range of red to yellow pigments in the earth. Red ochre is a pigment made by grinding hematite or other iron oxides. Of the range of colors of ochre, red in particular is considered **sacred** by **cultures** around the world. Red ochre is often used as body paint or to adorn **costumes**, fabrics, or **power objects** in preparation for the most sacred **rituals** of many cultures.

In Upper Paleolithic times red ochre was used to redden graves, corpses,

cave walls, engraved objects, and sculptures of women. Paleolithic people often buried their dead in fetal positions, painted with red ochre.

In some cultures red ochre is used for **healing** directly. The Aborigines of **Australia** explain that female **ancestors** traveled around the world in the **dreamtime** and where they bled their menstrual **blood** congealed in the earth as red ochre. It can be used by humans for many kinds of healing, particularly those of women.

Similarly, in **Africa**, the **Zulu**, Shanga, Mashona, and Swazi people explain that red ochre is the congealed menstrual blood of either the great earth mother or the moon goddess. The ochre was believed to have spread around the world when the earth was being created. See also **aboriginal** and **colors**.

Mutwa, Credo Vusa'mazulu. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Religion

Shamanism is not a religion. There is no dogma, no church, no cult, and no divine personification. There are **prayers** and **sacrifice**, but not in the abstract form of religious worship. They are common, daily actions that maintain balance and well-being.

"Religion" comes from the Latin "religio" or "religere," meaning "to tie together again." This refers to the reconnection of the creation to the creator. For shamanic, or pre-religious people, there is no need "to tie together again." The creation is not separate from the creator. They are One. They have always been and will always be One. It takes great imagination for a contemporary Western mind to make the complete shift necessary to see the world as the **shaman** does.

Scholars often refer to shamanism as the "ethnic religion" of a certain people; however, this is largely due to a lack of

imagination or **words** necessary to describe what shamanism is. It takes a generous imagination to see life from a worldview formed prior to the existence of religious thought and the dominance of the high religions in the creation psychology of humankind.

Central to shamanism is the understanding that humans are connected to all things. Traditional shamanic peoples accept this quite literally even though much of that web of connection is not visible. It took Heisenburg, in the 1970s, and his “probability principle” for science to show contemporary people that interconnectedness is not just a metaphor. Everything is connected by a very real and continuous exchange of electrons and photons. It took at least 16,000 years of human **evolution** and over 2,000 years of philosophical thought for humans to return to what shamanic peoples have known from the beginning.

Scholars have characterized pre-religious thought as a phase marked by the inability to divide real from supernatural (transcending the natural or material order) and acceptance of the related idea that inanimate objects embody **spirit** and may affect humans positively, promoting well-being, or negatively, promoting **illness**. The “inability” of shamanic people to separate the visible from the invisible worlds does not arise from a lack of intelligence or the mental ability to do so. It arises from their experience of life as simultaneously ordinary and non-ordinary. The shaman’s experience tells him/her that the separation, fundamental to a religious worldview, is not real.

World religions include Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Gnosticism. These higher religions all embody the principle of transcendence from the state of separateness in which a godhead involves humans in an experience beyond their immediate needs. This experience of the **sacred**, or holy, is outside of the individual’s day-to-day life, created by the godhead, and not believed to be an immediate need.

For an individual in a traditional shamanic **culture**, the sacred is in all things. It is in every part of day-to-day life, it need only be recognized. The sacred does not need to be created by the godhead, for it already is. The sacred is not believed to be beyond one’s immediate needs; it is inherent in life and living.

Shamanism is not a religion. It can, however, be considered a prototype for the world’s religions. The experience of the shaman in his or her relationship with spirit parallels the original **mystical experience** of the “lonely prophet” at the center of each of the revealed religions. The intrinsic core of every known high religion (Confucianism aside) is the private revelation, or ecstatic illumination, of a prophet or **seer**. Each of the high religions begins with one individual’s revelation. The validity, function, and existence of the religion is based on the codification of this original mystical experience and the teaching of the message in that revelation to others.

The revelatory experiences at the core of the high religions are **peak experiences** that were then phrased in the conceptual, cultural, and linguistic framework of the seer at that time. It is within the natural range of human experience to have peak experiences. They are not reserved for the godhead alone. The shaman’s relationship with spirit is based on the techniques for provoking peak experiences.

There is some scholarly discussion as to whether or not shamans experience *unio mystica*, the classical ecstatic, mystical union with God. While shamans do not report having mystical union with a religious divinity, they do report returning to the source of all things or communicating with the **Great Mystery**. Perhaps the shaman frames the ecstatic experience differently precisely because he or she never created the underlying metaphor of that reunion which is the anthropomorphic God who is separate from Nature and the **earth**. It is easy to assume that it is the human condition to be separated

from God and to desire the experience of *unio mystica*; however, that assumption is only accurate for religious humankind.

Pre-religious people experience the concept of God and Nature as One, not as two or even as the union of two. Furthermore, the shaman does not believe in Oneness; the shaman experiences Oneness, particularly in his or her practice of journeying. This is not to say that shamans experience *unio mystica* every time they **journey**; they do not. Ecstatic union is not the goal of shamanic practices; it is a common fringe benefit.

It is clear that shamans have ecstatic experiences of an intensity and character to be considered genuine **mystical experiences**. One must always remember that the true mystical experience can not be captured in words; therefore, these particular experiences would be very hard to preserve in the oral traditions of shamanic cultures. Those that are preserved are expressed in a pre-religious context in terms of a through framework, not in the context and terms of religious mystical experiences.

That fact that a word for religion did not even exist in many shamanic cultures before contact does not mean that shamanic peoples did not have profoundly spiritual lives. The human concerns of questing, soulful yearnings, and existential needs have been called religious questions; however, they are also pre-religious questions. These concerns arise from roots planted deeply in the human experience of being a living, breathing, creating expression of the Great Mystery manifest in physical form. See also **knowledge**.

Hultkrantz, A. "A Definition of Shamanism." *Temenos* 9 (1973): 25–37.

Lagassé, Paul, ed. *The Columbia Encyclopedia*. 6th ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

Maslow, Abraham H. *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*. New York: Penguin, 1994.

Ripinsky-Naxon, M. *The Nature of Shamanism: Substance and Function of a Religious Metaphor*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Walsh, Roger. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Renewal of Life

The renewal of life **ritual** is a counterpart to Siberian **hunting magic**. The purpose of the ritual is to encourage the reproduction of game animals. The survival of hunting peoples was obviously interrelated with animals; however, they also saw their fertility interrelated with the fertility of the game animals. Participation in the renewal of life ritual was both a joy and a duty to the community.

The **dances** of this ritual, some more like games and wrestling, were explicitly sexual. They were composed mainly of mimicking the rutting and mating behavior of animals, like elks and reindeer. Men and women dance, or in some versions, men dance alone. The ritual was a celebration of virility, both human and animal, and intended to please the animals **spirits** so much that the animals would engage in reproductive activities themselves.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Rewe

The *rewe* is a pole carved with steps that is the **sacred** symbol of the *machis*, the **shamans** of the **Mapuche**. The *rewe* is climbed during **ceremonies** as the *machi* enters a deep **trance**. She stands on the top playing her **drum** and communicating with the beings of the **spirit** world.

A three-meter section of a tree is barked, notched to form steps, and set

in the ground at a slight tilt that makes it easier to climb. Tall branches may be stuck into the ground around the *rewe* to create an enclosure of 15 by 4 meters for special **rituals**. The *rewe* remains in the ground outside the *machi's* house indefinitely.

The trunk of the **Tree of Life** is the axis (*axis mundi*), running through the Center of the World that allows the shaman to travel between the realms of the spirit world. This symbolism can be recognized by the presence of seven notches or steps, representing the seven layers of the **Upperworld**. As the *machi* ascends her *rewe* she ascends into the Upperworld. See also **shamanic symbols**.

Rhythm

Rhythmic **music** is an essential component in most shamanic **rituals**. Rhythm is a primary means by which **shamans** induce the **altered states of consciousness** necessary to perform shamanic acts. Through mental and physical concentration on particular rhythms the shaman can enter altered states in which the shaman's **soul** is unbound by the normal limitation of **time** and **space**.

Rhythm was revered as a structuring force of life in the most ancient **cultures**. Today science has shown us that rhythm shapes matter. **Sound** waves introduced into various material substances creates symmetrical patterns with uniform characteristics in the substances. Disorganized, random substances become organized instantly into organic forms by rhythm. Rhythmic vibrations give form to the material world.

Our creation theories express the idea that the universe is in essence a symphony of vibrations emanating out of an enormous first beat or bang. The different harmonics correspond to different elementary particles—electron, graviton, proton, neutrino, and all the others. These elemental rhythms shape the matter of our world. See also **drum; journey; song; sonic driving**.

Gleick, J. "New Images of Chaos That Are Stirring a Science Revolution." *Smithsonian* 18, no. 9 (1987): 122–134.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Rig Veda

The *Rig Veda* is a **sacred** book of Indo-Aryan hymns first recorded in Sanskrit approximately 3,500 years ago. It is the oldest still-extant book of the ancient Aryans, written after they began migrating from the steppes of Eurasia into the Indus Valley. **Soma** is an **ecstasy**-inducing plant, or **entheogen**, revered as a god and named in the hymns. However, the actual plant that is "Soma" is a mystery.

In *Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality*, R. Gordon Wasson writes that *amanita muscaria*, a **mushroom** used by **shamans** to induce shamanic **trance** states, was the original source of Soma. Wasson based his theory on linguistic and literary evidence and on the similarity between unique characteristics of the entheogen and the **altered state of consciousness** it induces and those of Soma experiences described in the *Rig Veda*.

Wasson, R. Gordon. *Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality*. New York: Harvest Books, 1972.

Ritual

Shamans use ritual and **ceremony** to create the quality of **sacred space** necessary for their work with **spirit** to succeed. Though "ritual" and "ceremony" are used interchangeably today, they are not the same. Ritual (seance) and ceremony are two powerful and distinct shamanic tools for creating change through the intervention of spirit in human affairs.

In ritual the **energy** spirals upward, toward spirit; it is unpredictable and uncontrollable. The shaman sets the

intention, creates the container, calls in the **spirits**, and surrenders to the ritual process. The participants don't know what is going to happen. That is the uniqueness of ritual and the magic. Ritual is a call to the Unknown and that gives ritual the **power** to heal us.

In a successful ceremony the energy spirals downward, toward the **earth**, drawing spirit into the community. Ceremony is essentially the same each time and that is the power of ceremony. It allows humans to make adjustments to correct what is taking place in the visible world, on the surface, that can be seen and observed. In ceremony it is the familiar form and familiar experience of the Divine that empowers it to build community, ease the heart, calm the mind, nourish the **soul**, and to bring people into the same **time** and **space** with one another.

Shamans use ritual to call on the spirit world to help achieve goals that the people cannot achieve in any other way. The shaman opens a sacred space, invites spirit in to help do something, and then closes the space when the **sacred** activity is complete. Shamans use ritual to create the conditions for sacredness. It is the spirits themselves that make sacredness real.

In ritual the humans are openly admitting to the spirit world that they need help with whatever they are facing as individuals or as a community. Through ritual the humans can put what they are overwhelmed by in the hands of spirit which makes it possible for things to be done better.

When humans invoke the spirit world they initiate a different context or condition for reality. Through ritual humans have superhuman help and superhuman witnesses. The shaman and the participants take the initiative to spark the process then they surrender control to allow the spirits to produce an unexpected result.

Uniqueness

Each shamanic ritual is unique because the reason for ritual is never exactly the

same twice, nor are the resources the shaman draws on. Comparing, for example, two depossession (**exorcism** or **extraction**) rituals, there will be at least the following variables: two different possessing spirits who are possessing for two different reasons in two different people who have received the **possessions** for two different reasons. Furthermore, the shaman draws the energies into the ritual from things that are always changing: the spirit world, Nature, society, **weather**, people, animals, even the illnesses keep changing. Therefore, shamans must renew the form of rituals to keep them alive and effective.

The form of a ritual changes in response to many different variables as directed by the shaman's **helping spirits**. However, the functional elements of the ritual, the **ritual structure**, must remain the same if the ritual is to be effective and safe. The ritual structure is consistent. The actions taken within this structure and the relative importance of each step varies depending on a range of variables, the foremost being the type of ritual to be performed.

Shamanic rituals lose their efficacy when simply repeated or imitated. Without an understanding of the important variables, including the original intention, the necessary preparation, and the worldview within which the ritual is held, imitation will not engage the ritual process. Exact repetition is only effective if the situation remains exactly the same, which is highly unlikely in an ever-changing world. As the variables change the efficacy of any repeated ritual will diminish.

Codifying Rituals

When the *forms* of ritual are codified, ritual can no longer serve its intended purpose, which is to open a portal in time and space between the physical and spiritual worlds and to access the Unknown. Without the ability to change the ritual to serve the specific needs of a specific situation, the shaman loses the creativity and power of ritual.

Codifying the *results* of ritual can be advantageous when it allows humans to build, preserve, and pass on huge bodies of information over time. This is particularly important when used to collect plant remedies, physical therapies, and healing **songs, chants, and dances**. In this way humans have learned complex **healing** arts like the medicinal value of thousands of plants in the rainforest or all of the acupuncture points, their interrelationships, and treatments.

Codifying *ritual* turns ritual into an empty performance that are nothing more than a series of actions practiced by rote that never actually result in accessing spirit and focusing that energy on an intended outcome. If the shaman cannot access spirit for instructions, rituals stop living. The information that was a living communication with spirit, becomes dogma. Those who hold it tend to defend its “rightness” without understanding its deeper source and meaning. As a result, the sacred in the lives of the people begins to die.

There are rituals that have been codified and turned into effective ceremony. The ritual no longer serves its intended purpose as ritual, however it can serve a new purpose as ceremony.

Elements of Ritual

There are essential elements of ritual that the humans are responsible for creating. They are: **invocation**, communication, structure, and opening and closing the ritual space. For a gathering to rise to the level of a ritual, the spirit world must be invited in. Once in, spirit provides new answers and energies to solve human problems. When the spirit world is not accessed, the humans are on their own to solve their problems.

Ritual involves authentic, real time communication with spirit. The shaman is there to take all the steps necessary to create sacred space in a safe way, to access spirit, and to interpret the communication. The shaman is responsible for orchestrating all the elements of the ritual structure, though all

the steps are not always apparent to the participants. Finally, the shaman is responsible for opening the ritual space by invoking spirit and closing the ritual space by releasing or sending spirit away.

Purity and Secrecy in Ritual

In the ritual, spirit is called to intervene in human affairs. The presence of spirit makes the act and the space sacred. The entire process and all beings, both ordinary and nonordinary, must be safely contained. Therefore opening and closing the ritual space is important. Keeping the space away from any impurities and unwanted intrusions is equally important.

Often secrecy is necessary to safely contain all the energies of a ritual. For some rituals the content and purpose of the ritual must be kept secret because any disclosure tears open the sacred space. This release of energy affects everyone and disempowers the ritual itself. There is much about traditional **shamanism** that we will never know for this reason. The Keepers of Ritual in many **cultures** went to their graves with these secrets during the time of the **persecution of shamans**.

Ritual is the art of the shaman. The medium of this art is the invisible energies of the spirit world. Through ritual the shaman moves these energies between the worlds to create the potential for change beyond that which humans can do for themselves.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Somé, M.P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Ritual Structure

Authentic, shamanic **rituals** are not repeated exactly the same way twice. The specifics of the form changes in response to many variables as directed by **spirit**. However, the functional

elements of the ritual, the structure, must remain the same if the ritual is to be effective and safe.

The following are seven general steps that form the structure of effective ritual. All the steps are important. None of the steps may be left out, though steps may be carried out in ways that appear insignificant or invisible to the audience.

Purpose Is Determined

The purpose of the ritual is determined by the **shaman** and/or a council. Depending on the scope and the severity of the problem the shaman may determine the purpose of the ritual through **divination** or a series of divinations. Participants may take part in determining the purpose of the ritual and/or the shaman may select participants according to the purpose.

Opening Sacred Space

The shaman determines the location of the ritual and cleanses the space. That space is now removed from ordinary activities until the ritual is closed.

Purification and Preparation

The shaman and all participants make preparations and are cleansed before they enter the **sacred space**. Once in, participants can not leave until the ritual is closed.

The Spirits Are Called In

The shaman calls in the **spirits** appropriate to the purpose of the ritual. The shaman may use the participants or a chorus to aid in calling in the spirits, usually through **song, music**, chanting, or dancing.

Communication with the Spirits

The shaman enters **trance** and communicates with the spirits. The shaman is directed by spirit to move the energies and/or to guide the participation of those present. Through the shaman's work in trance, the participants come into the presence of Spirit.

Gratitude and Closing Sacred Space

The shaman and participants thank the spirits for their intervention in human affairs and the shaman releases the

spirits. The shaman closes the sacred space completing the ritual.

Reintegration

The shaman instructs participants in the integration into their daily life and community of new energies or new perspectives gained in the ritual.

The spirits are always sent away symbolically, not dismissed. The shaman clarifies that the **sacred** purpose for which they are gathered is complete and that the humans are ready to resume normal life. When spirits are not thanked and sent away properly, they invent ways to remind the people that they are still there. **Ancestor** spirits tend to create major accidents or destruction. **Nature spirits** tend to create conflicts. Thus the whole ritual structure is essential to assure that the ritual is successful and safe.

If the purpose of the ritual is **healing**, actual healing takes place between the fourth and sixth steps. In the fourth step the shaman enters into the trance state necessary for the healing. In the fifth step the shaman begins to communicate with spirit, usually beginning with a **diagnosis**. As the ritual continues action is taken by spirit through the shaman to restore the client to health and harmony. When the healing is complete the **helping spirits** are thanked and released, sending all spirit elements back into the spirit world before the final closure of the healing ritual. Though the healing is only a small part, it will not be successful without all the steps of the ritual.

The ritual structure is consistent, though more or less detail may arise in any step as the shaman is directed by spirit. The actions taken within this structure and the relative importance of each step varies depending on the type of ritual being performed. The openings and closings are always important for the safety of all involved.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Somé, M.P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Roadman

A roadman is a leader of the **peyote** ceremony performed as practiced in the **Native American Church**. The roadman is the Keeper of the **ceremony** who offers the peyote sacrament. A roadman is not a **shaman**, however, a shaman can also be a roadman.

Rock Art

Ethnographic history ties rock art sites to **shamans** and the process of acquiring supernatural **powers** and **helping spirits**. Neuropsychological modeling and an increased understanding of the stages of trance has revealed a better understanding of the content, function, and origins of the **art**.

Prehistoric rock art was assumed to be part of primitive **hunting magic** or astronomical observations. However, there is no ethnographic evidence to support the theory that the art resulted from either practice. A reexamination of the rock art in the context of historic ethnography and neuropsychological modes has revealed that the art is most likely derived from trance states, particularly those of the shaman.

Many of the central characters of the rock art scenes are shamans. It is possible that creating the art was a way that the shaman communicated or illustrated his or her **altered state of consciousness** experience. This hypothesis is supported by the practice of applying new paintings over older works, implying that the act of painting was more important than the art itself. It is also possible that the illustrations are a "road map" of sorts for the uninitiated to follow as they enter trance for the first time.

San rock art, for example, is filled with representations of the visionary imagery perceived by shamans in various stages of trance. Generally speaking, there are three distinct stages of trance

that are distinguished by the distinctly different qualities of visual phenomena. Images from these three stages are seen in the rock art of **Africa** and Europe.

Luminous lines, zigzags, grids, vortices, and spots of lights most likely represent **phosphenes**, the visual sensations associated with the early stages of trance. Arcing rainbows, crescents, or corona like images, along with vague animal images are characteristic of the transitional stage as the trance state deepens. The part animal/part human beings, or **Therianthropes**, and the **spirit** forms of animals and humanoids so characteristic of rock art are also characteristic of the visual experience in deep trance. Though historically mistranslated as monsters or demons, these spirit beings are the source of power that the shaman seeks when entering trance.

Different styles in the art also reflect the predominant trance states used by the shamans of the regions in which the art is found. For example, in the Great Basin region of **North America** shamans worked primarily in deep **dream** states. The images here are rendered in a stylized fashion in that region. In contrast, shamans in the Southern **California region** often induced trance with **Datura**, the **plant hallucinogen**. The art there is rendered in a highly innovative, bizarre style reflecting the more hallucinogenic nature of that trance state.

Rock art is most likely derived from trance states; however those trance states are not necessarily all the same nor are all the artists necessarily shamans. The images are just as likely to be from the altered state experiences of non-shamans engaged sacred activities like **vision quests**, **initiation** into adulthood, or **dream incubation**.

Turpin, S. A. *Shamanism and Rock Art in North America*. San Antonio, TX: Rock Art Foundation, 1994.

Rope Trick

A term used in the literature to refer to the shaman's mysterious release from

bindings and blanket in which he is firmly bound during the **Spirit Lodge** ritual. The shamans explain that the **spirits** summoned in the **ritual** untie the **shaman**. See also **Shaking Tent Ceremony** and *yuwipi*.

Runes

Runes are the symbols of the major **magical alphabet** of central and northern Europe, usually carved on wood pieces or stone's. The runes are more than an alphabet for the transmission of information through **words**; they encapsulate an array of symbolic meanings that go far beyond our familiar, linear communication of information. The runes were part of a mystery, spiritual in nature, that connected intimately with the inner secrets of magic. The **shamans** of central and northern Europe used the runes primarily for **divination**, problem-solving, and magic. They continued to be used for magical formulae throughout the Middle Ages in northern Europe even after shamanic practices were driven underground by the spread of Christianity and organized **religion**.

The meaning of the words for rune in Old **Celtic**, Welsh and English is "to whisper" and in modern Irish the word *rún* means "secret" or "resolution." The root words for rune all show the traditional connection of the runic alphabet to its use as a divination and decision-making tool.

Like the characters of other Magical Alphabets (the Greek alphabet, the Celtic **oghams**, the Hebrew alphabet of the Kabbalah, etc.) each individual runic character has not only a name and **sound**, but they also represent many different objects that express the dynamics of specific qualities. For example, the runes engraved or inlaid into weapons record the weapon's name and the magical qualities of that weapon, while the runes found on other artifacts are considered to be magical formulae for **healing** or love.

The rune symbols hold many layers of meaning. Like the ogham alphabet

each rune is associated with a tree, which expresses the quality of the rune. Traditionally, the runes are also associated with gods, goddesses, the elements, seasons, and various qualities of family, community, and life force or **power**.

Initiation into the secrets of the shamanic or the bardic professions gave the initiate an understanding of deeper layers of meaning in the runes and the ability to use them for magic. However, the runes could be used for problem-solving by anyone who could read them at even the simplest level of interpretation. When needed, a branch was broken from a fruit tree, cut into twenty-four slivers, and carved with the runic alphabet. The slivers were then cast onto a white cloth. Three were picked up, one at a time, and the meaning interpreted from the runic symbols drawn.

For more powerful acts of divination or magic, a rune casting **ceremony** was performed by a shaman, bard, magician or sorcerer. This ceremonial method was known as Raed Waen, which means "riding the wagon" and refers to the act of placing oneself in the position of deity on the **sacred** wagon from which all things—past, present, and future—can be viewed. To perform the Raed Waen, the rune caster must consider several aspects of the physical location to be used and timing of the ceremony. At a minimum these considerations included the axis of the space, its orientation to the four directions and the gods and goddesses who inhabit the directions, prevailing local forces of man, customs, and nature, the Nowl (navel) point created when the shawl (casting cloth) is spread, and the various ceremonial objects to be incorporated into the ceremony.

The actual casting is performed on a shawl, a white cloth whose dimensions are the length of the diviner from fingers to toes and the width of their outstretched arms. Functionally, the shawl serves to define the rune caster's place in **space** and **time**. Shaws were used by

shamans for the same purpose in their healing **rituals** and long distance journeying work.

The **myth** of the origin of the first ten runic characters is associated with **Odin**, the Norse shaman-god of magic, poetry, divination, inspiration, and shamanic practices. Odin's revelation of how humans could use the runes for divination (communication with the spirit world) came about in an act of self sacrifice on the **World Tree**, Yggdrassil. Wounded by a spear, Odin hung himself upside down by one foot from Yggdrassil for nine days and nights without food or **water**. Odin's insight on the ninth night was inspired by the rune sigils (symbols) themselves, believed to have been drawn first by the gods. In the moment that he grasped the new use, which was a synthesis of the relationship between the intuitive use of rune sigils and the rational phonetic alphabet, he fell from the tree, ending his suffering.

It does appear, historically, that many of the runes were derived initially from two basically separate sources. Though the origin of the runic alphabet has not been determined by scholars in the field, the concurrence of certain characters in ancient European rock carvings (the sigils used intuitively) and Mediterranean alphabets (the Phoenician Ahiram used rationally) makes it plain that two sources were involved.

The runes together express the fundamental nature of the inner structure of reality as these ancient peoples saw it. Each individual rune encapsulates a certain aspect of that existence; it is one piece of the fundamental nature of the whole of the **Kosmos**. The meaning of each of the runes is fixed, as described in the rune poems, and plays apart in the whole reality described. However, each new day brings new experiences, new developments, and new relationships, all ultimately new expressions of the inherrent structure of reality. The fixed runic meanings take on fresh significance in relation to the new circumstances and gain another layer of

interpretation. It is because of the eternally fluid nature of existence that the simple runic symbols have deep, multi-layered meanings that can convey the true nature of the Kosmos and thus provide a powerful and lasting tool for divination and magic.

There are three ancient Rune Poem texts: **Anglo Saxon**, Norwegian, and Icelandic. They each show us the specific meanings of the runes, or more correctly, the Futhark (a runic row), from earliest times. The earliest complete rune row dates from the early fifth century and is carved in a Gothic stone from Kylver, on the island of Gotland, Sweden. There have been a considerable number of runic alphabets, the oldest complete version is call the Elder Futhark or Common German Futhark.

The Elder Futhark has twenty-four characters, collected into three groups of eight, called *aetts*. Runes are read from the bottom of the center to the top, down the right side, and up the left. The order of the Elder Futhark is fixed. To alter the order would be to disrupt and render the pattern meaningless, for they are in a precise sequence directly related to the cycles of time. Historically, the runes remained almost unaltered in order, though not in number of characters.

The following is a brief summary of the symbolic meaning of the twenty-four runes of the Elder Futhark. Alternative names are in parentheses.

The first rune of all runic alphabets is *Feoh*, meaning cattle. Literally, cattle refers to movable and negotiable wealth, unlike the homestead or other inherited wealth. Symbolically *Feoh* signifies wealth that can be traded or exchanged. Thus *Feoh* represents both the accumulation of this two-fold power—physically controlling the wealth and economically controlling the trade—and the responsibilities that ownership brings. *Feoh* also warns against greed and envy, the problems that arise from this type of wealth.

The second rune, *Ur*, means *auroch*, the extinct wild ox, a symbol of the

raw, impersonal, tameless power of wild cattle. *Ur* symbolizes the limitless power of the universe, the awesome **embodiment** of unlimited creative potential. *Ur* is a symbol of the power of collective will because its power, irresponsible by nature, ensures that it can never be restricted to a single individual. Magically *Ur* brings good fortune, collective strength, and personal success measured in terms of common good.

Thorn (Thurisaz) denotes the resistant and protective qualities of the thorn tree. Mythologically, *Thorn* signifies the defensive powers of Mjölnir, the Hammer of Thor, symbolic of the power that resists everything that threatens the natural order of things. *Thorn* symbolizes the willful application of the generative principle and the creative **energy** of the masculine as it flows within the natural order of things.

The fourth rune, *As* (Asc, Asa, Ansuz), signifies the divine force in action. *As* represents the **Ash** tree, which in Norse tradition is the World Tree, Yggdrassil, the cosmic axis of the universe. This rune symbolizes the divine power that oversees the maintenance of order in the cosmos.

Rad (Raed, Rit) refers to riding, implying both horsemanship and sexual intercourse, and represents all forms of formalized, directed activity. *Rad* signifies the necessity to channel our energies in an appropriate manner to achieve the results we desire and emphasizes the necessity to be in the right place at the right time to perform the appropriate act.

Ken (Cen, Kennaz) means the chip of pine wood that burns to illuminate the house. The rune represents illumination, bringing light into darkness, and the transformation necessary to achieve it. Mystically, *Ken* represents the creation achieved through the union of two separate entities and the transformation that creates the third which did not exist before. *Ken* calls forth of the inner light of **knowledge** gained only through transformation, giving it the

second meaning of regeneration through death.

Gyfu (Gebo) means gift and signifies the unifying effect that a gift makes between the donor and the recipient. *Gyfu* is the quality personified in The Norse goddess Gefn, the bountiful giver. *Gyfu* expresses the feminine qualities of linking seemingly separate people in common bond or the link between a human and the divine.

The eighth rune is *Wyn* (Wunnaz, Wunjo) and is the last run of the first *aett*. Shaped like a wind vane, *Wyn* represents the joy that arises from one's ability to remain in harmony with the flow of events. It is the rune of fellowship, shared aims, and general well-being. *Wyn* represents the balance that must be maintained in order to lead a sane and happy existence and to fulfill our wishes and desires without disillusion or attachment.

Hagel (Haegl), meaning hail, begins the second *aett*. The structure of hail and the results of its storms are symbolic of the results of the forces which arise from the nature of the Kosmos rather than the results arising from human creativity. *Hagel* symbolizes the disruptive agency working in the unconscious mind that causes needed change in established thought processes. It is associated with Hiemdall, the watcher god whose Rainbow Bridge (Bifröst) links the **Middleworld** with the **Upperworld**, and Mordgud, the goddess who guards the bridge from the Middleworld to the **Lowerworld**. *Hagel* signifies the link between the worlds and between human consciousness and other planets.

The tenth rune *Nyd* (Not) means need. It expresses the maxim that the ability to be released from need exists within the need itself. Thus, *Nyd* calls for caution in action and the wisdom to look within oneself before acting.

Is (Isa) means ice and refers to several aspects of the principle of static existence. Where fluid water becomes resistant ice, *Is* signifies cessation of progress or termination of relationship.

Where solid ice is recognized as having the potential to melt and become fluid, *Is* is associated with death. Where ice becomes the irresistible force of a glacier, *Is* is symbolic of the power of inexorable forces.

Jera (Ger, Jara, Jer) means year or season and refers to the cycles of time. *Jera* symbolizes the fruitful results of doing things in the correct order and at the fitting time. The power expressed by *Jera* is that beneficial results always transpire when human activities are conducted according to the correct principles and are done in harmony with the natural order.

Eihwaz (Eoh) means yew tree. The yew, considered the tree of death and rebirth was sought for making **bows** and the staves of spears. *Eihwaz* is symbolic of the dual power of protecting the dead and of giving access to the Otherworld of **spirit**.

The fourteenth rune *Peorth* (Peord, Perthro) means game piece, dice, or dice cup. It is symbolic of the dynamic relationship between the action of the conscious free will and the constraint of existing circumstances. Just as circumstances often inspire innovation, *Peorth* is the power of the manifestation of that which was formerly concealed. In this sense it represent the fertile **womb** of the All Mother which brings into existence the world.

Elhaz signifies the elk and the sedge plant, both noted for their ability to protect. *Elhaz* is considered the most powerful of the runes for protection against those influences which we find in conflict with ourselves. Spiritually it denotes our conflict with ourselves in our aspiration toward divine qualities.

Sigel (Sig, Sowilo) means **sun** and represents the power of the sacred solar disc and the vital qualities of daylight. *Sigel* is symbolic of clear vision and ready accomplishment in the physical or spiritual plane. It also represent the conscious magical will at work in a selfless way, bringing the strength to resist the powers of death and disintegration. The last rune of the second *aett*, it is

considered the rune of victory.

Beginning the final *aett*, *Tyr* (Tiwaz, Ziu), is named after the **sky** god of central and northern Europe and is considered the rune of justice. *Tyr* represents the qualities of steady, reliable, positive regulation resulting from just rule as well as the self-sacrifice of the ruler necessary in order to rule justly. Thus the rune denotes the essential relationship between successful accomplishment and the sacrifice necessary to succeed.

The eighteenth rune *Beorc* (Birkana, Bar) means birch tree. The birch, the traditional tree cut for the central maypole of the Beltaine festival on May 1, is the ancient northern European symbol of **purification** and regeneration. Signifying regeneration and new beginnings, the rune's powers are related to the **Earth** goddess, Nerthus, the creative energy of the feminine.

Ehwaz (Eh) means horse and refers to the intuitive bond between horse and rider, not the action of riding as signified in the rune *Rad*. Symbolic of the combination of two, the underlying power of *Ehwaz* is the trust and loyalty necessary to accomplish the task of life our **soul** has arrived here to do.

Man (Mannaz) is the rune of the human being and the basic nature present in every person. The rune denotes the full range of human experience and expression, without which the full potential of our lives cannot be realized.

The twenty-first rune, *Lagu* signifies water in all its aspects and is symbolic of the ever-changing nature of existence. Central to this rune is the irresistible power of growth, which is always cyclical and fundamental in all matter. The flow implied in *Lagu* signifies the medium through which humans pass in life and the inherent risk in that passage. *Lagu* cautions that balance is attained through accepting the ebb and flow of nature and the cycles of growth.

The twenty-second rune, *Ing* (Ingwaz), is named after the god Ing, the male consort of Nerthus, goddess of fertility and nurturance. *Ing* guards the

hearthfire (inglenook) and the rune has long been used for protection of households and as a symbol of light. The masculine character of *Ing* represents both the type of energy that must accumulate slowly over time before it can be released in one enormous burst and the responsibility for the consequences of such a release of power.

The twenty-third rune, *Odal* (Odil Ethil, Ethel), means ancestral land, or the homestead of the family. This rune represents the qualities of belonging, togetherness, ancestral heritage, and unique familial characteristics passed down through the generations. The rune is symbolic of the innate qualities, both material and spiritual, within anything.

The twenty-fourth and final rune of the third *aett* is *Dag* (Dagaz), which means day. *Dag* is the rune of the bright day, with the sun at its zenith and the season in midsummer. Carrying the central message that Spirit is in all things, *Dag* is the rune of light, health, radiance, and prosperity. Spiritually, it is the rune of cosmic consciousness and the joy and strength found in any source of divine light. As the end of the cycle, *Dag* is also a beginning. It is a door,

symbolic of the door that lies at midsummer when half the light is rising and half the light is declining.

Various rune poems have included up to thirty-three rune symbols. As with all alphabets, there are many variant forms, for example the Danish or Norse variations. The eight characters, drawn from different alphabets and different historical times, can be considered a fourth *aett*. They are *Ac*, *Os*, *Yr*, *Ior*, *Ear*, *Calc*, *Stan*, and *Gar*.

When using the twenty-four Elder Futhark runes there are also reversed meanings to be considered. If the rune is drawn in an inverted position then the meaning is generally reversed. This applies also to the Anglo-Saxon twenty-nine rune system. With the thirty-three runes of the Northumbrian system, or the Thirty-eight runes of the extended system, there is only one reading for each rune. These combinations of possibilities increase the already rich complexity of interpretation. See also **Tree of Life**.

Pennick, N. *Magical Alphabets*. York Beach, ME: Samuel Wieser, Inc., 1992.

S

Saami

The **First People** of Northern Scandinavia, also called Lapps by outsiders. Samiland, their homeland, encompasses the northern portions of what is now Finland, Sweden, Norway, and the northwestern corner of Russia.

The most important tool of the Saami *nodide* (shaman) is his **drum**. From the late 17th to the middle of the 18th century, drums, drumming, and all related shamanic activities were forbidden and effectively suppressed in an effort to break the spirit and erase the culture of the Saami people. The drums of the Saami were confiscated and destroyed by **fire**. The Scandinavian courts of law imposed severe penalties and heavy fines on those who kept their drums. Some were flogged or burned at the stake.

Unfortunately, the majority of the owners of magical drums were the heads of families, fathers whose role it was to function as the **family shaman**. Many fathers and their eldest sons were taken from their families and shot simply because it was their tradition to solve practical problems by using their drums to ask their guardian **spirits** for guidance.

In contrast to the family shaman, the *nodide* is a shaman as defined in this volume. The *nodide* had greater **knowledge** and ability to control his *gaddse* (guardian spirits) and *saivo* (**power animal**). This gave him greater access to more powerful spirits than the ordinary man who acted as a passive medium, receiving and interpreting messages from ancestor spirits.

The Saami *nodide* share a fundamental ideology and many **healing**

techniques based on the practice of **soul flight** with the shamans of other circumpolar peoples. The following are the elements of Siberian **shamanism** not practiced by the Saami: performing transference rites to cure epidemics, officiating ceremonies involving animal **sacrifice**, **hunting magic**, and the special **costume** empowered by spirit.

It is possible that the Saami *nodide* was more active in hunting magic when the Saami people were more dependent on hunting and fishing for food. In the beginning of the 17th century, the Saami transitioned into reindeer herding, a pastoral way of life which shifted their culture and economy in such a way that a scarcity of game was no longer a crisis to be solved by the shaman.

Saami Philosophy

The Saami look to the **Sun** as the source of life. The Sun gave birth to life. Its light falls from above into the bodies of the **earth**, the animals, the humans who all get heavier and heavier with the spark of life inside. The spark of life is in everything. When humans reconnect with the spark of life they can remember the Source of All Things and be Whole. Therefore, the Saami also believe that humans have to go into their own darkness to release the spark of life from that darkness.

In practice the reindeer herding Saami pursue this Wholeness, which they believed is created within the individual by balancing the Mother/Father dyad internally. In this principle the “Mother” is symbolic of the qualities one is given at birth that are innate to one’s nature. The life issues that arise are ones of nourishment and internal creation. The solutions are found in the Moon Path, in the Moon Mythology, and in the **journey** into the spirit realms.

The “Father” is symbolic of doing, speaking, setting priorities, and taking action to bring one’s innate nature into full manifestation. The issues that arise are ones of manifestation and creation

in the world. The solutions are found in the Sun Path, the Sun Mythology, and in action in the physical realm.

Moon Path

Traveling the Moon Path demands the journey through the body and out, into **dreams, intuition, and altered states of consciousness**. The Moon Path involves death and the driving **rhythm** of the drum to open the doors to perception. The helping spirit is the Moon Woman, or Moon Hunter, and the cycles of the **moon**. She is the big hunter, carrying bow and spear, stalking the light and losing it.

Sun Path

Traveling the Sun Path is the waking of the Dreamer. It involves remembering the good, recreating the body from the inside out, and expressing the dreams to manifest them. The Sun is the **circle** that tells of the journey of getting home. It is the mythology of being called back to the light. The helping spirit is the Sun, the sunray that reaches across the room, walking out in Nature, softening intellect, sustaining good humor, and opening to creativity.

The Crystal Bridge

The Crystal Bridge, or rainbow, is the connection between the Sun and the Moon, like the corpus callosum that connects the two hemispheres of the brain. It is a bridge of white light given by the sun to allow people a way to create balance. White animals are believed to be connected with the Crystal Bridge.

Tree of Life

The Saami **Tree of Life** is superimposed with an animal cosmology. Both are used to diagnose illness and the necessary remedy for the patient to bring balance to his or her life. The tree is seen as a metaphor for life development as a whole. Illnesses, weakness, or pain results in the places where life development has stagnated.

Different parts of the body are associated with different animals which are used as metaphors for the nature of the

stagnation in that area of the body. Strengthening the relationship between the patient and the animal is an important part of the healing process.

For example, the roots of the tree are associated with the Bear who wakes from her long dream of hibernation and must find the earth. A Bear stagnation is one in the foundational **energy** that holds the structure and form of the patient's **soul**. Cultivating a relationship with the spirit of Bear would be a strong aspect of the patient's healing.

The Dragon rises from the foundation of the Bear through its ability to raise the **inner fire**. The inability to nourish the spark of life and raise inner fire is the next place of stagnation. Cultivating the energies of touch, feeling, and inner awareness associated with the Dragon are an aspect of this healing process.

When inner fire is healthy within the patient then the next place of stagnation is the ability to act as an individual in the world. These energies are associated with the Wolf who is a master of the ability to rise up, go out, and hunt. The spirit of the Wolf teaches the patient about responsibility, functioning in the here and now, and establishing hierarchy or order, like the social order of the pack.

Once order is established the next place of stagnation is in the ability to express the **power** of the heart and the ability to sacrifice. These attributes are associated with the Reindeer who carries the moon/sun silver/golden horns and shines on everyone equally with no need for hierarchy. Through cultivation of a relationship with the Reindeer spirit the patient learns to give of him/herself, to create an ideal life that is flexible, free of revenge and at peace with darker side of human nature.

The Reindeer's horns are paths to the **Upperworld**. Once a connection to the spirit world is established, the **Bird** energy emerges that is associated with expressing sight, vision, and the capacity for spiritual insight. Without this energy the individual stays closed to

spirit and his or her cultivation of “true sight” stagnates along with the individual’s maturation into a full adult in Saami society.

Drum

Saami shamans traditionally paint their drums with a representation of their inner cosmology, which displays the Saami universe holistically in both geography and ideology. In other words, they paint their drums with a multi-dimensional a map of their experience of the terrain of the spirit world and their own orientation within it. Saami *noðide* create some of the most ornate drum skins found in shamanism anywhere.

Saami drums are double headed, **frame drums** with both faces of the skin covered in images. The images on each drum and each side of a single drum are unique, although they always include the sun and moon, the **World Tree**, and the rainbow or crystal bridge in some fashion. This microcosm of the spirit world depicts the three realms of the Upperworld, **Middleworld**, and **Lowerworld** and the figures of many of the significant beings the Saami encounter regularly in these realms. The design a *noðide* paints on his drum is believed to be given by spirit.

The drumming and **singing** are used at the beginning of **rituals** to summon the spirits into the ritual space and to embody them in the *noðide*’s drum. Drumming is used to induce **trance** for healings and **divination** and the drum itself is used as a tool to perform various types of divination that do not involve deep trance states.

The Saami used different rhythms as a code to speak to the spirit world. One rhythm was used to summon **giants** (raw energy), demons, **chaos**, or division. Another rhythm was used to summon ice, order, **Odin** (the Great Shaman from the Upperworld), or unification.

The bow was also used to induce trance states. A single string was strung on a reindeer antler and plucked to produce a monotonous, droning tone. The

bow is considered “less demanding” than the drum as a means of trance **induction** and tended to be used for journeys to the Upperworld and/or at the *noðide*’s discretion.

Divination

Divinations in which the drum is the tool of divination were performed by the family shaman and the *noðide*. The “shaman” performed this technique either alone, together with a client, or with a group. The drum is held with the plane of the faces parallel to the plane of the floor. A moveable **metal** ring(s) or other kind of pointer or frog is placed on the top drum skin. The drum is beaten gently with the drumstick so that the pointer moves across the drumhead, but does not fall to the ground, though in certain circumstances the fall to the ground would be considered the answer.

The movement of the pointer in relation to the figures on the drum is interpreted as an answer. Of particular importance is whether or not the pointer stays at a certain figure as the drumming continues and the movement of the pointer in a clockwise or counter-clockwise direction.

When a more extensive divination is necessary the *noðide* is able to combine this drum technique with the performance of a in deeper trance. In this case, the presence of others to **sing** continuously is important to support the *noðide* journey into the spirit world.

When the drum divination is complete the *noðide* begins to beat the drum in a stronger rhythm meant to induce trance. As he enters trance he lies back in an altered state of consciousness, allowing his soul to seek further information in the spirit world. Since the drumming has now stopped, it is important that the singers continue until the *noðide*’s soul has returned to his body. This method was most often used to diagnosis **illness**, to determine the appropriate remedy, and travel to a remote location.

Remedies derived from this type of divination often involved extracting a promise from the patient to make a specific sacrifice and then clarifying the kind of sacrifice: reindeer, bull, oxen, buck, ram, or other, what *Storjunkare* (wood or stone figure embodying a particular spirit) to make the sacrifice to, and where, on what mountain, to make it. Sacrifices were also made to Thor or the Sun for cures.

The Saami used divination to determine events at far off locations, luck or misfortune, location of game, diagnosis, remedies, and the type of sacrifice and to whom it should be offered.

Acquiring Power

Generally, the two forms of obtaining shamanic powers coexist among the Saami, as do the two types of shamans, family and *noðide*. The gift of shamanic talent is transmitted in a family and the powers are in part hereditary. This is particularly the case for the family shaman, the head of the family who engages in divination rituals to better guide his decision making for the family.

The *noðide*, the professional shaman's is granted power directly by the spirits, in particular Thor, the Sun, or the spirits of **dead shamans** among the *Sájva-olmak*. The spirits grant power to whomever they wish to bestow it to. The initial experience of **the call** is spontaneous, the spirit forcing itself into **possession** of the chosen one. Those who resist develop mental and physical illness, until they relent to the demands of the spirit.

Once the individual surrenders to the will of the spirits, they instruct the future shaman in the use of this power through dreams and **visions**. Saami shamans today still tell stories of their ancestors who were able to fly through the air and perform other displays of power.

Helping Spirits

The **helping spirits** in animal form play an important role in Saami shamanism. The *noðide* uses drumming, singing,

and dancing to call the spirits into the ritual space, into the drum, and into the *noðide's* body in preparation for the ecstatic journey. The dancing of the *noðide* often begins by imitating the movements and cries of the animal. As the dancing continues Saami *noðide* merge with their helping spirits and become wolves, bears, reindeer, fish, dragons, **birds**, etc.

Secret Language

In the course of his **training** the novice *noðide* has to learn the secret **language** that allows him to communicate with the spirits and **animal spirits** during his rituals. This secret language is learned from a master *noðide* or directly from spirits. This is the language of all Nature, of all life, from the time when all things were One.

Healing

Illness is believed to be caused by natural and/or supernatural causes. The role of the *noðide* is to restore balance within the individual, the community, or the world at large. Supernatural causes are primarily believed to be the **soul loss** of a person, group of people, a place, or thing.

The Saami *noðide* performed their healing rituals stripped to a breechcloth or entirely naked, like many North American Arctic peoples. Using drumming primarily and singing and dance, the *noðide* attained a deep trance state during which his soul descended into the Lowerworld to locate the lost souls the sick or to escort the soul of the dead to *Sájva-ájmuo*, the **Land of the Dead**.

The shaman's role after locating the lost soul was to engage in combat for the soul or to negotiate a sacrifice to be performed later by the patient in exchange for the soul. The journey to the Lowerworld and *Sájva-ájmuo* was the most common journey for the *noðide*. One of the Saami words for trance is "immersion," signifying the importance of the underwater and lowerworld aspect of the *noðide's* journey.

The Saami shaman's journeys to the Lowerworld began with a journey to a

mountain that functioned as the **World Mountain**. However, from there the *nodide* usually traveled down. The only remaining examples of the *nodide* journeying to the Upperworld are preserved in the late oral tradition. There does not appear to have been a prohibition to journeying up and the Tree of Life and World Mountain clearly provided access. There simply appears to have been a lack of need, interest, or records of these journeys.

Costume

Saami *nodide* perform without a costume. There are records of hats worn by the *nodide* adorned with stars that represented sexual power that has been transformed and released through the crown chakra.

Storytelling

The Saami have a rich history of **storytelling**. It is a form of teaching that has been used since the beginning of time. Among the Saami the stories are often sung. These singers possess a virtually endless fount of stories the central theme of which is the recreation and continuance of the **sacred**, and the relationship of the Saami people to the sacred in all things.

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Sacred

Sacred means where the **spirit** occurs. Experiences and things are sacred when they allow us to establish conscious

relations with the Transcendent. The Transcendent may be experienced as God, Nature, the Absolute, the Universe, the Source of All Things, or however the **Great Mystery** is personally understood.

The sacred is not merely a state of consciousness. To have an experience of the sacred demands that we establish conscious relations with spirit. An individual's belief in the sacred does not make it so. The sacred exists, whether we believe in it or not.

From a shamanic point of view, everything is sacred because everything is imbued with spirit. Everything is imbued with spirit because everything is connected in a very real, energetic way. Living in a sacred way is to live with a awareness of your connection to all things. In the words of Malidoma Somé, a West African **shaman**, "a sacred life is a ritualized life, that is, one that draws constantly from the realm of the spiritual to handle even the smallest situation." See also **Africa; ritual; sacred space; spirits**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

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Sacred Language

Shamans in many **cultures** speak a sacred language, usually unintelligible to others, while in **trance**. In anthropology "sacred language" refers to a unique shamanic language employed to speak with **helping spirit(s)**. For example, the **Lakota** call it *hanbloglagia* and the Sukuma people call it *kinaturu* to distinguish it from common language. The **Chukchee**, **Tungus**, Lapps, **Yakuts**, Semang pygmies, North Borneo cults,

Brazilian **Umbanda** cult, the **Zulu** Amandiki cult, the Trhi-speaking **priests** of Ghana, and the Hudson Bay **Eskimos** are all examples of peoples whose shamans speak (or spoke) in a special language while in trance.

It is believed that in the beginning after the **First Shaman** began to teach others, that these shamans extended their **knowledge** of extraordinary things as they helped humankind. They also developed a sacred language, a language of tones and frequencies that was only used for communicating with the **spirits**. It was taught to a very small number of persons and even they did not use it in everyday speech.

In some cultures the shaman's sacred language is composed of old words which are related to the common language. These shamanic languages are partially intelligible to the ceremonial audience without translation. In other cultures only the shaman can understand the sacred language and one of the shaman's assistants must translate for the audience.

In other cultures the process of communication and translation is even more complex. Among the **Inuit**, for example, the shaman works in trance with a special helping **spirit** whose sole role is to interpret all the other spirits for the shaman. Similarly, **Mikenak** the turtle spirit, takes the shaman's questions to the spirits and returns with answers during the **Shaking Tent Ceremony** of the **Ojibwa**.

Art is an important extension of the shaman's sacred language. There are aspects of the **sacred** that cannot be translated into words, but can be expressed through a visual or performing art, like **sand painting** or **song**. For this reason, art is used by shamans as a **healing** tool and as an expression of the sacred qualities of their ecstatic experience. See also **ecstasy** and **glossolalia**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Pennick, N. *Magical Alphabets*. York Beach, ME: Samuel Wieser, Inc., 1992.

Sacred Pipe

The sacred pipe is one of the most widespread **power objects** used by **aboriginal** North Americans in **healing** and **prayer**. The **ritual** smoking of **tobacco** with the sacred pipe is practiced alone as prayer or as part of the **sweat lodge** ceremony, or any of the other rituals and ceremonies practiced in **North America**.

The ritual smoking of any sacred pipe is an act of sending one's prayers directly to the source-of-all-things. If performed correctly, the ritual is a means of communication between the realms. Elaborate **ceremony** has evolved around the use of the sacred pipe, its handling, loading, and smoking. The pipe is activated by inserting the stem into the bowl. When inactive, the pipe is kept in two pieces, with the related **paraphernalia**, in a beautifully decorated, skin bag.

Smoking tobacco is a sacrament for the indigenous North American. The sacred pipe has evolved from its earliest tubular structure into many different forms in many different areas. Originally made from the straight leg bones of large mammals, the most common form now is carved from catlinite, or "pipestone," a dark, red stone symbolic of the **blood** of the **Ancestors** and/or the buffalo. This mineral is found in only one location in the world, along Pipestone Creek in Minnesota, an area now protected as Pipestone National Monument. It is estimated that quarrying for pipestone at this site began as early as 1600.

One of the most powerful sacred pipes was brought to the **Lakota** by the **spirit** being and **teacher** White Buffalo Calf Woman. Her message is believed to

be directly from *wakan tanka* and the pipe remains with the people as a means to communicate directly with *wakan tanka*. This pipe and its **medicine bundle** are believed to be from between 1785–1800.

Shamans are among the acceptable pipe carriers. The sacred pipe is alive and is treated with the utmost respect. It is an object of great supernatural **power**. Shamans who carry a sacred pipe believe that through the proper use of the sacred pipe, good health, protection, abundant game and crops, and control of the **weather** can all be assured.

Pipe carriers usually used a blend of tobacco and other herbs or plants. Each pipe carrier gathers the plants, prepares the components, and creates his own mixtures. Traditionally these mixtures do not contain psychoactive ingredients. Power of the sacred pipe is more akin to shamanic prayer than to shamanic **trance**. See also **sacred**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Sacred Space

Sacred space is physical space in which **spirit** is alive, present, and available to humans who share that space. **Shamans** open sacred space by calling **spirits** into a **circle** of humans in order to help achieve goals that cannot be achieved in any other way. The shaman creates the conditions for sacredness. The sacredness is created by the spirits themselves. The shaman opens a space, invites spirit in to make it sacred, and closes the space when the sacred activity is complete.

Sacred space is necessary for shamanic work. The most minimal role of sacred space is to provide a place where **power objects** and other sacred **paraphernalia** can be laid out and protected. The greatest role of sacred space is to provide space for wounded **souls** to be laid out and protected so that they can

be healed and transformed by the spirits through the efforts of the shaman.

Sacred space is an in between place, no longer truly ordinary or non-ordinary, but touching both. It is ordinary space permeated by the energies of the Otherworld. Different laws operate in the Otherworld. The shaman will be able to operate according to those Otherworldly laws within the sacred space if it has been properly set up.

Using sacred space, the shaman creates a different context or condition for human transformation by bringing in the spirit world. This space must remain a safe container for transformation in the way a mother's belly safely contains the transformation of the baby inside. Sacred space itself is shy. It must be kept free from impurities and unwanted intrusions.

It is essential that sacred space is closed with the same care through which it is opened. The spirit beings called into the sacred space must be thanked and released. The shaman tells the spirits that what the humans embarked upon is over and that they are ready to resume normal life. In this way the spirits are sent away symbolically, though not dismissed.

When sacred space is not closed well, the spirits will invent a way to remind the humans that the spirits are still there and the sacred space is still open. **Ancestor** spirits tend to create incidents of major accidents or destruction. **Nature spirits** tend to create incidents of conflict. See also **ritual** and **shamanic healing**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Somé, M. P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Sacred Technologies

The various techniques used by **shamans** to enter into **altered states of consciousness** in which they come into contact with the Divine. It is in **trance** that the invisible world of **spirit** becomes visible for the shaman. Mastery of these **techniques of ecstasy** is the essential characteristic of **shamanism**. These techniques include, but are not limited to: dancing, drumming, and ingesting psychotropic **plant medicines (entheogens)**. See also **dance; drum; ecstasy; sacred**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Sacrifice

Sacrifice, which can be seen as an equivalent exchange of energies, is an essential element in **shamanism**. Sacrifice is exacted on several different levels.

Shamanic **rituals** often involve the actual sacrifice of an animal or object. In some **cultures** what is sacrificed distinguishes different kinds of **shamans**. Those who benefit from the shaman's rituals must make sacrifices to restore balance with the spirit world. Finally, shamans experience great personal suffering and sacrifice to gain their **power** and to keep it.

Sacrifices, which range from the fee offered by the patient to the killing of an animal, are a usual part of shamanic rituals. The **Dagara**, for example, determine the necessary sacrifice for a ritual through **divination**. The appropriate sacrifice is always relative to the purpose of the ritual. For a ritual to be successful, the sacrifice must be correct. The **spirits** do not recognize inappropriate sacrifices. They will not take what they do not need. How the sacrificed animal dies contributes information to the overall divination and **diagnosis** of the situation.

Generally, animal (**blood**) sacrifices, are required in situations of **disease** or

death. The blood sacrifice is offered to fend off or to placate a malevolent spirit or ghost whose presence is causing disease or death.

An animal is often sacrificed as part of funeral rites to free that animal's **soul** to aid the deceased in his or her **journey** in the Otherworld. For example, the Sora sacrifice a buffalo and Siberian and Mongolian shamans sacrifice a horse or caribou. The shaman is called on to perform these sacrifices, because he or she alone can assure that the soul of the animal, as well as that of the deceased, finds safe passage to their right place in the Otherworld.

In some cultures shamans are distinguished by the types of sacrifices they perform. These distinctions are often translated as "black" and "white," perhaps reflecting the bias of the reporter more than the sentiment of the culture. For example, the **Yakut** distinguish between *oyun*, male "shamans," and *udaghan*, female shamans.

The *udaghan* enter **trance** to deal with malevolent spirits in the **Lower-world** who bring disease, starvation, and death. This work often necessitates animal sacrifices to protect the people. The *oyun* do not enter trance or make blood sacrifices. They attend to problems that can be resolved with lesser **offerings, blessings, and prayers** offered to the beings of the **Upperworld**.

The people who benefit from the shaman's rituals must also make sacrifices in order to restore balance and harmony. All people are responsible for maintaining balance between the human and animal communities, and between the human and spirit communities. It is common for **Eskimo** shamans to return from divination journeys demanding of the audience full and immediate public disclosure of all transgressions against each other to restore balance and harmony in the community.

All people who partake in food, clothing, and shelter from the sacrifice of animal lives must honor that animal's sacrifice in kind. An Eskimo shaman

explains that “the greatest peril of life lies in the fact that human food consists entirely of souls. All the creatures we have to kill and eat, all those we have to strike down and destroy to make clothes for ourselves, have souls, as we have.” The soul of the animal is honored in a feast of gratitude during which some sacrifice is made to show the spirits the sincerity of the human needs and thanks.

In some cultures the sacrificial offerings necessary to propitiate the spirits and restore the proper balance between the worlds are extreme. For example, Tukanoan shamans enter the spirit world and travel to the realm of the Master of Animals where the shaman asks permission to hunt and fish. Permission is granted for the price of a number of human souls whose soul-stuff must be sent into the realm of the Master of Animals. The shaman must pledge himself to kill this number of people, of his or a neighboring group, and perform the necessary rituals to send their soul stuff into the Master’s realm. Though extreme, this practice did allow the Tukanoan people to maintain stable and sustainable populations for thousands of years.

Shamans experience great personal suffering and sacrifice to gain their power. The initial experience of death and rebirth, central to the shaman’s **initiation**, is not a metaphor. The experience is literal and terrifying, leaving those who cannot find their way through the fear of death to “rebirth” either dead, insane, or diminished in some way for life.

The shaman’s path demands continual sacrifice to maintain, rejuvenate, and develop power. Entering trance states is in and of itself dangerous for the shaman’s soul who may have to do battle there. “Successful” cures often result in the shaman taking on the patient’s **illness** and **healing** it in his or her own body. Many **helping spirits** exact a heavy toll from the shaman for their services in **non-ordinary reality**. Shamans are often forced to observe

rigorous **taboos in diet**, behavior, and sexual practices to maintain their relationship with their helping spirits. A shaman who breaks a taboo, even unintentionally, may suddenly lose the power they have spent a lifetime cultivating.

Shamans are often required to sacrifice much of life that others take for granted. Jealous spirit “spouses” may prohibit marriage in **ordinary reality**. Women called into shamanism before childbearing may never be allowed to bear children. The strain of being available all day, every day, to people who are possessed and ill may be more than any non-shaman wants to deal with. The shaman’s relationship with the helping spirits may frighten the uninitiated. So, the shaman may not be able to find a mate even if the spirits allow it. The life of the shaman is one of profound personal sacrifice that may or may not be balanced by the moments of **ecstasy** that arise from a working relationship with spirit.

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Salasacan

The Salasacan people are **Quechua**-speaking Bolivians who were relocated in Ecuador. See also **cuy**.

San

A nomadic people of the Kalahari Desert, **Africa**, on the border of Botswana and Namibia in southern Africa. Men are hunters and women gather small animals and plants and report the signs and movement of game

to the men. Today only a few thousand of the estimated 62,000 San are of pure **blood** or follow their original way of life.

The San are the earliest **aboriginal** inhabitants of South Africa. Some are believed to have been there for 40,000 years. The San left paintings and engravings in the stone where they stopped to rest, live, and conduct **ritual**. Their paintings were made with natural dyes, like carbon iron oxide, and yellow ochre, mixed with blood or animal fat.

These rock paintings, some made at least 10,000 years ago, appear to document shamanic roots in what is now the great diversity of African spirituality. The paintings show **shamans**, “big shamans,” individuals dancing ecstatically, and individuals in ecstatic **trance** states. The painting also show individuals in a trance state receiving **powers** to attract game, heal **illness**, and control the **weather**.

The San originally lived in the central plains as is evidenced in the paintings and carvings that remain. The San began to be pushed from these more desirable lands in 500 A.D. by the Nguni who migrated from the **north**. The San did not permanently leave the area for the Kalahari until after the arrival of the European settlers in the mid 19th century. See also **art**; **colors**; **Ju'hoansi**.

Sand Painting

Sand paintings, like those created by Navajo **shamans**, are **healing** tools. The paintings are made from colored sand and powders made from ground rocks and precious **metals**. Each grain of sand is charged with intention and **blessings** through the **ritual** process, then carefully put into place in the picture. These paintings are delicate and impermanent. Their **power** comes from the spirit **energy** that is called into the painting through the intention and focus of hours of painstaking creative work.

The shaman's sand paintings are spontaneous creations designed by **spirit** for that particular healing of that individual at that time. They are a type

of **medicine**. No two paintings are the same.

Sand paintings are generated from the unique perspective the **altered state of consciousness** gives the shaman on the **illness**, the patient, and the patient's relationship to the world and the spirit world. They are two-dimensional images of this multi-dimensional world perspective of an individual and his or her interconnectedness to all things. By creating a sand painting, the shaman is painting a picture of the healthy state of interconnecteness and drawing the individual into it.

Traditional sand paintings that are always exactly the same are also effective healing tools. They can be used as a **mandala**, for example, to focus meditation. The Gelupa monks who make the Kalachakra sand painting spend years memorizing texts and learning how to construct their traditional sand-painting exactly as the first painting was constructed. See also **colors**, **Dineh**, and **ikhááh**.

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Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Sangoma

The *sangoma* (*isangoma*, *zangoma*) is one of three classes of traditional **Zulu** practitioners who each perform different functions of the **shaman**. The *sangoma* is responsible for the mastery of skills necessary to maintain a healthy relationship between the natural and supernatural realms for his or her community.

A *sangoma* works with the *Amadlozi*, or ancestral **spirits**, who are ever present; however an **altered state of consciousness** is usually necessary to communicate with them directly. *Umbilini* is the primal source of the *sangoma's* **power**. Through its arousal the *sangoma* enters the altered states necessary to

connect with the **ancestors** for **divination, diagnosis, and healing**.

The *sangoma* uses several methods to arouse the *umbilini*. Using drumming, the *sangoma* experiences the *umbilini* heating, rising up the spine, and bursting through the top of the head. In this aroused, energetic state, the *sangoma* is able to call upon the hidden powers of his or her **soul** to join with the great powers and **helping spirits** of the unseen world. Merged in this way, the *sangoma* draws **knowledge** from “the Hidden Lake,” a huge unseen lake in the spirit world where all the knowledge of the universe, past, present, and future, is found.

The *sangoma*'s knowledge and understanding must encompass the context, history, and mythological antecedents of his or her skills because true power resides in the universe as a whole, not in any single **ritual** or act of magical efficacy. Thus the *sangoma*'s awareness and concern is broader and deeper than that of the sorcerer. The sorcerer is merely a technician of magic who simply activates its force without awareness of or concern for the Whole.

When a *sangoma* disregards the whole and uses his or her skills to harm another, he or she becomes *umtagatin zulu allmaloy insone*, a doer of evil deeds and a sorcerer to be feared. Through knowledge of the universe and correct orientation within it, the *sangoma*'s power is exercised in a wholesome way. This way brings healing to the patient and to the world at the same time.

The Call—Ukutwasa

A *sangoma* is called to his or her profession by ancestral spirits. This experience is **Ukutwasa**, meaning coming out or emergence. This call often comes in a **dream** and manifests as an unexplained **illness** of the mind and body. This strange illness gradually progresses and remains untreatable by standard **medicine**. Characteristics of *Ukutwasa* include, but are not limited to; **visions**, both waking and sleeping, increased

ability to see future events or through physical objects, experiences of **dismemberment** by **animal spirits**, and a sense of the self (ego) shifting into something different.

When the individual recovers from *Ukutwasa* he or she is recognized as a **twasa**, (novice, **apprentice**) and is apprenticed to a *baba*, (*sangoma* **teacher**). The *twasa* begins a long period of **training** and personal **purification** while continuing to fulfill all responsibilities to family and community for an individual of the same age and **gender**.

The *sangoma*'s training is a highly ordered, strictly regulated, process. Candidates must work their way up through twelve stages, or ranks. In each stage they learn to work with one of twelve “vessels” or types of spirits. Few *sangoma* succeed in mastering the twelfth and final stage to become a High **sanusi**.

Gender

Traditionally the *sangoma* is a woman. However, there are male *sangoma*, many of whom are **gender variant** or **transformed shamans**. The important factor is that the individual is called, regardless of gender, by the spirits through *Ukutwasa*.

Training

During the first period of training, a *twasa* learns the *Umlando*, the tribal and community history, mythology, and ceremonies. He or she learns how to prepare herbal medicines and interpret dreams. In addition the *twasa* must begin an intense, ongoing process of deep, personal work focused on eliminating base feelings, like jealousy and anger, from within his or her self.

Each *twasa* must create his or her own *dingaka* set for divination. The *dingaka* come from the bones of the animals sacrificed for the feasts prepared to honor the *twasa*'s successful completion in an area or level of his or her training. After each feast the *twasa* searches through the **fire** for an

unbroken bone. The bone's are treated ceremonially, cleaned, and carved with sacred symbols. When the *twasa* has collected and decorated four *dingaka*, he or she can begin learning divination and diagnosis.

The *baba* teaches the *twasa* the techniques for using the full extent of his or her mental powers to enter **trance** and achieve union with the unseen world. The *twasa* learns to use drumming, meditation, proper breathing, and fasting as different means to summon and heat the *umbilini* and properly enter trance.

The *twasa* learns to use his or her trance states to diagnose illness, exorcise or remove *tokoloshe* (frightened ghosts), control the **weather**, and foretell the future. The *twasa* must also learn the techniques of counteracting *tagati*, the hexes placed on tribal members by witches or sorcerers.

The Ukukishwa Ceremony

Successful completion of a stage of training and **initiation** is honored with a feast during which a calf or goat is slaughtered. The sacrificial animal's *ena* (soul) is offered to the ancestral *enas* to strengthen the *twasa's* connection to the ancestors. The animal's bladder is worn on the *twasa's* head signifying the readiness of spirit to communicate through that individual. The *ukukishwa ceremony* is held when the apprenticeship is complete and the *twasa* is welcomed into the community as a *sangoma*.

Divination

The Zulu believe that the fact that an individual is ailing is evidence that the divine power of the universe has been misused. The *sangoma* must determine who (the client, someone else, or something else) has misused the power and how (counteract, uproot, avenge, or balance) to restore harmony to the universal energies involved.

Using **dingaka bones** for divination, the *sangoma* "throws the bones." Both *sangoma* and patient blow on the

dingaka, bringing the ancestral spirits of both people in to assist in the divination. Then the bones are thrown and their configuration interpreted by the *sangoma*. The *dingaka* are used to diagnose whether the illness or ailment is caused by witchcraft, **sorcery**, the presence of malevolent human or **nature spirits**, a broken **taboo**, loss of **energy**, or loss of a part of the patient's soul, the most serious condition.

Healing

After diagnosing the cause, the *sangoma* will throw the bones again to prescribe treatment. Treatments include purification rituals, **exorcism** or **extraction**, **soul retrieval**, **offerings**, healing ritual, massage, or medicines like tea, snuff, salve, poultice, emetics, or powders.

The *sangoma's* medicines have both medicinal and magical properties. A *sangoma* uses a variety of things; herbs, minerals, insects, bone fragments, **feathers**, roots, seeds, smoke, excreta, shells, and eggs, in their medicines and rituals.

Treating Physical Illness

The *sangoma* treats physical illnesses (headaches, heart **disease**, high blood pressure, etc.) with specific foods, life style changes, and psychological work. The Zulu believe the power of the human mind can harm or heal. By acknowledging the power of the patient's mind to harm himself through unexpressed thoughts and emotions, the *sangoma* works to balance these mental powers and restore internal harmony.

The *sangoma* also finds hidden objects, counters evil wishes against patients, and distinguishes between different types of "ghosts" to be exorcised. Some ghosts are gently persuaded to go where they will be more at home and no longer cause the humans discomfort. Noisy ghosts that throw things are expelled with more force by working with the humans they have attached themselves to.

Treating Mental Illness

In treating mental illness a *sangoma* distinguishes between three categories of madness; hopelessly mad, mad but able to be healed, and mad with *Ukutwasa*, which the individual must resolve for him/herself. *Sangoma* treat both the physical and mental aspects of mental illnesses with herbs, abstinence from particular substances, life style changes, and/or psychological work. Most remedies also involve some way of using the patient's visions, illusions, or hallucinations as a lever to bring the patient back to sanity. For this work the *sangoma* must know how to communicate with people who are in involuntary altered states.

First Contact

The *sangoma* learns the oral history of the most ancient ancestors who came from the stars. He or she is trained to be able to relate to extraterrestrial phenomenon. The *sangoma* learns what rituals to perform and how to properly communicate, depending upon which type of extraterrestrial lands and where the landing occurs. See also **Africa** and **iNyanga**.

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San Pedro

The San Pedro cactus, known as the Cactus of the Four Winds, grows in the temperate and warm zones of the central Andes of **South America** between 6,000 and 9,000 feet. It is used as a **sacred** hallucinogen by the indigenous peoples of Peru, who call it *Huachuma*, Bolivia where it is called *Achuma*, and Ecuador where it is called *Aguacolla* and *Gigantón*. In contemporary Peru it is called San Pedro after St. Peter, whom the Christians believe holds the keys to heaven.

Trichocereus pachanoi is a branched, columnar cactus with six to eight ribs (often spineless) that can grow up to twenty feet in height. The fragrant buds bloom at night, revealing seven to nine inch, funnel-shaped flowers with white inner segments, brick red outer segments, and greenish stamen-filaments. *Trichocereus pachanoi* grows wild and is cultivated widely in Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia.

The indigenous people of the Andes recognize several "kinds" of San Pedro, distinguished by the number of ribs. Cacti with seven ribs are the least potent and most common. Cacti with four ribs are rare, considered the most potent, and believed to have special **power** because each rib corresponds with one of the "four winds." The four winds and the four roads are supernatural powers associated with the four cardinal directions.

The use of *Huachuma* as an **entheogen** is one of the most ancient practices of the peoples of South America. There is archeological evidence that *Huachuma* was used by **shamans** more than 3,000 years ago in Peru. The association of *Huachuma* with the jaguar, anaconda, and **trance** states in South American art undoubtedly indicates that the cactus was used in ancient shamanic **rituals**. *Huachuma* is also associated in ancient art with the hummingbird, deer, and the sacred **spiral** of life, which are all symbols associated with the shaman and **shamanic healing** practices.

The ritual use of *Huachuma* was well established in the indigenous population of Peru when the Spanish arrived. The Spaniards, and the Roman Catholic Church in particular, were intolerant of these spiritual practices and suppressed the ritual use of *Huachuma*. The traditional practice was driven underground and the sacred role of San Pedro transformed.

The modern use of *Huachuma*, now called San Pedro, has been greatly influenced by Christianity. The spiritual center of the modern day San Pedro cult is

the highland town of Huancabamba. In the Andes above the town lies a series of sacred lagoons known as Las Huaringas which are renowned for their curative powers, and for being the home of the greatest *curanderos* and the a source of the most powerful **healing** plants.

Use

Traditionally the shaman, the patient, or both may drink *Huachum* during the healing ritual, which lasts through the night. The shaman uses *Huachum* to enter a trance state in which he or she can access the spirit world for **divination** and **diagnosis**. There are reports that *Huachum* enables the shaman to assume another's identity. The magic available through this sacred plant goes far beyond divination and curing.

The shaman's intention in giving San Pedro to the patient is to enable an opening of the heart and a blossoming of the patient, like the night flower of the cactus, into a higher state of **energy** and health. In the trance state patients are sometimes contemplative and introspective and sometimes quite wild, breaking into spontaneous **dance** or simply writhing on the ground. It is the shaman's role to facilitate the patient's revelations from these experiences.

In modern curing ceremonies San Pedro is used for divination and to heal sicknesses, like alcoholism and insanity, reverse hexes, counter **sorcery**, and assure future good fortune.

Preparation

The cactus stem is cut like bread into slices, approximately one half inch wide, and boiled for several hours. The resulting mash is strained for the juice. In this preparation San Pedro is taken alone. Often other plants, like *Datura*, are boiled separately and added to the drink, which is then called Cimora.

Some of the common admixtures are: *Brugmansia aurea* and *B. sanguinea*, Andean cactus (*Neoraimondia macrostibas*), *Iresine*, *Pedilanthus tithymaloides*, and *Isotoma longiflora* Many of the common admixtures have psy-

choactive components themselves that greatly affect the potency of the drink and the nature of the trance state induced. On some occasions the magic needed demands additives other than plants, like ground bones or cemetery dust. This area of admixtures to San Pedro deserves further study.

Active Principle

The active principle in San Pedro is mescaline, which is responsible for the **visions** and **shapeshifting** qualities of the experience. The alkaloids 3,4-dimethoxyphenylethylamine and 3-methoxy-tryamine have been reported from the plant.

Ritual of Receiving the Plant Spirit, or Plant Medicine

In larger, communal curing sessions the focal point of the ritual in **ordinary reality** is the shaman's *mesa*, activated and displayed on the **altar**. The shaman and the participants drink San Pedro and enter **non-ordinary reality** through the induced trance state.

San Pedro is the principal **plant hallucinogen** in the high Andes. The cacti that grow near Las Huaringas are believed to have extraordinarily powerful properties for curing and protection. Shamans go annually to these sacred lagoons for **purification** and rejuvenation; the sick make pilgrimages to seek healing. Shamans from other regions work with the powerful shaman of Las Huaringas who can open up one's supernatural spiritual powers with the help of San Pedro.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

The onset of trance is marked by a dreamy state, drowsiness, or slight dizziness. As the visions begin and the trance state deepens, there is a numbness in the body followed by tranquillity. As the senses clear and release there is a sensation of detachment and a heightening of all the senses, including the telepathic sense of traveling across **time** and **space** and transforming shape and matter.

The primary characteristic of the trance state induced by San Pedro is **soul flight**. The ecstatic experience of the soul's movement in the spirit world was quite literal in the ancient *Huachuma* healing rituals. In contrast the modern ceremonies of the San Pedro cult tend toward work ceremonially with preparations of San Pedro diluted to the degree that soul flight is merely symbolic. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **Andes, South America**.

Davis, Wade. *Shadows in the Sun: Travels to Landscapes of Spirit and Desire*. Covelo, CA: Island Press, 1998.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Santo Daime

Santo Daime is a plant sacrament or **entheogen**. It is believed to be an experiential **vehicle** for the Divine Being that is present in all of creation. It is also known as *ayahuasca*.

Practitioners of the Santo Daime doctrine believe that the **spirit** of the rain forest sent Daime out into more mainstream Brazil because mankind had destroyed a large part of the forest and threatened to destroy what remains. They believe Daime can guide people to the light and truth through ecstatic trance states and can re-teach humans the **sacred** laws necessary for living in and with Nature.

The main **teacher** and guide is the Santo Daime itself, therefore, the *Padrinho*, or leader, serves more as an example or standard for students and initiates (*fardado*), those who have affirmed that Daime is their sacrament, guide, and Master Teacher. The *Padrinho* is usually in charge of the final steps in the preparation of Santo Daime when it "comes to life."

Santo Daime is prepared in a **ritual** process called *Feitio*, in which the men

prepare the *jagube*, *Banisteriopsis caapi* vine, and the women prepare the *rainha*, *Psychotria viridis* leaves. During the *Feitio* **silence**, concentration, and inner purity are required by everyone in the community.

The night-long ceremonies follow the calendar of the Catholic Church. After the participants drink the Daime, the hymns, instruments, and **dances** guide the **journeys**. Participants know that when they participate in a **ceremony** they are expected to use their trance state to work on themselves, to merge with the Divine, and to become a more perfect being. The concept of **healing** in the Santo Daime faith is holistic—body, mind, and spirit are healed in unity.

The Santo Daime doctrine was established by Raimundo Irineu Serra, an Afro-Brazilian rubber tapper who studied with Peruvian **shamans** during the 1920s. Serra was initiated into the process of making the sacred *ayahuasca*, journeying into the spirit world, interpreting his **visions**, and integrating them into his daily life.

In an *ayahuasca*-induced vision Serra was told to deepen his practice. He entered the rain forest, drinking only *ayahuasca* and eating only manioc for eight days. On the fourth day Our Lady of Conception the Forest Queen came to him in continuous visions and described to him the spiritual doctrine he was to go on to found. Drinking of *ayahuasca* was to be the central activity and sacrament of the ritual process.

In 1930 Serra founded Alto Santo church and began to receive the hymns, over 100 in all, that codified the foundations of the new doctrine. This doctrine is centered around the teachings of Christ and the collected hymnals are held to be the Third Testament, a revised and enlarged version of the Gospel of Christ.

Richman, G. D. "The Santo Daime Doctrine." *Shaman's Drum* 22 (Winter 1990–91):30–41.

Sanusi

The *sanusi* (master **shaman**) is the highest of three classes of traditional **Zulu** practitioners of the esoteric arts. The *sanusi*, *sangoma*, and *iNyanga* are all responsible for different aspects of maintaining a healthy relationship between the natural and supernatural realms for their community.

Traditionally, the *sanusi* are predominantly women. The *sanusi* has one foot in the spirit world and one in the physical world so that he can act as a conduit for spiritual realities. He or she is the uplifter of the people and a spiritual leader.

A *sanusi* is called to the role by the *Amadlozi*, the ancestral **spirits**. The role can not be inherited or chosen by the individual. *Ukutwasa*, **the call** from the spirits, often begins in a **dream** and progresses into an unexplained **illness** of the mind and body. This strange illness gradually progresses and remains untreatable by standard **medicine**, herbal remedies, or **sacrifices**.

The *sanusi* can be considered the most evolved and skilled *sangoma*. In **training** candidates must work their way up through twelve stages, or ranks. In each stage they learn to work with one of twelve “vessels” or types of spirits. Few *sangoma* succeed in mastering the twelfth and final stage to become a *sanusi*. This stage can only be reached with the help and **blessing** of the spirit world. See also **Africa**.

Mutwa, Credo Vusa'mazulu. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Sauel

(Also *sauäl*, *sawal*.) Springs inhabited by **spirits**, which are considered power spots by the **Wintun**. They are visited, usually in the spring, by people who wish to gain **power** from the **spirit** of the *sauel*. Different *sauel* have different spirits and vary in the amount of power associated with them.

The most powerful *sauel* are visited only by **shamans** and are off limits to others. Less powerful *sauel* can be visited by anyone wishing to obtain **medicine** for gambling, hunting, warfare, invisibility, invulnerability, or love. **Offerings** are left at the *sauel* for the spirits, for example a common offering for **hunting medicine** is the afterbirth and the navel cord from newborn's birth.

Shamans and novices visit a *sauel* to acquire **helping spirits**, and therefore, power. A *sauel* is often associated with a particular **animal spirit**, e.g., Deer, Wolf, Coyote, Grizzly Bear, etc., who visits the shaman in his or her **dreams** or **visions** while at the *sauel*. Some *sauel* are restricted by gender as well as power. For example, the Coyote *sauel* is reserved for use by female shamans and novices only.

A *mentuli sauel*, or “**water-swimming sacred-places**,” is a *sauel* with a pool. To gain power from the *mentuli sauel* the shaman dives to the bottom in an attempt to find a **charm** stone or other **power object** at the bottom of the pool. These sacred pools are also the place where the Wintun can safely discard shamanic regalia.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Sauyit

The *sauyit* is the *tungralik*'s or shaman's **drum** in the **Alaskan** Arctic region. The drum is the core of the *tungralik*'s practice and of the sacred **rituals** and ceremonies of the people. The *tungralik* plays the *sauyit* to induce **trance** or the assistant plays while the *tungralik* **sings** and beats a **rhythm** on the floor with a small baton.

The *sauyit* is an 18-inch, circular, wooden frame with a walrus or seal bladder stretched over it and held in place with a hide cord, or *oklinok*. The

sauyit is held aloft when played and beaten at the rim, not in the center of the drumhead. The beater, or *mumwa*, is a small stick adorned with a piece of white ermine or a fox tail. See also **aghula**; **Alaskan**; **angakok**; **Eskimo**; **sacred**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Scapulimancy

A form of **divination** used to determine future events or to find lost persons. An animal bone, most often the scapula or shoulderblade, is held near enough to the **fire** to scorch it and then either the scorch marks or the fissures and lines created by the heat are read. This form of divination is practiced primarily in **North America** and Asia, which is believed to be the origin of scapulimancy. For example it is called *matinik-ashauew* among the Montagnais-Naskapi and *masinisawe* by the **Ojibwa**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Scry

(Also skrie, skry.) Scrying is a form of **divination** in which the **seer** looks into a vessel of **water** with “second sight” to discover answers to questions. Often the seer covers his or her head and vessel with a cloth to better see beyond ordinary sight. Scrying is used in particular to see at a distance or into the future. The term is used generally to refer to any form of divination in which a container of water, a **crystal**, or an ordinary object like **mirrors**, tea leaves in a cup, a pool, or a well is used in divination.

Scrying is an ancient and widespread divination technique. It was

used by Celts, Saxons, and other early Europeans to see into the future. The scrying bowl was hung from three chains and filled with rainwater collected before it touched the **earth**. The Celts placed a small, model salmon in the bottom of the scrying bowl to connect the seer to that **sacred** keeper of **knowledge**.

Scrying in many forms is widespread in **North America**. The practice of scrying in **blood** and water has been found from the **Alaskan** north down into the Southwest. The **Ojibwa**, for example, scry by looking into a cup of water or into mirrors.

Cowan, Tom. *Fire in the Head: Shamanism and the Celtic Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Somé, M. P. *Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman*. New York: Penguin, 1995.

Sea Dyak

See **Iban Dyak**; *manang*; *manang bali*.

Sedna

Sedna is the Great Goddess and the **Mistress of the Beasts** of the peoples of the Arctic region. She is central to the *angakok's* (shaman's) ability to secure food for the community. The wild animals are Sedna's children, especially the seals, walruses, and whales. She gives her children to the hunters who honor their **souls** in appropriate **rituals** and withdraws them from those who show disrespect.

When the animals grow scarce the *angakok* must **journey** to the realm under the sea on behalf of the people to ask Sedna for more game. She is frightening and wild, wearing her long hair matted with the **blood** of all the animals the hunters have slain. Usually she is

angry that the people have broken **taboos**, both social and hunting, and dishonored the souls of her children. The *angakok* must first comb out her snarled hair and win her favor, asking what the people must confess and **sacrifice** to be worthy again of her children. In this way the *angakok* exchanges the sacrifice of the people for the souls of the animals the people need to survive.

Sedna is the goddess of destiny, death, and the afterlife. She oversees the three heavens of the **Eskimo**, including Omiktu, where the souls of humans and whales go after death. Thus the *angakok* meets Sedna's rule again when functioning as **psychopomp** and conveying the souls of the deceased to this **Land of the Dead** and when retrieving lost souls who have strayed to Omiktu.

Sedna was a girl who defied her father and married a sea-bird. As Sedna's irate father tried to take her home in a skin boat her irate bird husband created a storm. To save himself, Sedna's father threw her overboard to placate the **bird** and stop the storm. As Sedna clutched the gunwale to climb back in the boat, her father cut off the first joints of her fingers. They fell into the sea and became the whales, seals and walruses. Sedna continued to struggle and her father continued to cut until she had no fingers to hang on at all and she sunk to the bottom of the sea.

This is how Sedna got to her home at the bottom of the sea and why she is unable to comb her unruly hair. The broken taboos and evil deeds of people only dirty her hair and tangle it further, leaving her irate and angry with humankind. This is why the **shaman** must not only get to the bottom of the sea past Sedna's guards, but he must calm her anger and win her favor every time.

Sedna's companion in the watery Underworld is Qailertetang, the amazonian, **weather** goddess. Both goddesses are guardians of animals, hunters, fishermen, and **transformed**

shamans. In ritual they are represented in ways that blend **genders**. Particularly the gynandrous Qailertetang, who is represented in ritual by a man wearing a seal skin **mask** and the clothing of a woman. See also **Amazonia**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Seer

A practitioner of **divination** who uses his or her skills to see at a distance and into the future or past. A seer is commonly called on to locate game, locate the enemy and warn of their movement, and to find lost objects or people. **Shamans** are seers, however not all seers are shamans. Seers who are not shamans are **clairvoyant**.

Sehrsartog

The *sehrsartog* is a **bullroarer** used by West Greenland **Eskimo** *angakut* (**shamans**). The *sehrsartog* was used during **healing** rituals; however exactly how is unclear. There is one report that a *sehrsartog* was whirled close to the patient's head to drive away the disease-causing spirit as part of the healing ritual. However, missionary efforts so effectively suppressed **shamanism** in this region that there are no clear accounts explaining how and why the *sehrsartog* was used in healing. See also **Greenland**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Seidr

A Norse **ritual** for **divination** and prophecy performed by the *volva* (**seer** and **shaman**) to see into the future of people, **weather**, abundance of crops, etc. Originally the performance of the *seidr* was the secret art of the goddess Freyja.

The *volva* was seated and entered a **trance** state induced by the ecstatic singing of her chorus. The *volva's* soul traveled to meet Freyja in the spirit world, merged with her, and returned to the ritual space with Freyja. With the goddess present in the space and speaking through the *volva*, the audience was allowed to ask the goddess questions.

Hoppál, M., and O. J. von Sadovsky. *Shamanism: Past and Present* (Vol. 1 & 2). Fullerton, CA: International Society for Trans-Oceanic Research, 1989.

Høst, A. *Learning to Ride the Waves*. København: Scandinavian Center for Shamanic Studies, 1991.

Semen and Water

Cross-culturally, semen and water are often associated in mythology. For example, the **Shuar** tell stories of young women who are impregnated while swimming in the river and later gave birth to mixed, human-spirit children. Conversely, the Sumerian god Enki, brought forth new life to the barren country of Sumer by allowing his semen to flow throughout the land.

Linguistic evidences shows that early humankind viewed **water** as a life-inducing, fertilizing fluid of conception, much like semen. The ancient Sumerian symbol for water also represented sperm, conception, and generation. Water symbolized the source of all things and was believed to harbor all potentiality for life and regeneration.

Much of the water supplies of the **earth** was more semen-like, unclear, muddy, and filled with organic matter, bacteria, and viruses. Much like semen carrying DNA, these waterways also carried information. Physically, water carried people, goods, and their messages. Internally, it carried other life-forms from animals to viruses. Spiritually, it carried the **animal spirits** and the messages of the living upstream (or downstream depending on the **culture**) to the **Ancestors** now residing at

the Source. The association of semen and water as carriers of the information necessary for life to flourish is ancient.

Clear water, on the other hand, was held **sacred** for different reasons. It embodies the **spirit** of water that brings **purification, cleansing**, restoration, and reconciliation. Freshwater springs were often considered sacred sites, or power spots, and used differently than muddy, flowing water. Through clear water people connected to the spirit of water as an essential element (one of four or five) and a direct connection to the Source of All Things.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Semen of the Sun

Epená is an hallucinogenic snuff made from the inner bark of several species of *Virola*. For the **shaman**, it is a powerful tool for **diagnosis** and treatment of **illness**. *Epená* is an important **vehicle** of communication with the **spirit** world for many tribes in northwest **Amazonia**.

The Tukano people call *epená*, **viho**, or "Semen of the Sun." They explain that in the beginning of time Father **Sun** was having sex with his daughter. She scratched his penis and thus acquired *viho* for the Tukano. In this way the **sacred** snuff came from the Sun's semen and continues to be kept in containers called *muhipu-nuri*, or "penis of the sun."

The Tukano shaman is not allowed to communicate directly with the **spirit** world. In an *epená*-induced **trance** state the shaman communicates with *Viho-mahse*, the "snuff-person" who lives in the Milky Way and attends to all human affairs. Then through *Viho-mahse* the shaman is able to communicate with the spirit world.

Seneca

One of the original five nations of the **Iroquois** who lived in the northeastern region of **North America** near the Great Lakes. The original medicine society of the Seneca was the **Hadigonsashoon**, the **False Face Society** from which all other Seneca **medicine societies** emerged.

The medicine societies performed curing **rituals** for illnesses and injuries whose origins were not obvious and physical, and therefore easily handled by the medicine people with plant remedies. When the cause of an **illness** could not be identified by the medicine people, the relatives of the patient consulted a **clairvoyant** or **seer**. The seer performed a **divination** to determine the cause of the illness and the **healing** ritual(s) necessary for a cure.

For serious cases several performances of the ritual might be necessary or the performance of several different rituals. However, these rituals failed to cure the patient, a **shaman** who could reverse the affects of **sorcery**, or **witch doctor**, was called on as a last resort.

To perform a medicine society ritual was to honor and apply the highest spiritual mysteries of the people. The societies performed their rituals continuously; however, after the coming of the white man, they found it expedient to do so secretly. The leaders of the same societies conferred to keep their rituals uniform from tribe to tribe.

There were no restrictions placed on membership, except the men who assist the Women's Society. Candidates could join any society regardless of clan and were often invited to join a society after being cured by their medicine ritual.

The Seneca medicine societies are ancient. Their rituals have been transmitted by **song** with little change for many, many years. Each society has a legend of a founding hero that explains its origin and ritual practices. In general, the theme is the same in each society. The founder has a great adventure, with many trials that he or she could

not have prevailed over had the animals or **spirits** not come to his or her aid. The hero then returns to the people to teach them the secrets learned from the animals and the rituals necessary to gain their favor and therefore their **power**. These secrets were preserved by the society founded by the hero.

The traditional Seneca Medicine Societies included several societies, described as follows.

The Little Water Society

The Little Water Society was organized to perform the rites necessary to preserve the potency of the secret **medicine** known as the little water powder. This medicine is sung for and empowered in this society's rituals; it is not used in them. The empowered powder is stored for use by medicine people in healing ceremonies. Both men and women are members of this society.

The Pygmy Society

The rituals of the Pygmy Society are primarily to honor and communicate with the little folk, whose goodwill is sought by all native people. Translated as pygmy, these **spirit** beings are more like elves or small forest folk whom the Seneca believe are "next to the people" in importance and are therefore very powerful beings. These beings demand proper attention and punish those who neglect them.

There are many other spirit and magic animals, called *ho'tcine'gada*, of this society. In addition to the elves, the *ho'tcine'gada* include: Great Horned Serpent, Blue Panther, Exploding Wren, White Beaver, Corn-bug, Sharp-legs, Little Dry Hand, Wind Spirit, and Great Naked Bear. Members of this society keep **charms** of the *ho'tcine'gada*, some made from body parts of the animals.

The Dark Dance Ritual is designed to appease a *ho'tcine'gada* or to procure its power and **blessings**. This ritual is performed at any time for the purpose of appeasing the spirit of a charm that has or will become impotent. Non-members may call for the ritual when they

are troubled by certain sights and **sounds** that imply that a *ho'tcine'gada* is not pleased.

This society **sings** for all the medicine charms and all the magic animals. Some of the Seneca charms embody malevolent energies that bring harm or misfortune to their caretakers. However, they must not be destroyed under any circumstances. The harmful effects of these charms can be warded off by the rituals of this society. Most charms are only for benevolent purposes, but they can become angry and then harmful if neglected.

The Otter Society

The Otter Society is a women's society organized to honor and appease the otters and other **water** animals whose spirits influence the good health, fortunes, and destinies of humans. The Otter Society has no songs or **dances**. Its members preserve and perform the teachings of how to give thanks to the water animals, to retain their favor, and to cure illnesses brought on by transgressions against the water animals. In these healing rituals the members go to a spring and conduct a **ceremony** to gather **sacred** healing water. They then go to the patient's lodge and sprinkle him with the sacred water while affecting the cure.

The Medicine Animal Society

The members of the Medicine Animal (or Mystic Animal) Society preserve and perform the rituals necessary to maintain the good will of the "medicine" animals, the animals who joined with humans in ancient times to be of service to mankind. The powers of the medicine animals cure illness, relieve pain, avert disasters in Nature, and reestablish good fortune. These animals taught humans the rituals necessary to honor and please them so that they will continue to be of service to humankind. These rituals are kept strictly secret.

Each member receives a **power song** from spirit and a gourd **rattle** during their initiation into the society. During

their rituals the members chant and dance while the shaman performs displays of power like, **mastery of fire**, animating inanimate objects, and seeing with "spirit eyes" through wooden **masks** that have no eyeholes. The rituals of this society are prescribed to treat fevers and skin diseases.

There are three masks used by the Medicine Animal Society in their rituals: the Conjuror's mask, the Witch mask, and the Dual-spirit's mask. These masks are made without metal eyes and are never used in the rites of the False Face Society.

The Eagle Society

The Eagle Society's ritual is considered the most sacred. Its songs are believed to be the most potent charms known to the Seneca. The Dew Eagle, also known as the "reviver of wilting things," or **oshadageaa**, is called upon in this ritual to restore the life force to the dying, the elderly, and those afflicted with wasting diseases.

Membership in the Eagle Society is limited to those who received specific **dreams** involving the Dew Eagle or who are healed by the rituals of the society. Members wear special **costumes** in the rituals, which involve singers and selected dancers. Those who dance assume a squatting position and dance like **birds** to induce a full **possession** trance by the Dew Eagle.

The Bear Society

The Bear Society's rituals employ dancing and chanting to cure the diseases of its members and candidates. The ceremony is particularly effective in curing fevers, rheumatism, and in bringing good fortune. The highest officer of this society is a woman who functions as the shaman in the healing rituals blowing the healing power of Bear into the head of the patient. The Bear Society uses the water-**drum** and horn rattles during their rituals.

The Buffalo Society

The rituals of the Buffalo Society involve many songs and dances accompanied by the water-drum and horn

rattles. When the ritual is complete, a buffalo pudding is taken home by the members. When eaten the pudding acts as a charm, “stamping off” illness and misfortune.

Chanter for the Dead

The Feast of the Dead, performed by this society, is called for when a member dreams of the restless spirits of deceased members, relatives, or friends. The ritual is led by its highest official who is always a woman. The large water-drum is played to accompany a specific set of songs and then the participants feast. The food is shared in a ritualized way to satisfy the hungry ghosts, who have become **earth** bound. The diviner of this society identifies the spirit who is troubling the dreams of the member. Any sickness or misfortune caused by the ghosts is dispelled by the healing forces of the ceremony.

The Women's Society

The Women's Society exists to preserve the rituals through which good fortune and health are obtained and maintained for women. The fourteen singers of this society are all men. During this ritual the men sing and are accompanied by the water-drum and horn rattles. The women dance and join in chorus of the songs.

Sisters of the Dio'he'ko

The duty of the all female members of this society is to preserve and perform the special **offering** of thanks to the *Dio'he'ko*, “these sustain our lives,” the spirits of corn, beans, and squashes. These rituals of thanksgiving honor and satisfy the spirits of growth that assure a good harvest and, by extension, the life of the people. The special rattle of this society is made from the shell of a land tortoise.

The False Face Society

The False Face Society, the eldest of the medicine societies, has three divisions and uses four classes of masks: the doorkeeper or doctor masks, dancing masks, beggar masks, and secret masks.

The beggar and thief masks are not part of the **paraphernalia** of the true society. The secret masks are only used in society rituals, not open to the public, performed as part of the midwinter ceremony. All of the masks have names.

The paraphernalia of this society consists of the false face masks, rattles made from the shells of snapping turtles, hickory bark rattles, head throws, and **tobacco** baskets. The leader's pole has fastened to it a small husk face mask, a small wooden false face mask, and a small turtle rattle.

The Husk Face Society:

The Husk Face Society members are water doctors who endeavor to cure certain diseases by spraying and sprinkling water on the patients during their healing rituals. The members wear carved, wooden masks, different from those of the False Face Society. During the rituals the doctors receive the power to heal from the spirit energies embodied in the masks. See also **power displays** and **trance**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Parker, A. C. “Secret Medicine Societies of the Seneca.” *American Anthropologist* 11, no. 2 (1909): 161–185.

Serrat

Serrat is the West Greenland **Eskimo** term for **spells** used by *angakok* (**shamans**), *qanimasoq* (sorcerers), and *serrasoq* (witches). *Serrat* are sayings with magical influence that can be general in nature or addressed to an individual owner. They are things of value and are passed on through inheritance. See also **Greenland** and **sorcery**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Set and Setting

“Set and setting” is a commonly used phrase in discussions of psychoactive substances, like the plant **entheogens** used by **shamans** in many **cultures**. Set refers to the psychological makeup of the individual taking the psychoactive substance. Setting refers to social and physical environment in which the psychoactive substances is taken.

Set and setting are two of three primary factors that influence the hallucinogenic experience, from the perspective of contemporary western researchers. The third factor is the pharmacological effects of the substance. Together these three factors influence the psychedelic experience such that the same psychoactive substances can produce varied responses.

Shadow

The Shadow is a psychological aspect of the self that has been disowned or judged unworthy of being an active part in the individual's conscious life. Any aspect of the self, even a positive or powerful aspect, that is disowned and unintegrated as part of the whole self is relegated to the Shadow. These Shadow aspects invent ways to remind the individual that they are still there. When an individual is able to accept a Shadow aspect and re-integrate it, that aspect moves from the Shadow back into the conscious self.

The process of disowning aspects of the self creates holes or openings in an individual's **energy**. These openings allow intrusive energies and the malevolent energies sent by sorcerers to enter the body. Once in the body these energies can create physical and mental **illness**. **Shamans** perform **extraction** healing **rituals** to remove these energies from the body. See also **healing**.

Shaking Tent Ceremony

(Also Conjuring Ceremony or Jugglery.) A version of the **spirit intrusions** ritual widely used across the northeastern

woodlands, Plains, and Plateau regions of **North America** by **shamans** and **seers** for **divination**, information, **diagnosis**, and to a lesser extent **healing**. A special cylindrical tent, the **djesikon**, is built for the **ritual**. The name is derived from the characteristic shaking of the **djesikon** that occurs when the spirit **powers** arrive and exit during the ritual.

The **djessakid**, the shaman who performs this ritual, learns the skill from the **manitou** or helping spirit. The power to perform the ritual is given in a **dream** or **vision** by the **manitou** and then cultivated over time. This ritual requires levels of power and skill that can only be mastered by shamans with a great deal of personal power and maturity as well as a strong working relationship with powerful **manitou**.

The ritual is performed sparingly because the **energy** expenditure necessary depletes the shaman; however several questions can be asked in one ritual. The ritual is used for diagnosis and divining cures for **illness**, seeing the future or the movement of enemies, locating game and lost objects, and communicating with the deceased. In particular the ritual is used to capture the **free soul** of a sorcerer and to force that sorcerer to cease all malevolent acts causing illness, death, and injury to others.

The shaman and assistants prepare for the ritual with a sweat for **purification** and to strengthen their relationships with their **manitou**. The assistants then construct the **djesikon** as instructed by **spirit** in the shaman's visions. The ritual usually proceeds at night.

The shaman begins **singing** as he approaches the lodge. The shaman's **power songs** are used to induce **trance** and call the **helping spirits** to enter the lodge with the shaman. In some versions of the ritual the shaman is bound wrists and ankles with a chord or wrapped in a skin from head to toe and bound securely and then carried into the lodge. In most cases the tent begins shaking as the shaman enters, and

continues to do so quite violently indicating that the **spirits** are arriving and present. When the shaman is deep in trance and the tent is shaking violently the members of the audience put forth questions to the helping spirits.

Depending on the shaman and/or cultural expectations the spirits answer in a variety of ways. Some shamans simply translate while others speak in a **shamanic language** that must be interpreted by an assistant. The communication of some spirits is heard as whistles or other **sounds** while other spirits are heard speaking in voices. Some shamans work with **Mikenak**, Turtle spirit, who works as a mediator, taking the question from the shaman to the spirits and returning to the shaman with the answer.

When the ritual is complete, the shaman returns to **ordinary consciousness** free of his bonds. The magical liberation of the shaman is considered proof of the presence of spirit in the *djesikon* and one of many **power displays** associated with this divination ritual. See also **language; Mishikan; Ojibwa; Spirit Lodge**.

Hultkrantz, A. "Spirit Lodge, a North American Shamanistic Séance." In *Studies in Shamanism*. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1962.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Shaltu

A **Wintun** term for a shaman's **helping spirit**. *Shaltu* is also used to refer to the performers in **dance** rituals who dance in **trance** states in which they have embodied their helping spirit. See also **embodiment; ritual; spirit**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Shaman

The shaman is a practitioner who has developed the mastery of:

1. accessing altered (alternate) states of consciousness, control of themselves while moving in those states, and returning to an ordinary state of consciousness at will and,
2. mediation between the needs of the spirit world and the those of the physical world in a way that can be understood by the community, and whose mastery of the above is used,
3. to serve the needs of the community which cannot be met by practitioners of other disciplines, like: physicians, psychiatrists, **priests**, leaders, etc.

This means that the shaman is a specific type of healer who uses a **trance** state, or **alternate state of consciousness**, to enter the invisible world (all aspects of our world that affect us which we can not see, including the spiritual, emotional, mental, mythical, archetypal, and **dream** worlds). Once in the invisible world the shaman makes a change in the **energy** found there in such a way that it directly affects the need (**healing, hunting magic, weather**, etc.) here in the physical world. Furthermore, the shaman learns what to do (what energy to change and how to change it) in the invisible world through direct contact with "**spirits**." Spirits are energies with presence found in the invisible world. They may have form (animal, plant, mountain, **ancestor**, deity, element, etc.); they may be formless; or the **spirit** may be the presence of the universe as a being, often explained as That Which Created God. It is this direct contact with spirit and the use of the trance state that distinguishes the shaman from other practitioners. See also **altered states of consciousness; animal spirits; elements; non-ordinary reality; ordinary consciousness; plant spirits**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

- Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.
- Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.
- Peters, L. G., and D. Price-Williams. "Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism." *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 3 (1980): 397–413.

Shamanic Altered States of Consciousness

Altered states of consciousness are mental states which can be subjectively recognized as representing a difference in psychological functioning from the individual's day-to-day, alert waking state. Altered states of consciousness are the tools of the shaman's profession. What separates the altered states necessary for shamanic work from mental and spiritual **illness** is the intention, discipline, and concentration of the **shaman**.

Shamanic altered states of consciousness are a diverse range of states used by the shaman to perform the tasks of his or her profession. In altered states the invisible world of **spirit** becomes visible, allowing the shaman to communicate with **helping spirits** and to see the true source of the patient's problem. The shaman's experience of these **trance** states is often ecstatic, though the state remains controlled and intentional.

The shaman's ability to help a person to heal or to influence **weather**, game, or crops arises from his or her relationship with spirit. To exercise this relationship the shaman must alter his or her state of consciousness to connect and communicate with the spirit or sacred **energy** being called upon.

To establish a rapport with spirit the shaman will **journey** (intentional **soul flight**) or enter an **embodiment** trance, (intentional spirit **possession**). Practitioners caution against viewing the shaman's altered state as exclusive to either type of trance. The type of

trance used by a shaman has a great deal to do with what the shaman is trying to accomplish through the trance. Any definition of the shaman's trance must include both spirit flight and spirit embodiment, the full range of altered states between, and the understanding that these trance states can exist separately or coexist to various degrees throughout a **shamanic healing** ritual.

In his work mapping altered states, Roger Walsh, MD., Ph.D., professor, and author of numerous books and papers on **shamanism**, has shown that there is not one single altered state of consciousness sought by shamans, but many. Generally speaking there are three major classes of shamanic altered states of consciousness: embodiment, drug-induced journey, and journey induced by other means. While there may be significant functional overlap between these classes, there is no reason to assume that they comprise a single state. Furthermore, considerable variation may occur within each class, therefore it would be an oversimplification even to consider each class a single state of consciousness.

Shamanic altered states are often compared to the altered states achieved through other disciplines such as Buddhist meditation and yoga. There are some significant similarities: the ability to enter and exit at will, heightened concentration, initially negative experiences resolved into increasingly positive experiences, and a shift of identity from ego/body self. However, there are enough significant differences: the awareness of environment, ability to communicate, types and degree of concentration, control over content and experience, arousal, sense of self, affect, experience of the body, and content, that the states cannot be considered the same.

The altered state used by the shaman varies between **cultures**, shamans, and clients. Looking at **diagnosis** alone there are a variety of altered states and corresponding techniques. For example, using a **tsentsak** (invisible

dart) with *ayahuasca*, watching a candle rubbed on the client's body burn, reading guinea pig innards, soul flight, or traveling somewhere between **ordinary reality** and the spirit realm. The altered state used depends on **training**, personal preference, illness, mastery, and/or cultural expectation. See also **divination**; **healing**; **magical darts**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Peters, L. G. "Shamanism: Phenomenology of a Spiritual Discipline." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 21, no. 2 (1989): 115–137.

Walsh, Roger. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Shamanic Counseling

Shamanic counseling is an experiential counseling method designed to facilitate the psychological and emotional **healing** of individuals and communities. This method was designed by Michael Harner, the founder and director of the **Foundation for Shamanic Studies**.

Shamanic counseling is based on the discipline of journeying into the invisible world to the **sound** of a monotonous drumbeat. Unlike **shamanic healing** where the **shaman** journeys on the client's behalf, in shamanic counseling the client **journeys** on his or her own behalf. The client's **helping spirits** are the "counselors" to whom the client goes for healing and guidance. The shamanic counselor teaches the journeying technique and serves the client as a resource in using the technique to

facilitate the desired psychological and emotional healing.

Shamanic Healing

At the most essential level shamanic healing involves the movement of energies from a patient, or group, out into the spirit world or from the spirit world into the patient. This movement of **energy** occurs in the context of the shaman's **healing** ritual. The principles of shamanic healing are unchanging. The techniques change to some degree from **culture** to culture. The content changes from situation to situation based on the patient and the kind of energies being moved.

There are two aspects of shamanic healing that are similar in all sessions. First, the **shaman** enters a **trance** state, either **soul flight** or spirit **embodiment**, which allows him/her to become an energetic bridge between the patient and the invisible world. Secondly, the shaman moves energy across that bridge. From the shaman's perspective there are energies out in the spirit world that belong in the patient's energy body and energies in the patient's energy body that belong out in the spirit world. A typical healing session focuses on one primary problem and involves some additional movement of energies, both in and out of the patient.

The type of trance used by the shaman is determined by what needs to be done in the healing **ritual**. The techniques necessary for a particular healing depend on the **diagnosis** of where the source of the problem lies, the true nature of the energies involved, and what to do about those energies. This is determined by the shaman through **divination**.

There are different names for the different kinds of shamanic healing because there are different kinds of energy that need to be moved. For example, removing an **energy intrusion** from a patient is an **extraction**, while removing a harmful spirit from a patient is a depossession, or **exorcism**.

In a divination the shaman retrieves information from the spirit world for the patient or group. In **power retrievals** or **blessings** the shaman retrieves **powers** or energies from the spirit world for the patient. In a **soul retrieval** the shaman retrieves lost **soul** parts from the spirit world for the patient. In a **cleansing** the shaman removes non-localized energies from a body or a **space**. In an extraction the shaman removes localized energy intrusions from the body of the patient. In a depossession or exorcism the shaman removes a spirit intrusion from the body of the patient.

Shamans work on at least five different levels simultaneously in healing rituals. These five levels are:

1. the physical-biological,
2. the emotional-psychological,
3. the mental-philosophical-moral,
4. the social-ethical, and
5. the spiritual.

For example, in a soul retrieval healing ritual as soon as the shaman has returned the lost soul part to the client, the source of problem is resolved on a spiritual level. The shaman then facilitates any physical-biological changes that result from the soul part's return to the body. Finally, the shaman works with the client to establish a new equilibrium in and between the emotional-psychological, mental, and social levels.

The shaman is able to work on multiple levels simultaneously because he or she is aided by spirit. When in his or her working trance state, the shaman is guided in what to do directly by the **helping spirits** of the energy of the altered state, as with the *num* energy that guides the **!Kung** healers. Therefore every healing ritual is improvised, created on the spot from the needs of the patient, the abilities of the shaman, and the intervention of spirit.

During healing rituals shamans often retrieve lost souls, communicate with **spirits**, repair the interconnectedness of their patients with his or her community or with the **earth**, facilitate spiritual **purification**, interpret **dreams**

and **visions**, and stress the importance of spiritual growth, life purpose, and being of service to humanity and to Nature.

The first act in any healing session is the diagnosis, or divination. From there the shaman may move into another type of healing like soul retrieval, power retrieval, extraction, or cleansing. If not done, the shaman remains in the act of divination and retrieves information, describing remedies, healing rituals, preparation for those rituals, the true spirit source of the presenting problem, how to restore harmony to all the energies involved, or the need for the patient to go to an allopathic doctor or another type of healer.

The structural principles of shamanic healing rituals are cross-culturally consistent. The healing **ritual structure** is simplified as follows:

1. The shaman opens the ritual space and enters his or her trance, which is necessary for healing. The trance is either a journeying state or spirit embodiment.
2. Diagnosis of the true source of the **illness** /problem is determined by spirit and involves both ordinary and non-ordinary reality factors.
3. Action is taken by the shaman, as the **vehicle** for the helping spirits, and energies are moved.
4. Gratitude and thanks are given to helping spirits and the ritual space is closed.

How these steps are carried out varies relative to culture, the skills of the practitioner, the healing needed, and the directions offered by the helping spirits. For example, an extraction by a **Shuar** shaman will involve using *aya-huasca*, a **plant hallucinogen**, to enter trance and a *tsentsak*, invisible dart, to remove the energy intrusion. An extraction by a Pomo shaman would involve **singing** and dancing into trance and sucking to remove the energy intrusion. Though these two healing rituals look different, they each involve the same steps in a ritual process that results in the same type of healing, an extraction.

Contemporary shamans are often called upon for an additional step in the healing ritual to compensate for the lack of community support for shamanic healing. After the ritual is complete the shaman helps the client integrate the healing experience into a new sense of self and to reintegrate that sense of self into his or her daily life.

Shamanic healing also involves work with the souls of the dying and the **spirits of the dead**. It is the shaman's task as **psychopomp** to escort the soul on its **journey** to the **Land of the Dead**. To complete its dying process a soul must be resolved with its entire life and free of emotional attachments to that life and the physical plane. The shaman may have to assist in the healing necessary for this detachment even at death's door.

By altering reality within the healing ritual, shamans create an opportunity for participants in that ritual to experience the Divine, to become One-with-all-things. This experience of ecstatic union is in and of itself a healing experience. By practicing and sharing the **sacred technologies** of ecstatic altered states, shamans maintain the possibility for humanity's healing and evolution of conscious well-being. See also **altered states of consciousness; dance; death and dying; magical darts; soul loss**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Somé, M.P. *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Wolf, F. A. *The Eagle's Quest: A Physicist Finds the Scientific Truth at the Heart of the Shamanic World*. New York: Touchstone Press, 1992.

Shamanic State of Consciousness

The Shamanic State of Consciousness (SSC) is a term used by Michael Harner, founder and director of the **Foundation for Shamanic Studies**, to refer to the **altered state of consciousness** and the

learned perspective that characterizes shamanic work. "The SSC involves not only a '**trance**' or transcendent state of awareness, but also a learned awareness of shamanic methods and assumptions while in such an altered state."

The learned component of the SSC includes:

1. Information about the cosmic geography of the invisible world of **spirit**, or non-ordinary reality.
2. An awareness by the **shaman** that he or she must have a specific intended mission while in the SSC and the ability to hold the focus of that mission.
3. The basic methods for accomplishing the work of the shaman while in the SSC.
4. The ability to retain the information for the patient until the shaman's return to the physical world and to communicate that information clearly and completely.
5. The ability to maintain conscious control over the direction of his or her travels in the **journey**, without knowing what he or she will discover on that journey.
6. The ability to bring back his or her discoveries to help others and to build a body of knowledge about the invisible world, its geography, and the beings that inhabit it.

The SSC described above refers primarily to the shaman working in the altered state referred to as a journey or spirit flight. The journey and the **embodiment** trance are the two poles of a continuum of altered states used by the shaman.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Shamanic Symbols

Much of the **art** created by **shamans** is intended to communicate complex ideas through symbolic shorthand. These shamanic symbols create visual links that activate the **energy** and **power**

contained in the more complex ideas which are derived from the shaman's experiential **knowledge** of the true nature of the visible and invisible worlds. The foundation of this knowledge is the understanding that all things are connected and interrelated all the way back to the beginning of the Universe.

Listed below are reoccurring, cross-cultural symbols that represent essential aspects of a shamanic worldview. They remain in our human **psyche** today as universal, archetypal symbols.

The Tree of Life (The World Tree)

The **Tree of Life** is a cross-culturally recurrent symbol for the opening and connection between the realms of the physical and the spirit world. The Tree of Life is used by the shaman and the **helping spirits** as the way to move between the realms. The branches provide a means to climb to the **Upperworld** and the roots a means to reach the **Lowerworld**. The Tree of Life is also known as the **World Tree**, **World Axis**, Great Tree, or **Cosmic Tree**.

The trunk of the Tree of Life is the axis (*axis mundi*) running through the Center of the World. Pillars, poles, large stone monoliths, mountains, or temples built like mountains are also symbolic of the Tree of Life. This symbolism can be recognized by the presence of seven notches or rungs, representing the seven layers of the Upperworld. In many **cultures** a particular type of tree is considered the Tree of Life, for example, the birch for the **Tungus** or the **sycamore fig** for ancient Egyptians.

Spiral of Creation

The Spiral of Creation represents the original emanations of life from the Void. The Spiral is the as yet unknown potential, alive and pulsing between occurring and reoccurring. The Spiral of Creation is recorded in the stone and clay remnants of the **symbolic languages** of people on every continent.

The Spiral of Creation is the interrelationship of **space** and **time**. It winds

simultaneously upwards and downwards. The **spiral** exists in such a way that any one point can touch any other point at any time. It represents the infinite, simultaneous possibilities within the **Kosmos**.

The Circle

Time is represented in the **circle**, whose deceptive simplicity is symbolic of a much more complex relationship with time. The shaman experiences time as the simultaneous, creative expression of all that is, that was, and all that will be. Some shamanic cultures, like the **Dagara** of West Africa, have no concept for linear time at all. They are aware of linear time as an illusion accepted because we do not know time as it really exists. The shaman uses timing to move in harmony with the Whole and in synch with the **rhythms** of Nature and the Universe.

The Circled Cross

The Circled Cross is a shorthand symbol of the shaman's universe and is found in cultures as distant and unrelated as the Celts of the British Isles and the **Mapuche** of Chile, **South America**. The circle aspect represents both the circle of time and a foreshortened view of the Spiral of Creation. The crossed lines represent the four directions of the physical world and the movement of the shaman out into the other dimensions of the spirit world. The center point where the lines cross is the Tree of Life, the central axis from which the shaman can move in all directions in an infinite universe. This basic pattern of two crossed lines enclosed in a circle appears carved on stones, worked into jewelry, and painted on **cave** walls throughout the world.

Center of the World

The Center of the World is the *axis mundi*, an existential place or point where the **sacred** manifests in space and the **dream** unfolds, bringing the world into existence. The axis mundi joins the diametrically opposite forces of the universe as One. Creation and

entropy, the essential generative and destructive forces of the universe, exist simultaneously, mirror images of each other together within the **Great Mystery**.

The Center of the World is not just a metaphor for the shaman but an actual place. Shamans move through this place in **altered states of consciousness** to connect with all the other dimensions of the Otherworld.

Ascent and Descent

Themes of ascent and descent in stories and **myths** are symbolic of entering and traveling through the spirit realms. While the symbolism is important for all people, the means of ascent and descent are real and literal for the shaman. Movement in the spirit world and between the realms is essential for the shaman's work.

Different means of ascent provide access to the Upperworld. Common symbols of ascent are **trees**, poles, **ladders**, stairs, rainbows, cloud tunnels, and rising smoke. Stairways are seen in Thai murals and in Buddha's descent from Trayatrimsa Heaven. The Egyptian Book of the Dead refers to the ladder to heaven, the *klimax* is a seven rung ladder in Mithraic mysteries, and the Russian of Voronezh bake dough ladders with seven rungs to honor their dead. In **China** and **Korea** a ladder is literally constructed of **swords** for the initiate to climb during the final stage of shamanic **initiation**.

Different means of descent provide access to the Lowerworld. Common symbols of descent are trees, stairs, caves, and holes, for example the holes found in the center of the floor of *kiva* homes in southwestern **North America**.

Bridges

Bridge themes in stories and myths are symbolic of making a crossing, often a dangerous one, from one reality to another. Bridges, like the Rainbow Bridge, connect different realities and allow the shaman to cross from **ordinary reality** to **non-ordinary reality**. An

example is found in Japanese initiations during which a bridge must be constructed upon seven arrows and seven boards.

Cosmic Rope

The Cosmic Rope appears in stories and myths. It holds heaven to the **earth** and the human **soul** to the body. The shamans of the **Huichol** of Central America, the **Inuit** around the North Pole, and the indigenous peoples of Asia and Tibet speak of a fine thread, as thin and silky as the thread of a spider, that connects the lifeforce (soul) to the body. In the Thai custom of *tham khwan*, that thread is tied to the body when the soul of a person is at risk of being lost.

Numbers

Certain numbers appear in **shamanism** and in other traditions including Judaism, **Daoism (Taoism)**, Islam, yoga, and Tibetan Buddhism. The numbers seven, nine, and twelve represent the layers of the Upperworld and the levels of the Lowerworld. These numbers appear again and again, in shamanism where journeying is central as well as in other religious practices in which journeying is used, but is not central to the practice. The presence of the numbers in religious traditions belies the journeying that was fundamental to earlier forms of that religious discipline. See also **Africa; Celtic; language**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Perkins, J. *The World Is as You Dream It*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1994.

Walsh, Roger. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Shamanism

Shamanism, both traditional and contemporary, is the practice of initiated

shamans, who are distinguished by their mastery of a range of **altered states of consciousness**. Shamanism arises from the actions the shaman takes in **non-ordinary reality** and the results of those actions in **ordinary reality**.

Trance is the technology of shamanism. Shamanic methods use a range of trance states involving **journey** trances, during which the shaman's **soul** leaves the body and moves into the spirit world, and **embodiment** trances, during which the shaman calls a helping spirit into his or her own body to work on the patient in the physical world. The type of trance and the depth of trance are determined by what the shaman needs to accomplish during the **ritual**.

These actions are made possible through the shaman's relationship with **helping spirits** who are the source of the shaman's information and **power**. Shamans conduct rituals for **healing** and **divination**. Rituals cannot be repeated by rote if they are to be kept relevant and effective. Shamans use trance states to access helping spirits who direct the creation and adaptation of ritual.

Shamanism is not a **religion**, though it is the prototype for the later development of the mystery religions. In shamanism there is no dogma, no church, no cult, and no divine personification. There are **prayers** and **sacrifice**, but not in the abstract form of religious worship. They are common, daily actions that maintain balance and well-being.

Shamanism demands spiritual discipline. This path of service involves personal sacrifice and the opportunity for the highest stages of mystical development for the mature shaman. Shamanism accesses the power of the **transpersonal** experience of life and of the ecstatic Connection-to-all-things. For the master shaman, shamanism discloses nothing less than what is found in the higher mystical traditions. See also **ecstasy**.

Peters, L. "Mystical Experience in Tamang Shamanism." *ReVision* 13, no. 2 (1990): 71–85.

Shaman Pharmaceuticals

Shaman Pharmaceuticals, Inc., is a traditional pharmaceutical company whose focus is to discover and develop novel pharmaceuticals in a way that is ethical and sustainable. By working with ethnobotany, isolation chemistry, pharmacology, and the people of the tropical forests Shaman Pharmaceuticals hopes to create a more efficient means of discovering drugs than mass screening and genetic engineering.

Simultaneous goals include devising effective strategies for producing raw materials that sustain the forest people and their ecosystems and developing sustainable and nondestructive harvesting methods for plant products that maintain the integrity, diversity, and productivity of the ecosystems.

King, S. R. *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (summer 1991).

Shaman's Death

The result of shamanic **initiation** is the death of the initiate's ego self. This death occurs in an **altered state of consciousness**, and is experienced as real death. It is not a psychological metaphor. Shamanic initiation creates a fundamental change in the initiate's existential condition. The initiate becomes another person whose orientation in the world is totally different. Because the familiar self dies away, shamanic initiation is often called a "little death" or the "shaman's death."

The ego is referred to as the "little self" because, in its pre-initiatory form, the ego and its associated belief system, keep the individual small minded and immature in behavior. The aspects of the ego that die off in initiation are the aspects of the ego that limit the shaman's relationship with the spirit world. It is through this relationship

that the **shaman** experiences a Connection-to-all-Things, or the "big self." This relationship demands **humility** from the shaman and the ability to surrender the ego to the will of the spirit world.

With the death of the ego self, the shaman's will is no longer controlled by the ego. The shaman gains the internal freedom to align his or her will consciously with the Will of the spirit world and receives his or her supernatural **power**. The shaman's relationship with spirit, his own and that of the **Kosmos**, is transformed in such a way that there is no turning back. See also **dismemberment** and **ego death**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Shaman's Ladder

Ladders are found in shamanic **rituals** around the world. Generally the **ladder** has seven or twelve rungs, symbolic of the layers of ascent into the **Upperworld** or the levels of descent into the **Lowerworld**. Whether used as a means of ascent or descent, the ladder is symbolic of the **Tree of Life** and functions in the same way.

Like the Tree of Life, ladders are a means of communication between the worlds. They provide an alternate means of ascent for the **shaman** or the **souls** of the deceased into the Upperworld. They are also a means of descent for the **helping spirits** to join the shaman in the **Middleworld**. In some **cultures** a ladder is set up in the room in which the **healing** ritual will take place to allow an easy descent for the helping spirits who will aid the shaman.

The ladder functions whether or not it is created literally or is experienced only in **non-ordinary reality** during **trance**. A unique manifestation of the ladder is created by firing a succession of arrows into the **sky** for the journeying soul to use as a ladder. Ladders appear,

for example, in the rituals of shamanic cultures in Tibet, Mongolia, **South America**, **Southeast Asia**, India, and Indonesia.

Often the ladder is an aspect of the final stage or highest degree of shamanic **initiation**. For example, the *manang* (shaman) of the Dyak of Borneo is initiated in three stages of increasing difficulty. The final stage demands that the initiate successfully enter an ecstatic trance of **soul flight** and climb into the Upperworld on a ritual ladder. Ladders used in initiation are found, for example, in South America, Asia, where the ladder is made of **swords** or **metal** blades, and India, where the blades are wooden. See also **ecstasy** and **sword ladder**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Shaman's Sickness

"Shaman's sickness," or **initiatory illness**, refers to the specific, physical and/or mental **illness** that results when **spirit** chooses a new shamanic candidate and possesses the candidate or takes his or her **soul** into the spirit world. The sickness does not respond to normal treatment, nor does it progress like a normal illness. It may advance and retreat without reason and defy our understanding of how similar symptoms normally function in the body.

This illness is cured only when the one stricken surrenders to the will of spirit, faces his or her fear of death, and cures his or her own madness or illness. The individual gains shamanic **power** in the process by finding meaning in the crisis and curing herself. As a result of this passage, the individual can work with the fears and madness in others having now crossed that emotional and psychological territory within her self. See also **shaman**.

Walsh, R. "Shamanic Cosmology: A Psychological Examination of the Shaman's Worldview." *ReVision* 13, no. 2. (1990): 86–100.

Shapeshifting

Shapeshifting is the ability to transform physically into other shapes, usually those of animals who serve as **helping spirits**. This phenomenon is widespread in **shamanism**. Some scholars apply the term to aspects of shamanic **rituals** that involve only partial transformation. In these rituals the **shaman** assumes at least some of the animal's characteristics, usually while dancing in an **embodiment** trance.

The literal, physical transformation of the shaman is mentioned frequently in stories of past shamans. The **power** and skill necessary are rare today, though shapeshifting does occur for all shamans while they are in journeying **trance** states. Some past shamans were capable of shapeshifting in the presence of spectators, while others could only perform this act of power alone. Shapeshifting is also an aspect of **sorcery, medicine**, and various magics of deception.

Shapeshifting is one means of learning and gathering power from the animals, plants, or other forms that the shaman transforms into. Jaguar shamans of **South America** and bear shamans of Asia and **North America** are particularly renowned for their ability to transform into animals. These transformations give them enormous powers for **healing**.

Another aspect of shapeshifting is the **transmutation** of the **transformed shaman**, biologically male shamans who adopt female **gender** roles as a prerequisite for **training** as shamans. Overtime the most powerful of these transformed shamans succeed in physically shapeshifting into females to better serve their roles as shamans. It cannot be proven whether or not the ancient shamans could transform physical form. However, it is clear that they

lived in a time during which the prevailing beliefs supported the abilities of shamans to physically change form at will.

Shapeshifting is the key component of the **Celtic** shaman's ability to access the power. As the shaman experiences life as animals, plants, **elements**, and faere folk, his or her web of awareness reaches out until he or she is ultimately aware from the perspective of all things and of the interconnectedness of all things. Those who have been all things experience the greatest universal truth: all things are made of the same **energy**, they share the same power, and that power and energy moves among all things, sharing the consciousness and the creative power of life. See also **animal spirits; journey; power displays**.

Cowan, Tom. *Fire in the Head: Shamanism and the Celtic Spirit*.

San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Shih-Niang

The male **transformed shamans** of **ancient China**. The *shih-niang* were described as "not male and not female," referring to their **gender-variant** nature, and "not **dreaming** and not awake," referring to their ability to move between the physical and spiritual worlds while in **trance**. The *shih-niang* dressed in a fusion of feminine, masculine, and **sacred** dress. They were employed by various cults, including Pan Hu of the canine warrior deity and Ta Wang Shen of the serpent king.

In ancient **China** the *wu* (**shamans**) were predominantly female. Trance states were considered a yin activity, used by all women as part of their personal spiritual practice. Because it was a

yin practice, any boy who demonstrated shamanic potential as a child was given a female name and dressed as a woman all his life. These boys became the *shih-niang*.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Shopan

The *shopan* is a **transformed shaman** of the Aleut and Kodiak peoples of the southern **Alaskan** regions. Their **gender** variance was recognized as children, sometimes as infants. These boys were raised as girls, wearing the feminine clothing and hair styles and plucking their facial hair. After adolescence their *shopan* **training** began as with all other Aleut **angakok**.

Mature *shopan* were highly respected *angakut*. As boys between the ages of ten to fifteen the *shopan* were often wed to older men, during their training. The Aleut considered it lucky to have a *shopan* as a partner. See also **achnucek** and **gender variant**.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Shrine

A shrine is a physical home for specific **spirits** here in the physical world. Shrines are similar to **altars** in function, however shrines are often permanent and public. For example, villages of the **Dagara** people have a shrine for the **spirit** of each of the five **elements**: **earth, fire, water**, Nature, and mineral in the village and an ancestral shrine in each family compound.

Shrines are a place a person goes to be in communication with the spirits of the shrine. It is a place to leave fresh **offerings** and make requests of the spirit of the shrine. It is a place to exercise and strengthen the relationship between humans and the spirits.

Once a shrine is built physically it must be activated energetically with offerings and a **ritual** to invite the spirit into its new home. In many **cultures** shrines have a keeper who tends the shrine and communicates the needs of the spirit in the shrine to the people. Activated shrines serve as a threshold between the physical world and spirit world. See also **ancestors**.

Shuar

The Shuar, *untsuri suara*, live in the Amazon rain forest of eastern Ecuador in an area between the Rio Pastaza in the north, the Rio Zamora in the south, the Rio Pangui in the east, and the Andes to the west. There are four other primary Shuar tribes: the Achuara to the northeast, the Mayna to the east of the Achuara, the Huambisa to the southeast, and the Aguaruna to the south southeast.

Shuar, meaning “man” or “people,” is how the Shuar refer to themselves. In the literature the Shuar are also called the Jivaro, Jibaro, Xivaro, or Shuara. The Shuar are the only group of peoples in **South America** to remain unconquered by the **Inka** (1527) or the Spaniards (1549), nor have they ever signed a treaty with the Spaniards.

The first mission was built in Shuar territory in 1870. Contact with whites and colonization increased steadily from that point for the Shuar living on desirable land. For the Shuar living in the interior, east of Cordillera de Cutucú, little changed in their traditional way of life until contact with the outside world in 1956.

The Shuar word for **shaman**, *uwishin*, means “someone who knows all the secrets.” *Uwishin* are healers and sorcerers who work with medicinal plants, spirit **powers** accessed through drinking *natem* (*ayahuasca*) and **tsentsak** (**magical darts**) to benevolent and malevolent ends, respectively.

For the Shuar, knowing how the world really is and how to manipulate its processes is power. Magical **phlegm**,

helping spirits, and *tsentsaks* are three traditional aspects or manifestations of the shaman's power. These manifestations of power can pass through many objects, substances, forms, and actions.

The First Shaman

The **First Shaman** of the Shuar was Tshunqui, goddess of the **waters**. A woman of white skin and long hair, she was able to transform herself into an anaconda. She lived underwater protected by crocodiles and anacondas and using a turtle as a stool. This is why *chumpis* (stools), symbols of the shaman, are carved as turtles.

From time to time Tshunqui supplied certain shamans with particularly deadly *tsentsak* of quartz **crystal**. Thus the origin of the power and **knowledge** of the use of the *tsentsak* is attributed to the Tshunqui, who is believed to still be alive today under the water. An important part of the **training** of an *uwishin* continues to be going for a time to live under the waters of a river with a Tshunqui. The *uwishin* makes a pact with Tshunqui who becomes his wife and mentor for this period of training.

An *uwishin's* knowledge comes from the teaching of other *uwishins*, **dreams**, **rituals**, and from the **spirits** he accesses when he drinks *natem*. Knowledge also comes from practical experiences like spending the night on beaches with dangerous animals and other tests and making many **sacrifices** such as experiencing prolonged hunger and thirst, extreme heat and cold, and sexual abstinence. The *uwishin* will spend years, on and off, learning from living alone in the jungle.

The path for gaining shamanic powers is the same for benevolent or malevolent *uwishin*. They are distinguished from each other by their use of that power. The *yahauci uwishin*, or *wawek*, is the sorcerer who derives his social rank primarily through the fear of what he might do. The *pener uwishin* is the shaman healer who derives his social rank primarily through the power of his **healing** and by being an asset to his neighbors.

Though the Shuar no longer shrink heads, jealousy continues to be a danger for successful *uwishin*. A shaman of a different Shuar family may be moved by his jealousy to lash out through an act of **sorcery** to kill the successful *uwishin*.

Payment for services is expected by shamans and sorcerers, usually with highly valued goods. The payment or sacrifice from the patient or petitioner performs a function; it closes the **circle** of **energy** that is opened by the shaman's work on the individual's behalf. Without this energetic closure the **illness** or energies removed during the session would be free to linger and enter other people, re-creating **disease** and illness in a new person.

Plant Hallucinogens

The Shuar believe that normal life is an illusion and that the true powers behind daily life lie in the spirit world. Therefore, true reality is revealed with the *uwishin's* potent hallucinogenic plant preparations. Even infants, within a few days of birth, are given a hallucinogenic drink to assist the infant in entering the "real" world and connecting with an Ancestor spirit who will help the child survive the hazards of infancy.

At six years of age Shuar boys must acquire an *arutam wakani*, the **soul** that can **journey** into the spirit realms and communicate with the ancestors. The corresponding **initiation** for young girls is unclear. Training as a shaman is based on the successful completion of this initiation into adulthood.

To get his *arutam* vision the boy and his father travel to the **sacred** waterfall, the origin of the Shuar people and a gathering place of spirits. They travel together in a sacred way, bathing and fasting to cleanse and drinking only **tobacco** water. When they arrive they bathe in a ritual way in the falls by day and call the spirits to them at night.

Natem (*ayahuasca*) or *maikoa* (*Brugmansia* or **Datura**) may be added

to the tobacco water to induce an **altered state of consciousness** that will induce the boy's contact with the spirit world. Once in the spirit realm, if the boy has the courage to reach out and touch the spirit that comes to him, the *arutam* will enter his body as a pair of jaguar or anaconda. The **vision** then explodes and the boy, having made contact, returns home. If he does not speak of his experiences the *arutaum* returns in his dreams in the form of a human Ancestor and begins to communicate with him.

Natem induces a much less violent intoxication and is used more frequently. However, if *natem* is not successful in revealing the boy's *arutam*, *maikoa* will be used. *Maikoa* is the most powerful and also the most dangerous hallucinogen used by the Shuar. They distinguish six types of *maikoa*, all of which are stronger than *natem*.

Shamans prefer to use *natem* in their healing sessions because the potency of *maikoa* is too great for the shaman to be able to function deliberately, **singing**, sucking, and interacting, during the healing ritual. The *uwishin's* achievements are directly connected not only to his or her ability to enter the "real" world but to his or her ability to use those energies and spirits with intention.

Training

The first act of formal training with a master *uwishin*, who may be a man or a woman, is to receive the master's breath into the crown of the head. This transfer of energy enables the **apprentice** to be more at peace and healthy. During the years of apprenticeship that follow, the master and apprentice will fast and drink *natem* many times. The apprentice will also drink *malikawa*, a **plant hallucinogen** with powerful **cleansing** properties that help the body to heal and to integrate the changes brought on by the training.

Periodically during training the apprentice will live a simple life, alone in the forest. During that time he drinks

natem to contact the spirit world and acquire helping spirits for protection. *Datura* may also be consumed to develop **spirit vision**. An *uwishin* properly trained can become one with the jaguar spirit allowing it to enter his or her soul and transform his or her body. These powerful *uwishin* are known to run through the forest as jaguars.

The master *uwishin* experiences the inner reality of his or her apprentice the first evening they drink *natem*. In training the master, who appears under the influence of *natem* to have a gold, red, and greenish "crown" above his head, creates an evolutionary process in his apprentice that induces an existential change from which the apprentice cannot go back to his or her former self. During this time the apprentice must have a spontaneous dream vision of the future that marks the spirit world's acceptance of the new *uwishin*.

More often women train female *uwishin*. Men do not readily agree to train women who ask because the Shuar believe that, though men and women are equal, women can be more powerful than men. Women have access to secrets that men do not have.

Acquiring Power—Tsentsaks

Tsentsaks, or invisible darts, are the essence of the *uwishin's* power. They have a **dual nature** and an almost infinite variety of forms in both their material object form and their helping spirit form. *Tsentsaks* reside in the *uwishin's* body and are only visible when he or she has ingested *natem*. Sorcerers send a *tsentsak* into the body of the victim to create illness, pain, or death. Shamans send a *tsentsak* into the body of the victim to recover the sorcerer's intruding dart and to aid the shaman in its removal.

The power of a *tsentsak* varies according to the type and the power of the master *uwishin* who originally supplied it. The most powerful, and therefore the most valued, *tsentsaks* come from the *uwishin* of the **Quechua-**

speaking Canelos tribe. It is also important to note that the *tsentsaks* from a sorcerer can only create another sorcerer, while those from a healing *uwishin* can create either sorcerers or healers.

Any adult male or female who presents a sizable gift to an established *uwishin* can receive instruction and a supply of *tsentsak* helping spirits. Neither a sorcerer nor a shaman can expect to become a successful practitioner unless the power of his or her *tsentsak* exceeds the power in those he or she is working against.

The *tsentsak* power is transferred to the lesser *uwishin* in magical phlegm, that appears as a brilliant, translucent substance under the influence of *natem*. The master *uwishin* regurgitates the phlegm containing the *tsentsaks*, cuts part of it off with a machete, and gives it to the lesser *uwishin* who swallows it. The receiving *uwishin* experiences stomach pain and must stay in bed for ten days, repeatedly drinking *natem*. The master *uwishin* periodically *camays* (blows into) and rubs the body of the receiver to aid in the integration of the new power.

Taboos must be followed if the powers of the *tsentsak* are to integrate properly. The receiving *uwishin* must remain inactive and abstain from sex for several months. The end of the first month is a critical time. The first *tsentsak* emerges and with it a tremendous desire to misuse the power and perform sorcery. If the *uwishin* acts on this impulse he or she will become a sorcerer. If he or she controls this impulse and swallows the first *tsentsak*, he or she can become a curing *uwishin*. Either way, to gain the power to kill or heal a man, the *uwishin* must follow the taboos and abstain from sex for five months. To become a truly effective shaman or sorcerer the *uwishin* must abstain for a full year.

During this period of taboo and abstinence, the new *uwishin* collects and consumes pairs of all kinds of insects, plants, and other small objects. The greater the variety of these objects,

the greater the *uwishin's* ability. These objects are transformed into the material forms of the *tsentsaks*. Because of their dual nature, each *tsentsak* also has a spirit form, such as a giant butterfly, jaguar, or monkey, who assist the *uwishin* in his tasks.

The ability of the *uwishin* to perform successful sucking healings depends largely upon the quantity and strength of his or her own *tsentsaks*. Under the influence of *natem* the *tsentsak* do many things simultaneously. As magical darts they directly assist the *uwishin* in sucking healings. As helping spirits they cover his body in a protective shield and remain on the lookout for any enemy *tsentsaks* headed toward the shaman. When an enemy *tsentsak* appears they close together around the point of entry and repel it. *Uwishin* constantly drink tobacco water to keep the *tsentsaks* fed and ready to repel the *tsentsaks* of sorcerers.

Power Loss

Any *uwishin* who gives *tsentsaks* to another *uwishin* can draw them back at any time without notice, regardless of the distance separating them. This sudden loss of shamanic power may result in serious illness or death, so it is not done frivolously. Typical reasons are a personal offense or a compelling bribe from a third party. As a safeguard against this type of power loss it is common practice to obtain *tsentsaks* from several master *uwishins*.

Though the *uwishin* may have hundreds, the *tsentsaks* are gradually used up through curing, sorcery, or passing them on to lesser *uwishins*. Every few years the *uwishin* expects to visit a master *uwishin* to have his supply of *tsentsak* replenished. At death a *uwishin's* remaining *tsentsak* fly back to the *uwishin* from whom they were originally received.

The Soul

The Shuar recognize three kinds of souls. The *nekás wakanĩ* is the original or ordinary soul. The *arutam* is an

acquired soul and is significant in many aspects of Shuar **culture**, particularly relative to men and their sense of power and maleness. The third type of soul is a *muisak*, or avenging soul, which is central to the traditional practice of head shrinking.

The *nekás wakani* is born at the same moment as the person, male and female. The material presence of this “true soul” is primarily in the **blood** and bleeding is perceived of as process of soul-loss. At death the *nekás wakani* leaves the body, returns to the site of its birth, and lives there, an invisible “human demon” in an invisible spirit house. Over time it transforms into a “true demon” and into a giant butterfly, and finally into water vapor.

The *arutam* soul does not exist at birth; it must be acquired at the sacred waterfall as described above. A person may possess two *arutam* souls at a time and endeavors to do so. The *uwishin* always possess *arutam* souls, which appear as an inverted rainbows in the person’s chest when viewed under the influence of *natem*.

The Shuar believe that a man cannot die while he possesses an *arutam* soul. Therefore, it must leave before he can die. At the moment of death, the *arutam wakani* comes into existence for the first time and, once created, is eternal. This transformation is said to generate strong winds, thunder, and lightning at the site of the death.

The *muisak* is closely related to the *arutam* soul. The sole reason for the existence of a *muisak* is to avenge a death and only a person who possesses an *arutam* soul is capable of forming a *muisak* to avenge his death. The *muisak* exists in the corpse and subsequently in the shrunken head, or *tsantsa*. The completion of the head-shrinking process forces the *muisak* to enter the *tsantsa* and binds it there.

If the human head is not taken and the *tsantsa* prepared, the *muisak* is able to travel from the corpse and transform into any of three types of demons, or *iwancí*, to avenge the death. These three

demons take forms of the natural world that can kill, e.g., a particularly dangerous poisonous snake, the water boa constrictor or anaconda, and a large tree which falls on its victim. Cause of death by these means is considered supernatural.

Illness

Uwishins diagnose one of two causes of illness: an act of sorcery by a malevolent *uwishin* or a microbes or other infectious agent from the environment. Both types will respond to the *uwishin*’s treatment. “White man’s diseases,” normally of an epidemic nature, such as whooping cough, measles, colds, and some mild diarrheas, are normally the only diseases not attributed to sorcery.

Sorcery is believed to be the cause of the vast majority of illness, pain and non-violent deaths. *Tsentsaks* are therefore the main supernatural cause of illness and the cure. *Tsentsaks* can only be seen by *uwishin* while under the influence of *natem* and are otherwise normally invisible.

Healing

The healing sessions are held almost exclusively at night or at least in a darkened room so that the *uwishin*, in a *natem*-induced **trance**, can see the **non-ordinary reality** aspects of the illnesses. An *uwishin* can cure five to ten patients during a single session. Those who are to be healed gather in the early evening and drink *natem* with the *uwishin*, as the spirit of *natem* is believed to be a healer in its own right.

The *uwishin* alerts his or her *tsentsak* helping spirits by whistling his or her personal curing **song**. After about fifteen to twenty minutes he or she starts singing his or her *icaros*. There are many different *icaros* and no one *uwishin* knows them all. The *icaros* come from the particular spirits and forces of nature the *uwishin* is in working relationship with. Therefore the *icaros* a *uwishin* uses depends on the knowledge and discoveries he or she has made with the spirits.

At first the *icaros* are sung to the spirits from whom the *uwishin* will draw healing power. Eventually, those spirits present themselves and begin to **sing** through the *uwishin*. The *uwishin*, and/or the assistant, narrates the healing process, announcing the helping spirits as they arrive and reporting on the progress and success of the healing as it transpires.

First the shaman will “look” into the patient to diagnose the true nature and cause of the illness, sometimes blowing a diagnostic *tsentsak* in to see more clearly. The *natem* enables the *uwishin* to see into the body as if the patient were transparent. If the illness is due to sorcery, the *uwishin* will see the intruding object within the patient’s body clearly enough to determine whether or not he can cure the illness.

When the *uwishin* is ready to suck out the offending object, he or she regurgitates two of his or her own *tsentsak* that match the object seen in the patient. If he or she sees a bone fragment or bug, he or she must regurgitate two bone fragments or two of the same kind of bug. The *uwishin* holds one of these *tsentsak* in the front and one in the back of the mouth and then sucks on the area of the body where the offending object is located.

The pair of *tsentsak* are expected to catch the offending object as it is sucked from the patient’s body. The *uwishin*’s *tsentsak* pair trap the sorcerer’s *tsentsak* and incorporate its essence into themselves. The *uwishin* then vomits out this incorporated object and displays it to the patient and family. The *uwishin* does not swallow it because it would make him/her ill and could kill him/her.

The offending object, once removed, must be disposed of carefully because it can enter an innocent passerby and cause illness again. It is either thrown into the air so that it flies back to the sorcerer of origin or it is shot into the forest where the energies of Nature will consume it and render it harmless.

If the offending *tsentsak* has been shot with such force that it passes all the

way through the body then there is nothing to suck out and the patient will probably die. If the *tsentsak* only lodges in the body then it is possible for the *uwishin* to remove it if his or her *tsentsaks* are as powerful as those of the sorcerer.

When illness is diagnosed as something other than sorcery the *uwishin* may suck out foul or stuck energies, for example the essential energy of a tumor, perform a cleansing, or send the patient to the white doctors for antibiotics. If **soul loss** is diagnosed the *uwishin* will enter the spirit world with his or her helping spirits and retrieve the lost soul. The Shuar believe that soul loss is caused by *espantu*, a sudden fear or trauma.

Song—Icaros

Song is used regularly by the Shuar, shaman and non-shaman alike, to communicate directly with the spirit world. For example, the women sing every morning to Nunkúí, the goddess of the **earth**, plants, gardens, and protector of women, so as not to startle her as they go to the gardens to dig up tuberous crops. Successful potters were given songs by the spirits to sing to prevent their pots from cracking when firing. The shaman sings *icaros* throughout the healing sessions to empower the healings and to guide the *natem*-induced experiences of the patient’s.

Instruments:

The *uwishin* accompanies himself during the healing session on the *tumank*, a **bow** that is plucked while held between the lips. It is made of monkey gut or fishing line strung on a three to four foot long piece of bamboo. The Shuar also play a *kitiar*, a violin carved from a single block of wood. See also *Brugmansia aurea*.

Harner, Michael J. *The Jivaro: People of the Sacred Waterfalls*. New York: Doubleday, 1972.

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Sahtouris, E. “Talking with Shuar Medicine Men.” *ReVision* 19, no. 3.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Siberia

The vast Northern Asiatic region from the Pacific Ocean to the Ural mountains and from the Arctic Ocean in the north to Kazakhstan in the south. It is the general consensus of scholars that the peoples living in this vast region express enough common cultural traits to be treated as one large group, the Siberians. Siberian peoples were chiefly hunters and reindeer herdspeople, near the coast hunters and whalers, and on the steppe herdsman and breeders all with some degree of nomadism.

The term “Siberian **shamans**” encompasses shamans from the **Saami** of Lapland to the **Chukchee** of the Chukchee Peninsula. The primary groups are the **Tungus**, Mongols, Chukchee, and Samoyed. The word “shaman” comes from the Evenk (Tungus) **language**. The **shamanism** of this region (Siberia and Mongolia) is referred to as “classic shamanism” in the literature. However, the “classic shaman” is an academic ideal which only partly reflects reality and is no longer universally believed to be true.

There is rich variation between tribes in the specifics and forms of their shamanic practices. However, there are also overall patterns in the functions performed. The dominant **trance** state used for **divination** and **healing is soul flight**, during which the shaman’s **soul** leaves the physical realms and enters the spirit world. The spirit world is made up of many layers all connected by the **Cosmic Tree**, Cosmic Pillar, or **World Mountain**. New shamans are chosen spontaneously by **spirit** and this call usually manifests in a prolonged, unexplained **illness**. The **blacksmith** is often fundamental in shaman’s transformation during **initiation**.

Most Siberian tribes recognized several different kinds of healers, e.g., herbal healers, diviners, and those who work exclusively with the souls of the dead. Among shamans there are two general types: There is the shaman who uses his or her mastery of trance to work with souls, **spirits**, and illness. These practitioners are shamans as defined in this volume. There are also “clan shamans” who care for the spiritual and reproductive well-being of the family through **prayers** and **sacrifice**. These practitioners do not use trance states and are **priests** as defined in this volume.

This distinction is often referred to as “black” and “white” shamans. The Buryat and **Yakut** people, for example, consider those shamans who enter trance and work with the spirits in **ritual**, “black shamans.” Those practitioners who conduct ceremonies of prayer and/or sacrificial **offering** and do not use trance are “white shamans.”

Cosmology

The Siberian peoples of North Asia conceive of the spirit world as a world exactly like the physical world only inverted or in reverse. This is why rituals that involve the spirits often begin at sunset. It is morning in the spirit world and the spirits are waking. Siberian shamanism was greatly influenced by Buddhism in the Middle Ages. The cosmology became more elaborate and the shamanic practices more institutionalized.

The spirit world is comprised of an **Upperworld**, a **Middeworld**, and a **Lowerworld**. The Upper and Lowerworlds are experienced by the shamans as having layers, the numbers of which vary between six, seven, nine, and twelve usually, depending on the cultural group or tribe. For example the Samoyed shamans **journey** in six levels under the sea, like the **Eskimo**, while the Tungus conceive of levels under the **earth**, but not the sea.

The Cosmic Tree

All of these worlds are connected by the limbs, trunk, and branches of the **Tree of Life**, or Cosmic Tree. The shaman travels along or through the Cosmic Tree to find safe passage to and from all the realms of the spirit world. The Cosmic Tree itself has many layers of rich meaning. It describes a universe that is in continual regeneration as it draws on an inexhaustible spring of cosmic life from the Source, the great reservoir of the **sacred** that is the source of all things.

The Cosmic Tree is the source of wood for the shaman's **drum** and is often part of the designs painted on the drum head. Symbolically, the shaman climbs the Cosmic Tree each time he or she climbs the sacred birch in ritual. Replicas of the tree are placed inside and in front of the shaman's yurt.

First Shaman

The creation mythology of the different Siberian peoples refers to an earlier time when relations between the people and the spirits, and the Supreme Being and shamans, were more intimate. Events occur that cause a distancing in the relationships between the physical and spiritual worlds. Humans struggle with **disease** and death and the Supreme Being sends the First Shaman or another surrogate to defend and heal humans.

Souls

Siberian peoples conceive of the human soul as a multiple soul. A persona can have anywhere from three to seven souls, depending on the **culture** and the person. These aspects of the soul have different destinations at death. One aspect remains in the grave with the body and goes into the earth, another descends to the **Land of the Dead**, and a third aspect ascends to the Upperworld. There is variation across Siberia in the number of souls and where they travel at death.

The Call—Dismemberment

Siberian shamans are called spontaneously by the spirits. **The call** usually

manifests in an unexplained physical and/or mental illness that does not respond normally to treatment. This is often referred to as an **initiatory illness**, however this illness is more a test of the candidate's readiness to train than a final initiation. In many cultures there are initiations later when the new shaman has displayed the **power** and ability to practice.

While the candidate lies in a state of "illness," he or she is also in an **altered state of consciousness**, during which his or her soul travels in the spirit world. The candidate experiences a **dismemberment** death at the hands (claws and teeth) of spirit, and recovering from that, instruction in how to heal and perform ritual. The experience often ends with the understanding that the candidate must now become a shaman or he or she will get sick and die.

There are many variations in the specifics of who the spirits are, where they take the new shaman, and the exact nature of his or her dismemberment or **ego death**. In some cultures the initiate must pass a test like having a certain number of bones or kind of bones.

Divination

The shaman's function in the community is healing and divination. Divination is used to diagnose the cause of illness, to find game, lost objects, and people, to observe things at a distance or in other times, and to discern the meaning of particular tribal events. The shaman uses the drum to induce trance for the *kamlanie*, a **shamanic healing** ritual used for healing and/or divination.

Other tools and methods are also used for divination. The drum itself is used in one method of divination, in which the movement of small objects across the drum head indicates the answer. Other methods vary with shaman, tribe, and culture. For example, **scapulimancy** in which the shaman reads the cracks of a heated scapular bone, or Buddhist cubes or dice which are cast and read.

Healing

Illness is believed to be caused by **soul loss**, which is caused by the soul wandering and getting lost or being stolen by a spirit or sorcerer with malevolent intent. The shaman must enter trance to find the lost soul and capture it or convince it to return to the patient's body. In some parts of Asia the **energy intrusion** or **spirit intrusion (possession)** is also a cause of illness. In this case the shaman must extract the intruding magical object or exorcise the spirit in the patient's body. Sometimes illness is caused by a combination of the above, for example, soul loss followed by spirit possession.

Some illness is caused by disrespect or an omission in respect shown to the spirit world. In these cases recovery is dependent on restoring balance between the human and spiritual forces. The shaman must divine the true cause of the illness and the ritual sacrifices necessary to restore balance.

Psychopomp

The shaman also serves as a **psychopomp**, guiding the souls of the deceased to the Land of the Dead. Among the Altaic, the Goldi, and the Yurak peoples, the shaman escorts the deceased to the beyond at the end of the funeral banquet. Among the Tungus, it is believed that only the souls of the deceased who linger in the land of the living beyond the usual period need the shaman's assistance.

In some Siberian cultures there are practitioners who specialize in handling the dead. Whether it is a shaman or a specialist the practitioner must be familiar with the road to the Land of the Dead and able to capture the soul and convey it to its new dwelling place.

The Shaman's Drum

Some scholars believe that the Tibetan double drum, a round, double-headed drum with a wooden handle, is the prototype for the drums of central and north Asia. The shaman's drum is a large round **frame drum** with one or two heads and a wooden handle. The drum's

head is painted with the symbols of the shaman's Universe, a map of the spirit realms the shaman journeys through while in trances.

The drum functions practically as a means to induce trance. In many cultures the shaman describes riding the drum as a horse or a boat through the spirit world. The drum functions magically as the Cosmic Tree, allowing the shaman passage between the worlds.

The frame of the drum is taken from a tree that is the Cosmic Tree. The shaman is guided to that tree by spirit, just as he or she is guided to the animal whose hide will be used for the drum-head. Sacrifices of **blood** and vodka are offered to the tree and then the drum must be animated. During the various animation rituals the spirit of the tree and the spirit of the animal whose skin was used are embodied in the drum to awaken it.

When a drum is first constructed it is unusable because its spirit is not yet awake. The drum is given to a small child to play with for a few days. Then the shaman must look for the spirit of the animal who gave its skin for the drum. The shaman follows the animal through its life in reverse all the way back to its birthplace, where the spirit of the animal can be caught and brought back to enliven the drum. In cultures where the ancestral shaman determines the size and kind of drum, the wood to be used, the animal skin to be used, and the designs to paint on it, that spirit must be approached to approve and awaken the drum.

The Shaman's Costume

The **costumes** of Siberian shamans are elaborate and distinctly different district to district. Each garment is created with symbolic design in the structure of the garment as well as the decorations applied. The costumes include caps, which often denote rank, but no **masks**. In addition to an elaborate costume, **transformed shamans** often tattooed their faces, tattooing being a Siberian characteristic of feminine beauty.

The characteristics similar in the costumes of every Siberian shaman are: the basic caftan hung with iron disks and figures, often of mythical animals; a veil or blindfold to cover the eyes so that the shaman can more easily be guided by inner light; an iron or copper breastplate, and a cap. The iron disks serve a variety of functions, the primary being protection against the intrusion of the malevolent spirits.

The costume often has characteristics of a bird, for example **feathers** applied like wings or the fur of the caftan is sewn into tufts. The feathers add to the image of the shaman dancing and embodying Merkyut, the Bird of the Heavens in the ecstatic flight through the spirit realms.

The shaman's costume embodies spirits and is therefore a **power object**. In many Siberian cultures the shaman cannot conduct rituals without the power of the costume. Some costumes embodied spirits of the clan and, in that sense, the costume belonged to the clan and functioned as part of the prosperity of clan.

A novice shaman must see his or her costume in a **dream**. If he or she sees the costume of a deceased shaman the novice will see where it is and travel to the people of its clan. The novice must buy it from the relatives of the **dead shaman**, however the costume is not allowed to leave the clan. The costume embodies clan spirits, and if worn by anyone who does not treat them with respect or who cannot control them, the spirit may bring illness and misfortune to the clan.

Costumes that were worn out were hung in the forest to allow the spirits to leave. There were also many different ritual procedures for the handling of a deceased shaman's costume when he or she died without passing the costume on. The costume inspires the fear and apprehension in non-shamans and there are ritual procedures for its storage, transportation, and movement in the overall ritual process.

A variety of caps completed the shaman's costumes. Generally they were feather crowns or **metal** caps with antlers. The cap like the costume embodies spirit. It is considered the most important part of the costume because a great deal of the shaman's power is hidden there. Without the cap, the Siberian shaman is deprived of all real power. Different caps may represent different **helping spirits**. Often a progression of caps marks the shaman's progression of skills and acquisition of power.

For example, in some regions the brown owl cap cannot be worn by a shaman immediately after his or her initiation. In the course of a *kamlanie* the spirits reveal to the new shaman when he or she will have acquired enough power to wear the cap and use other higher insignia without danger.

Bronze Mirrors

The bronze **mirror**, called *küzüngü* (Turks), *panaptu* (**Manchu**), and *toli* (Mongol and Tungus), is used by shamans for personal protection and in **diagnosis** and healing. The copper mirror, believed by some to be a **sun** sign, is the only part of the shaman's **paraphernalia** that is not inherited or made new. In the past they were found, usually in the wilderness, in a ravine, or flying in the rays of the sun.

The use and meaning of the copper mirrors varies from tribe to tribe. For many it provides a means to see into the spirit world with "spirit eyes," for example, the mirror enables the shaman to "see the (spirit) world," to "place the spirits," or to reflect the needs of mankind into the spirit world. Other tribes use the copper mirror to see the souls of the deceased, particularly ghosts.

Plant Hallucinogens

The *amanita muscaria* mushroom is possibly the oldest **plant hallucinogen** and the most prominent plant **entheogen** used in the Asiatic region of the world. Siberian shamans call it the

“mainstay of the Heavens” and use it to enter trance and fly into the Upperworld. While entering into and in the initial stages of trance the shaman **dances** for the spirit of the **mushroom**, to call in the helping spirits and to deepen the trance.

Gender

It is somewhat odd that many people, including anthropologists, assume that the earliest shamans were males given the linguistic evidence to the contrary. Russian anthropologists and linguists have shown clues hidden in the tribal languages of some parts of Siberia that the original shamans were women. Among the Siberian and Altaic tribal peoples the words for a female shaman (utygan, udagan, and udaghan) are linguistically similar, showing that they derive from the same root in a similar timeframe. In contrast the words for male shamans (saman, oyoun, bo, and **kam**) are linguistically unrelated, later developments.

Close

Siberia shamanism coexists to a great degree with the practices of Buddhism and **Lamaism** that first spread across Asia. However, it did not fare as well under the severe suppression of the Russian and Chinese governments during the 20th century. Shamans who continued to practice in order to serve their people and their spirits did so in secret and at terrible danger to themselves.

Many modern Siberian shamans have limited **knowledge**, an eclectic arsenal of techniques, and are often judged by members of their own groups to not be as powerful as the shamans, pre-suppression. However, the fact that any knowledge, power, and skills remain at all is a testament to a great strength of spirit and a true commitment to the good of the people.

Siberia, the land of **classical shamanism**, is also a land of dying shamanism. In Northern Siberia for example, an 83-year-old Nanay shaman is the last of the shamans in her village.

There is no one to pass on her lifetime of knowledge and skills to and the gift of power from her spirits. This tragedy repeats itself across Siberia and around the globe in the **South America, North America, Australia, and Africa**. See also **black and white shamans; Buryat (Buriat); death and dying; Koryak; multiple soul belief; Tuva**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Grim, John A. *The Shaman*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rätsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Silence

It is the wisdom of shamanic peoples to leave in silence the things we cannot talk about clearly in **words**. There are states of being and numinous experiences that are central to **shamanic altered states of consciousness** and **shamanic healing** experiences which defy description through words.

Choosing not to talk about **sacred** experiences is a way to contain and protect the **energy**. Though powerful, the energy of the sacred is illusive and easily contaminated. Silence is both a form of protecting the sacred and a means by which to hold the sacred while the non-rational aspects of a sacred experience are integrated.

Silence is often a necessary prerequisite to having an experience of the sacred. This is in part the reason for the traditional **vision quest** that lasts for three to four days in silence. The vision quest is time designated for silence in the hope that a message from **spirit** will be “heard.”

Silence is both a way to open to the sacred and to integrate the numinous aspects of sacred experiences. Silence is one of four universal **healing** salves

(**storytelling, singing, dance**) employed by indigenous peoples to maintain health and well-being. Discomfort with silence, or any of the four healing salves, indicates a state of **soul loss**. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **song**.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Sima-Kade

Sima-Kade is the Zulu **Tree of Life**. *Sima-Kade* means the One who stands for all time, who has been standing for all time, and who will continue standing for all time. All people and things are connected to *Sima-Kade* and through *Sima-Kade* all things are connected to each other. This is the essence of the Tree of Life.

Sima-Kade fell in love with the All-knowing, Omniscient, *Ninhavanhu-Ma*, the silvery goddess. *Ma*, the Imperfect Undying One, was the very first Goddess of human form. She placed the heavens in order, the stars and the **sun** in the **sky**, and made the **earth** firm to live on. She created the pattern from which all life is formed and that is why we are all imperfect, born of the Great Struggle between Dark and Light.

Ma tried to escape the strange, knarled *Sima-Kade* by running across the great earth and **shapeshifting** through many forms. But *Sima-Kade* captured her in his twisted embrace. In this union, *Ma* became the first to accept a path in life that she, like the **shaman**, did not desire, but could not resist.

She gave birth to the first nation of humans who populated the barren Kalahari. The **First People** were all of one kind, sharing the same stature, ochre red skin, no hair, and the golden eyes of *Ma*. They lived in peace for more than ten thousand years.

As *Sima-Kade* watched the birth pains of his beloved *Ma*, helpless and

awed, he transformed into the first spring. Green buds burst forth. Seeds spewed from his body and grew immediately in the rocky plains. Lush green began to spread across the earth. Forests grew and in their search for **water** the clouds began the cycle of water on earth. Together, *Ma* and *Sima-Kade* gave birth to all life.

Sima-Kade's roots sprouted reptiles, while animals snarled and howled and burst from his branches. Insects emerged in clouds of humming and whining. **Birds** flew and waddled from his trunk and the **song** of life began where there had been no life. See also **Zulu**.

Mutwa, Credo Vusa'mazulu. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Sing

A sing or **chant** is a lengthy and complicated **ceremony** that is prescribed for **healing** among the indigenous peoples of the southwestern **North America**, particularly the **Dineh**. See also *hataál*.

Singing

Singing is a tool used by **shamans** and shamanic peoples to open their hearts and minds to **spirit** and/or to embody spirit. Most shamans have a personal **power song**. By singing that **song** the shaman gathers and focuses his or her own **soul** in his or her heart, mind, and body.

Helping spirits each have their own song. These **spirits** teach their songs to people in **dreams, altered state of consciousness** experiences, or during **vision quests**. Singing these songs calls that spirit into the shaman's body, inducing an **embodiment** trance. Or the shaman can use the song to call the helping spirit into the **sacred space** of the **ritual**.

Both songs and **dances** are traditionally considered **sacred** in origin because

they are revealed directly by spirit. Singing as instructed by spirit is a form of **prayer**. It is also a way to gather **power** from **non-ordinary reality** for use in **ordinary reality**. For example, **Lakota** shamans take years to learn the songs and **rhythms** necessary to hold particular spirits in sacred space once they have entered the shaman's ritual.

Singing is one of four universal, **healing** salves (**storytelling**, **silence**, **dance**) employed by indigenous peoples to maintain health and well-being. To stop singing, or to start feeling discomfort in any of the four healing salves, indicates a state of **soul loss**. See also **trance**.

Langdon, E. Jean, and G. Bear. *Portals of Power: Shamanism in South America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992.

Sioux

See **Lakota**.

Si.Si.Wiss

Si.Si.Wiss means **sacred** breath or sacred life. It is one of many traditional **medicine** practices of the Pacific Northwest Coast region. Within the Si.Si.Wiss tradition there are several different kinds of medicine. Some people heal with medicinal plants, some heal hands-on, while other heal with **singing**, drumming, or dancing.

Traditional **healing** ceremonies are group experiences in which people work together with the help of **spirit** to heal each other. The person doing the healing gives themselves over to the "healing spirit" and allows that spirit to enter their heart and guide what they do.

Singing and dancing are important tools in the Si.Si.Wiss tradition. They are used to pray and to heal and to gather personal **energy** before beginning healing work on others. Ancient **songs** are central to Si.Si.Wiss healing practices. These songs do not change. Healers learn the ancient, time-tested songs

first to build their strength before learning and using their own, new songs.

It is common to see Si.Si.Wiss healers work with candlelight and firelight to cleanse and clear energies around the body. Another common technique is brushing energy off with the hands and releasing it upwards. The **drum** and bell are tools used to support journeying. See also **dance**.

White, T. "Northwest Coast Medicine Teachings." *Shaman's Drum* 23 (Spring 1991): 36–43.

Skull

In many shamanic **cultures**, the head (or the skull) contains the wisdom, truth, and **power** of a being, as well as a part of the **soul**. For some cultures the head contains the point of passage, or portal, between the physical and spirit worlds. Skulls were preserved as **power objects** and often handed down through family lines.

The **Shuar** of the Amazon Basin shrink the heads of their enemies to capture the **arutam**, or warrior soul of the dead. This practice honors the eternal power of the warrior spirit to avenge its death. By capturing the **arutam** and ritually securing it in the head through the shrinking process, the victorious warrior and his family are protected from harm. The heads are cared for generation after generation, to contain the avenging **arutam** and protect the family line.

In Northern European cultures the head is a mystical source of truth, wisdom, and **healing** for warriors and **shamans**. A common theme in **Celtic** mythology is the severed head that guides warriors to victory against impossible odds. In Teutonic **myths** the god Mimir's head guards the well at the base of the **World Tree**, Yggdrasil. Hanging from this tree by one leg the great Norse shaman, **Odin**, received wisdom and understanding from the spirit world and brought forth the secrets of the **runes** to his people.

The Yukagir people of Central Asia believe that ancient **knowledge** and information about the afterlife gathered during a shaman's life through his or her **journeys** is retained in the skull of the shaman after death. The skulls of **dead shamans** were preserved and cared for as **sacred** power objects. They were used as **divination** tools by living shamans. The simplest method was to present the questions and then note the changing weight of the skull, light indicating yes and heavy indicating no.

The **Huichol** believe that all life came into being through the **neirika**. It is the portal that unifies the **spirit** of all things and all worlds and is found in the human head. It is both a passageway and a barrier between the worlds. Huichol shamans activate or awaken the **neirika** to use it as a passageway to move between the worlds.

Cowan, Tom. *Fire in the Head: Shamanism and the Celtic Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Sky

The **spirit** of the sky is perceived as a **helping spirit**. **Shamans** work with the sky spirit and with the related elemental power, **air**. The **power** of the sky is called on for **vision**, illumination, creativity, and expression.

The role of sky in **shamanic healing** rituals is to connect humans with the mercurial nature of illumination and revelation, to inspire creativity and swift change where needed, and to open people to the possibility of instantaneous transformation. The spirit of the sky is invoked to help people connect to the power of the stars, the planets, the **sun**, the **Kosmos**, and all the spirit help of the **Upperworld**. The sky is also a receptacle for people's gratitude for the abundance of support from spirit in their lives.

Beyond these qualities, the role of sky is defined specifically **culture** by culture. See also **elements**; **healing**; **journey**; **ritual**.

Smudge

To purify or cleanse a **power object**, person, or **ceremony** with the smoke from a burning plant, like cedar, or plant resin, like copal. Plants commonly used include sweetgrass, wormwood, **tobacco**, sage, juniper, etc.

Soft Shaman

Transformed shamans, or soft shamans, are biological males who transform their **gender** from masculine to feminine to become **shamans**. "Transformed" refers to the gender metamorphosis that occurs within the male as he becomes female. Transformed shamans are also called "soft shamans," which refers to the fluidity of their sexual and gender identification. Soft shamans are seen by their **culture** as belonging to a third or alternate gender. This transformation is expected of men becoming shamans and is sanctioned by their culture.

Soft shamans emerged in the Paleolithic era (2,500,000–10,000 B.C.E.) particularly among the **Chukchee**, **Koryak**, Kamchadal, Asiatic **Eskimos**, and throughout much of northeast Asia. These **gender-variant** shamans represented for their communities a sphere of spiritual **powers** that exists beyond the male-female polarity. In dress, behavior, gender role, sexuality, and spirituality they are androgynous, blending aspects of masculine, feminine, and the **sacred**.

Soft shamans excelled in **shamanism** because their mixed nature allowed a close association with the spirit world. Their power was respected by untransformed shamans. A soft shaman was never treated badly because his **helping spirits** would retaliate on his behalf. See also **gender-variant male**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Soma

A plant deified in the Vedic text, the *Rig Veda*, by the early Aryan peoples who invaded what is now India. The divine Soma is described as a non-flowering plant with cap and stem that is non-leafy, fruitless, rootless, and grows in the high mountains. It is also described as a powerful **entheogen** that induces **visions** resulting in mental and physical enhancements.

Soma was recently identified as the *amanita muscaria* mushroom, possibly the oldest hallucinogen used by **shamans** to facilitate their entry into **trance**. *Amanita muscaria* is the most prominent **plant hallucinogen** used in the Asiatic region of the world. The Soma of the *Rig Veda* was regarded so highly as to be held holy. The very idea of “deity” may have originated from the entheogenic experiences induced by this **sacred plant**. See also **altered states of consciousness**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Ripinsky-Naxon, M. *The Nature of Shamanism: Substance and Function of a Religious Metaphor*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Song

Songs and **chants** are one of the most important tools of the **shaman**. They are used to access spirit power, enter **trance**, empower remedies and cures, and in some cases as a remedy. Songs are sung to cure the sick, to find game, to make crops grow, to confuse enemies, and to aid people in all kinds of trouble or danger.

Through songs the shaman speaks to his or her **helping spirits** and accesses the **power** of that **spirit**. Song is believed to give any voice power, not just the shaman's. The power of the song is not in the **words** themselves since **power songs** do not translate into ordinary speech. The power in a song is in the access it provides to spirit.

In some **cultures** the shaman's song is spontaneous; it comes to the shaman directly from spirit. In other cultures, for example in southwestern **North America**, the songs used are traditional **medicine** songs handed down through **medicine societies**. These songs were originally received from spirit, however that was long ago. In either case, **singing** a power song is not an act of self-expression. It is a act of magic which calls upon the powers of Spirit and Nature to aid the people.

In **rituals** shamans use songs to access power and to contain the **energy** of the ritual. For example, the Wakuénai, a northern Arawakan society in Venezuela, consider **sound** and song to be the very source of shamanic power. In Wakuénai **healing** rituals the shaman uses song to name that which is out of balance within an individual, the social order, and the surrounding natural environment. The shaman then uses a different song to guide the restoration of harmony in those relationships.

Different types of songs can be used to enter different types of **altered states of consciousness**. For example, the Wakuénai recognize both shamans and chant owners. Chant owners use their songs to create a numb, dream-like altered state in which the perception of contrasts is either minimized or shut out entirely. While chanting they travel to the celestial home of the bee **spirits**, which gives chant owners powers of **divination** to detect the presence of sorcerers, locate missing persons or objects, and predict future events.

In contrast, the songs of the Wakuénai shaman are intended to awaken the senses and heighten the

shaman's sensitivity to contrasts. Using songs and hallucinogenic snuff shamans travel to *íyarudáti*, the **Land of the Dead** where the dangerous spirits and work with lost souls demand an alert and highly sensual altered state.

Shamans also used songs to contribute to the efficacy of remedies. Throughout **South America** the words and song of the *payé* (shaman) are essential to all plant remedies. Shamanic plant remedies derive their healing properties from the biology, from the spirit of the plant itself, and from the song the shaman **sings** into the remedy. From the practitioners' perspective the remedies will have no healing properties if the shaman doesn't sing to them.

Spirits continue to reveal songs to humans in **dreams** or during **vision quests**. These songs (and **dances**) are **sacred** in origin and performing them is a form of **prayer**. These new healing songs, if effective, may be preserved with the culture's traditional healing songs. The performance of these traditional songs may be personal sacred acts or, if the song belongs to a medicine society, a long, complex ceremonial prayer.

Songs are the property of either an individual shaman or a medicine society. In general the songs of the medicine societies describe a desired event in the magic of beautiful speech. Sung or spoken, these complex songs were intended to make the event take place. It is believed that if the description is vivid and the recitation is as it should be at the right time with the right behavior, and on behalf of all the people, the act of singing will make it so.

In cultures where the traditional songs belong to an individual they are handed down, generation to generation, shaman to **apprentice**, or they are purchased. For example, a **Lakota** shaman may spend years learning the songs and **drum** rhythms that go with each spirit. Though the effort is painstaking, it is worth it. The shaman who can master the songs can bring the

spirits into a ritual and hold them there for the duration through the power of the songs and the **rhythm** of the drums. See also **music**.

Langdon, E. Jean, and G. Bear. *Portals of Power: Shamanism in South America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992.

Schultes, R. E., and R. E. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Songlines

Songlines are magnetic, vital forces that naturally emanate from the **earth** and flow, crisscrossing the continent. Aborigines believe that they can project their **psyche** or inner consciousness along these songlines as a means of communicating. In this way **songs**, stories, and **knowledge** are shared over great distances and with people they never meet in person. The knowledge and use of songlines was once a **sacred** tradition that stretched across the entire earth and in this way cultural knowledge was shared worldwide.

For an **Aboriginal** Australian to become a socially responsible adult, he or she must learn the songlines of his or her **dreamtime** region. Knowledge of songlines allows a person to travel over the earth without maps or compasses. They tell those who know the nature of the land, desert, mountains, etc., what the land offers by way of **water** and resources.

Learning the songlines of a place creates an emotional attachment to the spirit of that place. The Dreamtime Ancestors are alive in the land. For example, a jumble of boulders is the Hare Wallaby men because they contain the essence of the Hare Wallaby men, not because the rocks resemble Hare Wallaby men. Learning the songlines connects the human **spirit** to the spirit of the land. See also **Australia** and **storytelling**.

Clanton-Collins, J. "An Interview with Burnam Burnam." *Shaman's Drum* 14 (Fall-Winter, 1988): 29–33.

Parker, K. L., et al. *Wise Women of the Dreamtime: Aboriginal Tales of the Ancestral Powers*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International Limited, 1993.

Sonic Driving

Sonic driving is the use of a monotonous **rhythm** that resonates at three, four, six or eight beats per second to induce **altered states of consciousness**. This is one of many techniques used by **shamans** to enter into their **trance** states. The **sound** may be produced with **drums, rattles**, other percussion instruments, like click sticks or hollow logs, **singing**, chanting, a stringed bow, digerido, bells, or Tibetan bowls. The trance response occurs when any of the above are played or sung at the correct frequency.

This frequency facilitates the production of **brain waves** in the low alpha and theta ranges which are related to states of creativity, vivid imagery, and states of **ecstasy**. A link has been shown between this type of shamanic drumming and an elevation in the production of **theta waves** in the brain.

There are four major types of brain wave frequency patterns, as measured by the electroencephalogram (EEG), an instrument that produces drawings of brain wave patterns of humans while they are engaged in various activities. EEG waves are classified according to wave frequency which is measured in cycles per second, or Hertz (Hz)

Delta waves, less than 4 Hz, are associated with sleep or unconsciousness. Theta waves, 4–8 Hz, are associated with the twilight consciousness between waking and sleeping that is difficult to maintain without **training**. Alpha waves, 8–13 Hz, are associated with a conscious state that is alert but unfocused or focused internally—relaxation, and well-being. Beta waves, greater than 13 Hz, are associated with

normal, everyday activities with the focus on the exterior world.

Jeanne Achterberg, Ph.D, author on **shamanism**, explains that it is possible for sonic driving to filter out ordinary awareness and take shamans into trance. The auditory nerves from the ear pass directly into the reticular activation system (RAS) of the brain stem, which is a massive nerve net that functions to coordinate sensory input and motor tone. The RAS also alerts the cortex to incoming information. Strong repetitive sound becomes strong repetitive neural firing in the brain. This strong, repetitive neural firing could compete successfully for cognitive awareness in the cerebral cortex. Successful competition would filter out **ordinary reality** stimuli and disturb the baseline stabilization of **ordinary consciousness**. The consciousness is then free to expand into altered states.

Humanity may have been using sonic driving as far back as prehistoric times. It is possible that **cave** paintings show us that our **ancestors** used sound, chanting, and **song** as sonic drivers for their **journeys** into the **spirit** realm. Légor Rezinkoff and Michel Dauvois, French archaeologists, surveyed three caves in southwest France by singing as they walked through. They commented on the impact of the stunning resonance. Their research resulted in a resonance map that showed that the cave areas of highest resonance were also most likely to harbor a painting or engraving. See also **chants**.

Achterberg, Jeanne. *Imagery in Healing: Shamanism and Modern Medicine*. Boston: New Science Library/Shambala, 1985.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Ingerman, Sondra. *Soul Retrieval: Mending the Fragmented Self Through Shamanic Practice*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991.

Leakey, Richard E. *The Origin of Humankind*. New York: Basic Books, 1994.

Sorcery

Some define sorcery as the use of sympathetic magic for personal gain or malevolent purposes; however others believe that when used properly sorcery can allow one “to taste infinity.” The **training** of the **shaman** and the sorcerer are nearly identical. How and why that training is used in the world differs. The sorcerer’s path is exclusively the path of personal **power** and liberation.

In practice sorcery is most often manifest as a projectile, like a *tsentsak*, shot into the victim or another object, like a tupicks, sent to attack the victim or an outright act of soul theft. The sorcerer may perform the soul theft with his or her own **spirit** through the victim’s **dreams** or through a spirit agent sent by the sorcerer. All of these conditions cause the victim to become ill in some manner and eventually to die, usually by wasting away.

Historically scholars have confused sorcery and **shamanism**, often treating them as the same profession. Sorcery is distinct from shamanism, but in most indigenous **cultures** of South or **North America**, it is accepted—if not expected—from otherwise benevolent shamans. Acts of sorcery practiced as a means of survival, protection, or **healing** of the tribe particularly against outside enemies are appropriate and perceived of as necessary.

Therefore, sorcery can be defined as that which disturbs the natural order of things, that is malevolent in intent and manipulative, but not perforce “evil.” Sorcerers are those people who perform acts of sorcery consistently, for personal gain, with disregard for the good of the community as a whole.

In shamanic cultures **illness** is frequently diagnosed as **soul loss** or the presence of an **energy intrusion**. Since both of these conditions can be caused by sorcery, accusations of sorcery are

often associated with illness. However, both conditions can be caused by means other than sorcery. Accusations of sorcery are often leveled when a North American shaman is unsuccessful in healing a patient. However, a shaman’s failure to heal is more often the fact that he or she and his or her **helping spirits** are less powerful than the source of the illness and they sincerely cannot prevail.

There is always a price for sorcery, however it is not always apparent what or how high that price is. For example, in **Africa** it is believed that for every power gained through sorcery, or unnatural means, a natural power of the people is lost. When shamans use their power to do harm, it is said that their relationship with spirit becomes polluted. The shaman must decide if the benefit to the community outweighs the cost and whether or not the resulting contamination can be cleansed and the relationship with spirit salvaged for the future.

Consistent, intentional misuse of power cannot be cleansed. The accumulated pollution brings misfortune or a painful death to the sorcerer. However, more often it is the community or the sorcerer’s loved ones, who are not as power-filled and protected, who suffer. Even if the sorcerer uses power to keep death at bay, over time the disconnection from a right relationship with spirit means the sorcerer must draw on more and more of his or her own power until there is nothing left but the “perfume of power” that the shaman once had.

Shamans and sorcerers both work with the energies of the visible and invisible worlds. It is the intent of their actions is different. The shaman seeks to restore harmony between the humans and the flow of the Universe for the good of his or her people. The sorcerer seeks personal gain with disregard for the harmony or disruption created relative to the flow of the Universe.

The life’s work of a shaman changes and develops over time. In general it is a

path of mastery wherein the shaman's skills and spiritual evolution develop in direct relation to each. All shamanic skills are neutral; the benevolence or malevolence of any act results from the intent through which the shaman sends the act forth. The shaman is usually held by others in a combination of fear and respect because of the ever-present possibility of acts of sorcery. See also **extraction; magical darts; soul retrieval; soul thief**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Mutwa, Credo Vusa'mazulu. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Soul

The soul is the animating and vital principle in a person often conceived of as an immaterial entity that survives death. The soul is a living reality, not a belief or tradition. However each **culture** describes the structure of the soul in its own way.

The primary and most universal factor of human existence is the recognition of soul as the experience of a life-giving **energy** that is independent of the body and directs or guides each individual. The existence of a soul and its connection with life before and after death is the ground of all traditional spiritual philosophy.

Soul, for the purposes of this book, is defined as the vital life giving force of the living human—the human spirit. This is to distinguish the soul of the living, for example the soul of the **shaman** or the patient, from the souls of the dead, the **helping spirits** the shaman works with, or the malevolent, misplaced **spirits** the shaman works on.

For example, a shaman's grandmother's life force is referred to as her soul while she is living. Once she is dead and her soul passes on into the spirit world where it re-emerges with the Source. There her soul is referred to as a **spirit**. If her spirit were to return to aid the shaman, it would be an ancestral helping spirit. However, if upon the grandmother's death her soul did not pass on, but stayed in the physical world where it no longer belonged, it would be referred to as a misplaced spirit. See also **ancestors**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

Soul Calling

A variation of a **soul retrieval** healing **ritual** practiced by various shamanic peoples in Asia and **Southeast Asia**. In a standard **soul** retrieval the **shaman** enters the spirit world, locates the lost soul, captures or secures it in some way, and conveys it back to the patient and replaces it in the patient's body. In a soul calling ritual the shaman enters **trance** to talk the soul back, often in **song**, by describing the way back to the body, by enticing the soul back with descriptions of the people and things the soul loves, or by negotiating the return of the soul with the **spirits** who have stolen it.

Hu Plig is the soul calling ritual performed by the **Hmong**. The Hmong conceive of the human soul as a multiple soul and of **illness** as the loss or dispersal of one or more of these soul aspects. In the soul calling ritual the shaman summons the soul aspects that have left the body, whether due to theft or of their own volition, and directs them to return to the body, re-integrate with each other, and restore integrity to

the life force of the body. See also **healing**; **multiple soul belief**; **spirit**.

Conquergood, D., and P. Thao. *I Am a Shaman*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1989.

Soul Catcher

Soul catchers are tools used by **shamans** to aid in the **soul retrieval** process, which is a type of **shamanic healing** ritual. Some of these tools are **power objects** in **ordinary reality** while others exist only in **non-ordinary reality**. Some soul catchers are defined culturally while others are the personal creation of the individual shaman.

Tsimshian shamans of the Nass River region in British Columbia, Canada, use soul catchers carved from hollow bone. These soul catchers are traditionally decorated with a two-headed beast, like a wolf or snake. This mythical beast opens its mouths at either end of the bone while a humanoid face stares out from the center.

Shamans use a variety of other **power** objects as soul catchers. For example, some shamans have soul catchers among the secret objects in their **medicine pouch**. Southeast Asian shamans have a box containing magical objects, including quartz **crystals**, or "stones of light," used in **soul** retrievals. A **Tungus** shaman is reported to have used a noose. See also **ritual**; **soul loss**; **Southeast Asia**.

Ingerman, Sondra. *Soul Retrieval: Mending the Fragmented Self Through Shamanic Practice*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991.

Soul Dance

See *lehstconos* and *Wintun*.

Soul Flight

Soul flight is another term for the shaman's **journey**. The journey and the embodiment **trance** are the two poles of

a continuum of altered states used by **shamans** in their work. The journey is the shaman's experience of his or her **soul** leaving the body and entering the invisible world to join forces with the **helping spirits** there on behalf of the patient or community. **Embodiment** is the shaman's experience of allowing the helping spirits to enter his or her body in the physical world to perform **healing** work for the patient or community through the shaman's body.

The terms journey, soul flight, and spirit flight describe the shaman's experience as his or her soul travels in other realms while in this altered state. For example, it is common understanding among Siberian tribal peoples that the shaman's soul leaves the shaman's body to travel to other parts of the world or to the spiritual realms of the **Kosmos**, typically described as flying up to an upper world, climbing down to a lower world, or swimming down into an underwater realm. See also **altered states of consciousness**.

Soul Loss

Soul loss is a spiritual **illness** that causes emotional, physical, and psychological **disease**. When the **soul** is lost, crucial parts of the individual that provide life and vitality split off and become lost in **non-ordinary reality**. The greater the degree of soul loss the more severe and life threatening the condition. If the soul totally vacates the body, the patient will die.

Soul loss is the gravest **diagnosis** in the shamanic nomenclature. It is seen as a major cause of illness and death and often arises from the demise of relationship with loved ones, career, or other significant attachments. Soul loss manifests in despair, immunological damage, cancer, and a host of other very serious disorders.

In Central and North Asia there are several conceptions of the cause of illness, but soul loss is by far the most widespread. The shamanic people of this area attribute disease to the soul

having strayed away or been stolen. The **shaman** is called on to find the lost soul, capture it, and convince it to return to the patient's body. In these **cultures**, only the shaman recognizes that the soul has fled, and is able to overtake it in non-ordinary reality and return it to the body of the patient. This **healing** ritual is called **soul retrieval**.

From the shaman's perspective, the human soul is an undifferentiated **energy** that enters the body at birth. The soul transcends the individual, existing before birth and after death. It is the nature of the soul to flow, undifferentiated, like a river of life force in the body.

At the moment of soul loss the part that splits off becomes differentiated, assuming the age, emotions, pain, details, and distortion of the experience. That fragment of life force energy, the soul part, crystallizes around this information, solidifying like a rock and no longer flowing like a river. In this form the life force energy is no longer available to the individual.

Soul loss is an adaptive strategy. It can be caused by whatever a person experiences as traumatic relative to his or her soul, even if another person would not experience it as such. When a person experiences trauma, a part of his or her vital essence separates in order to survive the experience by escaping the full impact of the pain. Normally, as the individual deals with manageable amounts of pain over time the vital essence eventually reconnects and the person "gets over it."

However, when the pain is so overwhelming or the fear so terrifying, or the person is unable to deal with manageable amounts of pain for lack of support or skills, the vital essence is lost. In the case of abuse, the single experience alone may be tolerable, but the cumulative effect of these experiences over time is more than the soul can take. The incident becomes "the straw that breaks the camel's back" and the vital essence is lost.

When the soul part slips into non-ordinary reality and out of time, it

becomes lost or stuck. This leaves a hole in the soul that remains within the body in **ordinary reality**. Many addictions and habitual behavior patterns can be seen as coping mechanisms for living in a state of soul loss. They are attempts to gather energy to fill the hole created by the soul's leaving.

The primary reasons for soul loss in the past are: soul theft by a sorcerer, magician, or wandering **spirit**, straying from the body and getting lost, particularly while **dreaming**, and being frightened or living in chronic fear.

The primary reasons for soul loss today include all of the above. However theft by a skilled practitioner of magic is much less common because those skilled enough to steal a soul are less common. Soul parts can be lost through trauma (a single experience) including loss of a loved one, divorce, surgery, accident, illness, miscarriage, abortion, rape. Soul parts can be lost through abuse (a pattern of traumatic experiences that repeat in a pattern over time) including physical, sexual, psychological, or spiritual abuse, incest, abusive intimate relationships, the stress of combat, addiction, and cultural conditioning. In some cases individuals give their soul parts away due to behavior patterns set up by chronic low self-esteem, shame, and sense of self as a victim.

Possible symptoms of soul loss include feelings of chronic depression, alienation, a hole or incompleteness, **emptiness**, being cut off from a deep connection with life, or living a life that is without meaning or purpose. These feelings may be experienced as intense suffering or as a dull chronic ache masked by drug and alcohol use, entertainment, compulsive sex, or other addictions. However, an active addiction can be both the sign of the original soul loss and a reason for further soul loss, for example, an overdose is extremely traumatic for the soul.

There is a distinction between a lost soul and a lost soul part. A lost soul leaves the patient weak and vulnerable,

without the vital force needed to live. The patient will die in a number of days or weeks if the soul is not brought back. It takes a severe trauma or a skilled **soul thief** to truly damage a soul to this degree.

A lost soul part is a fragment of the soul. The absence of a part may go basically unnoticed as anything more than a sudden mood, attitude, or behavioral change. Though the patient has died a bit inside, literal death from a lost soul part is not eminent. However, soul loss makes an individual vulnerable to further soul loss. The cumulative effects of several lost soul parts can evolve into a state similar to that of the lost souls described above.

Both situations are life threatening, though in different time frames. They are both more significant than psychological dissociation or the dissociation of an aspect of the personality. Soul loss is literal damage to the inviolate core that is the essence of the person's being. It is not a psychological metaphor.

Prominent Jungian analyst Marie Von Franz wrote that soul loss can be observed today in the everyday lives of the human beings around us. Loss of soul appears in the form of a sudden onset of apathy and listlessness and the feeling that joy has gone out of life, initiative is crippled, life is empty, "I" am empty, and everything seems pointless. See also **ritual**.

Achterberg, J. "The Wounded Healer: Transformational Journeys in Modern Medicine." *Shaman's Path: Healing, Personal Growth, and Empowerment*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Ingerman, Sondra. *Soul Retrieval: Mending the Fragmented Self Through Shamanic Practice*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991.

Way, A. G. *Soul Recovery and Extraction*. Cottonwood, AZ: Blue Turtle Publishing, 1993.

Soul Retrieval

Soul retrieval is the process by which the **shaman** enters **non-ordinary** reality to track and retrieve lost **souls**, or soul parts, for a patient who has experienced **soul loss**. The soul retrieval process is the most difficult and dangerous of the shaman's tasks. The following steps, observed in Siberian soul retrieval **rituals**, describe the soul retrieval process.

1. The shaman connects with a **helping spirit** and enters his or her working **trance** state, thus entering non-ordinary reality.
2. The shaman discovers the cause of the **illness** and where the soul of the sick person can be found (**divination**).
3. The shaman finds the lost soul in non-ordinary reality with the help of the helping spirits and returns with it to the ritual space.
4. If necessary the shaman drives out the **spirit** of the illness from the patient's body (**extraction**), as indicated by the helping spirits.
5. The shaman returns the lost soul to the patient's body, usually by blowing it into the patient's heart and the top of the head.
6. The shaman thanks the helping spirits for their assistance, exits the trance state, reenters **ordinary reality**, and closes the ritual space.

After the soul part is returned to the patient's body, it is traditional to recount some of the events that occurred in the shaman's **journey**. In some **cultures** the shaman is expected to report or narrate the events as they unfold in the journey. The dynamics of the journey further explain the exact nature of the soul damage and what the patient will now need to do to complete the **healing** and reintegration of the lost soul.

There is a traditional relationship between soul retrievals and extractions. Soul loss creates a hole in the patient's soul which leaves the individual vulnerable. **Spirit intrusions** and other illness-inducing energies can enter that hole. Therefore, it is often necessary to take

out what has filled the hole in the soul before placing the soul part back in it.

Some practitioners can perform soul retrievals long distance, without actually being in the physical presence of the patient. In this case the shaman tracks the soul part, secures it, and then travels through the **Middeworld** to the patient, while still in the journey, to return the lost soul parts.

Sandra Ingerman, shamanic healer and author of *Soul Retrieval*, explains that where lost soul parts go is crucial information for the shaman to succeed in the soul retrieval. From a shamanic perspective, the soul parts go to a specific place in non-ordinary reality where they exist out of linear time. These soul parts are not simply aspects of the personality which split off, or dissociate, and get lost in the undifferentiated, no-man's land of the unconscious. They are specific energies in a specific place which can be accessed in the **altered state of consciousness** of the shaman's journey.

Scholars have discussed possible reasons why the shamans of different cultures, for example Siberian and Indonesian shamans, journey to the same three places for soul retrievals. They suggest that the places either originate in the religious traditions in the heart of the same people or that the different religious traditions belong to different cultures who met and joined within one culture. However, practitioners explain that the commonality is a result of simply following the souls to where they go when they are lost or taken. In soul retrieval work the shaman must go to wherever and whenever the soul part is waiting in non-ordinary reality as directed by his or her helping spirits.

The Role of Helping Spirits

Helping spirits of all kinds help the shaman locate lost souls in non-ordinary reality and successfully retrieve them. If the lost soul was stolen by **spirits of the dead**, helping spirits are dispatched by the shaman to bring the

souls back to the shaman, who will then complete the retrieval. However, if the shaman determines that the soul was stolen by malevolent spirits then the retrieval is considered more difficult. The shaman journeys with his or her helping spirits, working together to track, secure, and retrieve the lost soul.

Once the soul is found, the shaman may be forced to use trickery, theft, or engage in battle to get the soul away from the malevolent spirit or other **soul thief**. At times it is the lost soul itself that doesn't want to return. In this case the shaman may barter, cajole, or trick the lost soul into returning.

For **contemporary shamans**, soul loss is often caused by loved ones engaged, unintentionally, in soul-damaging behavior. In these cases, the perpetrator is usually passing on patterns of abuse that were inflicted on them. The patient often has compassion for their perpetrator and trickery or battle with the perpetrator may upset the patient. Persuasion, debate, and engendering trust are often the appropriate course of action.

In these cases the soul part may not want to return. The shaman explains that the situation has changed and/or that the part is now an adult in ordinary reality. Learning that they are out of danger and/or free to act on their own behalf as adults, soul parts are usually willing to attempt a return.

Tools of the Trade

The essential tool for soul retrieval is the shaman's journey. The **drum** and **rattle**, basic tools for supporting the journey, are therefore the basic tools for soul retrieval. Some shamans also take **soul catcher** tools into their journeys specifically for soul retrieval. Some of these tools are defined culturally while others are the personal creation of individual shamans.

Soul catchers are used by shamans of the Nass River region in British Columbia, Canada. Soul catchers are carved from a hollow bone and usually decorated with a two headed beast, like

a wolf or snake. This mythical beast opens its mouths at either end of the bone while a humanoid face stares out from the center.

Shamans use a variety of **power objects** as soul catchers. Some shamans have objects that aid them in soul retrievals among the secret objects in their **medicine pouches**. Southeast Asian shamans have a box containing magical objects, including quartz **crystals** or “stone’s of light.” A **Tungus** shaman is reported to have used a noose. Some of these tools are power objects in ordinary reality while others exist only in non-ordinary reality.

Integration

When the shaman returns the lost soul part to the patient, the source of problem is resolved at the level of spirit. Then the shaman must facilitate the process of resolving the original reason the part left and restoring harmony between the patient and the soul part. If the soul loss was recent then the integration process is relatively simple and harmony restores itself. If the soul loss occurred in the past, not only does the original trauma need to be expressed and released, but the behavior patterns formed to cope with the soul loss must be replaced with healthier behavior patterns.

The behavior patterns formed to cope with living in a state of soul loss occur on three levels. The first level is at the patient’s core where the hole was left in the soul. Right after a soul part leaves, the individual must begin protective behavior to guard the hole from intrusions. These behavior patterns effect the persons ability to express and receive intimacy.

The second level is composed of patterns of behaviors the individual engages in to fill the hole. These behaviors are habitual, compulsive, or addictive. They may fill the hole temporarily or they enable the person to enter an altered state in which they feel as if the hole is filled for the duration of the altered state.

The third layer of behavior is the chronic repetition of the original trauma. The hole carries the shape, or resonance, of the original trauma in the same way that a puzzle holds the shape of a piece that has been removed. The resonance of the trauma, still within the body, attracts new versions of the original trauma. In this way the patient chooses to repeats the pattern, again and again, until the lost soul part is retrieved.

These behavior patterns are chronic stresses on the individuals well-being. They affect the physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual health if the individual as well as how he or she perceives of the world (mental-philosophical), how he or she relates with others (social-ethical), and how he or she relates to herself (moral).

In soul loss and the sicknesses or death arising from it, healing is available through the shaman’s journey, the **power** of the helping spirits, and the cleverness of the shaman herself. The shaman sees the soul, its form, and its destiny. Where the shaman is at hand and the fate of the soul is the issue. The shaman guards the soul of the community and the souls of the individuals within the community. See also **shamanic healing** and **Southeast Asia**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Ingerman, Sondra. *Soul Retrieval: Mending the Fragmented Self Through Shamanic Practice*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991.

Waya, A. G. *Soul Recovery and Extraction*. Cottonwood, AZ: Blue Turtle Publishing, 1993.

Soul Substance

A substance carrying the unique vibrational signature of the **soul** adheres to all things which have been in contact

with the soul. Soul substance adheres in particular to fingernails, hair, excrement, and saliva. These can be used for a variety of different kinds of diagnostic purposes for the person in question. They can also be used as ingredients in acts of **sorcery** intended to harm that person.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Soul Thief

A soul thief is a person or **spirit** who steals the **soul**, or soul parts, of others. Traditionally, soul thieves are sorcerers or magicians, who are skilled in the magical manipulation of the soul, or malevolent **spirits** and **spirits of the dead**, who are able to pull the souls of the living into the spirit realm. Soul theft leaves the victim in a state of **soul loss**.

Soul theft by a practitioner of magic is less common today, as are skilled sorcerers and magicians able to perform it. However, the theft of soul parts is quite common. Soul parts are often stolen unintentionally in divorces, abusive or dysfunctional relationships, relationships with the chronically ill, and by exhausted parents. Rapists, child molesters, and people who prey on others of lesser **power**, rank, or privilege are often soul thieves.

Sound

Sound is the movement or vibration of **energy** moving at vibrations per second within the auditory range. Sound is an essential aspect of shamanic work. **Shamans** use **rhythm** and percussion, **song** and **chant**, **music** and instruments, and **silence** and meditation. Sound is used by shamans to access spirit **power**, enter **trance**, induce trance in the patient, empower remedies and cures, and as a remedy in and of itself.

The body is affected differently by different sounds. In particular, **shamanism** makes use of the fact that the body responds to repetitious sounds occurring at 6 to 8 beats per second by altering its ordinary state of consciousness. In this way shamans have used **drums** and percussion to induce journeying trance states for 40,000 years.

Percussive sound, probably accompanying chanting or dancing, appears to be the oldest form of music. Though drums are not found in excavations, it is assumed that this is due to the rapid degeneration of wood and hide. Excavations do reveal bullroars, bone and ivory flutes, whistles, and **rattles** of strung beads or bone scrapers and **rock art** depicting the use of drums along with these other instruments.

Shamans understand that the human body responds to sound in a myriad of ways. There is evidence that certain sounds and rhythms affect both our physical and spiritual well-being. Positive physical health effects related to sound have been shown in contemporary medical studies involving meditation, the repetition of **mantras**, and the cultivation of silence.

Yet indigenous peoples have a much more fully developed understanding of the use of sound in **healing** that extends all the way back to the beginning of time to the original **Ancestors**. The creation stories of indigenous peoples around the world explain that in the beginning was the Sound, and the Sound was the sound of **Spirit** who caused the world of matter to take form. Sound is associated with the essential Ether out of which the other **elements: Air, Fire, Water, and Earth** unfolded during the **evolution** of the universe.

Lao-tzu, philosopher of the Tao, speaks of the Great Tone that is "the tone that goes beyond all usual imagination," and the Hindu speak of Nada Brahma, the tone from which God made the world. Religious scholars have searched for centuries for the word that the Christian God spoke that created the world.

Similarly, our **language** reflects the ancient idea that a person, like his universe, is created from a tone. Musicologist and writer, Hoachim-Ernst Berendt, observed that the Latin term *personare* means “to sound through something.” Thus the person is as the shaman sees him, a body through which the sound of a **soul** resonates. See also **journey** and **sonic driving**.

Dossey, Larry. “The Body as Music.” *UTNE Reader* 68 (March–April 1995), 81–82.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Meadows, Kenneth. *Earth Medicine: Revealing Hidden Teachings of the Native American Medicine Wheel*. Boston: Element Books, 1996.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

South

The south is a directional **energy** used by **shamans** in their **ritual** work and the creation of **sacred space** within ordinary **space**. The south is one of six directional energies (**east**, south, **west**, **north**, above, and below) who together define the location of the seventh point, the center. Shamans must remain aware of their center at all times to keep from becoming lost while traveling in the boundless and ever-changing realms of **non-ordinary reality**.

Each of the directions is associated with an element, a season, time of day, **colors**, animals, deities, etc. These associations show both consistency and variation across **cultures**. The energy of the south is quick, physical, sensual, and rapid fire. For many cultures, though not all, the element associated with the south is **fire**, the season is summer, the time is day, the **life cycle** passage is the elder, carrier of **knowledge**, the **power** is love, and the **journey** is one of **purification** and growth through

lessons of innocence, faith, passion, and release.

South America

South America is a continent of vast and enormous natural wonders. These natural wonders are powerful spiritual forces in the **shamanism** of the continent. Thus, **shamans** in the Andes work in deep relationship with the **spirits** of those mountains and shamans in **Amazonia** work with the spirits of the rain forest and the plethora of **plant medicines** it offers.

South America is home to shamans who, like those of the **Q'ero** and the **Shuar**, have lived relatively untouched by the outside world until just a few decades ago. In contrast, across the continent in Brazil, there are many spiritist movements, like **Candomblé** or **Santo Daime** doctrine, that have merged the **trance** techniques of indigenous people with African and European **religions**.

Power distinguishes the South American shaman from ordinary people as it does around the world. In South America power is acquired through the mastery of ecstatic **altered states of consciousness**, the acquisition of **helping spirits**, and the acquisition of **power songs**.

The shaman's ability to mediate with the spirit world and affect change in the physical world defines his or her power. Many different techniques are used like the extensive energetic **training** of the **Q'ero**, the drumming trances of the **Mapuche**, or the **dreaming** work of the **Avá-Chiripá**. In much of Amazonia plant **entheogen** are the most common means to enter ecstatic states and **ayahuasca** or **yagé** is the most frequently used.

Throughout South America the plant entheogens are believed to have spirit power in and of themselves. **Ayahuasca** in particular is considered a shaman. It has its own force, power, will, and **knowledge**. It is known to enter the bodies of the initiates and patients who drink it and to inspire altered state

experiences in which they heal without the intervention of the shaman.

It is prevalent in South America for shamans to be paid for their services. In many **cultures** it is expected that the helping spirits will determine the appropriate sacrifice on a sessions by sessions basis. The patient's sacrifice completes the cycle of energy opened in the spirit world by the shaman on the patient's behalf. If payment is not made the illness itself will remain vital and able to enter other people or the helping spirits may harm the shaman. See also **Andes, South America; drum; ecstasy; medicine; Quechua; spirit.**

Langdon, E. Jean, and G. Bear. *Portals of Power: Shamanism in South America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992.

Southeast Asia

South Asia is defined by a massive arc of mountain ranges that separates it from Afghanistan and Iran to the west and from Central Asia and Tibet to the north. Vast oceans define the southern and eastern parameters. Thousands of dialects of the main **language** families are spoken and several of the world's principal racial types are represented in this region.

The religious life of people in Southeast Asia is extremely complex. Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Daoism, Shintoism, and regional forms of Islam and Christianity are practiced formally while daily life is filled with spirit **possession, exorcism, shamans, sorcerers, oracles, spirit mediums, energy healers, and various other practitioners** who use **trance** states. The lay population is both religious, following one of the above formal doctrines, and spiritual, turning to shamans and **seers** to assist with the influence of demons, deities, and **spirits** on their health and livelihood.

Two of the world's major **religions** developed in South Asia: Hinduism and Buddhism, which sprang from

Hinduism in 1000 B.C.E. retaining some ideas and innovating others. Both religions greatly affected the shamanic **rituals** and practices of the indigenous peoples. Buddhism exists alongside Hinduism in **Nepal**, is the major religion of Sri Lanka, and has all but died out in India.

Across the region the shamanism of the indigenous people has been deeply affected by religious and governmental centers of power. Nonetheless, shamanism adapts and is still practiced across the region among, for example, the **Tamang, Hmong, Koreans, Indonesians, and Malay**. See also **Daoism (Taoism); Korea; sorcery.**

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Space

The **shaman** is often described as "a master of both worlds." In practice this means that the shaman is able to be in everyday space and non-ordinary space simultaneously. In everyday space the shaman is bound by the laws of physics. In **non-ordinary reality** the shaman enters the multi-dimensional reality of the spirit world and is no longer bound by the laws of physics.

The shaman cultivates this ability through developing a mastery of altered states. Shamans must be lucid and active while in the **altered state of consciousness** to be able to move **energy** from the infinite dimensions of the spirit world into the three dimensions of the physical world and vice versa.

While the everyday world is permeated by **spirits**, they do not have form in the everyday world. Since they have no form they are hard to move because they are hard to contain or hold. The shaman uses altered states to enter the space where spirits and intrusive energies have form. Different altered states give shamans access to different spaces in non-ordinary reality and to the different spirits who inhabit them.

Some physical places are both ordinary and non-ordinary spaces. These

physical spaces contain naturally occurring portals which allow mortals and spirits to pass between the worlds. These power spots are highly valued by shamans as passages to the otherworld and as sources of rejuvenating energies.

Physical spaces, like power spots, serve to remind us that the multi-dimensional realms of the spirit world are not geographically removed from the everyday world. All the worlds occupy the same physical space, but the spirit world spaces are only accessible to some of us some of the time. To gain access humans must enter altered states of consciousness. The mastery of these altered states comes with great effort, personal sacrifice, and skill. However it is through this that the shaman becomes “a master of both worlds.” See also **sacred space** and **time**.

- Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.
- Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.
- Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Spells

Spells are magical **incantations** that govern the behavior of the target for better or for worse. Spells can be cast on others or on oneself. Spells are usually cast with intention, however they can be cast unconsciously. Malevolent spells are problematic suggestions of what the target of the spell can and cannot do that manipulate his or her actions. Benevolent spells, also called **blessings** or **prayers**, are non-problematic and often empowering suggestions that also manipulate the actions of the target.

Spiral

The spiral, an ancient symbol of the **sacred**, is found carved into and painted

on stones, homes, **power objects**, and shamanic **paraphernalia** on every continent. In general the spiral represents the earth's **womb**, a core image of the wisdom and the life force inherent in the **earth**.

In Neolithic Europe the spiral represented the flow of **energy** from the earth, through the cycle of life and back to the earth. That sacred cycle is physical and spiritual, solar and lunar, feminine and masculine, and of death and rebirth.

The spiral can represent different ideas depending on how, and in what context, it is used. For example, the **Zulu** use a single spiral to represent the heat and force the high **shaman** can harness for **healing** people. A double spiral is a symbol of rebirth, called “the Path of the Many Returns.” Rebirth itself is a symbol of the secret road between the stars that was taken by humans between earth's and other solar systems.

The spiral represents the path of the **soul** from the unknown point of origin in the cosmic womb to the point of return in the Hereafter. The spiral describes the infinite process of life that resonates with the vibrations and **rhythms** of the **Kosmos**, moving from and returning to The Source.

The spiral is related to the labyrinth which represents a path to the Center and, in a mystical sense, to the Source. Death and a return to The Source is the objective of the shaman's **initiation** journey and the terrain of every **journey** thereafter. The shaman's conception of the labyrinth as a return to the womb of the Source has been demonstrated by anthropological field research.

- Mutwa, Credo Vusa'mazulu. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.
- Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Ripinsky-Naxon, M. *The Nature of Shamanism: Substance and Function of a Religious Metaphor*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Spirit

Spirit is the animating and vital principle often conceived of as an immaterial entity that survives death. It is experienced as a life-giving **energy** that is independent of form and directs or guides the being it enlivens.

With our present tools, science can neither prove nor disprove the existence of spirit. Nor is it within the scope of this book to continue this debate. However, to understand **shamanism**, a working definition of spirit is necessary. In this volume, spirit describes the vital energies and entities **shamans** work with in the invisible world. **Soul** describes the vital energy of a living human, in particular. Spirit and soul both have form in the invisible world, and are therefore, real to the shaman.

From the perspective of a shaman working with a patient, **spirits** are either helpful or harmful. The interaction of a human with helpful spirits can create greater harmony and well-being and is a source of wisdom and **healing** power. However, even helpful spirits may appear malevolent under certain conditions, for example, when their messages are unheeded or rejected.

Harmful spirits are usually misplaced, not malevolent, like **spirits of the dead** who remain attached to the living or souls of the living who are lost in the **Land of the Dead** before their time. Other spirits are vengeful or malevolent, often because an act of **sorcery** has engaged them in a malevolent mission. Interaction with harmful spirits can create disorientation, disharmony, **illness**, and possibly death.

For the most part, spirits are neutral and formless. Some spirits take a physical form like a human, a place, a lake, or a mountain. Other spirits inhabit different forms in the physical world, for

example **ancestor** spirits who were human may take the form of a rock or an animal. Other spirits may take the form of beings that no longer exist in the physical world like gods, goddesses, and mythical beasts, like dragons and dinosaurs.

Through spirit the shaman makes a Connection-to-all-things. Spirit is the shaman's way into the unquantifiable **Emptiness**, the Unknown. Held in this way, all spirit is a manifestation of Divine Spirit. When used in this transcendent sense, Spirit will be capitalized. See also **interdependence** and **Kosmos**.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

Spirit Boat

The Spirit Boat is a **shamanic healing** ritual used by a group of **shamans** to retrieve the lost **soul** of a person who is suffering from **soul loss**. This technique is used when the lost soul has been stolen by the **spirits of the dead** and taken to the **Land of the Dead**. The **ritual** is used by shamans of **Australia**, the Upper Amazon, and the northwest coast of **North America** when the **power** of more than one shaman is necessary to retrieve the lost soul.

This particular **healing** ritual was highly developed among the people of the Puget Sound region. Each tribe had its own name for this ritual, for example Chinook call the ritual *qlaqewam* and the Snuqualmi call it *sbededaq*, but in practice these rituals are very much the same. The form of the ritual and the participation of more than one shaman are both a response to the danger to the shaman involved in retrieving a lost soul from the spirits in the Land of the Dead. However, if the shaman does not go, the patient will become ever weaker, lose everything, and eventually die.

In the Pacific Northwest, the Spirit Boat ritual is held in a house where invited guests and friends gather. The

ritual begins at sundown and will last for up to four days. The sick person is placed on a pallet in a corner of the room. Three to four shamans take their places in the center of the room in the "boat," each armed with a long pole, or *touchtd*. The friends gather around, **rattle** and beat the **drums**. The shamans begin to **sing** their **power songs**.

The shamans begin movements with the poles, as though they are propelling and paddling the boat along. The **helping spirits** begin to join them and the shamans gradually enter their **trance**. This continues all night as the shamans travel in their boat to the Land of the Dead, searching for the lost soul.

The shamans will encounter at least nine familiar locations as they travel through the **Lowerworld** to the Land of the Dead. Some of these locations are dangerous. The shaman who spots the danger sings his power **songs** to announce it. If one of the shamans falls into the stream or is caught off guard by the dangers in the **journey**, the corresponding shaman in **ordinary reality** will drop dead in the middle of the ritual. This is interpreted as a severe loss of **spirit** power.

Once the lost soul is located, the struggle in the Lowerworld can last a day and a half. To prevail a shaman must stay connected to his helping spirit and possess an unusually strong will. If this first rescue attempt is unsuccessful, the patient will die and the shaman may die.

When the shamans have prevailed and the lost soul is secured, they must retrace their path to return safely from the Lowerworld. When the shamans have returned to the room in ordinary reality, sometimes a full four days later, the sick man is lifted into the "boat" with the shamans. Together, using all their remaining strength, the four shamans lift the soul of the patient, place it on his body, and force it if necessary back into the body in which it belongs. The ritual is then complete and

the patient will recover quite quickly. See also **soul retrieval**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Spirit Canoe

The Spirit Canoe, or **Spirit Boat**, is a **shamanic healing** ritual used to retrieve a lost **soul** for a person who is suffering from **soul loss**. The technique is used for **healing** or **divination** by the people of **aboriginal Australia**, the upper Amazon, and the northwest coast of **North America**. See also **ritual**.

Spirit Flight

See **journey** and **soul flight**.

Spirit Hands

Spirit hands refers to the helping spirit's hands, paws, hooves, etc., working through the shaman's own hands in **extraction** work and other hands-on **healing**. The shaman experiences expanded sensory awareness and **powers** to heal while in **trance**. See also **helping spirits**.

Spirit Intrusions

Spirit intrusions are complex **energy intrusions**, which are considered **spirits of the dead** (deceased humans) or some other malevolent spirit or minor deity. The **diagnosis** of the true nature of a spirit intrusion depends to some degree on the cultural definitions of the beings of the spirit realms.

The intrusion of a spirit into a living being is considered a spirit **possession**. In this state the intruding spirit will compete with the host for the host's own life force and control of the host's body. Depossession, or **exorcism**, is the

type of extraction used to remove spirit intrusions.

Spirit Lodge

The Spirit Lodge is a shamanic **ritual** performed widely across **North America** for the purposes of **diagnosis, divination**, and to a lesser extent **healing**. Versions of the Spirit Lodge are found in the American Arctic, areas of **South America**, and among the Semang of the Malay Peninsula. This ritual in all of its variations is characterized by a sudden confusion of **spirit** voices that can be heard by everyone within the ritual space, the shaking of the tent and/or other objects in the ritual space, and the magical liberation of the **shaman** from restraints with which he was bound in the beginning of the ritual.

The spiritual beliefs and ritual elements that make up the Spirit Lodge practice constitute a complex whole. It is performed by shamans primarily of the **Eskimo** peoples across the Arctic and indigenous peoples throughout North America from the northeastern woodlands to the Plains and Plateau regions. Though it is not present in all **cultures**, the Spirit Lodge practice is clearly widespread. The different ritual elements of the practice occur in a fixed order that is surprisingly consistent given its vast dispersion and clearly delineates this as a unitary practice among other shamanic performances.

The ritual is used for diagnosis and divining remedies for illness, seeing the future or the movement of enemies, locating game and lost objects, and communicating with the deceased. In particular the ritual is used to capture the free soul of a sorcerer and to force that sorcerer to cease all malevolent acts causing illness, death, and injury to others. In addition to its literal functions, participation in the ritual reaffirms the powerful presence of **spirits** in the lives of those people.

Performing the Spirit Lodge requires levels of **power** and skill that can only be mastered by shamans with a great deal of personal power, maturity, and a

strong working relationship with powerful **helping spirits**. The practice is primarily one of divination in which spirit flight is not as important as the presence of the spirits and the accurate interpretation of the communication with those spirits.

There is some scholarly debate as to the exact nature of the shaman's **trance** state during the Spirit Lodge ritual. However, the activities of the shaman, **singing**, rattling, and drumming, to induce trance and the wide range of **power displays** that result from the shaman's trance clearly distinguish the Spirit Lodge ritual as an ecstatic performance.

There are many displays of spirit power, witnessed during a typical Spirit Lodge ritual. When it is performed in a tent, the tent shakes, often violently, throughout the ritual. The top of the lodge, regardless of the structure, fills with voices and shining lights with no apparent origin other than spirit. In response to spontaneous questions posed by the audience, complex answers come through the shaman, whole, at a speed quicker than thought. In some cases the **language** of these answers is unintelligible and has to be translated by the shaman.

The shaking of the tent is absent in areas where the cylindrical tent, or **dje-sikon**, is not used for the ritual. When the ritual is performed inside a lodge or home, as with the **yuwipi** of the **Lakota**, the construction of the ritual space does not allow for shaking. Nonetheless, a range of the other signs that spirit power is present are witnessed, like **sounds** of tapping and steps on the ground, objects flying around the room, and the shaman's liberation from his bonds, are characteristic of these versions of the ritual.

In some performances of the Spirit Lodge, the shaman is not only freed from bonds he cannot untie himself, but he is found suspended from the top of the ritual space. Often the suspended shaman hangs precariously from one foot, completely naked.

The spirits who participate with the shaman in the Spirit Lodge rituals varies between cultures and shamans. However the spirits of Nature and spirits from the **Land of the Dead** are the most common in North America. The spirits of Nature are most common in the **east** where Thunder is prevalent as is Turtle, or *Mikenak*, who serves as a go-between with the shaman and the spirit world. The spirits from the Land of the Dead or the **Ancestors**, who often appear as Owl, are prevalent in the Plains. Often the Master/Mistress of the Animals or the Master/Mistress of the Dead is invoked in the ritual, as is prevalent in Eskimo Spirit Lodge performances.

The shaman does not invoke spirit flight into the spirit world during the Spirit Lodge performance, except among the Arctic peoples where the shaman's **journey** is a regular part of this ritual. The function of the ritual is to summon the spirits to answer questions and perform tasks to get information. Therefore the practitioner of the Spirit Lodge is not necessarily a shaman, but may be a conjurer or **seer** with the power and skill to perform the ritual.

Curing during the Spirit Lodge is rare. It is more common to use the ritual to diagnose the cause and treatment of illness. However, when curing does occur it is often because the answer to the question is a healing or the response to a request for healing is an answer or information.

Soul loss is sometimes cured through the Spirit Lodge when the helping spirits summoned for the ritual are able to retrieve the patient's **soul** from the Land of the Dead. Illness caused by the transgression of a **taboo** can be healed in the Spirit Lodge if the patient is able to perform the confessions and amends demanded by spirit for a cure. It is also possible to cure illness caused by **sorcery** through the Spirit Lodge if the helping spirits summoned for the ritual are able to capture the sorcerer's free soul and force the sorcerer to

confess and desist. See also **drum; rattle; Shaking Tent Ceremony**.

Hultkrantz, A. "Spirit Lodge, a North American Shamanistic Séance." In *Studies in Shamanism*. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1962.

Spirit Marriage

Shamans in many parts of the world gain shamanic **power** through marriage to a **spirit** mate in the spirit world. For example, in Burma female shamans marry a male *nat* and male shamans, a female *nat*. The spirit husband or wife becomes a primary helping spirit in the shaman's practice. These spirit marriages not only empower the shaman's **healing** work, but they often produce offspring (spirit) and develop other qualities attributed to ordinary reality marriages.

Sora shamans, who are primarily female, acquire their shamanic powers around puberty through marriage to an underworld spirit. With the aid of this spirit, the girl begins to develop the ability to enter **trance** at will and to **journey** around the **Lowerworld** without fear.

The family tree of Sora spirit marriages serves to pass shamanic power down through the family line. A shaman's spirit husband is the offspring from the union of her predecessor (human) and that predecessor's mate (spirit). The spirit husband is also her spirit brother. The offspring from this union will marry the shaman's successor and so on, effectively accumulating shamanic powers and keeping them in the female lineage.

Though the Sora live a separate life from their Hindu neighbors, some Sora shamans receive their power through marriage to Hindu **spirits**. This creates an interesting re-balancing of powers socially. These Hindu spirits are from high warrior or king castes who wield economic and political power over the Sora and have for centuries. Through spirit marriage that power is accessible to the shaman in **non-ordinary reality**.

Spirit marriage may preclude marriage to a human spouse, depending on the demands of the **helping spirit** to whom the shaman is married. Spirit husbands and wives are quite lusty. They are able to bring their shaman mates to orgasm during **dreams** and trances. However, given the ecstatic nature of the shaman's trance state in general, this is not surprising. The spirit marriage is another way of describing the intimate merging of the shaman's power with that of his or her helping spirit. See also **ecstasy**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Spirit of Fire

See **fire**.

Spirits

In the invisible world the **shaman** experiences the infinite nature of the **Kosmos**; a Kosmos which is alive, ever-expanding, and creative. The Kosmos in its totality is a challenge for the human mind to grasp. Therefore, the shaman enters an altered state of **ecstasy**, so that he or she can experience the true nature of the Kosmos. Even in an **altered state of consciousness**, the shaman's experience is not always easily described or comprehended, particularly by others not in an altered state.

Spirits are one of the ways shamans "see," or give form to, the energies of the invisible world. Just as each human learns to identify a certain **energy** patterns as "tree" and another as "cat" in **ordinary reality**, the shaman must learn identify energy patterns in **non-ordinary reality**. Metaphorically speaking, spirits are tendrils of the Kosmos reaching out to the shaman in forms he or she finds easier to comprehend and communicate to others.

Shamans explain that the experience of **spirit** while in **trance** is an interaction with what is felt to be an intelligent, non-material entity that is separate from the ego or self. Furthermore, this entity may provide information that shamans believe they cannot access alone, without this connection.

Spirits may be seen in the form of an animal or a personage from the past including **ancestors**, gods, goddesses, or other deities. Shamans also see the spirits of nature, of the geography, the **elements**, and mythical creatures, like dragons and griffins. While these forms may be symbolic representations of what a shaman experiences during trance, these trance experiences are real in another dimension. Spirits are pictographic representations of the ineffable in terms the general public can understand.

Piers Vitebsky, author and anthropologist with twenty years of fieldwork with tribal shamans, explains that in the shaman's view of the world all things—the humans, the animals, the **weather**, the elements, the geography—have spirit. Understanding the nature of spirit is a profound theological and psychological problem in any system of beliefs. In shamanic thinking, spirit sometimes seems better translated as the essence of something—what makes an animal an animal, or a **drum** a drum. At other times spirit can be better translated to mean the consciousness of something, like tree consciousness or rocks consciousness, since everything can have a consciousness similar to our own in the shaman's worldview.

Spirit is experienced by shamans in three general ways. It refers to the human spirit, like that of the shaman or the client. It refers to the beings who populate the invisible world who are capable of taking actions that affect humans and other things in the physical world. Spirit also refers to a Divine Spirit, the Spirit of the Kosmos through which the shaman feels a Connection-

to-all-things. Shamans experience spirit to be at times formed, at times formless, and in moments of ecstasy, both everything and nothing. See also **helping spirits**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Turner, E. "The Reality of Spirits." *ReVision* 15, no. 1 (1992): 28–32.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Spirit Senses

The spirit senses refer to the expanded sensory awareness the **shaman** experiences while in **trance**. This pertains to the shaman's awareness of **non-ordinary reality** while in spirit flight and of **ordinary reality** when the shaman's soul remains here and merges with his or her **helping spirit**.

Similarly, **spirit hands** refers to the helping spirit's hands, paws, hooves, etc., working through the shaman's own hands in **extraction** work and other hands on **healing**. See also **soul flight**.

Spirits of the Dead

Spirits of the dead are the **spirits** of deceased humans who have left the realm of the living and crossed over into **non-ordinary reality** to return to the Source from whence they came. In many **cultures** they then inhabit the **Land of the Dead** while in others they inhabit the rocks, plants, animals, and geography surrounding their descendants.

Shamanic cultures make a clear distinction between people who have only just died, ghosts or haunting spirits, and the spirits of the dead. A ghost is a lost or roaming **soul** who remains with the living longer than is natural, never crossing over and completing its return

to the Source (a general term for where souls come from and return to).

The souls of people who have just died normally linger after death, then complete their **journey** of return to Source. Different cultures have different beliefs about the number of days and why the soul lingers. However, it is generally believed to be normal to linger for three, four, or seven days at the grave site or near the place the soul lived. The soul is not believed to stay longer than it takes the body to begin to decompose.

Souls that successfully complete their journey to the Source are considered spirits of the dead. In some cultures spirits of **ancestors** or loved ones are awaiting to accompany the soul on its journey. In other cultures the soul sets out alone, or with an **animal spirit** guide, after lingering with the living for a few days.

The soul's movement from the physical body into non-ordinary reality represents a temporary state for the soul and is only part of the full transition of death. In this state the soul can enter people and possess them or get lost or distracted from its journey.

Once the soul has completed its return from the life that has just ended, it must pass through further states of existence (reincarnation) in order to develop itself spiritually or dissolve completely (depending on cultural beliefs). Many shamanic cultures believe souls must take on the forms of animals, plants, and places, in addition to human forms, to fully develop spiritually. See also **death and dying**; **helping spirits**; **plant spirits**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Spirit Vision

Spirit vision is the ability to see the "**spirits**" or the true nature of things, with and without form. The "spirits" are usually invisible to the untutored eye.

The awakening of spirit vision marks an essential stage in the novice's development of shamanic skills. If necessary a considerable effort may be invested in acquiring and cultivating spirit vision. There are a variety of specific techniques used in different **cultures** to develop spirit vision, some of which are extremely demanding.

Spirit vision is usually cultivated in two stages. The most basic is to catch an initial glimpse of the images and sensations. However, for some individuals this ability is quite natural. Nonetheless, all novices must cultivate the second stage, which is to deepen and stabilize the fleeting images and patterns into a permanent visionary capacity in which the spirits can be seen at will.

In an ordinary state, there is an almost continual flux of images that can be seen when the eyes are closed. In **altered states of consciousness**, these images can become clearer. The meaning and interrelationships between images become more apparent. The shaman's ability to interpret and communicate what he or she experiences in an altered state depends on his or her ability to organize this flux of images into spirits and other meaningful elements. In part, gaining spirit vision is learning to expand the senses while in an altered state. Once the novice has learned to remain conscious while expanding his or her senses, he or she must learn how to interpret the **vision** accurately. The discovery of the meaning of different images can be a long process of trial and error. This process is similar to the way children learn the difference between the floor, table, stairs, **sky** and the dog in the **language** of their parents. The novice must learn through experience to organize the flux of visual images seen during **trances** and to interpret them in accurate and meaningful ways.

Walsh, R. "Shamanic Cosmology: A Psychological Examination of the Shaman's Worldview." *ReVision* 13, no. 2. (1990): 86–100.

Spirit World

See **non-ordinary reality**.

State Shaman

A state shaman uses **trance** states and other shamanic skills on a communal scale in state **rituals** to govern the people as a whole. The state shaman is expected to lead in **ordinary reality** based on his or her connection to **non-ordinary reality**. The state shaman's responsibilities are to manage the universal energies that effect his or her people, maintain the state's harmony with those energies, and in this way, to serve as healer for the people as a whole.

When state shamans occur, they do so in **cultures** where ordinary and non-ordinary reality are inextricably interwoven in the culture's worldview. In such cultures journeying and trance are part of everyday life. The state shaman is expected to gain wisdom in trance from the **ancestors** of the people, particularly past rulers and sages, and to use that wisdom in guiding his or her decisions for the people.

This term was used by Schele and Freidel to describe the *ahau*, or god kings, of the **Maya**. The *ahau* entered a trance state induced by a bloodletting **vision** ritual. In that ritual the *ahau* becomes the *wacah chan*, the central axis or **Tree of Life**, connecting all dimensions of the Maya world, allowing the ancestors to speak, and the gods to materialize in the human world.

China may also have seen the rise of the state shaman in the Zhou dynasty, 1122–256 B.C.E. It is possible that **shamanism** played a strategic role in the development of early Chinese political culture. For the ancient Chinese the **Upperworld** is where all the wisdom is. Those who controlled access to that wisdom had the authority to rule. **Shamans** became a crucial part of every state court; and scholars of **ancient China** agree that the king himself may have functioned as a state shaman. See also **energy** and **journey**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Schele, Linda, and David Freidel. *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*. New York: William Morrow, 1990.

Storytelling

Storytelling has been used by the native peoples since the beginning of human time to teach people about **spirit** and their connection to the **sacred**. The native peoples of **North America**, **Australia**, and Lapland, for example, each have a wealth of stories that teach about the sacred, its true nature, and of the people's relationship with this **Great Mystery**.

Storytelling itself is a shamanic act. **Shamans** tell stories to call in particular **animal spirits**, gods, goddesses, or Ancestral heroes and heroines who possess the energies the patient needs to heal. In this way spontaneous stories are crafted to create something new in the patient, a kind of **medicine** to aid the **healing**.

Stories can also be used to reinforce traditions when stability and order are needed to restore balance and harmony. The traditional stories of indigenous peoples contain shamanic imagery that illuminates the obvious, mythic patterns in the situation at hand. Listening to how the characters rise to meet the mythic challenges reminds people that their traditional values can help them to rise above their current troubles.

Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Jungian analyst, author, and award-winning storyteller, explains that hearing a story allows the listener to experience it as though he or she were the heroine/hero who either falters or wins out in the end. "Among storytellers, it is called sympathetic magic—meaning the ability of the mind to step away from its ego for a time and merge with another reality, experiencing and learning ideas there it can in no other form of consciousness and

bringing these back to a consensual reality."

Storytelling becomes a healing process when the story transforms the advice being given. The information given through a healing story is given in a form that becomes inseparable from the **soul** of the listener. Stories weave awareness into the soul. That is why stories can heal when advice is quickly and often forgotten.

Angeles Arrien, a cross-cultural anthropologist, explains that **cultures** transmit their values, **ethics**, history, traditions, and spiritual beliefs through storytelling. Indigenous people who relied on oral traditions in this way trained and developed their memory. The storytellers of these cultures, who were often shamans, had to work for years to precisely memorize the culture's stories. Graduation from one level to the next required flawless recitation of a large body of stories as well as the development of a storytelling style that captured and enchanted the listener.

Storytelling is one of four universal healing salves (dancing, **singing**, and **silence**), which are ways indigenous peoples maintained health and well-being. The inability to be enchanted by stories indicates a state of **soul loss**. See also **ancestors; dance; energy**.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Estés, C. P. *Women Who Run with the Wolves*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1992.

Sucking Shaman

A sucking shaman is one who performs **extractions** by sucking the **energy extrusion** from the patient's body. In a majority of **cultures** the sucking shaman sucks and bites the body directly with his or her mouth. In some cultures the **shaman** uses a tool to suck, such as a **cupping horn**, hollow bone or

tube. Energy intrusions are also removed without sucking with **feathers**, hands, or **cleansings**, often depending on the nature of the object needing removal.

In most cultures the intrusion, once removed, is momentarily displayed, then ritually destroyed or sent back to the sorcerer who created it originally. Intrusions are sent into the forest to be absorbed by Nature, thrown into the **fire**, buried in the ground, placed into a bowl of **medicine** water, or left at a cross roads to be devoured by lesser **spirits**. The one exception is the shaman of the **California region** who extract intrusions called "**pains**" and then keep them in their body as a source of **power**. See also **sorcery** and **water**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Sun

The Sun is a **helping spirit** of great **power** for the **shaman**. In some **cultures** the sun is perceived of as male, for example, *Inti*, of the **Quechua** and, *Etsáa*, of the **Shuar**. In other cultures the Sun is perceived of as female. For example, the Celts associated the Sun with the Goddess and many South American **myths** tell of a female Sun who was assaulted by her brother the **Moon**.

Male or female, or perhaps both, the Sun is a **spirit** being from the **dream-time**. Through relationship with the spirit of the Sun the shaman reconnects to the dreamtime. In an **altered state of consciousness** the shaman can draw power from the Sun to rejuvenate a patient's flagging life force or to re-ignite a spark of life extinguished by a sorcerer. See also **South America**.

Sun Dance

A major spiritual **ritual** that spread across the Plains in the nineteenth century. The Sun Dance was held at

mid-summer by tribes of the Plains, including the Teton, Crow, Ponca, Omaha, Pawnee, Shoshone, and Ute. This **ceremony** involves self-sacrifice rather than the **sacrifice** of others.

At the Sun Dance men offer themselves by dancing for days in the brutal glare of the July **sun**, without **water** or food, calling out for **visions**. A small piece of wood is inserted beneath the dancer's pectorals and attached to long thongs. The dancer is then suspended by the thongs which are attached at the other end to the central Sun Dance tree. The dancers **dance**, looking steadfastly at the sun, until they are released by the tearing of their flesh. In this way they offer a **blood** sacrifice.

Dancers choose to dance to fulfill vows made in time of distress or danger, for **healing** of themselves or their people, or because they are guided to by **spirit**. They are supported by singers who **sing** the Sun Dance **songs** and the **shamans** who conduct the ritual. The secret part of the Sun Dance is carried out in the preparation and the search by the leaders for tree that will become the Sun Dance pole, a symbol of the **Tree of Life**. See also **Lakota**.

Densmore, F. *The American Indians and Their Music*. New York: The Woman's Press, 1936.

Gunn, Allen P. *Grandmothers of the Light*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.

Susto

Susto, the Spanish word for "fright," is a common **illness** brought on when experiences of extreme of fear, usually fear of punishment or death, create **soul loss**. The symptoms are both mental, anxiety and disequilibrium, and physical, loss of appetite and **energy**. The *payé* (**shaman**) treats both aspects of the illness. He uses tranquilizing plants (Marcgraviaceae), chanting to call in **spirit** help, and often **trance** states to **journey** to find the frightened **soul** and bring it back to the patient.

Sweat Lodge

The sweat lodge is one of the most widespread traditions for **purification** of the mind and body in indigenous North and Central America. With the exception of the tribes native to the southwestern United States, the sweat lodge was a universal custom practiced by almost every tribe. To sweat is a **sacred** act and the sweat lodge ceremony is usually performed in a sacred context. In this context the **shamans** of many tribes used the sweat as a **healing** tool in their practices.

For example, Maidu shamans from the **California region** used their sweats, *weni otatai*, in different ways to heal different problems. To heal chills or fever, **medicine** was placed in the **water** that turned to steam on the hot rocks, allowing the patient to breathe in the medicine. In treatments of muscle strains the injured area was covered with warm mud and the patient spent the night in the sweat lodge. Paiute shamans from the Basin region used sweats, *tuzinobi*, as a powerful **cleansing** ritual to remove the source of sickness from the patient's body.

The **power** of the sweat in both physical (sweating) and spiritual (praying, chanting, mediation). The sweat lodge is performed as a purification **ceremony** in and of itself. For example, upon the arrival of puberty, to induce a **vision**, before going on a hunt or to war, or after killing an eagle or a human. The sweat lodge was also used as preparation before other **rituals** and ceremonies. For example, an individual would sweat before beginning a **vision quest** or dancing in a **Sun Dance** ceremony.

The sweat lodge is also a means of preventative medicine. In some tribes a sweat could be performed simply to cleanse and refresh, to get rid of all that makes the mind and body feel bad, and to simply rejuvenate and feel good again. Though the performance of the sweat in these situations might appear more casual, the sweat is still a sacred ceremony.

Three Types

There are many different correct ways to construct the lodge, and this varies from **culture** to culture. However, there are three basic ways to bring the heat into the lodge. In the first, stones are heated in a **fire** outside the lodge and then brought in. Water is then poured or sprinkled on the hot rocks producing steam. In the second type the fire is built in the lodge to heat the rocks and then the fire is removed. The hot rocks may be covered with fragrant boughs, but no water is used. In the third type, used primarily in Central America, a duct is used to convey heat from an outside fire into the lodge.

Types of Lodges

In much of **North America** the lodge is constructed on a frame of flexible poles, like willow, that are bent and tied together to form a four to five foot high dome, seating roughly ten to fifteen men. Today the frame is usually covered with blankets or tarps, while traditionally the cover would be found in nature. For example, in the Northeast the cover would be birchbark and in the Plains, buffalo skins.

Far north, the **Inuit** sweat lodge is either a large structure made of cedar planks, called a *kashim*, or the sweat is performed in an igloo. Either way it is central to the spiritual and social life of the village. In the southeast, lodges were dug into the **earth** or into the side of a hill by a stream. For example, the Navajo created an earth-covered, mound structure and framed the entrance with cedar planks. In the California region, the sweat house could serve as a dwelling place and a ceremonial place.

Purification by sweating was also practiced by many of the indigenous peoples who populated Europe and the British Isles. For example the *savusauna* of Finland, still practiced today, is similar to the North American sweat lodge ceremony when used in a sacred way to cleanse the body, mind, and **soul**.

In Central America the Mayan and **Aztec** practices of sweating for purification are continued in *temezcalli*, practiced by the native peoples of Mexico. The name comes from the indigenous Nahuatl **language**, *teme*, to bathe, and *calli* house. The lodges are low huts into which heat is channeled from an outside fire. People enter, crawling one-by-one, through a narrow entrance and squat inside in the darkness. There they pray and **chant** as they sweat.

Inipi

The **Lakota** practice of *inikagapi wójeya*, or **inipi** for short, is the most widespread sweat lodge tradition in North America. The Stone People Lodge, as it is also known, was brought to the Lakota by the **spirit teacher**, White Buffalo Calf Woman, with directions for building the lodge and instructions for using it. If done properly, all the powers of the Universe are brought into play in the ceremony and to the aid of the participants.

Each piece of the lodge and part of the ceremony is connected with a greater power. Where the lodge is placed, the source of the water, the number of sticks, the rocks, the placement of the fire and the wood that is burned, etc., all have meaning and power. The lodge is built on the earth and with materials that grow from the earth. Water is a connection to the Thunderbeings who bring goodness to the people. The rocks bring in the Fire and the **Air** is made apparent in the purifying steam.

Traditionally, every stage of building the lodge is sacred work during which **prayers** are said and pieces are purified. For the Lakota lodge twelve to sixteen willow sticks are placed in a **circle**, bent to create the dome frame, and covered with buffalo skins. The floor of the lodge is covered with sage before entry.

Outside the fire is built and the rocks heated. The hot rocks are passed into the lodge with a forked stick or deer antler and placed in the center. An **altar** is created near the rocks on which the

sacred pipe rests. The altar is often in the shape of a buffalo **skull** with sage placed in the eye sockets.

The leader of the sweat is responsible for sprinkling the rocks with sweetgrass, that fills the lodge with a smoky, fragrance or water, that fills the lodge with steam. Cold water from a spring is set in a bucket by the rocks with either a ladle or a bundle of sage for the leader to use to douse the rocks with water. The leader is also responsible for calling the **spirits** into the lodge to hear the prayers of the participants.

The number of rocks used determines how hot the sweat will be and the number of rounds determines how long. The sacred pipe is passed around clockwise, usually within each round. Traditionally there are four rounds, though not always. When the ceremony is complete, participants may plunge into a river, if nearby, or rub themselves dry with sage. See also **Dineh** and **Maya**.

Bruchac, J. *The Native American Sweat Lodge: History and Legends*. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1993.

Erdoes, R. *Crying for a Dream: The World Through Native American Eyes*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co., 1990.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Sword

The sword is used by **shamans** in some **cultures** to display their full **embodiment** trance. When the shaman has reached the appropriate depth of **trance**, he or she can slash and stab his or her own body without harm, though the blades are razor sharp. When fully embodying **spirit** the shaman is protected from all harm.

Old accounts tell of Asian shamans dancing up the seven rungs of a **ladder** made of swords as their **soul** journeyed into the spirit world. In the final test of the *kut*, the traditional **initiation** of a Korean **mudang** (female shaman), the

initiate must **dance** barefoot atop a tower of seven balancing layers which culminates in a pair of sharp *chaktu* (heavy, large cleavers) blades. Her success is proof that she has allowed her soul to die and be reborn with the warrior spirit.

In **healings**, swords are brandished by shamans to frighten off malevolent **spirits** during **extractions** and **exorcisms**. The offending spirit is attacked and threatened, often quite violently, and since the spirit is inside of the patient, the patient may be physically harmed in the process.

The *mudang* uses different swords in various forms of **divination**. A set of small, six-inch swords are used as a set. During **prayer** they are thrown to the ground. When they all fall pointing in the same direction it is a sign of good fortune. A large sword or a moon-shaped sword are also used in divination. The *mudang* clarifies the divination question. She then holds the **sacred** sword upright in her hand so that it touches the table or bowl and then releases it. When it stands, it is regarded as a good omen. When it falls, it is a sign of misfortune. See also **journey**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Lee, Jung Y. "Korean Shamanistic Rituals." In *Religion and Society* 12. The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1981.

Sword Ladder

The sword ladder, or to *t'ui*, is central to the final **initiation** of the *wu*, or traditional Chinese **shaman**. The *wu* work primarily in **trance** states of **embodiment** by *shen*, or **spirits**. They practice **divination**, trance dancing, and psychokinesis. Ancient *wu* displayed their **powers** by disappearing, swallowing **swords**, slashing themselves with sharp objects, and spitting **fire**, all without harming themselves.

The final initiation of the **apprentice wu** is a public **ceremony** during which the initiate enters a deep trance through ecstatic **dance**. While in trance she must physically ascend a **ladder** of twelve sword blades in her bare feet while her **soul** ascends into the **Upperworld**. Sometimes she must descend by another ladder. She must not only succeed in communicating with the spirits, which is the purpose of the **journey**, but she must do so without injury.

The initiation ceremony of the sword-ladder is practiced in several Southeast Asian **cultures**. The ladders are usually seven or twelve rungs. In some cultures, India for example, the sword blades are wooden. See also **ecstasy**; **shaman's ladder**; **Southeast Asia**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Sycamore Fig

The sycamore fig is the Egyptian **Tree of Life**. It connects the **Lowerworld**, the realm of the serpent, with the **Middleworld**, the realm of the cow, and the **Upperworld**, the realm of the vulture. Its fruits are believed to be the **blood** and body of Hathor, the mother of all gods and goddesses. Therefore, eating the fruits of the Tree of Life is considered a rite of **sacred** communion.

Redmond, L. *When the Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Symbolic Language

A symbolic language is the interconnecting system of symbols and meanings a **shaman** uses to interpret his or her **altered state of consciousness**, or **trance**, experiences. The symbols and their meanings emerge from a number of complex sources. These sources include **culture**, personal history,

nature, brain neurochemical function, **transpersonal** images like collected thoughts, **dream** scapes and figures, **visions**, and autonomous images from alternate realities which produce themselves, and thus have a life of their own.

Some symbols are universal, or nearly so. This may be explained by an innate ability in the human brain to recognize and respond to certain images. However, the nature of the response and the meaning accorded these symbols are not universal. What an image symbolizes depends on a complex interconnectedness of the sources listed above. The resulting symbolic language is unique to each shaman and to all individuals to choose to develop awareness of their own inner **language**.

Shamans use their symbolic language to transform their experience of the invisible world, which has no fixed meanings or forms, into useful information and **power** that can be directed with intent. Carl Jung explained that symbols are psychological mechanisms that transform **energy**. Symbols are by their own nature real and unreal, rational and irrational. This **dual nature** is their power and the reason they are the only medium that allows actual communication and translation of energies between the physical and spiritual worlds.

The meaning of the images and energies the shaman experiences in trance are not absolute or fixed. The experience is always relative. It must be interpreted relative to the shaman's

question or reason for entering the trance. For example, the trance experience is interpreted relative to the shamans request to heal the ill, to know the source of a drought, or to find game.

The shaman must maintain focus on his or her reason for being in the trance to accurately interpret the meaning of the trance experience. The symbolic language is crucial; it is the bridge between the worlds. The symbols and meanings brought forth from the shaman's trance must be both transformative for the shaman, the patient, and empathic for the audience. A successful shaman trusts implicitly in his or her symbolic language and interpretation, while adapting his or her presentation to the expectations of the community and the role the shaman fulfills within it. See also **ecstasy**.

Achterberg, J. "Healing Images and Symbols in Nonordinary States of Consciousness." *ReVision* 16, no. 4 (1994): 148–157.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Maslow, Abraham H. *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*. New York: Penguin, 1994.

Peters, L. G., and D. Price-Williams. "Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism." *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 3 (1980): 397–413.

T

Taartaa

The *taartaa* is a *torngraq*, or **helping spirit**, used by *angakok* in East Greenland who live below the ground. When the *angakok* enters his **trance** and his soul **journeys** out into the spirit world, the *taartaa* gradually enters the empty body of the *angakok*. The *taartaa* are believed to enter via the anus and exit in the same way when the *angakok*'s **soul** returns.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Taboo

Taboos are the precautions humans take when dealing with strong supernatural powers. Shamanic taboos carry no negative or positive implication in and of themselves. They are instructions that, when followed, allow humans to enter more fully into relationship with the **sacred** and remain in right relationship with these mysterious energies. The existence of a taboo implies the need for caution, respect, and for honoring the **spirit** powers being called upon.

In the broadest sense, "taboo," a Polynesian word, refers to a prohibition against certain actions. There are actions, like entering an **altered state of consciousness**, that allow an individual to come into contact with the sacred. These actions are regulated so that the sacred energies of the spirit world are not polluted or violated by the disrespect, disregard, or ignorance of humans.

When a taboo is violated, disharmony, blockage, or dissonance is created,

which pollutes the relationship between humans and the spirit world. Famine, **illness**, sterility, accidents, or a breakdown in social structure may result. The pollution must be cleansed, usually through **ritual**, **healing**, banishment, or death, depending on the severity of the violation.

The exact nature of a taboo varies from **culture** to culture and is always relative to the specific healing or ritual being conducted. Typical taboos for patients are restriction for several days to months from eating pork and lard, engaging in sexual activity, or sudden, jarring physical contact with others. Typical taboos for **shamans** include restrictions on types or amounts of food and abstinence from sexual activity, particularly during **training** or before and during healing rituals.

Taboos are often defined by the spirit world and communicated to the people through the shaman. Taboos arise from an awareness of the interrelated nature of our relationship with the sacred. See also **death and dying** and **energy**.

Taique

Taique is a hallucinogenic tea used by **Mapuche shamans** of Chile. *Taique* is made from the leaves of *Desfontania spinosa*, a shrub with holly-like leaves and red flowers with yellow tips. *D. spinosa* grows in the highlands of Central and **South America**.

Talasi

Corn pollen used as a sacred **offering** by the Hopi. *Homngumni*, or cornmeal, is also used. See also **sacred**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Talisman

A talisman is a **power object** created for protection of the **soul**. The talisman

itself is a home for the **spirit** who is called on for protection. That spirit plays a part in deflecting and dissipating negative energies and maintaining a protective field of spirit **energy** around the wearer.

In **Africa**, a talisman is created by using magic and **art** to engage spirit in the task of protection for the owner, either **shaman** or patient. **Ritual** may be necessary to bring the spirit into the physical talisman after it has been created. The talisman is then “alive” with spirit and in some **cultures** it must be “fed” and cared for to keep its energies vital. The presence of the living talisman provides protection in the home or on the wearer.

A talisman can be in the form of a necklace, ring, belt, hat, or shoes. The most common talisman is a small pouch, filled with power objects and **invocations** whose energies together are the talisman. Depending on the actions of its bearer, the **power** of the talisman may be used to help or to hurt. Talismans are treated with great respect and care. Talismans belonging to shamans are often feared for their power.

In **North America** a talisman is a **charm** created to bring good fortune to its owner. The energies of some talismans may be absorbed into the energy of the owner, effectively generating good fortune even when the object is not with the owner. Other talismans must be present to be effective. Some talismans generate good fortune by deflecting harmful or malevolent energies. See also **fetish** and **medicine**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Somé, M. P. *Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman*. New York: Penguin Group USA, Inc., 1995.

Tamang

A Tibeto-Burmese-speaking people who live in the mountains to the east and west of Kathmandu Valley in **Nepal**. They comprise the largest ethnic group in Nepal and are of Tibetan origin. The Tamang practice a form of **shamanism** paralleling that found farther north in **Siberia** and Central and North Asia. They are Buddhists, though few lay people meditate, know the Buddhist doctrine, or read the sacred texts. Animism is the underlying **religion** and the Tamang understand **spirits** to be accountable for the goings on and misfortune of their lives.

The Tamang have developed a unique blend of Buddhism and Hinduism combined with their own much more ancient pre-Buddhist **Bön-po** shamanic tradition. The Tamang, never having allowed their belief system to be overcome by Buddhism or Hinduism, are noted for their powerful **shamans** who are a strong spiritual force in contemporary society. The basis of the shaman's willingness to help the patient is compassion and the related belief that by taking on the suffering of others the shaman heals him/herself. The shamans are consulted by everyone, rich and poor, educated and illiterate.

Tamang shamanism developed from **Bön** alongside **Lamaism** (Tibetan Buddhism) as compatible and autonomous spiritual paths. Many of the important elements of the Bön system have remained intact, while others are thinly veiled or censored to subscribe to the Buddhist worldview. There is some overlap of functions of shamans and lamas. In an adaptation to cultural changes over time, the basic function of the shaman is to heal and of the lama to conduct the funeral **ceremony** and act as **psychopomp**.

The Tamang *bompo* (shaman, from the ancient Bön-po) enters **trance** states to influence the spirits, combat malevolent spirits, exorcise spirits, and otherwise help those being affected by spirits. The *bompo* uses **soul flight** to

communicate with the Supreme Being of the Sky and **embodiment** trance states for **divination** and **extraction**. The *bompo* utilize their *sakti*, **power**, primarily for **healing**, secondarily in **sorcery**, and infrequently in securing food.

There are a number of different types of *bompo*. The *dunsor boms* perform clan rituals, which are performed during the day, and previously performed funeral ceremonies, a function taken over by lamas. The *munsor boms* perform healing rituals which are always performed at night. Some *bompo* perform both day and night rituals.

Another distinction is made between shamans who are called, trained, and taught **mantras** directly by spirit and those who are called by spirit, but trained and taught mantras by a human *bompo*. The *aph se aph* shamans who have no human intervention in their **training** are believed to be the most powerful. These *aph se aph* shamans are called spontaneously and initiated by the *yi dam* spirit of former shamans or by **Banjhakri**, the **Forest Shaman**. The latter are called *rang shin tugba* and they are typically considered the most powerful of the *aph se aph*.

Cosmology

A small portion of the vast Tamang cosmology explains that in the first age humans lived free of sickness, aging, or “bad qualities.” In the second age **sacrifices** and rituals developed. In the third age passions and **illness** arose from conflicting and contradictory ideas. In the fourth age the “poisons” arose: greed and cruel rulers, slavery, suffering, death, danger, war, **pain**, and material obsession.

The **First Shaman**, *Nara Bön Chen*, appeared inspired by humanity’s need. *Nara Bön Chen* battled the disharmonious spirits and sorcerers who were the cause of the poverty and sickness. In his final battle he fought with nine witch sisters and came to a truce agreement. In that agreement the witches could

continue to cause illness for humanity, but could no longer extract payment and **blood** sacrifices. In exchange, the shamans would be able to heal humanity of these illnesses.

Soul

Bhla, meaning **soul**, is used interchangeably with *sakti*, meaning life-force **energy**. The Tamang conceive of the *bhla* as a multiple soul. The *chi wa* is associated with wisdom, light, and consciousness; it transmigrates to the **Upperworld** after death and is reincarnated. It is the soul that is lost and retrieved in **soul retrieval**. The *yi dam* is associated with love, the heart, and kinship; it transmigrates with the *chi wa* and is reincarnated. It is the soul that shamans pass on at death to their favorite **apprentice** for whom it becomes the “chief guru” or **teacher** in their shamanic work. The *sem chang* is associated with anger and prone to attachment to the physical world, especially in cases of violent, accidental, or unnatural death and improper burial. However, when a person’s life is properly resolved at death, the *sem chang* will transmigrate along with the *chi wa* and *yi dam*.

The *yi dam* of a shaman belongs to the people because it is full of mantras and techniques for healing the people. Usually a shaman passes his or her *yi dam* on at death through the family lineage to a descendant who shows a natural inclination for shamanic abilities. At a shaman’s funeral ritual, an effigy is dressed in the shaman’s gear and his or her **power objects** are laid out. The shaman’s *yi dam* is then called on and asked to empower the effigy.

As the *yi dam* arrives, a rainbow light descends from the Upperworld. The effigy and power objects begin to shake with the power of the shaman’s soul. The *yi dam* can be addressed through the effigy with questions to clarify, for example, who is to receive the *yi dam* (if that is in question) and the mantra needed to invoke the *yi dam* in the body of the chosen individual. Once embodied, the

yi dam serves as a guru or teacher for the novice, providing healing mantras and access to the other tools and techniques used by the deceased shaman.

The Calling

The initial calling is considered a “crazy possession”; it is an involuntary state specific to those chosen to become shamans. The possessing spirit may be either the soul of a deceased shaman or that of *Banjhakri*, the Forest Shaman. The *yi dam* of powerful *bompo* that are not passed on at death search for a candidate with a pure heart to whom they can transmit their soul force, mantras, and healing **knowledge**. *Banjhakri* also searches for candidates of pure heart to initiate.

These spirits enter the body of the candidate spontaneously. This trance state is uncontrolled, a “crazy possession.” Often violent, this **possession** state may last or reoccur for several days. If resisted or misdiagnosed and treated as mental illness, it may last for months or years.

The characteristics of this uncontrolled possession are anxiety, hallucinations, convulsions, and desire for solitude, which are all considered abnormal in Tamang society. This altered state is an involuntary spirit possession and loss of soul. The candidate who overcomes this crisis and masters the symptoms will become a *bompo*.

Surviving the initial calling demands an expansion of consciousness of the candidate. Whether it is the acceptance of the shaman's *yi dam* or the successful completion of *Banjhakri's* initiatory adventures in **non-ordinary reality**, something new must rise from within the candidate in response to this challenge.

Not all who experience this initial uncontrolled possession can master the intense emotions and bizarre experiences that are characteristic of this calling from spirit. Some are ejected by *Banjhakri* because their hearts do not prove to be pure. Others do not possess

the necessary balance of inner strength and openheartedness that would allow the awe, mystery, and sacredness of the experience to open new ways of understanding and perceiving reality.

Training

Apprenticeship can last for many years. There are numerous mantras and **myths** to memorize, and learning to master trance, ritual methods, and healing techniques is an arduous process. Training continues as long as it takes the candidate to progress through the three remaining stages of **initiation**. There are four stages of initiation overall, the crazy possession being the first. After this experience every Tamang shaman must find a teacher to complete the training and initiation.

Apprenticeship with a human guru is often necessary to master the ability to work with one's inner guru. Training is both didactic, learning ritual forms, methods, and myths, and ecstatic, learning to master different trance states and their uses. Mastery is nothing less than the ability to control the initiation of and exit the trance state and oneself throughout the duration of the trance.

The second stage of initiation, *lha khreba* or possession, involves the preparation and performance of *guru puja*, in which the possessing spirit guru speaks out and identifies itself through the apprentice. When successfully performed the spirit guru begins to visit the apprentice in **dreams** and teach. The apprentice advances in his or her control of trance, but has not yet developed full mastery.

The third stage of initiation, *lha khresi*, marks a level of mastery over the possession trance. The apprentice can now use the trance state to perform divination, **diagnosis**, and healing *puja* (rituals). The apprentice is now a *bompo*, and many never progress beyond this stage of initiation.

The fourth stage of initiation is achieved in two stages of initiatory ritual: the *pho wang lung* and the *gufa*. In

completing the *pho* initiation ritual, the *bompo* has raised his or her consciousness to the degree that the fontanelle on the top of the head opens and the *chi wa* soul flies free of the body into soul flight which gives the *bompo* access to clear visions.

The *gufa* initiation lasts for seven days, during which the *bompo* **drums** continually in a hallowed shelter made of rice straw erected in a cemetery. The *bompo* must succeed in fighting off the malevolent spirits and calling on the gods using mantras and drumming day and night. If successful the *bompo* is rewarded with a **journey** first to *Yama lok*, the **Land of the Dead**, where he or she surrenders to death and then on the final day to the highest heaven where he or she meets **Ghesar Gyalpo**, the Supreme Mother/Father deity of the *bompo*, and is reborn.

Apprenticeship is systematic, with precise psychological goals and methods for attaining them. In the formal application of this guru-disciple relationship the apprentice is transformed psychologically. The training is not merely therapeutic for the apprentice. It enables the future shaman to perform the most important function of his or her vocation, the community psychotherapist.

In his or her psychotherapeutic role, the *bompo* is called on to heal social conflict. Tamang shamans are keen observers of social interactions, frequenting the tea shops and taverns where local gossip abounds so that they can learn about the community's social problems. The information obtained is used later in the rituals that heal and release social tension.

The curing rituals for social conflict bring about a catharsis and rally group support around the patient. Selections from Tamang mythology are often retold in these rituals. The myth and its cultural heroes provide a template for the patient to see themselves in the heroic acts and qualities and to realign with the dominant cultural symbols of health and well-being. The myth arouses in the

community faith and hope in the patient. Through the healing ritual and cultural mythology, the *bompo* reorders the **chaos** inspired by the illness and provides a path for the patient and community to heal.

Trance

Control, communicative rapport, and memory are the three significant and characteristic elements of the Tamang shaman's trance. The *bompo* often invokes his or her trance with drumming and a frenzied **dance** that induces a passive, hypo-aroused state from which they narrate **visions**. The shaman's trance is outwardly oriented toward the community with the goal of serving as a medium of communication and action between the spirit world and that of humankind.

The purpose of the shaman's trance is to "beg for power." As the spirits arrive to grant the request for power, the shaman's physical body may shake and become possessed by the spirit. It is essential for the shaman to know the spirits of the environment and all the spirits of power so that he or she knows what spirit she now embodies. In addition, the shaman must be able to identify who or what is possessing or otherwise interfering with the patient.

Divination

The process of divination is unique to each *bompo*; however the responsibility is the same. Divination must determine the cause of the illness: spirit-caused, which are subdivided into attacks, sorcery, **soul loss**, or spirit possession, **energy intrusion**, sorcery, or natural causes. The *bompo* must also determine what type of spirits are involved in creating the illness, the appropriate remedy or healing ritual, and what type of spirits to involve in the healing.

When an extraction healing is called for, the *bompo* must determine the nature of the intrusion itself, where it came from, how it was able to enter the patient, and by whom it was sent, which includes the possibility of self-infliction.

The above information may be divined from the energy intrusion itself after it has been removed from the body.

Healing

Tamang healing occurs in a complex philosophical context. The various agents of affliction involve a complex hierarchy of spirits whose actions affect the living. Furthermore, those effects are not accidental; there is a reason for and an underlying meaning in every event and illness. When intervening in this spiritual context on the patient's behalf, the shaman is protected by his or her purity of heart and the compassion expressed through the act of healing.

The *bompo* perform extraction healing rituals in an embodiment trance state. They are merged with their **helping spirits**, often bears, wolves, tigers, leopards, jackals, or fierce divinities. Embodying the helping spirit is a means of gaining that power and it demands a mastery of this trance state. Generally, *bompo* perform sucking extractions. Extraction tools, like a goat's horn, metal straw, or tube are often used as aids in sucking out the poisons.

There are many possible sources of harmful energy intrusions. Intrusions can be sent by deities who have been dishonored, **spirits of the dead** who died unnatural deaths or who did not receive proper funeral rites, spirits of a location like a cemetery or crossroads, spirits of Nature or the **elements**, malevolent **animal spirits**, malevolent spirits, semi-malevolent spirits, spirits of **diseases**, and various **disease objects** that do not possess a will or consciousness. Furthermore, any of these spirits can be used by sorcerers to inflict harm.

Particular to Tamang perspective, intrusions are the result of "poisons." These poisons are envy, lust, pride, hatred, and lying and any of the spirits listed above can send these poisons. Through divination the shaman reveals the true nature of the poison and the reason the patient was attacked with that particular poison. The presence of an animal spirit may imply the nature of

the intrusion, for example, a pig spirit is associated with the poisons ignorance, lying, and denial; the serpent is associated with anger, hatred, malevolence, and guilt; and the cock is associated with greed, lust, and insatiable wanting.

After the extraction is complete and the healing ritual is closed, the extracted intrusions are fed to "hungry spirits." Hungry spirits are lesser spirits who gain the energy/ability/consciousness to move up in the hierarchy of spirits by consuming the harmful energies, which is considered an act of compassion. Feeding the spirits is also an act of compassion because it gives them the opportunity to aid in restoring balance in the world.

A bucket full of intrusions, sticks, stones, blood, hair, wood slivers, other small projectiles, and various undefined substances, is collected during a full night of extractions by a powerful Tamang *bompo*. A ritual is performed on the intrusions, magic (directed intentions and/or herbs) is added to the bucket, and then it is left in an area where hungry spirits collect, like crossroads or cemeteries. This procedure is followed for all intrusions, whether or not they manifest in physical form.

Soul loss is caused by fright or another experience that forces the soul to leave the body, allowing it to be stolen by a *lagu* (spirit). Soul retrieval, or *gunnaser utthar puja*, the going to bring back the heart/mind soul ritual, is more often than not combined with other healing processes by the *bompo*. These other healing processes include extraction, divination, spirit **invocation**, and psychopompic work. The healing ritual as a whole is known as *karga puja*, the spirit weapons ceremony.

Psychopomp

Both shamans and Buddhist lamas perform psychopomp rituals to convey the souls of the dead. They escort these souls in two different ways. The *bompo* is called to convey the soul of the recently deceased if a lama is not available, if the lama is not powerful enough,

or if the deceased is another *bompo*. The *bompo* performs all the psychopomp work in areas remote to the monasteries.

Traditionally, the dead are buried three days after death and the funeral ceremony is performed within forty-nine days. The *bompo* then guides the passage of the soul on to the Kosmic Mother/Father deity, **Ghesar Gyalpo**, using spontaneous visions or a trance state. When the soul being conveyed feels that its life is resolved and is ready to move on, a nine-rung **ladder** falls from the Upperworld. The *bompo* and the soul ascend the ladder to Ghesar Gyalpo who sits, awaiting the soul's return, on a throne covered with soul flowers.

When souls of the dead remain stuck in the human realm where they don't belong, the *bompo* performs a ritual. The purpose of the ritual is to enable the soul to resolve its attachments to the last life so that it can move on to where it now belongs. In the ritual the *bompo* allows the soul of the deceased to speak through his or her body and communicate to the living why it is angry or unresolved about its passing. The *bompo* then asks how the soul can be helped in its resolution and transition to Ghesar Gyalpo.

Altar

At the center of the *bompo's* ritual is his or her **altar**. In the center of the altar is the candle, which is lit for the **Sun** and *Banjhakri*. A water vessel is placed on the altar in connection with the First Shaman, the son of the Kosmic Mother/Father deity, who fashioned a vessel to carry sacred **water** and to attract lost souls back to the physical world.

Paraphernalia

Tamang shamans work with a specific set of power objects that includes: drum, a trumpet made of a human thigh bone used to call on the spirits, a peacock **feather** headdress worn to create a temporary bridge between heaven

and **earth** allowing communication with the spirit world, rosaries, bells, and a magical dagger or *phurba*.

The peacock's feathers come from a time after sorcery broke the Rainbow Bridge that connected heaven and earth. When the bridge broke the humans became mortal and began to suffer. The daughter of the Kosmic Mother/Father deity looked down at the suffering and felt compassion for humanity and its need for healing. She sent the peacock with its iridescent feathers that, when worn by the *bompo*, allowed the healer to create a temporary bridge to the spirit world and to get the healing humanity needed.

Mantras and Offerings

Mantras, **offerings**, and trance are the three prominent elements in Tamang shamanic rituals. Mantras allow the shaman to use his or her voice to focus the power they have been given by the helping spirits. Mantras are used to compel, restrain, and transform energies. To this end they are often worded as imperatives that define how things will be. Mantras are spoken or blown like a dart. Mantras are a tool to gather and direct power and, as with all tools, *bompo* are often secretive about their mantras, speaking their mantras in a whisper to protect them.

Typical offerings in Tamang rituals are rice, which is the staff of life in Nepal, lights, **incense**, flowers, and herbs. Rice is often thrown, overhand to cast energies or spirits away and underhand as an offering. See also **altered states of consciousness; death and dying; ecstasy; exorcism; lhamo/lhapa; mediumship; multiple soul belief; psychotherapeutic practices**.

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- . “Mystical Experience in Tamang Shamanism.” *ReVision* 13, no. 2 (1990): 71–85.
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Taoism

See **Daoism (Taoism)**.

Tapel

A traditional Balinese **mask** created as a home for spirit **energy**. The *tapel* is a **power object** that is *tenget*, or possessed by spirit energy. The *tapels* used in dramas and processions depict humans, mythological animals, and spirit beings, usually witches and low spirits. The masks are granted powers as beings in Bali society.

In Bali the spirit world and the natural world are One. The gods and goddesses are present in all things. Every element of nature possesses its own **power**, which reflects the power of the gods. Everything is potentially a home for spirits whose energy can be directed toward benevolent or malevolent ends.

Tapels are made in a **sacred** way of wood from a *tenget* tree to be used in specific **rituals**. When the *tapel* is danced in ritual, the dancer enters a **trance** state induced by the spirit in the *tapel*. The spirit embodied in the mask enters the dancer and lives again in the ritual drama and battles of positive and negative forces of Balinese mythology.

The most sacred masks are carved only by a consecrated *undagi tapel*, mask carver, in a prescribed manner. The sacred aspect of the mask comes from its treatment by the *undagi tapel*, the wood that is used, the magic letters inscribed inside it, and the spirit power embodied in it.

The tree itself is *tenget* and the choice of tree is important. Only a small amount of wood is taken by the *undagi tapel*, accompanied by **prayers** and **offerings** that ask the permission of the spirit of the tree and the spirit of the place where the tree grows. The wood is cut only on propitious days and the carving itself may take over four months.

The carving begins with two offerings to ask for **blessings** for success, one to Bhatara Surya, the Sun God, and one to Taksu, the spirit of inspiration. The final **purification** process involves three steps: purifying the mask (and **costume**) from indignities suffered during the building process, uniting the mask and the costume, and enlivening the mask.

For sacred *tapel*, the initial *pasupati* ritual follows the purification to awaken the spirit in the *tapel*. During the *pasupati* ritual the mask claims its spirit power and receives it in full view of the villagers. The spirits are drawn to the mask with such power that even masks that are not made in a consecrated way are known to spontaneously become *tenget*.

Tapel may lose some of their spirit energy over time. **Initiations** of renewed or new masks can involve as many as ten days of feasting, **dance**, shadow puppets, cock fights, and processions. First, the spirit is released from the old *tapel* and sent home during a ritual in which the “head” or spirit inhabiting the mask separates from the “body” or wood mask. When the new *tapel* is ready it is sent to the temple where a *pasupati ceremony* is held to invite the spirit back into its new *tapel*.

Sacred *tapel* are never displayed. They are kept in fabric bags of particular **colors** chosen for their effect on the spirit in the *tapel*. The masks in their bags are placed in baskets and stored in the temple complex. See also **embodiment** and **magical alphabet**.

Slattum, J. *Masks of Bali*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1992.

Teachers

The **helping spirits** are the **shaman's** true teachers. Most teach while the shaman is in an altered state, either **dreaming** or journeying. More experienced shamans may also receive teaching from helping spirits in **ordinary reality**. All helping spirits teach the shaman how to use their **power**, gifts, and specific skills, e.g., the **knowledge** of the plants in how to use them as **medicines**, the skill of the rhinoceros to heal sexuality, the tiger to extract malevolent **energy**, the snake to shed the past in one piece, etc.

The helping spirits bring the novice into the shamanic work, teach skills through experiences in **non-ordinary reality**, and create the **initiation** experiences necessary for the initiate to emerge from the ordeal a shaman.

"Teacher" often refers to helping spirits in human form, e.g., gods, goddesses, angels, **ancestors**, etc. However, since all helping spirits teach and all are capable of **shapeshifting** between human and animal forms, this distinction is unnecessary. See also **altered states of consciousness**; **dreamtime**; **journey**.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Techniques of Ecstasy

Shamans use a variety, and often a combination, of techniques to induce ecstatic states. These include: seclusion, **silence**, solitude, sleep deprivation, visual and/or sensory deprivation, dehydration, fasting, **pain** stimulation, repetitious actions, like grinding or weaving, jumping, running, sexual activity, visualization, drumming, dancing, instruments like bowstrings and bells, chanting, and ingesting **psycho-tropic plants**.

Many of these techniques set up a monotonous **rhythm** with an instrument or through the body. These regular, monotonous rhythms function as

"**vehicles**" for the shaman who rides this thread of rhythm into and out of the altered state of consciousness. For example, percussion instruments like the **drum** may facilitate **trance** states when beaten at certain rapid rates. Psychotropic plants also serve as vehicles for the shaman to enter trance.

The shamans of some **cultures** use focused concentration or meditation-like means to enter trance. These shamans, like the Australian **aboriginal** shamans for example, sit or lie in quiet contemplative states when communicating with the supernatural and performing magical acts.

Shamans are masters of techniques that allow them to access and exploit their own normal, human potential. The capacity to experience **altered states of consciousness** is a psychobiological capacity of the species, and thus universal. Its use, institutionalization, and patterning are features of culture, and thus variable. Control of the ecstatic state is universal to **shamanism**; the means to invoke the state varies.

Humans have a biological propensity for experiencing a range of altered states, including **ecstasy**. Humans cannot tolerate ecstasy deprivation forever. Nothing can change the biological capacity and deep desire for experiences of meaning and contact with the Divine. Humans deprived of ecstasy spontaneously create new **religions** from the content of their own ecstatic experiences and bits and pieces passed on via oral traditions, **dreams**, and folklore. See also **Australia**; **chant**; **dance**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Peters, L. G., and D. Price-Williams. "Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism." *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 3 (1980): 397–413.

Tembetá

The *tembetá* is an ornament of yellow resin inserted into the lower lip of

young **Avá-Chiripá** males as part of their traditional **initiation** into adulthood. The *tembetá* serves as a connection to Tupá, a **sky** god and the **spirit** of the **west** wind and the whirlwind. It is believed to both symbolize and produce lightning, Tupá's signature **power**.

The Avá-Chiripá are one of three large subgroups comprising the Guarani people of **South America**.

Bartolomé, M. A. "Shamanism Among the Avá-Chiripá." In *World Anthropology: Spirits, Shamans, and Stars*. The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1979.

Teonanácatl

Teonanácatl, which means "divine or wondrous or awesome flesh," is the Nahuatl name for several species of hallucinogenic **mushrooms**. They have been employed as **sacred** hallucinogens since ancient times in Mexico and Guatemala. *Teonanácatl* was revered for its role as a plant **entheogen** by the **Aztecs** and other Nahuatl tribes. Though they are a non-flowering fungi, these mushrooms are known as "little flowers of the gods," a term of endearment and respect for the divine **ecstasy** that is characteristic of the **trance** state they induce.

Teonanácatl is found throughout the Americas and Europe. There is evidence that shamanic practices with the sacred mushroom flourished in northwestern Mexico in prehistoric times (100 B.C.E. to 400 C.E.). Traditions among contemporary **Huichol** also suggest the use of *Teonanácatl* in ancient times. These mushrooms continue to be of great importance in **shamanic healing** rituals primarily in Mexico and Guatemala today. It has not been determined whether the modern mushroom use in the **Maya** regions of Mexico and Guatemala is a vestige of former Mayan use or a recent introduction from the native peoples of Oaxaca.

These mushrooms are naturally occurring throughout the vast northwestern region of **South America**.

Though there is evidence of their former use in South America, there is no apparent use today. Archaeological evidence of the ancient use of this plant entheogen is found in the Yucatan, Costa Rica, Panama, the Sinú and Calima regions of Colombia, and as far south as the Peruvian Amazon. However, evidence is not proof, and there remains an absence of modern use of mushrooms and a lack of reference to such use in the colonial literature to support the archeological information.

At least twenty-four species of fungi are employed in southern Mexico today. The most important belong to the genus *Psilocybe* and contain the psychoactive component psilocybine. **Shamans** use a wide range of different mushrooms depending on the season, **weather** variations, and specific purpose of the **healing**. The choice of mushroom is also determined by the shaman's relationship with the **spirit** of the different mushrooms and the shaman's personal preference.

Psilocybe mexicana, one of the most widely used of the "little flowers of the gods," is found nearly worldwide growing in limestone regions at altitudes of 4,500 to 5,500 feet. **Psilocybe mushrooms** are found in wet meadows and fields, in **oak** or pine forests, and at times in mossy areas along trails. *Psilocybe* is one of the smallest of the sacred hallucinogenic mushrooms, growing from one to four inches high with a conical or hemispherical cap from a quarter to just over one inch in diameter. The cap is usually a weak straw color, though it ranges from greenish to brick red along the red/green color spectrum. The hollow stipe is yellow to yellow-pink in color and brick red at the base. The spores are darker, from sepia to purple brown.

Stropharia cubensis, another important hallucinogen in Mexico, is found nearly worldwide. Not all shamans will use *Stropharia*. It is known as *Hongo de San Isidro* by the people of Oaxaca, and as *Di-shi-tjo-le-rra-ja*, "divine mushroom of manure," by the **Mazatecs**.

Stropharia grows from one and three quarters to five and three quarters inches in height and the conical cap is usually from three quarters to two inches in diameter. The cap begins as an onion-shaped dome whose outer circumference curls up with age, inverting the outer edges of the cap. The cap is chocolate brown to brown-orange in color which blends to tan or white at the outer edges. The hollow stipe is white to yellow to ashy red and strongly lined. The gills range from white to deep purple grays and browns. The spores are purple-brown.

Conocybe siligineoides is another of the sacred hallucinogenic mushrooms of Mexico found growing worldwide. Psilocybine has not been isolated in this species and the active principle is not yet clear. *Conocybe siligineoides* grows to three inches in height with a cap one inch in diameter and is found commonly in rotting wood. The cap is deep orange in the center and fawn-orange-red toward the edges. The gills are saffron to brown-orange and the spores are chrome yellow.

Panaeolus sphinctrinus, found worldwide, is used in northeastern Oaxaca for shamanic **rituals** and **divination**. *Panaeolus sphinctrinus* is used by some Mazatec and Chinantec shamans who call it *T-ha-na-sa*, *She-to*, "pasture mushroom," and *To-shka*, "intoxicating mushroom." *Panaeolus sphinctrinus* is a delicate mushroom that grows up to four inches in height, usually in cow dung. The obtusely pointed, ovoid cap is yellow-brown to tan-gray and approximately one and a quarter inches in diameter. The stipe is dark gray, the gills brown-black, and the spores black.

The Spanish invaders who conquered Mexico found the sacred use of mushrooms offensive and set out, rather successfully, to eradicate the practice. The Spanish ecclesiastics, particularly intolerant of any cult other than their own, condemned *Teonanácatl* and its use outright. Illustrations from a seventeenth-century missionary guide depicted such scenes as the devil

dancing on a mushroom or the devil enticing a native Mexican to eat a mushroom.

The campaign of persecution carried out by the church fathers drove the use of *Teonanácatl* into hiding in the mountain villages of central and southern Mexico so completely that neither anthropologists nor botanists could find a sign of it for four centuries. In the late 1930s, *Teonanácatl* was identified as several species of hallucinogenic mushrooms and was then associated with contemporary mushroom healing ceremonies.

Use

Quetzalcoatl instructed their nine Ancient Ones of the Aztecs in the origin and use of *Teonanácatl*. From that time forward these sacred mushrooms have been consumed in pairs in rituals. The *Teonanácatl* mushrooms are used for divination, shamanic rituals, and religious practices by the Mazatec, Chinantec, Chatino, Mije, Zapotec, Mixtec of Oaxaca, the Tarascan of Michoacan, the Nahuatl, and possibly the Otomi of Puebla. The Mazatec practice the most intensive use of *Teonanácatl*, which they call *Nti-si-tho*.

Mazatec shaman Maria Sabina humbly describes how the sacred mushrooms enable her to do her shamanic healing work. "It is they, the sacred mushrooms, that speak in a way I can understand. I ask them and they answer me. When I return from the trip that I have taken with them, I tell what they have told me and what they have shown me."

Gathering and Preparation

In pre-conquest times the mushrooms were gathered by men of status (whether shamans or **priests** is unclear) who went into the hills to pray and **chant** all night long. At dawn if the mushrooms spoke to the men through a gentle breeze, they were gathered and brought back to the village. In contemporary times the mushrooms are gathered by the shamans who use them.

For the Mazatec, the mushrooms that sprout erratically are spontaneous gifts from the Divine Spirit. The mushrooms embody that Spirit and proclaim that Spirit through the qualities of the trance state that they induce. For the Mazatec then, it is literally the grace of the Divine Spirit that allows individuals who eat the mushroom to experience the Divine Spirit while in the ecstasy of trance.

Active Principle

The psychoactive constituents, psilocybine and psilocine, are indole alkaloids. They are unique to the *Teonanácatl* mushrooms and are not found in other plants. These compounds are closely related to the neurotransmitter serotonin, a chemical substance found in the brain that regulates the biochemistry of psychic functions.

Ritual of Receiving the Plant Spirit, or Plant Medicine

In a healing ritual, the shaman ingests the mushroom, in many **cultures** always in pairs. He or she begins at the **altar** on which is placed the shaman's **power objects**, copal **incense**, candles, and the fresh mushrooms. After **cleansing** the mushrooms in copal smoke, the shaman eats several mushrooms and begins to chant, invoking the **helping spirits** and the spirit of the mushroom. The shaman presents the questions pertaining to the patient's **illness** and then prays in a long chant calling forth the spirits of the plants, **earth**, mountains, rocks, rivers, thunder, **sun**, **moon**, and the stars who will answer his or her questions.

The shaman then makes his or her act of divination. The tools of divination, if any are used, are particular to each shaman. The true nature of the illness and the necessary remedy are diagnosed, healing work is done and/or **medicines** are prepared, and the ritual is closed. In some rituals the participants are also invited to consume the sacred mushrooms.

In the modern mushroom *velada* (night vigil), the Mazatec shaman

praises the spirit of the mushroom as she cleanses the fungi in copal smoke. They are distributed in pairs to the participants if they are also to eat the mushrooms, and ingested while facing the altar. All lights and candles are extinguished and **silence** is called for.

The shaman begins to hum in a way that evolves into a chant as she begins to enter trance. The chanting will continue throughout the night, accompanied by clapping or thumping the chest over the heart. In this trance state the shaman chants for hours, speaking to the spirit of the mushroom and allowing the spirit to speak through them.

While Mazatec shamans chant they maintain a **rhythm**, through clapping or other percussion, during the entire nightlong ritual. Pre-Christian artifacts from Mexico show a shaman beating a mushroom-shaped **drum**, presenting the possibility that ancient shamans also used drums to accompany their rituals.

Throughout the night in the mushroom-induced alternate state, the shaman feels him/herself in full contact with the invisible world of spirit. From this experience the shaman develops complete and sincere faith that the mushroom will reveal the spiritual truth to all of the shaman's questions.

With great reverence and love expressed toward the sacred mushrooms, the shaman closes the nightlong ritual with a final request for **blessings** from the spirit world for those who are gathered. All participants must now live with the truth gained from this audience with Spirit made possible only through the sacred powers of *Teonanácatl*.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

The mushroom-induced trance is characterized by **visions** of geometric patterns, rich **colors**, and movement, the feeling of the **soul** leaving the confines of the body and floating or flying, occasionally auditory hallucinations, and a sensation of the Divine presence.

Mazatec shaman Maria Sabina eloquently and reverentially describes the world she enters while in a mushroom-induced trance: "There is a world beyond ours, a world that is far away, nearby, and invisible. And there is where God lives, where the dead live, the spirits and the saints, a world where everything has already happened and everything is known. That world talks. It has a **language** of its own. I report what it says. The sacred mushroom takes me by the hand and brings me to the world where everything is known." See also **altered states of consciousness; alternate states of consciousness; embodiment; persecution of shamans; plant hallucinogens; plant medicines.**

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The Call

Shamans experience a calling to their profession. The nature of this call from **spirit** can be as dramatic as a seven-year **illness** or as simple as a **dream**. Either way, there is an overwhelming feeling that the profession chooses them or that they were compelled along the path by forces out of their control. Asking a shaman why they do what they do is like asking a painter why they paint or a dancer why they dance. They are called to do it. It is their art.

The call takes many different forms, both traditional and uniquely individual. The call is perceived to come from spirit, who is interpreted as an ancestor spirit, **nature spirit**, **animal spirit**, a form of a Great Spirit (Creator spirit), or

the universal spirit of the **Kosmos** (the Source, what was before the Creator). The call touches the individual deeper than beliefs, fantasy, or desire. It remains, echoing in the sphere of their being until a choice is made of how to respond to the call.

There are three general forms of the call found in traditional shamanic **cultures**:

1. The most common form is a personal experience of being called by spirit. This experience, though essentially psycho-spiritual, begins with a sickness, physical and/or mental, that cannot be cured by customary methods of treatment. The seven-year illnesses typical of Siberian shamans and the **vision quests** of North American shamans are examples of this form of the call.
2. The call comes through inheritance, in which case a living ancestor who is a shaman or the spirit of a dead ancestor who was a shaman chooses their successor from their descendants.
3. The individual identifies a deep yearning that they must follow beyond all reason and logic. When this deep desire is identified, the individual looks for a **teacher** who will train and initiate them. This practice is common in southern Asia, for example.

In some traditional shamanic cultures the call is a very specific and complex interaction between spirit and the novice. Some cultures believe that the call comes from the **soul** of a **dead shaman** who is looking to be reborn after being rejuvenated on the branches of the **World Tree**, at the breast of the **First Shaman**, or in the refining **fires** of the **blacksmith**. Another complex theme is the need for a mystical union between the physical and spiritual worlds, as in the Indonesian **ritual** mating of heaven (the spirit) and **earth** (the shaman) or the spirits of the **Soma** (India) who look for human wives to bear their children.

The call may come at any age and the **training** can begin at that time, however, traditionally, shamans are not allowed to practice until after puberty. The commitment to becoming a shaman is usually made in earnest between the ages of twenty-five and forty. Most often the **healing** practice begins after thirty when the individual has fulfilled their duties toward their community through marriage and profession. More important, shamans find compassion for their clients in their own life experience.

For many **contemporary shamans** the response to the call comes later in life, after a life crisis or during the soul searching of middle age. Contemporary people face a staggering array of career opportunities and “shaman” is rarely seen as one of them. Those who find their calling tend to do so through a process of trial and error. However, cultural resistance has more to do with the delaying in recognition of the call and acceptance of **shamanism** as a valid profession.

Many factors contribute to contemporary resistance to shamanism. Shamans are widely considered fakes, charlatans, and madmen in civilized societies due to centuries of misinformation about shamans. Contemporary people are taught to pursue practical, lucrative professions and not to follow their heart or some message from the spirit world. An often overlooked, yet significant, factor is that post-Freudian people have a differently (perhaps overly) developed ego than their **ancestors**. The effort necessary to get free of the mental and emotional control expected in contemporary life makes the **ego death** necessary for shamanic **initiation** simply too terrifying a prospect.

There is no official form of the call used to define all shamans because passing judgment relative to some external belief system, or dogma, is the antithesis of the creativity essential to shamanism. Spirit speaks to each culture and each individual uniquely, through their own **symbolic language**,

which only they can interpret accurately for themselves. However there are inappropriate reasons that individuals pursue shamanism as a profession: **power** and healing.

Contemporary people are attracted to the power and healing that come to the shaman along his or her path. The personal desire for these need not be mistaken for the call to become a shaman, but should be understood as the need for **shamanic healing**. Those who pursue shamanism for power are dangerous to themselves, risking insanity or death, and dangerous to others should they survive the training and become sorcerers. Those who pursue shamanism for healing will soon recognize that they do not have inner fortitude to respond to the constant needs of a community. The call demands a complete willingness to serve others and commitment far beyond one's own self-interest.

An authentic call is received with reluctance and often outright refusal. The rigors of training and the constant demands of service at all hours of the day, the all-night healing rituals, rigid **taboos** restricting food and sex, and other extreme **sacrifices** are often too much. The spirits can be severe demanding the sacrifice of one human from the shaman's relatives for each bone of the shaman. In North **Siberia** many shamans reveal that they try to refuse the call because the sacrifice is too great. For those who refuse, even if just to protect their relatives, the spirits continue to be demanding, creating blindness, depression, sickness, chronic mishap, and general disharmony or death for the individual and family members of those who refuse them.

In **Southeast Asia** there are few, if any, references to human sacrifice, however there are many references to illness, misfortune, and mental torment that appear suddenly when the call is refused and disappear just as suddenly when the novice surrenders to the will of the spirits. There are many stories from cultures around the globe of severe ailments disappearing completely when

the initiate surrenders to the call and serves as a shaman. Though this may seem severe to the contemporary mind these personal afflictions are no more severe than the illness, **pain**, and death that results from the poverty, pollution, and bigotry created by cultures who no longer have shamans to heal the wounds of the soul.

In contemporary, non-shamanic cultures, the call often goes unrecognized and refusal occurs by default. The resulting misfortune, depression, or illness is often considered part of normal contemporary life. It may be in the course of healing these afflictions that the individual realizes they were called. They may continue to refuse the call because their physical symptoms can be numbed through modern **medicine**, rendering them less demanding than healing, overcoming the resistance to becoming a shaman, or the commitment to a life of service and the surrender of egocentric goals.

Given the sacrifice demanded of the shaman, why respond to the call at all? The experience of the call is also a **mystical experience** where the individual receives a glimpse into the true nature of the Universe and his or her part in it all. The call awakens the knowing of one's true self and the yearning to express that self through the artistry of the shaman. There is a great internal peace that comes to the shaman as they rest between **humility** and power in Oneness with spirit. See also **North America**; **renewal of life**; **sorcery**.

Graboi, Nina. "One Foot in the Future." *Magical Blend* 38 (1993): 57–59.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Therianthropes

Therianthropes, from the Greek *therion*, animal, and *anthropos*, man, are part

human/part **animal spirit** forms that characterize the deeper stages of journeying **trance** states. As the journeyer progresses more deeply into trance, he or she typically passes through three distinct stages characterized by different types of visual phenomena. The presence of therianthropes, animal and human-like **spirit** beings, is characteristic of the third stage, a deep trance state. See also **journey**.

Theta Waves

There are four major patterns of **brain wave** frequency: delta, theta, alpha, and beta. These patterns are measured by the electroencephalogram (EEG), an instrument that produces drawings of brain wave patterns of humans while they are engaged in various activities. EEG waves are classified according to wave frequency, which is measured in cycles per second, or Hertz (Hz). Each pattern is characterized by a different Hz range.

Theta waves, 4–9 Hz, are associated with the twilight consciousness between waking and sleeping. Theta wave frequency aids entry into **altered states of consciousness** involving hypnogogic imagery, states of **ecstasy**, creativity, and sudden illuminations. This brain wave pattern is difficult for most people to maintain without **training**.

Any external rhythmic pattern of movement, light, or **sound** that incorporates 4–4.5 Hz can effectively induce theta activity. In shamanic rituals, **drums**, **rattles**, and other instruments are played in rhythmic patterns to induce theta activity and promote entry into altered states of consciousness. See also **rhythm**; **ritual**; **sonic driving**.

Maxfield, M. "The Journey of the Drum." *ReVision* 16, no. 4 (Spring 1994): 157–163.

Thread Cross

(Also: God's Eye) A magical **power object** constructed by **shamans** and **priests** in Tibet to temporarily house a deity or to

snare malevolent **spirits** and demons. The thread cross, or *mdos*, is made from two (or more) sticks crossed and bound to form a cross structure. The central vertical stick is called the *srog shing*, or “life tree,” believed to be a reference to its origin in the **Tree of Life**. The ends of the cross are connected with colored thread, round after round, creating a geometric shape. *Mdos* can be complicated structures up to eleven feet high and consisting of many geometric forms and attached objects and sections.

In **ritual**, a thread cross constructed to temporarily house a deity is called a *gtor ma*. When constructed to imprison a demonical deity for a ritual the thread cross is called a *gtang mdos*. After the demonical deity is given instructions to perform, the *gtang mdos* is cast away, freeing the spirit.

When used for protection they are called *brten mdos*. Small *brten mdos* are placed above entrances or on the roofs of homes and huge *mdos* are used to surround monasteries and their grounds. After a *brten mdos* has been used for some time and is full of malevolent energies, it is taken down, broken up, and incompletely burned in a process designed to destroy the malevolent energies captured within. The unburned pieces are taken by laymen and used as protective fetishes. See also **Bön; energy; fetish**.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Dieties*. Delhi: Book Faith India, 1996.

Threshold Guardian

The threshold guardian is a **spirit** entity encountered in altered states, particularly those that occur spontaneously. The threshold guardian is often seen in a tall, elongated, dark humanoid form, though not always.

The threshold guardian stands in the four cardinal directions as well as above

and below. It appears when the journeyer has reached the boundaries of his or her present sphere of awareness. Beyond the threshold guardian lies darkness—the Unknown—and the danger of forces that will transform the journeyer. These are the realms into which the journeyer must travel to gain awareness, **energy**, and **power**. These are the familiar realms of the **shaman**.

The threshold guardian functions as a means to keep the unprepared within the boundaries of their current awareness. If the presence of the threshold guardian alone does not frighten the unprepared back into **ordinary consciousness**, the first step beyond that boundary will typically inspire enough fear to cause retreat. The guardians that watch this boundary are dangerous. Dealing with them is risky for the incompetent, fearful, and unprepared.

Threshold guardians are depicted in painted pictographs and engraved petroglyphs of ancient **rock art** around the world. Some of the figures are distinguished by simple forms, like crosses or **spirals**, decorating their dark “torsos.” Very clear examples of these figures can be seen in pictographs from Horseshoe Canyon, Utah. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **journey**.

Time

Shamans, by working in altered states, experience the polychronic nature of time and the multi-dimensional nature of **space**. They are concerned with timing and moving in harmony with the **rhythms** of Nature and the Universe. Some shamanic **cultures** have no concept or word for time.

Leading edge scientists explain that the shape of time is not a straight line that can be broken down into regular intervals, but an irregular fabric that loops back on itself and is full of inconsistencies. A **circle** is perhaps a more accurate symbol for time than a straight line. The line and the circle represent two very strongly different views of time and the world.

The circle is a primary symbol in almost every shamanic culture. One interpretation of the circle is time. The circle represents something that comes back to itself in harmony over and over again. It represents periodicity, vibration, and movement. The shaman sees life as the expression of mythic patterns that come back on themselves in harmony over and over again.

For shamanic societies, time happened in the beginning, in “the time of the **myths**” or the **dreamtime**. The mythic events of the beginning are still happening and will continue as long as there are people, whether or not those people are aware of the mythic patterns that flow through their lives. Time is the simultaneous, creative expression of all that is, that was, and all that will be. See also **altered states of consciousness**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Villoldo, A. Personal communication, 1994.

Time of Purification

See **Hopi Prophecy**.

Tlahit

Tlahit is the **Wintun** (Nomlaki) term for a **shaman** who is a “**seer**,” but who does not possess the **power** of curing. The *tlahit's* **trance** is induced while lying on the ground and smoking **tobacco**. In trance, the *tlahit* is able to see the spiritual truth of what is going on in the present and the immediate future, an ability immediately useful in warfare and locating lost people and objects. The *tlahit* usually speaks from trance in a secret **language** that must be interpreted by his or her assistant. See also **shamanic language**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Tlilitzin

The **Aztec** name for the **plant hallucinogen** made from the seeds of **Morning Glory**, *Ipomoea violacea*, for use in **divination** and shamanic **rituals**. The Aztecs considered *Ipomoea violacea* and *Turbina corymbosa* the **Ololiuqui**.

Toá

A medicinal preparation of **plant hallucinogens**, specifically *Brugmansia aurea*, a species related to *Datura*. *Toá* is utilized in the warmer parts of **South America**, especially western **Amazonia** and the cool highlands above 6,000 ft (1,830 m).

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rátsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers*. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Tobacco

Tobacco, of the nightshade family, is native to **North America** (e.g., *nicotiana rustica*) and **South America** (e.g., *nicotiana tabacum*). In **healing**, the plant is smoked, snuffed, chewed, or prepared as a syrup which is applied to the gums or tongue, licked, or used as an enema.

Tobacco smoke is used for **cleansing** energy and is prominent in the indigenous healing **rituals** of the Americas. In the Andes, the *payé* blows tobacco smoke over the patient while **singing** the correct **chants** and healing **songs** to cure some ailments. For more serious problems **plant hallucinogens** are necessary and tobacco smoke is used to prepare the patient. Tobacco smoke is blown over the affected part of the body prior to the deeper healing.

Tobacco syrups are also used in healings. *Ambil* is tobacco syrup made by

the Witoto of South America. The Witoto boil tobacco leaves down to a molasses-like consistency. **Water** is leached through alkaline ashes of various burned forest **trees** and allowed to evaporate, leaving a "salt." This salt is added to the syrup to release its bioactive compounds, making *ambil*.

Tobacco **spirit** often presents itself to the **shaman** in the form of various **birds**, depending on the **culture**. For example, the Guianan people see Tukayana, the tobacco spirit, as a vulture, a vultureman without his **feather** cloak, or four large-king vultures. See also **Andes, South America; ash; energy**.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Toloache

Central American name for a sacred **plant hallucinogen** made from *Datura* that induces a deep and intense **trance** state. This highly toxic **entheogen** is used by **shamans** and plays a fundamental role in **initiation** rituals into adulthood. See also **ritual** and **sacred**.

Tonal Spirit

Tonal **animal spirits** are believed by native peoples of Mexico and Guatemala to determine an individual's **ordinary reality** life experiences. Tonal animals are not to be confused with the **nagual** animal of the **shamans** of this region. Tonal spirits are connected to an individual's **vital soul** based on their birth date, similar to the way the animals of the zodiac signs or the Asian calendar are associated with individuals by their birth date and used to describe qualities of the individual and the individual's life.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Tongochim

(Also: *tunosim*) *Tongochim* is the **gender-variant** shaman, or *berdache* (*berdach*), of the Yokut, a people of the San Joaquin Valley of central California in **North America**. The Yokuts believed that the *tongochim* is born into their gender-variant nature, meaning that this unique gender was seen as an aspect of his or her **original medicine**. Thus, **the call** to the role as *tongochim* is a response to an irresistible call of their spiritual nature, not a delegation or election to their status. An aspect of the *tongochim*'s responsibilities was to prepare the dead for burial. See also **transformed shaman**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Tornarsuk

One of many types of *torngraq*, or **helping spirits**, utilized by the *angakut* (**shamans**) of East **Greenland**. The *angakok* summons the *tornarsuk* to answer questions during **divination** sessions. However, the powerful *tornarsuk* is particularly dangerous because it is known to steal **souls**. The *angakok* summons the *aperketek*, another **spirit** who acts as a mediator between the *angakok* and the *tornarsuk*. Among the Aleut *tornarsuk* is a general term for helping spirit, while in other **Eskimo** regions the term is not used at all.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Torngak

A unique **helping spirit** or *torngraq* of the Labrador **Eskimo** shamans. The Labrador **shamans** acquire only one *torngak*, unlike other Eskimo *angakut*

who acquire multiple *torngraq*, sometimes fifty or more. The *torngak* is a **spirit** being that has no past or present relationship with a physical form. They take many forms, some fiery and elemental and some unrecognizable. Through the appropriate **rituals** they can be embodied in an object to create an **amulet** or **fetish**. See also **embodiment**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Torngraq

The **helping spirit** of the *angakok* (shaman). *Torngrat*, *torngädt* (pl) is in the **language** of the Iglulik of the Arctic Coast, and some dialectical variants are *tôrnaq* (s), *tôrnat* (pl) from West **Greenland**, and *torngak* (s), *tornait* (pl) from Labrador.

The *torngraq* are the *angakok*'s primary **teachers** and the source of shamans' **power**. To acquire *torngraq* the novice must spend time alone in the vast emptiness of the Arctic and pray for one or more of the powerful **animal spirits** to come to his or her aid. These animal spirits, like the Dog, Owl, or Shark, often appear in human form.

As with all **shamans**, the **spirits** choose the shaman. The novice has no choice in the *torngraq* who comes or that one comes at all. However, some parents prepared for the birth of a shaman in their child by observing particularly strict **taboos** during pregnancy beyond those practiced by the **culture** at large. Through their actions they hoped to influence the *torngraq* to favor their child/shaman with a healthy childhood and later with a powerful **song** through which to call the *torngraq* into his body to enter the **healing** trance of the shaman.

Among the Iglulik and **Inuit**, the relationship between the *angakok* and the *torngraq* runs very deep, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually. The *angakok* experiences great joy **singing** the **power song** that calls the *torngraq*

into his body and even greater **ecstasy** as he enters **trance** and travels in the spirit world. The *angakok* **sings** with the voice of his *torngraq* while in trance. This joy so easily given by the *torngraq* turns easily to sorrow and depression if the *torngraq* should decide to leave, terminating the relationship indefinitely.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

_____. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Torniwoq

The shamanic **rituals** of the East Greenland *angakok* (**shaman**), during which the *angakok* performs *ilimarneq*, or spirit flight. There are four traditional reasons the *angakok* was called upon to perform a *torniwoq*: a scarcity of sea animals for hunting, snow masses or fjord ice blocking the ways to the hunting places, **soul loss**, and infertility in a married woman.

The binding of the *angakok* is characteristic of the *torniwoq*, as is the *angakok*'s *ilimarneq*. The *angakok*'s hands and elbows are bound tightly behind his back, with a long thong that is sometimes tied also to the knees and neck. When the *angakok*'s **soul** returns from its **journey** the *angakok*'s body will be magically freed of its bonds. See also **Greenland**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Tornrak

The **helping spirits**, or *torngraq*, of the Copper **Eskimo shamans**. These helping **spirits** are distinguished from *tarrait*, the **souls** of dead humans and animals. The *tornrak* never lived as animals or humans. They can appear, disappear,

and change form at will. *Tornrak* often appear in human-like form with some extreme or peculiar characteristic like a distorted face or unnaturally long hair.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Totem Spirits

A type of **animal spirits** that are inherited through the family line by all members of the family. The clans of many **cultures**, e.g., Pacific coast of **North America**, **Aboriginals in Australia**, etc., are identified by their totem animals. The connection of a clan or family to a totem animal is based on the recognition of a common nature (qualities, skills, talents) and the collective participation between humans and animals everywhere in nature.

Animal spirits are **helping spirits** in animal form who are able to transcend the abilities of that animal in its ordinary existence, e.g., anacondas flying without wings or fish swimming through mountains. Though they express their **power** through their extraordinary abilities like **power animals**, totem spirits do not necessarily help the **shaman** in shamanic work. This varies culture to culture.

There are many ways to receive or embody the power of one's totem animal. In some cultures eating the animal in **ordinary reality** is a way to directly assimilate the animal's power and teaching. In other cultures a shaman must observe a strict **taboo** against eating the flesh of the animal to maintain a relationship with the animal. In many cultures the totem animal is honored by wearing the skins, **feathers**, or a symbolic representation of the animal. In most cultures the relationship with the totem animal is honored through animal-like dancing that occurs when the individual merges with the **spirit** of the animal and allows that animal to **dance** through his or her body during **ritual** or **ceremony**. See also **embodiment**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Trago

Trago is a pure cane alcohol used by **shamans** throughout the Andes and **Amazonia** for **cleansings**, **purification**, **camaying**, and creating **fire**. See also **Andes**, **South America** and *camay*.

Training

"Though the gods give shamans their miraculous powers, shamans must learn the technique of invoking them."

—Korean Proverb

The function of training is to develop skills and talents so that **shamans** don't hurt themselves or others unintentionally. During training the shaman learns to control psychic and physiological functions, to regulate body chemistry and the transformation of **energy** internally, and to master concentration and contemplation techniques.

When the shaman is working with **helping spirits** in the spirit world or embodying a helping spirit in the physical world, they experience themselves as a limitless being. Limitless **power** is a great responsibility that demands impeccability in thought, word, and deed. Training enables the shaman to bear both the power and responsibility with skill and **humility**, so that others are not harmed through the shaman's ignorance or hubris.

The training of a shaman is unique to each **culture**, and can be different for different individuals within the same culture, particularly if that culture spreads over vastly different geographical regions. The training may also vary depending on the helping spirit(s) that the shaman is working with. There are, however, four basic principles found in shamanic training practices across all cultures.

1. *Change in awareness due to supernatural event(s)*: The true nature

of the universe beyond four-dimensional **time** and **space** is glimpsed or revealed in a sudden, qualitative shift of consciousness. As a result, **healing** powers (inborn or acquired) manifest in the person's life, becoming available for use. These events may be subtle, as in a **dream** or moment of revelation, or they may be quite dramatic as in a bout with physical or mental **illness**.

2. *Training develops the shaman's worldview:* The individual engages in some process of gaining spiritual **knowledge**, skills, personal healing, and power. While engaged in this process, insights into **sacred** wisdom are revealed such that a new worldview grows organically, expanding ever larger and more intricately and elegantly. A shaman's power is directly proportional to the depth and breadth of that individual's awareness of the true nature of the **Kosmos**.
3. *Individual talents emerge:* These specialties are usually related to the individual's own life and the personal healing **journey** that brings him/her to this point in their life. For example, those who have recovered from being struck by lightning often heal with the power of lightning, or individuals of man/woman **gender**, having achieved an internal balance between the masculine and feminine, are quite gifted in helping individuals of all genders to find their own inner balance.
4. *The training ends in a test or initiation:* The **initiation** may be traditional or spontaneous, depending on the cultural expectations, structure of the training, and relationship with the **teacher**. This test may be as simple as a successful healing **ritual** with the first client or as intense as the Maori initiation that requires splitting a stone or tree and killing a bird or

human using only *karakia* (ritual chanting) and **prayer**.

Shamanic training allows the individual to understand other worlds with extrasensory perception in the same way that our normal senses enable us to understand this ordinary, physical world. Through training the shaman develops the ability to use higher human potential, developing eyes that see the invisible world, ears that hear the **words** of spirit, and sensory and emotional feelings that are no longer limited and censored by the shaman's past experiences and old personal identification.

The desired expansion of sensory perception, humility, and spiritual insight are achieved by including one or more of the following in the training process: fasting, motionlessness, prolonged solitude, monotonous chanting, vomiting, enemas, complete separation from the community, and freedom from normal daily tasks. These practices weaken the mind's structure of beliefs and limitations by disrupting physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual patterns that reinforce these stable habits. An internal **chaos** ensues in which the body and mind are able to transform.

The structure of shamanic training falls into one or more of three categories:

1. *Apprentice/Spirit Teacher*—the candidate works with a teacher or teachers who are in spirit form. The spirit chooses the candidate, often suddenly, and the candidate must surrender control to the teachings of the spirit. This is a one-on-one relationship that demands a great deal of creativity, flexibility, and perseverance. Early on in the candidate's training the helping spirit creates experiences, primarily in the spirit world, to strengthen the candidate's weaknesses and teach him/her the fundamentals of healing. The spirit also teaches the unique ways that individuals will practice healing in relationship with their helping

spirits. There are many examples of this type of training; the one common to many cultures is the lightning shaman. These individuals are struck by lightning and thus selected by lightning spirit. If they recover and recognize the event as their call to shamanic work, they will continue their training. Later, as the individual has gathered power and skills, he or she may “hunt” a particular spirit teacher to learn particular types of healing or to gain access to specific kinds of power.

This is the form every shaman's training will ultimately take after initiation, whether the initial training was with a human teacher, spirit teacher, or in a school. **Shamanic healing** is a path of mastery; the shaman will continue learning from the helping spirits and the Source of all things throughout his or her lifetime.

2. *Apprentice/Mentor*—the candidate works with a shaman in physical form who has a strong reputation and great power. This is a one-on-one relationship; it has as much structure as the particular **apprentice** and mentor bring to it. This relationship is often seen within families where the teaching is being handed down from generation to generation: parent to child, grandparent to grandchild, or aunt or uncle to nephew or niece. When a candidate seeks out a particular teacher, there may or may not be an exchange of money or barter for the teaching. This varies culture to culture and is based on cultural precedent.

3. *Schools for shamans*—the candidate works with established shamans in physical form through a highly ordered training process that is, for the most part, the same for all candidates within a group and between one group and the next. The relationship may or may not be one on one, however the process itself is highly structured

and based on culture and tradition, as with the **Midewinini Society** of the **Ojibwa** (North America) and the rigid structure of the **Zulu** (Africa) and the Blackfoot (North America) training. Shaman schools often arise in cultures where the shaman is expected to accurately memorize large bodies of information, like genealogies or the parts of the landscape that the spirits of each of the tribe's **ancestors** now inhabit. The healing **kahuna** tradition of **Hawaii** demands mastery of a huge body of **chants, dances,** and ceremonies, as well as skills in **divination** and healing. Similarly, Korean shamans who, along with healing arts and divination, must also master dancing, musical instruments, chants, and the correct preparation of **offerings** of food, paper flowers, and figures for each **ceremony**. There may or may not be an exchange of money or barter for the teaching. This varies culture to culture and is based on cultural precedent.

The singular consistent result of shamanic training is the expansion of the shaman's awareness to embrace a multi-dimensional worldview that is no longer bound by the physical laws of time and space. Shamanic training creates individuals who express a sincere desire to serve, humility in the face of miracles, and relative freedom from small personal, ego-centered goals. **Transpersonal** psychological training and consciousness development occurs for the shaman during their training. It is logical to assume that the relationship between the individual and the spirits plays some role in forming this worldview since the training of all shamans involves developing a working relationship with one or more helping spirits. Largely because of this working relationship the shaman experiences a continuing expansion of consciousness, commitment to service, and mastery of both the everyday and the spirit worlds.

Shamanic training prepares the individual by transferring an expanded worldview and the knowledge of tools and techniques that have worked in the past. The initiated shaman knows how to use the tools of the past and is able to adapt them if necessary to respond to the energies of the present moment to create effective healing rituals. Each shamanic ritual is unique because the circumstances and conditions of the clients differ each time.

Because there are many workshops presented today that teach shamanic techniques to the lay person, it is important to note the distinction between learning shamanic methods for personal healing and self-exploration and the training of a shaman who will use shamanic techniques to meet the needs of the community. The shaman's training and initiation into the shamanic worldview sets his or her personal healing process apart from his or her shamanic healing practices. They are related, but the distinction—usually defined by the initiatory experience—is clear for the shaman. This distinction and separation is not clear for the uninitiated.

Shamanic training, with few exceptions, involves prolonged periods of physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual training during which time the individual's conscious aim becomes service, not ego, oriented so that they can become clear and accurate **vehicles** and translators of the transcendental knowledge gathered from spirit. The shaman becomes a mediator between the spirit world and the physical world to fulfill the specific needs of the community. How they do this depends on the contract with the spiritual world. It can be a short-term commitment or it can consume the rest of a shaman's life. See also **aboriginal; Africa; embodiment; Korea; North America; pattern recognition; the call.**

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Trance

Shamanic trance consists of a diverse range of **alternate states of consciousness** used by the **shaman** to perform the tasks of his or her profession. These altered states are experienced by the shaman as different from his or her ordinary, day-to-day, waking consciousness. In trance the invisible world of **spirit** becomes visible, allowing the shaman to communicate with **helping spirits** and to see the true source of a patient's problem. The shaman's experience of these trance states is often ecstatic.

The crucial element of the shaman's trance is the control of the trance state. The shaman does not master the spirits, so much as he or she masters the trance and the resulting working relationship with spirit. Mastery of trance demands impeccable control of entrance into and duration of trance, memory and interpretation of the trance experience, and the ability to communicate that experience during and after in a way that is transformative for the patient and/or audience.

All of the altered states in this diverse set of trance phenomena include the experiential features of control and mastery. The shaman is a trance specialist. The profession involves the production and social employment of the ecstatic altered states. These different trance states are used on behalf of the community to address issues that arise from birth, death, sickness, **sorcery**, and the need for **healing**.

The purpose of the shaman's trance is not autonomous as in meditation and yoga traditions. The shaman does not seek enlightenment nor does he or she seek detachment from the external world. The shaman's trance is outwardly oriented toward the community with the goal of serving as a medium of communication and action between the spirit world and that of humankind.

In 1935 in the *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus*, one of the most authoritative ethnographic studies of Siberian **shamanism**, S. M. Shirokogoroff posits that the most basic attribute of the shaman's trance is the "mastery of spirits," or **possession**. The **Tungus** distinguish between an involuntary possession trance, which is an **illness**, and the voluntary possession trance of the shaman who "possesses spirits" to cure the possession illnesses of others. This type of **embodiment** trance is reported in the shamanism of various other **cultures**.

In contrast other scholars, most prominently Mircea Eliade in 1964, in *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, contend that the true shaman's trance is the visionary **ecstasy** of spirit flight. In this trance state, the inverse of possession, the shaman's soul **journeys** into the spirit realm, and the shaman sees or has **visions** of ascending and descending to other worlds. Eliade, also looking at Siberian shamanism, posits that possession is a later, degenerate form of spirit flight, in spite of his observation that the shaman's possession trance was an effective, universally distributed phenomena. This type of spirit flight or journeying trance is reported in the shamanism of a variety of cultures.

Practitioners caution against viewing the shaman's trance as exclusive to either. The type of trance used by a shaman has a great deal to do with what the shaman is trying to accomplish through the trance. Any definition of the shaman's trance must include both spirit flight and spirit embodiment, the full range of altered states between, and the understanding that these trance states can exist separately or coexist to various degrees throughout a **shamanic healing** ritual.

There are shamans, particularly in African cultures, who attain full control and mastery of their trance states without any reference to "mastering the spirits." For these shamans the healing powers are believed to emanate from the energy and magic inside of the

shaman, not from helping spirits. The trance state is used by the shaman to activate and use these healing powers.

The common element of all of these accounts is that the shaman, no matter whether the trance experience is interpreted as spirit flight or spirit embodiment, remains in control of his or her trance. Furthermore, the shaman is able to use that trance state for the reasons the shaman entered the trance to begin with. The shaman's control and volition change what is **soul loss** for the individual into **soul flight** for the shaman and what is possession for the individual into embodiment for the shaman.

This distinction illuminates the important connection between the shaman's **training** and his or her social function. During training the shaman learns to master possession and to intentionally call spirits into his or her body. The shaman also learns to turn soul loss into mastery of soul flight, or journeying, and send his or her **soul** back and forth into the spirit world at will. The mastery of embodiment and soul flight trance states qualifies the shaman to heal his or her patients and **apprentices** who suffer from spirit possession and soul loss.

Discipline

Shamans learn to induce and master trance experiences as part of a defined discipline that is more than learning a set of techniques. Though there are many cultural variations of this discipline, at its core there is always a master/apprentice relationship, regardless of whether the master is in human form or exists as a spirit being. Mastering the trance discipline involves a system of psychological techniques and prescribed types of **altered states of consciousness** whose goal is the psychological transformation of the apprentice.

Techniques to Enter Trance

Shamans use a variety, and often a combination, of techniques to induce altered states of consciousness. These include: seclusion, **silence**, solitude,

sleep deprivation, visual and/or sensory deprivation, dehydration, fasting, **pain** stimulation, repetitious actions, like grinding or weaving, jumping, running, sexual activity, visualization, drumming, dancing, instruments like bowstrings and bells, chanting, and ingesting **psychotropic plants**.

Many of these techniques set up a monotonous **rhythm** with an instrument or through the body. These regular, monotonous rhythms function as “**vehicles**” for the shaman who rides this thread of rhythm into and out of the altered state of consciousness. For example, percussion instruments like the **drum** may facilitate trance states when beaten at certain rapid rates. Psychotropic plants also serve as vehicles for the shaman to enter trance.

Some cultures use focused concentration or meditation-like means to enter trance. These shamans, like the Australian **Aboriginal** shamans for example, sit or lie in quiet contemplative states when communicating with the supernatural and performing magical acts.

The common element of all of these accounts is that the shaman, no matter how the trance state is induced, is not overwhelmed by the intensity of the experience. He or she remains in control of his or her trance and manipulates it in the service of his or her community.

Communication

From a cross-cultural perspective, the shaman communicates with the patient and/or the audience in the majority of cultures. For example, shamans of the **Shuar** in **South America** and the Tungus of **Siberia** narrate their trance journeys and the progress of the healings while they simultaneously answer questions put to them by the patient and audience. In cultures where the shaman and the audience interact to a high degree, the audience participation may actually support the shaman on his or her journey through continuous **singing**, chanting, and encouragement.

Symbolic Language

The meaning of the images and experiences of the shaman in trance are not absolute or fixed. The experience is referential and must be interpreted relative to the shaman's reason for being in the trance. For example, the trance experience is interpreted relative to the patient's illness or the desire for a successful hunt. The shaman must maintain focus on his or her reason for being in the trance to accurately interpret the events and information experienced there.

The shaman uses a unique, **symbolic language** that is relevant and has meaning for the community to describe his or her journey. The symbolic language is crucial; it is the bridge between the worlds experienced by the shaman and the **ordinary reality** of the audience. The symbols and experiences brought forth from the shaman's trance must be both transformative for the shaman and empathic for the audience. A successful shaman must adapt his or her symbolic language to the role and expectations of the community.

It is not enough that the shaman has visions and enters into controlled trance states. The shaman must communicate to give form to these trance experiences so they will serve the community. The socio-cultural context provides the cultural setting for proper perspective of the shaman's trance performances and **initiations**. Without this background, the shaman's beliefs might seem idiosyncratic, unrelated, and removed from social reality. See also **Africa; Australia; chant; dance; non-ordinary reality; ritual**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Peters, L. G. *Ecstasy and Healing in Nepal: An Ethnopsychiatric Study of Tamang Shamanism*. Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1981.

———, and D. Price-Williams. “Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism.” *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 3 (1980): 397–413.

Shirokogorov, S. M. *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus*. Brooklyn, NY: AMS Press, Inc., 1980.

Trance (Short)

Trance states are often described in two extremes. One is the ecstatic **soul flight** characterized by immobility, **silence**, solitude, no crisis, sensory deprivation, recollection, and **visions** of a **journey** through the spirit world. The other is an **embodiment** trance characterized by a radical alteration of the self, movement, noise, crisis, sensory overstimulation, amnesia, and visions of the spirit dimensions of this **ordinary reality**.

These two trance states can be seen as opposite ends of a spectrum of altered states used by the **shaman**. Some trance states may show qualities of both. The shaman moves freely along this spectrum of trance possibilities within a **healing** session.

Scholars who do extensive fieldwork with shamans consistently observe shamans using both magical flight and intentional **possession** in their work. Shamans pass through a series of altered states or depths of trance during any one session until they reach the level that is necessary for the particular healing or the level at which they operate best. The process of passing through increasingly deep states of possession may last from just minutes to half an hour. See also **altered states of consciousness** and **ecstasy**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Peters, L. G., and D. Price-Williams. "Towards an Experimental Analysis of Shamanism." *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 3 (1980): 397–413.

Transcultural Medicine

Transcultural medical practices result when two or more systems of **medicine** are used for the purpose of curing a patient. At the end of the twentieth

century there are two distinct systems of medicine: allopathic medicine, which regards the body as a machine made up of many separate parts, and complementary or holistic medicine, which regards the human being as a whole made up of the interdependent relation of body, mind, and **soul**.

In many **cultures** around the world patients are crossing the boundaries between the holistic systems, the shamanic systems of indigenous peoples, and the scientific system of Western cultures. For example, on most reservations in **North America**, the Native American population uses the best of both traditional and Western systems, thus creating a need for transcultural medical procedures.

Where patients have the option, they will often go to indigenous practitioners for **diseases** caused in the spirit world and to modern allopathic physicians for treatment of diseases like tuberculosis or appendicitis, which are believed to be nonsupernatural in origin. In some areas the distinction is made between "white man sickness," which are the diseases brought to the Americas by Euroamericans, and traditional illnesses that have been treated by **shamans** and medicine people for thousands of years.

This distinction is particularly clear in the area of psychotherapy, where the origins of mental **illness** are largely supernatural and social from the point of view of traditional **healing** systems. In illustration of this point, in the late 1900s Brazil's mental institutions were filled beyond capacity with mentally ill patients that the psychiatric profession was largely unable to cure. One institution was turned over to Brazilian Spiritist healers who practice a mixture of religious and indigenous **shamanic healing**. In two years the entire population of patients was healed and discharged, now able to function in contemporary Brazil without medication.

In North America the indigenous population exhibits greater confidence in traditional medicine people and shamans than in alien psychotherapists.

The indigenous practitioner anchors his or her practice in the spirit world, a world the indigenous person knows from daily experience to be the most powerful force, interrelating all aspects of life. The psychiatrist, on the other hand, anchors his or her practice in a system of beliefs and references drawn from a foreign culture whose limited belief in the spirit world renders the psychiatric system significantly less creditable for the indigenous person.

Ake Hultkrantz, Professor Emeritus of Comparative Religion at the University of Stockholm, reports that the inadequacy of Western medicine from a Native American perspective is three-fold. There is, first, a lack of holistic concepts and practice; secondly, an overvalued focus on physical biochemical aspects; and thirdly, a neglect of psychosocial and cultural aspects of ill health and treatment. Native Americans report a clear superiority of indigenous therapies in the treatment of psychological problems and in effecting positive personality changes.

More and more, Westerners are crossing these medical boundaries, for reasons based on similar criticisms of allopathic practices. People of all cultural backgrounds are turning to shamans and traditional indigenous healers for treatment of the spiritual, emotional, and psychological wounds of contemporary life when they do not find the offerings of Western medicine effective. As a result, doctors of both systems are working with ever increasing cooperation where the patient population demands it.

Traditional practitioners began referring patients to allopathic doctors when they arrived with their antibiotics and medications for physical diseases like malaria and tuberculosis. Traditional practitioners tend to refer when medication is believed to be a superior cure or when guided to do so by spirit helpers. For example, **Sun Dance** leaders among the Crow of North America refer patients to hospitals for particular remedies such as cough and heart medicines.

They also refer patients to the hospital if they get a message that their powers are not strong enough for that particular illness.

The true movement toward transcultural medicine began when allopathic doctors, recognizing the areas where traditional doctors offer superior cures, began referring patients the other way across cultural lines. For example, on some Navajo reservations in North America traditional **singing** ceremonies (healings) are permitted in the hospital after treatment by Western physicians. Traditional medicine people know that they have cured or prolonged the lives of people who turned to them when the allopathic system offered no cure.

As time goes on transcultural practitioners are emerging. For example, Lewis Mehl-Madrona integrates lessons from traditional Native American healers into his work as a physician and psychologist. In northern Alberta, Canada, Cree healer Russell Willier uses **helping spirits** to diagnose and to prescribe herbal teas and ointments. All of Willier's treatments are accompanied by tobacco **offerings**. Due to the success of Willier's medical activity he has created a health center where other traditional native healers work with patients. Their collective aim is cooperation with Western doctors, not integration. See also **dance; psychotherapeutic practices; tobacco**.

Hultkrantz, A. "Interaction Between Native and Euroamerican Curing Methods." *Shaman's Drum* 31 (Spring 1993): 23-31.

Transfiguration

The ability of the **shaman** to transform his or her own form into that of a **helping spirit**. This phenomenon is widespread in **shamanism** and is commonly referred to as **shapeshifting**. The purpose of transfiguration is to fully embody the luminous **energy** of the **spirit**, in essence to become that spirit. This enables the shaman to better use

and/or learn from that spirit energy. Typical shamanic transfigurations include changing into animals, plants, or deities, usually through inducing an **embodiment** trance. See also **trance**.

Transformed Shaman

Transformed shamans are biological males who transform their **gender** from masculine to feminine to become **shamans**. “Transformed” refers to the gender metamorphosis that occurs within the male as he becomes female. Transformed shamans are also called “**soft shamans**,” which refers to the fluidity of their sexual and gender identification. Transformed shamans are seen by their **culture** as belonging to a third or alternate gender. This transformation is expected of men becoming shamans and is sanctioned by their culture.

Transformed shamans appear primarily in cultures where the shamans are traditionally women. Male or female, the novice is first called by **spirit**, then **training** begins. However, boys called to become transformed shamans must first become female, then become a shaman. The transformation begins with learned behavior and outward changes, then progresses through sexual and physical transformation.

Transformed shamans emerged in the Paleolithic era (2,500,000–10,000 B.C.E.) particularly among the Araucanians, **Chukchee**, Kamchadal, the Asiatic **Eskimo**, occasionally by the **Koryak**, Indonesians (Sea Dyak), Burmese Patagonians, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Ute, Zuñi, and other indigenous people of **North America** (though not limited to these cultures). These **gender-variant** shamans represented for their communities a sphere of spiritual powers that exists beyond the male-female polarity. They comprise a special class of androgynous shamans, who may have unique functions that vary culture to culture.

Five Stages of Transformation

There are five general stages of transformation, with some stages appearing more or less pronounced depending on

the culture. The first stage is **the call** from the spirit world, which usually comes to the gender-variant shaman in pre-adolescent childhood in the form of **dreams** or **visions**. In most cultures the parents of the boy arrange a **ritual** of choosing into which the boy is thrust without preparation. The boy’s actions, taken in the ritual context, determine the acceptance of his calling. From this point in his life his special status is recognized within the community.

The call from the spirits can not be ignored without repercussions. Though the nature of the repercussions varies, the spiritual interventions often take the form of pervasive visions of things culturally related to gender-variant shamans. If the boy’s reluctance persists, the interventions may intensify, disrupting his life, his family, and in extreme cases his entire community.

In the second and third stages of transformation, the traditional male gender is abandoned and that of the female is adopted. The second stage involves the outward transformation. The boy is treated as a girl, in dress and hair style, and in some cultures he receives a new, female name. The third stage involves the training by the women in skills necessary to fulfill the culture’s female gender roles. This is a significant change in the indigenous cultures that have clearly defined work and responsibilities for each gender. The boy must leave behind all activities, mannerisms, characteristics, even the **language** of other boys and learn those of girls and women.

After adolescence, the fourth stage, training in shamanic techniques, begins. The boy is apprenticed to a female shaman or an elder transformed shaman or he continues to learn from his **helping spirits**. The fifth stage involves **initiation** into the art of being the receptive partner in sexual intercourse. This initiation often has a sexual component and/or training in practices of **sacred sex**.

Completion of these five stages of transformation is marked by an initiation

ceremony, after which the individual is recognized by the community as an androgynous transformed shaman. In some cultures there is a sixth stage of transformation that continues over time as the shaman completes his physical gender transformation.

In the early twentieth century there were still stories told of older *koe'kcuc*, the transformed shamans of the Chukchee, who succeeded in a true physical transformation with the aid of their *ke'let*, helping spirits. The *koe'kcuc* were believed to embody their *ke'let* so completely that they physically transformed their male genitalia to female. Ya'tirgin, male companion of the *koe'kcuc* Tilu'wgi, "confessed that he hoped that in time, with the aid of the *ke'let*, Tilu'wgi would be able to equal the real 'soft men' of old, and to change the organs of his sex altogether."

The transformed shamans were considered the most powerful in some cultures. Female shamans were the next most powerful and untransformed male shamans the least. A community's relationship with its shamans is often complicated, involving a mixture of fear and respect. People often resort to ridicule, particularly around powerful transformed shamans, to alleviate their own discomfort with the shaman's **power** and gender variance.

Death

Many cultures believed that transformed shamans would retain their gender-variant identity in the spirit world. To show respect for their unique gender and power, the transformed shamans were buried on their own special hill. In other cultures the **souls** of the transformed shamans were believed to join the female shamans in their special spirit village in the **Upperworld**. In the cultures where everyone was buried together the transformed shamans were usually buried on the men's side of the cemetery. However, they were dressed for burial in ways that represented their role as transformed shamans and their status as "not-men."

Shapeshifting

Shapeshifting by shamans is recorded in the oral traditions of cultures all over the world. However, the transformation of gender discussed here is a particular kind of change that is distinct from other shapeshifting in that it is both permanent and necessary for the man to become a shaman.

Shapeshifting is the art of transforming into other forms, like animals, **nature spirits**, deities, or other helping spirits. Shamans gather power, **knowledge**, and the experience of Oneness-with-All-Things through shapeshifting. They may also use this technique to cure or assure the survival of others. A shaman can learn a great deal by shapeshifting his or her gender as well. The intention in this act, which is elective and impermanent, is somewhat different than the transformation of a gender-variant shaman.

The reverse gender transformation of female to male was not expected in any culture as a condition for a woman to become a shaman. There are stories of female shamans temporarily shapeshifting into men. However, these women shapeshift after they are initiated shamans, not as an essential part of the process of becoming shamans. In these stories the female shaman transforms to hunt or to accomplish some traditional male gender role task to save the village or other loved ones. This shapeshifting is not permanent. The intent in this elective transformation is different than the requirement to transform, whether that requirement originates in the spirit world or in the expectations of the community.

In cultures where shamans tended to be male, a woman does not have to become a man, dress like a man, or act like a man in any way to become a shaman. She is called by the spirits and trained as the men are.

Shamans must work with the spirits that call them into the practice, regardless of gender. The gender of helping spirits is not dependent on the gender of the shaman. Though the gender of the spirits may play a part in creating

transformed shamans, it does not explain why female shamans who embody male spirits are not required to permanently transform.

Native Americans explain the difference in this way. Masculine qualities are half of ordinary humanness. But feminine qualities are more than half, automatically encompassing the masculine, as well as many other characteristics that go beyond the limits of male and female. Consequently, these cultures recognize a special status for men who have the ability to transcend the limits of their masculinity while acknowledging that women are limitless by nature. See also *angakok*; **animal spirits**; **apprentice**; *basir*; *berdache (berdach)*; **death and dying**; **dual nature**; **embodiment**; *Iban Dyak*; *manang bali*; *Mapuche*; *Ngaju Dyak*; *paksu mudang*; *sangoma*; **Two Spirit**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Transmutation

Transmutation is the ability to transform objects or substances into other substances or forms. The ability of the **shaman** to transform his or her own form into animals or plants is referred to as **shapeshifting**. Common shamanic transmutations involve animating an animal skin or object or changing an object from one form to another. In **shamanism** and **sorcery** there is an object, a *tupilak*, that is animated from parts of dead animals and the sorcerers' own **energy**. See also **power objects**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Transpersonal

Transpersonal experiences are perceived by the individual to extend beyond the ordinary sense of self to connect with a wider awareness of reality and the **Kosmos** in which the individual is a part.

Transpersonal states of consciousness are a related group of states of being characterized by this expanded sense of self. These states of consciousness are central to work in the field of transpersonal psychology.

Transpersonal psychologists acknowledge the possibility of realms and capacities of the mind that transcend the usual ego-centered awareness. They accept the possibility of spiritual sources of wisdom which are transcendent aspects of the **psyche**, above and beyond the ego.

Walsh, Roger. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Tree of Life

The Tree of Life is a cross-culturally recurrent symbol for the connection between the realms of the spirit world and the opening between the physical and spiritual realms. For countless **cultures** and **religions** throughout the long history of humankind on **earth**, the Tree of Life is the *axis mundi*, the Center of the World.

The Center of the World, as described by Mircea Eliade, author of the classic study of **shamanism**, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, is the place "where the **sacred** manifests itself in **space**, the real unveils itself, and the world comes into existence." Eliade continues to explain that it is not just a point of the sacred in the **chaos** of the profane, but it is the place where the worlds connect and beings can pass between the worlds.

The Tree of Life is used by the **shaman** and the **helping spirits** as the

way to move between the worlds. The branches provide a means to climb to the Upperworld and the roots a means to reach the **Lowerworld**. The Tree of Life is also known as the **World Tree**, **World Axis**, Great Tree, or **Cosmic Tree**.

The Tree of Life is represented symbolically by **trees**, pillars, poles, large stone monoliths, mountains, or temples built like mountains. In many cultures a particular type of tree is considered the Tree of Life. For example, the birch for the **Tungus**, the **oak** for the Celts, the **sycamore fig** for ancient Egyptians, and the cedar for the peoples of the Pacific northwestern region of **North America**.

In rain forest regions, like the Amazon, the river may function like the Tree of Life. It is the center of life and the roadway that connects all things.

The Tree of Life appears as the seven-layered teaching glyph in the Judaic Kabbalah, in the Indian **Rig Veda** (one of the oldest books in the world), and in the Buddhist *Satapatha Brahmana*. It appears as the world **art**, *Ygdrasil*, in Germanic lore, as *bai si* in Thai ceremonies, as the central pole of the **Sun Dance** in North America, and as *wacah chan* in the glyphs of the **ancient Maya**. The *bo* tree, possibly a Babylonian tree of life, appears on four-thousand-year-old steatite seals and in India the *yupa*, a sacrificial post, is chosen by its assimilation with the Cosmic Tree of Life.

Climbing the Tree of Life is referred to symbolically in stories that tell of ascending seven layers into the **sky** and climbing stairs with seven steps or **ladders** with seven rungs. The Tree of Life is symbolized when seven notches are carved into a tree, post, or stone. For example, the Turko-Mongol birch post is carved with seven (or nine) notches and set standing symbolically at the center of the world for their shamanic **rituals** and ceremonies.

A partial, cross-cultural list of the Tree of Life follows:

Sima-Kade—Zulu, Africa
udesi burkhan—*Brugmansia aurea*,
 Siberia

Ygdrasil—Germanic, Europe
bai si—Thailand, Asia
wacah chan—Maya, Central America
yupa—India
bo—Babylonian

See also **dance**; **Middleworld**; **shamanic symbols**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Perkins, J. *The World Is As You Dream It: Teachings from the Amazon and Andes*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1994.

Tree of the Shaman

The tree of the shaman is a reference to the **Tree of Life**, which figures prominently in the **initiation** of Indonesian **shamans**. Nepalese shamans are also initiated on the Tree of Life or, *da suwa* (life **trees**). The initiate is left blindfolded overnight on precarious platforms perched high in the life tree to seek **visions** relevant to his or her future as a shaman.

All trees are viewed by shamans as symbols of the Tree of Life. The Tree of Life is the **axis mundi**, the connection between the seen (physical) and the unseen (spiritual) worlds, visualized as a tree in many **cultures** and **religions**. See also **Nepal**.

Eliade, Mircea, ed. *Ancient Religions*. New York: Citadel Press, 1950.

Trees

Trees are reflections of the **Tree of Life** in most shamanic **cultures**. The Tree of Life connects the physical realm with the spirit realm, and the **shaman** with the **helping spirits**. The trunk connects the **Middleworld** to the other worlds, allowing the shaman passage to the **Lowerworld** through the roots and to the **Upperworld** through the branches.

In many cultures a particular type of tree is considered the Tree of Life. For example, the birch for the **Tungus**, the **oak** for the Celts, the **sycamore fig** for ancient Egyptians, and the cedar for the peoples of the Pacific northwestern region of **North America**.

The **Celtic** people have a strong association with trees and the Tree of Life. By standing as if in the center of a tree, one stands in the center of the Celtic Universe and is connected to all things. The Celts also saw their life path in trees; the roots symbolizing the past, with their heritage and **ancestors**; the trunk symbolizing the present, and the expression of life force and creative spirit; and the branches symbolizing the future, with their goals and reaching toward the attainment of those goals.

In many cultures trees are looked to as **teachers** of transformation, reminding people of the cyclical nature of all life and the constancy of change. This is particularly true in areas populated by deciduous trees which completely change character with the seasons. Trees are also regarded as the **medicine** people of the plant kingdom. They teach humans how to work with the plants for **healing**.

Trickster

The trickster is a universal mythic figure who is the **embodiment** of the unexpected. As a **helping spirit**, the trickster teaches through surprise, reversal, or through humor at the student's expense. The trickster often shocks or humiliates people into seeing their attachments, habits, and outmoded sense of self.

The trickster is a powerful helping **spirit** who works with the flaws of **ordinary reality** to create good and bad luck. In some **cultures** there are both positive and negative tricksters. For example, in the **Dagara** tradition, Hyena is considered a negative trickster because he never fully uses the potential of Nature and it always backfires on him. Conversely, Spider and Rabbit are considered positive tricksters because they

use the powers of Nature fully in ways that benefit all living beings.

A partial list of tricksters includes: Coyote, Rabbit, and Raven in various regions on **North America**; Maui in the Polynesian Islands, Loki of the Germanic tribes, Krishna in Indian mythology, Hermes in Greek mythology, and *Mpungushe*, the jackal, *Anansi*, the spider, and *Kintu*, the hero-fool, in the **Zulu** tradition.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Tsentsak

Tsentsak are normally invisible **energy** projectiles that the **shamans** of various peoples throughout the Amazon region use to heal and sorcerers use to harm or kill. One aspect of the shaman's **power** is a thick, white **phlegm** kept in the upper part of the stomach, which is considered the most vital part of the body. This phlegm is called *yachay*, which is derived from a verb meaning "to know." Thus the phlegm and the *tsentsak* within it represent power as **knowledge**.

For these people, knowing how the world really is and how to manipulate its processes is power. The magical phlegm, the **helping spirits**, and the *tsentsak* are just three aspects or manifestations of the shaman's power. These manifestations of power can pass through many objects, substances, forms, and actions.

The shaman passes knowledge, power, and the *tsentsaks* on to an **apprentice** by regurgitating some of this phlegm and giving it to the apprentice to drink. The phlegm contains **spirit** helpers which the shaman or sorcerer can call upon for help. Similarly, the *tsentsak* can be used in **healing** or fired into a victim to cause harm. Inside the patient or victim, the dart is partly a material object and partly a living spirit being. See also **magical darts** and **Shuar**.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Tukyaini

The **energy intrusion** or **disease object** shot by a Hopi sorcerer into his or her victim. The *tukyaini*, or arrow, is sucked by the *tuuhikya* (**shaman**) from the patient's body during a **healing** ritual. A *tukyaini* is also called *powaka hoadta*, or "sorcerer his arrow." See also **disease; extraction; ritual; sucking shaman**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Tunax

A general term for a shaman's **helping spirit** of any type in the **Alaskan** Arctic island regions, *tunaxat* (pl). *Kala* is the general term on the Alaskan Arctic mainland. A **shaman** who works with a *tunax* is called a *tunagalix* while a shaman who works with a *kala* is called a *kalalix*.

There are many types of spirits and many can change form. A *tunax* can be an **animal spirit**, a **dwarf** spirit, an elemental, a **giant**, or any form. The most important helping spirits are the animal spirits.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Tunghât

A *tunghât* is a shaman's **helping spirit** in the west **Alaskan** Arctic Coast, *tunghât* (pl). *Tunghalik*, or **shaman**, means one who controls or owns a *tunghât*. The *tunghât* usually takes a human form with a grotesque face but also has the ability to take the form of an animal or monster at will. Some forms are so terrifying that if the *tunghât* were to suddenly appear to an ordinary person, that person would eventually die of **soul loss**

induced by severe fright unless the shaman retrieves the lost **soul**.

The *tunghât* possess supernatural powers and some are more powerful than others. Shamans in this region endeavor to establish relationships with as many *tunghât* as possible to increase their **power**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Tungralik

Tungralik is the term for *angakok*, or **shaman**, in the Yukon dialect of the South Alaska **Eskimo**. It means a person who possesses a *tungraniyak*, or **helping spirit**. There are many different types of helping spirits in this region of the world, however the most important are the **animal spirits**. A *tungralik* usually has several helping spirits, often of a variety of types.

Masks, or *kinaijoq*, are an essential tool in the *tungralik*'s practice. The mask is made to embody the shaman's helping spirit. When the shaman dons the mask and **dances** it in the dance **rituals**, the **spirit** enters his body and the shaman enters into a full **embodiment** trance. See also **Alaskan** and **trance**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Tungus

People of northeastern **Siberia**. The Evén and the Evenk formally comprise the Tungus, however they are found in many tribal groups.

Cosmology

Like other Siberians, the Tungus conceive of the spirit world composed of three realms: **Lowerworld**, **Middleworld**, and **Upperworld**. The Lowerworld appears similar to the earth, but exists outside of **time** and is populated

by the **souls** of the dead. The Middleworld also looks similar to **earth**, but it corresponds to real time and is populated by various types of spirits, human souls, and **animal spirits**, all of which have the ability to move out of time at will. The Upperworld exists outside of time and is the world of the stars, **sun**, **moon**, Buga (a Great Creator being who manifests as the **Sky**), and a few other spirits.

Soul

The **chanjan**, or human soul, is conceived of as a multiple soul. After death, the **chanjan** becomes an **omi**. In a natural and proper death process the **omi** are escorted by ancestral spirits to the land of the Omi-Souls, the source of the river of kinship of the Tungus. After this return to the source is complete, the **omi** may reincarnate in subsequent generations as a human or an animal. **Omi** may also choose not to reincarnate.

Some groups of the Tungus conceive of an aspect of the soul that carries the hereditary characteristics of the clan. This soul aspect represents what can be passed on genetically. All members of the same clan possess this clan soul within the complement of their multiple soul.

Class

The Tungus do not differentiate between “black” and “white” **shamans**. **Sacrifices** to the celestial gods can be made without the assistance of a shaman, however only the shaman can enter **trance** and bring back a patient’s soul. The rituals requiring a shaman are performed at night and the ceremonies of **prayer** and sacrifice are always performed in the day.

Many Tungus tribes recognize two classes of “great” shamans—the shaman and the clan shaman. The independent shaman acquires **power** and **training** directly from the spirit world. The clan shaman acquires power through heredity, usually transmitted from grandfather to grandson at the former’s death.

Among the **Manchu** the grandson succeeds only if there is no son, however in other tribes the powers must go to the grandson because the son is busy taking care of his father’s needs. A problem arises when there is no one in the shaman’s family to take on and maintain the relationship with the shaman’s **helping spirits**. In this case a stranger is called in so that the spirits will be cared for and will not pose a problem for the living.

Characteristics of Trance

The ecstatic trance state plays a great part in Tungus **shamanism**. Dancing, drumming, and **singing** are the methods most often employed to induce trance. The shaman begins his or her trance **induction** with a prayer to the helping spirits who are the source of his or her shamanic powers. In the prayer the shaman humbly speaks of his human weakness, but that the helping spirit is all-powerful and nothing can resist it. The shaman begins to **drum** and **dances** nine times around the **fire**, then addresses his helping spirit further in a **song**. For example the shaman cries out in song to the Great Thunderbird, “Stretch out thine iron wings (and come to me).”

The shaman continues to **sing**, drum, and dance. As the shaman begins to enter trance he or she becomes “light” and leaps high into the air in a **costume** that may weigh as much as sixty-five pounds. As the shaman moves more deeply into trance, the drum is handed to the assistant who drums while the shaman resumes dancing until he or she falls to the ground in full trance.

The ability to communicate with the audience as well as the spirits is a characteristic of the shamanism of the Tungus. While in **soul flight** the shaman answers questions from the audience and narrates every twist and turn of the adventure of his **journey** in the spirit world. This interaction between the shaman and the audience is essential. The audience sings, supporting the shaman’s trance and clarifying the way

home while the shaman's narration allows the audience to connect with the spirit realm through the story.

The Call

Traditionally the spirit of a **dead shaman** appears in a **dream** and instructs the dreamer to wake and succeed the shaman. That spirit often takes the dreamer's soul into the spirit world, initiating a spiritual crisis. The candidate wakes and manifests symptoms of an unexplained **illness** and/or temporary madness. During this period the candidate's soul is being challenged and tested in the spirit world. For those whose souls emerge sane from the terrifying death and rebirth at the core of this initiatory crisis, training will follow.

This period of training takes place largely in the spirit world. However, the candidate also learns techniques for attracting and dealing with the spirits and rituals for **offering** appropriate sacrifices from an initiated shaman who is recognized by the community. When the novice is ready he or she is initiated or consecrated in a ritual recognized as a shaman by the whole community.

In the majority of cases the spontaneous call from the spirit world occurs at maturity. However, when the first ecstatic experience occurs in childhood, the child is brought up as if he or she will become a shaman. However, if no subsequent ecstatic experience occurs, the clan will redirect the young person on another path.

There are times when a young candidate's behavior determines the need for training now and hastens the recognition by elder shamans and the community. When the candidate's response to the initial contact by spirit is strong and the candidate becomes possessed by his or her helping spirit, he or she may act as if mad. For example, Tungus candidates were reported to have run away into the mountains for seven to ten days, where they lived and fed their helping spirit.

When the candidate returns to the village dirty, bleeding, and disheveled,

he or she is still possessed. An elder shaman is called on to ask questions of the possessing spirit. The questions are designed to anger the spirit and push it to clarify the initiated shaman who is to offer the appropriate sacrifices to the spirits and prepare the **ceremony of initiation** and consecration so that the candidate can gain control of his or her trance state and learn to use it to perform as a shaman.

The Tungus must have a working relationship with several different types of spirits to be recognized as a shaman. The relationship with these spirits and the trance states necessary to work with them are mastered over time. Different types of spirits help the shaman to accomplish different things: protection, **divination**, curing, etc. Traditionally, there was a minimum number of spirits the shaman needed to have in his or her association to be considered a "real shaman."

To become a "great shaman" an individual shaman needed to be able to do more than acquire spirits and perform the rituals of past shamans. A great shaman was one who could innovate new methods with the assistance of new spirits. Great shamans were also able to learn to perform alien rituals with alien helping spirits from the shamans of neighboring tribes.

Need for the Shaman

The Tungus shaman is called on for curing, **soul retrieval**, **psychopomp**, conveying souls of sacrificed animals to the spirit world (psychopomp of animal souls), maintaining balance between the human and spirit world through ritual, and divination for locating game and the rituals necessary to assure abundant game.

The shaman is called when **disease**, misfortune, or sterility threaten the clan. The shaman must diagnose the cause of the disharmony and the remedy necessary to bring **healing** and balance to the situation. The shaman looks to ensure that the spiritual equilibrium of the entire society is maintained through

appropriate ritual and correct ceremonial sacrifice. The annual sacrifice offered by the shaman to his or her helping spirits is also an important spiritual event for the entire tribe.

Divination

Divination is often an act of “little shamanism” during which the shaman invokes the helping spirit within his or her body and asks the pertinent questions. Relative to a series of troubles, illnesses, or misfortunes the shaman divines the cause of the imbalance: spirits, souls of the dead remaining in the earthly realm, or ancestral souls, and the specific ritual and/or sacrifice necessary to restore balance. The shaman and the community then perform the ritual, during which the shaman often journeys into the spirit world to complete the resolution.

Healing

Healing rituals often require descent into the Lowerworld. These rituals are called *örgiski*, literally “in the direction of *örgi*” or the lower regions. An *örgiski* is performed to convey a sacrifice to the ancestor spirits or to the spirits in the **Land of the Dead**, to search for a lost soul and retrieve it for the patient, or to escort *omi* who are reluctant to leave the earthly realms into the Land of the Dead.

Long ago journeys to the Lowerworld were common, though full of risks and dangers. The shamans of that time are believed to have been more powerful than their contemporary counterparts. Today the ritual is not common; few shamans have the power to brave the dangers encountered in a descent into the Lowerworld.

Lowerworld Journey for Divination

The shaman’s **power objects** are assembled in preparation for the *örgiski*. They include: a small raft the shaman will use to cross the sea, a lance for breaking through rocks, small objects representing two bears and two boars who help the shaman by holding up the boat in case of shipwreck or opening a path through the dense forest, four small fish

who swim ahead of the boat, an image of the shaman’s helping spirit who will carry the sacrifice, and various instruments for **purification**.

On the evening of the *örgiski* the shaman puts on his or her costume, invoking a primary source of shaman power. The shaman then drums, **chants**, and invokes the spirits of Fire, Mother Earth, and the **Ancestors**, making a sacrificial offering to all three. The shaman **smudges** with a **cleansing** smoke and performs a divination. The drumstick is tossed in the air and the landing position is read to determine whether or not the spirits have accepted the sacrifices and joined the shaman in the ritual.

The second part of the *örgiski* begins with the central sacrifice, usually of a reindeer. The shaman’s power objects are daubed with sacrificial **blood** and the meat is taken away and prepared for later. Poles are brought and laced with string that connects the poles to the power objects and to the platform outside. This cord is the “road” for the spirits to follow to enter the ritual. The shaman then begins drumming, singing, and dancing in earnest until he or she falls to the ground in trance.

The shaman’s body is now inhabited by the helping spirit who will answer questions while his or her soul is journeying in the spirit world. If the shaman does not rise from the floor by the force of embodied spirit, he or she is sprinkled with blood three times. The spirit then speaks through the shaman in a high voice, answering the questions sung by two or three mediators.

When the shaman’s soul returns from his or her task journeying in the spirit world everyone in the audience rejoices. This part of the ritual may last up to two hours. Everyone pauses for a few hours waiting for dawn at which time the *örgiski* is completed with a third ritual portion, similar to the first portion. The spirits who were called in the beginning are now thanked and the ritual **space** is closed.

Lowerworld Journey for Soul Retrieval

A soul retrieval healing also has three sections. In the first, the divination, the shaman must determine which aspect of the soul has left the body, why, and where it is now located in the spirit world. Then the *örgiski* begins as the shaman in costume drums, chants, and dances. The sacrifices are made to the *séven* (spirits) so that they will help the shaman's soul on its journey into the lowerworld. The shaman takes the spirit of the sacrificed animal into his or her body by drinking its blood and eating its flesh.

The shaman drums, chants, and dances and enters trance. Throughout the journey the shaman sings a narration of every step of the journey. The audience follows the journey step by step, reinforcing the shaman's power and trance through song. Having secured the lost soul, the shaman returns it, often in the form of a bird, to the patient's body. The last part of the ceremony, giving gratitude to the helping spirits, is performed one to three days later when the recovery of the patient is assured.

Some shamans also perform a **soul calling** healing ritual in the case of **soul loss**. In this form of soul retrieval the lost soul or souls are called back to the body through song. The traditional **words** of the song, its **rhythm**, and the shaman's gestures create a bridge into the spirit world that guides the soul back into the body of the patient.

Healings Without the Journey

The shaman does not always need to enter into a journeying trance to effect a cure. However, the shaman must always perform a divination to determine the true source of the trouble and the appropriate remedy. To identify the cause of the trouble, the shaman embodies his helping spirit to divine the necessary information.

If the cause of illness in an *omi* it must be driven away, offered a sacrifice to placate it, or, if it has entered the body of the patient, it must be exorcised

with the assistance of the helping spirits. When the cause of the illness is a different type of spirit, it may require that a small temple (*m'ao*) be built for it and sacrifices offered to it regularly in return for a cure.

Costume

In general a shaman's power and ability to cure was increased by acquiring helping spirits and creating new **paraphernalia** to house much of the acquired spirit power. Principal elements of the shaman's paraphernalia include the costume, cap or headdress, brass **mirror**, staff, drum, objects that serve as **placings (for spirits)**, and an assortment of other objects and musical instruments.

The costume can be a single element or the full complement of caftan, apron, skirt, trousers, and shoes. Two kinds of helping spirits dominate the costumes of shamans among the Tungus: the duck and reindeer, which includes iron reindeer antlers on the cap. *Kulin* or snakes hang from the back of the caftan in ribbons a foot wide and three feet long. In addition the shaman carries a staff that is carved at one end into the head of a horse. Both the snakes and the horse embody spirits that assist the shaman in his or her lowerworld journeys.

The costume is hung with iron objects, which the Tungus interpret as the moon, sun, and stars. The symbolism of these iron power objects is believed to have been borrowed from the **Yakut**. The snakes and the horse are believed to have been borrowed from the Buryat.

Paraphernalia

The shaman cannot perform without his or her paraphernalia, which embodies much of his or her acquired spirit power. Paraphernalia, though indispensable, was variable. The indispensable tools are the *toli*, a brass mirror with pendants used as a place to hold spirits, and the drum used to enter trance. At its most complex a shaman's

paraphernalia may include not only a variety of power objects, but several different costumes and several drums. See also **Buryat (Buriat)**; **death and dying**; **embodiment**; **multiple soul belief**; **the call**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

_____. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Shirokogorov, S. M. *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus*. Brooklyn, NY: AMS Press, Inc., 1980.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Tunraq

The *tunraq* is the most powerful class of **turngraq** or **helping spirit** among the Labrador **Eskimo**. The *turnaq* are believed to be able to locate game directly, not simply communicate to the **shaman** where the game is. Stories are told of master shamans who could send their *tunraq* into the open sea to kill a seal and bring it ashore.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Tupilak

Tupilak is the **Inuit** term for a **helping spirit** created by a **shaman** or sorcerer. Also *tupilek*, *tupitlaq*, **turnrak**, and *tupilat* (pl) in various **Eskimo** cultures. The *tupilak* is created from a part of an animal, like the head or a strip of skin, and then empowered with **spirit** by a shaman or sorcerer. A *tupilak* can be made from various parts of animals and assume the shape of any of its components once empowered. Some *tupilak* are carved from bone, tusk, or wood.

A shaman uses a *tupilak* like other helping spirits in **rituals of healing** or **divination**. A shaman's *tupilak* can be sent into the body of a patient to aid in drawing the **illness** from the body or sent into the future to gather information. When **sorcery** affects the patient, the shaman may wage battle directly with a sorcerer's *tupilak* though they are dangerous and hard to kill.

A sorcerer's *tupilak* is made from bones, **blood**, skin, sinew, or hair and often contains something taken from the intended victim. Particularly powerful *tupilak* are made with human bones taken from graves. The *tupilak* can be empowered and animated by spirit in many ways. Sorcerers commonly use ritual, breath, **song**, or suckled semen to give the *tupilak* life.

The *tupilak* does not always do the harm directly, but is used to set a malevolent end in motion. For example, an **Alaskan** Eskimo practitioner created a *tupilak* in the image of the intended victim and then drowned it. The victim was drowned in the next whaling season, dragged under **water** by a harpoon line.

It is possible, as with all hexing, for the *tupilak* to turn on its creator if mistakes are made in its creation or empowerment. Furthermore, if the sorcerer underestimates the **power** of the victim's spirit protection or personal protective **amulets** the *tupilak* will be repelled. It will return to the sorcerer to carry out the malevolence for which it was created on its creator. Sorcerers are particularly vulnerable to their own magic. See also **culture** and **ilisineq**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Tutelary Spirits

Tutelary spirits are a type of **animal spirit** who represents the identity of the

shaman in the spirit world and who coordinate the efforts of the **helping spirits** if more than one is necessary for the **healing**. Some scholars designate the tutelary spirit as the shaman's **teacher** while the other animal spirits function as the shaman's helpers.

Animal spirits are helping spirits in animal form who are able to transcend the abilities of that animal in its ordinary existence, e.g., anacondas flying without wings or fish swimming through mountains. They express their **power** through their extraordinary abilities. Though common in the **shamanism** of peoples of the northern Eurasian continent, not all **cultures** recognize the role of the tutelary spirit.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Tuuhikya

Hopi **shamans** who heal but do not belong to either Yayatü or Poswimkya, the two Hopi curing societies. *Tuuhikya* acquired **tupilak**, **power** from animal **helping spirits**, which enable them to enter **trance** for **visions** and **diagnosis** and to perform sucking and other forms of **healing** rituals. See also **Poswimkya Society**; **ritual**; **Yayatü Society**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Tuuhisa

(Also: *duhisa*) The supernatural **power** received from a **helping spirit**, particularly an **animal spirit**. The Hopi differentiate between the power of *tuuhisa*, wielded by the *tuuhikya* (**shaman**), and the power of *powa*, wielded by the **priests** of Hopi ceremonial societies. This distinction is not based on the

nature or strength of the power, but on who is wielding it. *Tuuhisa* is neutral; it can be used to benevolent or malevolent ends.

Historically the Hopi came to devalue the **trance** states and **visions** of the *tuuhikya* healers. Though these shamans continued to be called upon frequently, they were no longer given the respect now paid the priests of the ceremonial societies who also had powers for **healing**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Tuva

A small mountain and steppe republic lying north of Mongolia in the Russian Federation. The Tuvan people are known for having maintained their indigenous traditions of **shamanism** and **music** relatively intact until early in the 20th century. Rural Tuvans remain connected to Nature and the **spirits** of their land as their **ancestors** before them. They continue the traditions of maintaining awareness of and acting in harmony with the spirits.

In the mid-1900s shamanism was severely persecuted in the USSR. Many **shamans** were imprisoned while others who continued to practice in secret were stripped of their **costumes** and **drums**, essential tools in their work, by authorities who burnt them or by family members who hid them or turned them over to museums. In contrast, contemporary Tuvan shamans work publicly for the first time in decades. In the capitol city of Kyzyl, the Association of Tuvan Shamans has set up a clinic where shamans diagnose and heal the physical and mental illnesses of their clients.

Spirits of Place

The spirits of Nature are honored as a regular part of every day, particularly spirits of the land. **Offerings**, **songs**, and

music are given to mountain passes, forks in the road, burial sites, petroglyph sites, and sacred **caves**. The shaman honors the spirits of places as a matter of course to cultivate strong relationships, which the shaman can then draw on in her work. Through drumming the shaman amplifies the natural energies of these places which serve to stimulate the patient and the patient's **healing**.

Offerings

Typical Tuvan offerings include food, strips of cloth tied to **trees, tobacco**, money, and/or music. Music can be used by the shaman to convey greetings, apologies, gratitude, and to make special requests. Thus music is used as the **vehicle** for **prayer**.

Ritual

The *kamlanie* (shamanic ritual) is based on the understanding that while in **trance**, humans are able to connect with the spirit world through their senses. The primary sensory stimulation is auditory, invoked by music, song, chanting, the drum and other instruments. Directly related to the music is **dance** which accompanies the playing of the drum and stimulates kinetic body awareness. The shaman's eyes are covered to stimulate inner vision. Shamans ingest offerings to the spirits of food and vodka that stimulate inner taste. **Incense** is burned, usually *artysh* (juniper), to stimulate an inner sense of smell, which aids the shaman in tracking lost **souls**.

Central to the *kamlanie* is the shaman's chanting and drumming; the music's function is threefold. First the chanting and drumming create the bridge to the spirit world while simultaneously opening the awareness of all the participants to that bridge. The shaman uses the music to call specific **helping spirits** into the place of the **ritual** for overall protection and into relationship with the shaman specifically to help in the tasks to be accomplished in that *kamlanie*. Finally, the shaman used the

drumming in particular to convey them on their **journey** into the spirit world.

In the past the shaman narrated their entire journey and conversation with the spirits, providing a spontaneous story whose telling served to connect the participants with each stage of the healing. With skilled shamans the narration included a translation of both sides of the conversation with the spirits.

The shaman's narration during the *kamlanie* often involves the calls of wild or domestic animals and Nature **sounds** like rustling reeds or the winds across the steppe. The shaman's ability to utter these sounds was seen as evidence of the shaman's spirit transformation into that animal. Some sounds had cultural meaning in addition to being the voice of spirit. For example the sound of the wolves or owls was used to frighten, the magpie to flush out liars, the raven to curse an enemy, and **power** was expressed through the sound of the bull or the bear.

The Journey

Tuvan shamans work in trance states in which they are aware of sending their souls out of their bodies, generally considered "**soul flight**." However, where they go in that trance and the depth of the trance are determined by the **diagnosis** of the patient's need. The shaman may enter the spirit world alone or accompanied by helping spirits, they may fly up into the air or down into the **earth**, or they may send helping spirits out alone to execute the diagnosis.

Music

Tuvan people used music to connect with the spiritual and physical aspects of nature involved in the work and the relaxation of their day. Traditionally their music was a way of relating with Nature, a spiritual practice for conversing with the spirits of the place. Their music was spontaneous, rarely the same twice, and never intended for concerts or human entertainment. Today, the traditional links have been lost through disuse and misuse. A song

sung with nostalgia for a native place does not function in the same way as music that creates a bridge to that place, allowing the singer and those listening to converse with the spirits of that place.

Tuvans believe that the spirits of Nature produce their own sound world and that humans communicate with those spirits through that world. Shamans are particularly adept at receiving and interpreting Nature's sound world and in using sound to engage that world in healing endeavors. This two-way "conversation," expressed through shamanic music, poetry, and narration, is improvised and/or arises spontaneously from the specific **time**, place, and purpose. They are never repeated as with healing songs in other **cultures**.

The music improvised for healing is created by the shaman in response to and interaction with the subtle energies of the place, the spirits present, and the souls of the people present, including the shaman. Repetition or recordings of the music created in one **shamanic healing** session would not be effective in another healing session because it would not fit the new situation.

Tuvan shamans use music and sound for diagnosis and healing. Sound is also used as to bridge ordinary and **non-ordinary reality** in the *kamlanie* (shamanic ritual). In the *kamlanie* sound becomes a tunnel, a bridge, or wings to fly in the spirit world. The sound of the drum is the most powerful tool of all the sounds used by the shaman.

Chants

Shamans **sing** improvised, poetic prayer **chants**, or *algysh*, while they are working. **Singing** *algysh* is the means by which the shaman calls on and communicates with the helping spirits. They are fundamental to the shaman's work.

Singing

In the past shamans used three different kinds of overtone singing or "throat

singing" to converse with the spirits in this spirit **language**. In overtone singing the performer sings two or more pitches simultaneously. All three styles are believed to have been inspired by the sounds of Nature.

Khöömei style produces two pitches and was inspired by the sound of wind passing through the rocks and cliff faces. *Kargyraa* style produces three pitches and was inspired by the sound of a mother camel who has lost her young. *Sygyt* style produces a whistling sound whose source of inspiration is unknown. These three styles, along with the calls of indigenous animals, are aspects of the spirit language perceived by Tuvan shamans.

Instruments

The shaman uses music to gather and focus the spiritual **energy** found in Nature and to connect and communicate with specific helping spirits. Because music serves this vital role in Tuvan shamanism, various instruments are used by shamans, though not exclusively. Generally speaking, if a shaman is to use an instrument in their work, they are shown how to make (or where to find) that specific instrument. When made new, the instrument is not ready to play until it has been introduced to the spirits. The shaman then learns to play the instrument and the spirits direct the shaman in mastering the use of the instrument as part of the shaman's practice.

Drum

The shaman's drum, the *düingür*, is again becoming the most important bridge to the spirit world now that the use of the drum and shamanic practices are no longer persecuted. The drum is fondly referred to as the horse who conveys the shaman on her journey.

The shaman produces a broad range of dynamic overtones on the *düingür*, though the trance-inducing **rhythm** itself is steady and monotonous. The natural range of drumhead's overtones are enhanced by **metal** pieces hung on

the inside of the drum and off the back of the drumstick.

It is a traditional Siberian belief that the life of the drum and that of the shaman are inseparable. It is believed that if the drum were destroyed the shaman would die, and if the shaman were to die that the drumhead must be ritually slit, or killed. It is said that after a **shaman's death**, the shaman's drum was heard beating a farewell on its own. The drum, like **power objects** used by shamans the world over, contains energy (power) that only the shaman has cultivated—the ability to use responsibly. With the shaman gone it is safest for all concerned to release the energy back to the spirit world from whence it came.

The Temir-Khomus

The *temir-khomus* (jaw harp) was used in the past by Tuvan shamans in the *kamlanie*, though it is uncommon today. The different melodies and rhythms produced with this resonant instrument were used to call specific spirits, to heal specific parts of the body, and to communicate ideas.

Paraphernalia

The **mirror** is the first and most important tool for a Tuvan shaman to acquire and learn to use. The drum is the next and as the shaman's strength grows the costume will be acquired.

Shamans explain that the *küzüngü* (bronze mirror) is used in diagnosis to reflect a particular type of energy out into Nature. The shaman interprets this energy as it bounces back from the mountains and rocks. The *küzüngü* is a tool or power object that can be used in healing as well as diagnosis. Smaller mirrors are attached to the shaman's costume.

Costume

The Tuvan shaman's robe is characterized by the vast array of symbolic and ceremonial objects attached to it. The shaman also wears a **feather** headdress and often a veil that covers the eyes while the shaman is in trance. The shaman's costume is so covered with

small objects of metal, wood, bone, and leather that it functions as another musical instrument. Each of these objects, and many of fabric as well, are attached to the garment with the intention that they move as the shaman moves so she resonates with sound. For the trained shaman these sounds can provide additional information in diagnosis and healing.

Gender

It is probable that the first Tuvan shamans were women. However, today women are quite restricted in some parts of Tuvan and Khakass society. Female shamans function as do the male shamans, participating in rituals that are otherwise forbidden to ordinary women. Female shamans work with the same power objects, playing the drum and *temir-khomus* and wearing costumes covered with sound-makers. Some female shamans even **sing** *khöömei*, a skill normally reserved for men. See also **Siberia**.

Van Deusen, K., and T. White. "Shamanism and Music in Tuva and Khakassia." *Shaman's Drum* 47 (Winter 1997–8): 21–29.

Twasa

Twasa is a **Zulu** apprentice who is in **training** to become a **sangoma** (**shaman**). The *twasa* has experienced **Ukutwasa**, a spontaneous call from the spirit world and been accepted by a *baba* (**teacher**). The training of the future *sangoma* involves both technique and personal development.

A *sangoma* works with the *Amadlozi*, or ancestral spirits, who are ever present. However an **altered state of consciousness** is usually necessary to communicate with them directly. The *twasa* must learn to enter the necessary altered states via drumming, dancing, chanting, fasting, and meditation.

In an altered state the *twasa* is able to merge his or her **soul** with the greater powers of the *Amadlozi* and the energies

of the unseen world. After merging, the *twasa* learns to work in that state to perform **divination**, **diagnosis**, and **healing** rituals for the community.

Training

The *sangoma's* training is a highly ordered, strictly regulated, process. A *twasa* must work his or her way up through twelve stages, or ranks. In each stage he or she learns to work with one of twelve "vessels" or types of spirits. Few succeed in mastering the twelfth and final stage.

The *twasa* learns the tribal and community history and mythology, as well as the esoteric skills necessary to perform divination and diagnosis. The *twasa's* apprenticeship also involves a strict regime of personal healing and **purification**. The discipline is very strict and total abstinence from sex is mandatory. Certain foods are also forbidden.

Divination

Each *twasa* must create his or her own *dingaka* set for divination. The original four *dingaka* pieces come from the bones of animals sacrificed for the feasts which mark the *twasa's* completion of an area of training. After the feast the *twasa* searches through the **fire** for an unbroken bone. The bones are treated ceremonially, cleaned, and carved with **sacred** symbols.

When the *twasa* has collected and decorated four *dingaka*, he or she can begin training in divination and diagnosis. The *twasa* learns to diagnose **illness**, witchcraft, **sorcery**, and the presence of malevolent spirits. Through the *dingaka* the *twasa* learns to communicate with his or her **ancestors** for guidance in conducting ceremonies, creating and leading healing **rituals**, retrieving lost soul parts, embodying spirits, exorcising *tokoloshe* (ghosts), counteracting *tagati* (hexes), controlling the **weather**, and foretelling the future.

A Typical Day in Training

The *twasa* rises before sunrise. He or she beats four liters of ground roots and

herbs to a froth in a clay pot. The mixture is consumed and regurgitated several times to cleanse the *twasa's* system physically and to open up the head spiritually. This **cleansing** will make the *twasa* more sensitive and his or her skills of divination sharper and more accurate.

The *twasa* washes in an ice-cold stream, regardless of season, and returns home with his or her pot, now filled with a second herbal mixture. The mixture is boiled first to show that the **helping spirits** are present. Then the *twasa* bathes his or her naked body in the steam of the boiling pot captured under a blanket. After submerging again in the stream, the *twasa* is ready to meet the *baba*.

A formal greeting of praise is offered to the *baba*. The *twasa* begins to purge inner struggles by confessing negative thoughts, longings, hubris, or doubt. The *baba* may assign extra duties, hard work, or periods of sustained dancing or drumming to assist the *twasa* in his or her inner purification. These personal assignments must be completed in addition to lessons, the normal chores for a tribal member of the same age and **gender**, and assisting the *baba* with patients.

The regime, restrictions, and responsibilities of the *twasa's* apprenticeship may go on for years. Successful completion of the apprenticeship is honored in the ukukishwa ceremony wherein the *twasa* is recognized in the community as a *sangoma*. See also **apprentice**; **chant**; **dingaka bones**; **sacrifice**.

Mutwa, Credo Vusa'mazulu. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Two Spirit

Two Spirit, a Native American term, refers to **gender-variant** men and women. These men and women fulfill traditional social roles different from each other and from the traditional

gender roles of men and women. Two Spirit men and women are best understood as additional genders.

One type of Two Spirit male is the **berdache** (*berdach*). Gender studies scholars basically agree that the *berdache* expresses an alternative or intermediate gender, accepted by their societies as being distinct from both women and men. He is not necessarily a homosexual, transsexual, a transvestite, or a hermaphrodite. The *berdache* must complete **rituals, training, and initiation** ceremonies to be recognized in his alternate gender status.

Transformed and **soft shamans** are also Two Spirit men. These **shamans** must complete rituals, training, and initiation to be recognized as shamans in their communities. Two Spirit also refers to homosexual men. Two Spirit men expressed same-sex sexuality, sensuality, or eroticism, often involving long-term marriage to a traditionally masculine male.

The Two Spirit female is a woman who adopts a hunter-warrior role. Female gender-variance has a separate and distinct status of its own, distinct from the traditionally feminine woman and from the *berdache*. The Two Spirit roles of women relate to traditional masculine endeavors, like hunting and killing, not traditional feminine endeavors, like spiritual leadership and **healing**. Two Spirit women expressed

same-sex sexuality, sensuality, or eroticism, often involving marriage to a traditionally feminine woman.

Traditional American Indian **cultures** believes the highest power is the **Great Mystery**. It is natural then that they held mysteries **sacred**. Much of what they didn't understand, like the Two Spirits, was considered sacred. By incorporating the Two Spirit into their societies, they can successfully use the different skills, insights, and spiritual powers of these alternate genders.

These Native American cultures supported the belief that a person's Two Spirit nature is much more internal to the basic character of the individual than it is simply the result of socialization. They believed that gender roles have to do with more than simply conforming to morphological sex or standard sex roles. Two Spirit alternative- gender roles conform to the requirements of a custom into which their culture tells them they fit. This cultural institution confirms an acceptance and value for what Two Spirits are. See also **domain; gender-variant male; transformed shaman**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1993.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

U

Udesi Burkhan

The birch is the Buryat **Tree of Life**. It is known as *udesi burkhan*, “the guardian of the door” to the **Upperworld**. The birch is also call *sita*, meaning “**ladder**,” and *geskigür* meaning “step.” The birch plays a central role in the **initiation** of the Buryat **shaman**. See also **Buryat (Buriat)**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Udoyan

The feminine form of **shaman** in Yakut **language**. *Ojuna* is the masculine. See also **Yakut**.

Ukutwasa

A Zulu *sangoma* is called to his or her profession by ancestral **spirits**. This experience is *Ukutwasa*, which means coming out or emergence. *Ukutwasa* often comes in a **dream** and manifests as an unexplained **illness** of the mind and body. During this dream, animals come to the dreamer, usually four lions or leopards and sometimes crocodiles or serpents. The dreamer is pulled apart and devoured by the animals, as in the **dismemberment** dreams of the initiates of many different **cultures**.

The strange illness gradually progresses and remains untreatable by standard **medicine**, herbal remedies, or **sacrifices**. Characteristics of *Ukutwasa* illness include, but are not limited to, **visions**, both waking and sleeping, increased ability to see future events or

through physical objects, experiences of dismemberment, and a sense of the self (ego) shifting into something different.

When the individual recovers from *Ukutwasa* he or she is recognized as a *twasa* (apprentice) and begins **training** with a *baba* (**teacher**).

The **Zulu** believe that patterns of **dreaming** were laid down by our **Ancestors** in the beginning times. These dreams contain messages from the Ancestors that still affect the lives of humans today. Some of these dreams make us crazy and some make us wise. It is one of these ancient dreams that a person experiences when they experience *Ukutwasa*. See also **Africa; apprentice; sanusi; the call**.

Mutwa, Credo Vusa'mazulu. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Umbanda

Umbanda is a contemporary, Brazil-born spiritist movement that incorporates beliefs and practices of a mixture of traditional African **rituals**, Catholic saints, European Spiritist teachings, and practices of the indigenous shamanic population. Umbanda's rapid growth in the late 20th century is attributed to a fertile socio-cultural context, **trance** and **possession** being very common in Brazil and Argentina, as well as the failure of the medical system and the Catholic church to meet the needs of the larger population.

Umbanda adepts, called *babaloo*, when drawing from the African traditions, or *máe de santo*, when drawing from the Brazilian traditions, use trance states to achieve direct contact with **spirit** entities. The **mediumship** trances are induced in a ritual context usually accompanied by polyrhythmic drumming, **singing**, hand clapping, and sometimes bell ringing. The mediums **dance** and spin and concentrate on having their spirit come. In private consultations the mediums enter trance

by quietly concentrating on their spirits coming.

Recognized trance states in the Umbanda movement are unconscious, semiconscious, and conscious, referring to the medium's ability to remember events while in trance. Participants consult the mediums on a wide range of issues affecting their lives, livelihood, and health. Individuals who decide to develop mediumship skills receive special **training**. However not all of these people will become adepts over time.

Umbanda appeals to Brazilians of African, indigenous, and European descent and is oriented toward the middle class. The consultation process with mediums is more useful for contemporary people living in a high rate of change than those found in the older spiritist **religions**. Over all, the main purpose of Umbanda traditions is to work for the greater good of all humanity—to practice charity, hope, and faith, and to heal spiritually, mentally, and physically. See also **Africa**.

Goodman, Felicitas D., J. H. Henney, and E. Pressel. *Trance, Healing, and Hallucination: Three Field Studies in Religious Experience*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Ungarinyin

Aboriginal people living around Walcott Inlet of North Kimberley in the north of western **Australia**. **Shamans** of this regions are call *banman* or *bainman*. The *banman's* **power**, or *miriru*, comes directly from Unggud, the dreamtime. When his training is complete the *banman* is believed to have the powers and abilities of Dreamtime heroes.

Initiation

A *banman* is said to be chosen by Unggud. The initiate has a **dream** that Unggur, the great serpent of the

Dreamtime, has killed him in a particular **water** place. After the boy's **initiation** into manhood, he is taken by a shaman **teacher** to that water place seen in his dream.

There Unggur, seen by teacher and student, rises out of the water (or the ground in some cases) with arms, hands, and a feathered crown. The initiate falls into **trance** and is taken by Unggur into subterranean **caves** where Unggur gives the initiate a new brain, fills his body with quartz **crystals**, and explains his future duties as a *banman*.

When the candidate wakes from his trance he is ready to begin training with his teacher. Instructions in controlling the gifts of power from Unggur and the skill of the craft continue for many months and often for several years. The new *banman* learns to see and understand things in the invisible world. He learns to see past and future events and events happening at a distance or in other worlds, to read other people's thoughts and recognize their secret worries, to move crystals from his body to cure illnesses with these magical stones, to send this *yayari* (**helping spirits**) from his body to gather information or to transform into that form and travel himself. Finally he must learn to enter trance at will and travel in the realms of the Dreamtime.

Power Displays

When the *banman's* training is complete he gives a public display of power. He and his teacher return to the water place of his initiation, this time with others of the community. They both dive in and rise to the surface riding on the back of Unggur. Spectators see only the two *banman* rising from the water, surrounded by huge waves stirred by the giant body of Unggur. Unggur then throws quartz crystals onto the land, which are gathered by the spectators and kept as cherished gifts from Unggur and living symbols of the Unggud. In this way the new *banman* establishes his power and prestige within the community.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Unio Mystica

Unio mystica is the experience of feeling the ecstatic truth of being absolutely and totally inseparable from every other aspect of creation. It is the experience of union with the Divine.

In this experience the human identity expands to include the All. The individual experiences a shift of consciousness so that he or she is experientially aware of his or her true energetic connection to all things in the **Kosmos**.

This realization of Oneness with All Things is the result of a developmental and evolutionary process of growth and transcendence. It is the existential unity, or *sama-dhi* of Hindu practices, the enlightenment of Eastern practices, and the illumination of Western spiritual practices. It is also the result of the mastery of the **techniques of ecstasy** by the **shaman**. See also **ecstasy** and **evolution**.

Achterberg, J. "The Wounded Healer: Transformational Journeys in Modern Medicine." In G. Doore (Ed.), *Shaman's Path: Healing, Personal Growth and Empowerment*. Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Peters, L. G. "Mystical Experience in Tamang Shamanism." *ReVision* 13, no. 2 (1990): 71–85.

Wilber, K. *A Brief History of Everything*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.

Upperworld

From a shamanic perspective anything and everything has, or is, **spirit**. The spirit aspect of everything, which is normally invisible, is experienced directly by the **shaman** through his or her

senses while in an ecstatic **altered state of consciousness**.

This invisible world, or **non-ordinary reality**, is experienced by the shamans of many different **cultures** to have three realms: the Upperworld, **Middleworld**, and **Lowerworld**. These realms are non-linear, with limitless **space** and without **time**.

The Upperworld is accessed from things that exist physically in **ordinary reality** that go up, like the branches of **trees**, mountaintops, cliffs, and rainbows, and travels upward on smoke from **incense** or a **fire**, as well as things seen in ecstatic visions, like **ladders** ascending into the **sky** or flying. The shaman's spirit engages one of these openings through the sky and travels upward until he or she reaches the intended level of the Upperworld.

Upperworld **journeys** are often particularly ecstatic, which means that the shaman is merged or connected to his or her helping spirit to gain access to the Upperworld. Once there, the shaman continues to journey through the Upperworld with his or her **helping spirits**.

The Upperworld is inhabited by helping spirits in humanoid form (gods and goddesses), some spirits of Nature or **elements**, some **power animals**, and formless spirits. The shaman enters this realm to retrieve information, helping spirits, and lost **souls**. The shaman works in a journeying **trance** state, which is often ecstatic, to maintain a presence in the Upperworld.

Harner, Michael J. *The Way of the Shaman*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990.

Urukáme

A **crystal** containing the **soul** of a deceased family member. The **mará'akame** (**Huichol** shaman) performs a **ritual** to capture the soul of the deceased and place it into a rock crystal so that it will remain present with the family. The *urukáme* lives in the family

shrine on the **altar** and is brought out to participate in all rituals.

Utugun

The feminine form of **shaman** in Altaic language. *Kam* is the masculine. See also **Altai**.

Uwishin

Uwishin, meaning “someone who knows all the secrets,” is the **Shuar** word for **shaman**. *Uwishin* are healers and sorcerers who work, to benevolent and malevolent ends, respectively, with medicinal plants, *tsentsak* (**magical darts**), and **spirit** powers accessed by drinking *natem* (*ayahuasca*). See also **sorcery**.

V

Vegetalista

Vegetalista is a Spanish word used to refer to **shamans** who work with plants for medicinal and hallucinogenic purposes. **Knowledge** of how to work with the plants and the necessary **icaros** (**songs**) to invoke their **power** to heal comes directly from the **spirits** of the plants. The real power of the plants to heal is in the *icaros*. This is demonstrated in the *vegetalista's* ability to cure **illness** with the correct *icaros* without ever administering the plant physically.

Vegetalistas are proficient in the use of a large variety of plants and preparations for medicinal purposes and they tend to specialize in a particular **plant hallucinogen** as their primary **teacher** and means of communication with the spirit realm. The most common *vegetalistas* are *ayahuasceros* who work with *ayahuasca*. Other specialists include: *tabaqueros* who work with **tobacco**, *toéros* who work with *Brugmansia*, *catahueros* who work with the resin of *catahua* (*Hura crepitans*), *paleros* who work with the bark of certain large **trees**, and *perfumeros* who work with fragrant plant essences.

During **training**, a master shaman protects the initiate from attack by sorcerers, malevolent spirits, and natural phenomena until the initiate learns to protect himself. For example, initiates learn to use **helping spirits**, *tingunas* (electromagnetic emanations), and *arkana* (defensive powers) to protect themselves from common attacks of **sorcery**, like *virotés* (**magical darts**), *marupa* (malevolent **power animals**), and *huaní* (the glass arrows shot from a magical bow).

The master shaman also facilitates the transmission of information from the spirit teacher during training. There are **diets**, meditations, and **taboos** the initiate must observe to create the conditions under which transmission is possible. The initiate learns to draw on the three great powers of the spirit world: the **sky**, forests, and underwater realms, for **healing** powers and guidance. In addition to the plants, the initiate must also master the *icaros* and the ability to work with magical **phlegm** and magical darts. See also *Brugmansia aurea*; **medicine**; **plant diets**.

Luna, Luis E., and P. Amaringo. *Ayahuasca Visions: The Religious Iconography of a Peruvian Shaman*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1991.

Vehicle

A **trance** state “vehicle” is anything that alters human consciousness enough to support the entry into and stabilization of an altered state while remaining constant to allow the individual to find his or her way back to **ordinary consciousness** at the end of the trance.

Shamans use a variety of techniques to enter trance, which work by disrupting the stabilization of the baseline of the shaman's ordinary consciousness. These include the monotonous **rhythm** of **drums**, **rattles**, other percussion instruments, like click sticks or hollow logs, **singing**, chanting, a stringed bow, *digerido*, bells or Tibetan bowls, dancing, and ingesting **psychotropic plants**.

Ordinary consciousness is a relatively stable and habitual pattern. When the stabilization of that baseline state of consciousness is disrupted, a radical rerouting can occur. This allows a transition from the patterned state (ordinary consciousness) into an unpatterned, chaotic state. If re-patterning forces are able to establish a new pattern, an **altered state of consciousness** stabilizes. It is the ability to do just this, to control the destabilization and

restabilization of states of consciousness that makes the shaman a master of altered states.

When this process is well learned, the shaman is able to destabilize his or her baseline state of consciousness, get to the desired, discrete, altered state of consciousness, to stabilize that desired altered state, and to destabilize that desired altered state and return to his or her baseline state of consciousness. The intentional control of this entire process for a variety of altered states is mastery of trance. See also **chant; plant hallucinogens; sonic driving**.

Tart, Charles, T. "The Basic Nature of Altered States of Consciousness: A Systems Approach." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 8, no. 1 (1976): 45–64.

Walsh, Roger. "Phenomenological Mapping: A Method for Describing and Comparing States of Consciousness." *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 25–56.

Viho

Viho is a hallucinogenic snuff used by the Tukano of the Colombian Amazon. The Tukano explain that *viho* was given to them by the Sun's daughter, who took it from her father's semen during his incestuous relations with her. See also **epená; plant hallucinogens; Semen of the Sun**.

Virola Snuff

Virola snuff is a hallucinogenic snuff used widely by the *payé* (**shaman**) and adult males of the Tukanoan and Witotan **language** families in western **Amazonia**. The snuff, or *epená*, is made from the inner bark of several species of *Virola*, a genus of the nutmeg family, which is native to the tropical forests of Central and **South America**. *Virola* snuff enables the *payé* to summon the *hekura*, the little men of the jungle, who enter the *payé's* breast and give him the

powers to cure **illness**, combat **sorcery**, and see into the future. See also **plant hallucinogens**.

Vision

Visions are messages of wisdom and guidance from the spirit world. They are distinguished from imaginings, fantasy, and most sleeping **dreams**. Visions must come *to you*, not *out of you*.

Visions can come to an individual through any of the five senses as well as kinesthetically through the body. For example, one can hear a vision rather than see it. The defining factor is that the vision comes to the receiver who is aware of its non-ordinary origin from outside of the self.

True visions often require preparation, like meditation and **purification**, and **induction** through the use of one or more of the **sacred** trance technologies. These technologies include, but are not limited to, prolonged isolation, fasting, sleep deprivation, **prayer**, and physical exertion. It is usually necessary to take solitary **time** away from the ordinary life patterns of stimuli and response to empty the mind and make it a receptacle for true visions.

Visions are rarely literal and must be interpreted. The images of the vision come from the **symbolic language** of the receiver. Who the vision is for and what it means is not always apparent or easy to hear. The receiver may need the skills of a **shaman**, or other culturally designated interpreter, to help unfold the meaning of the images and to lay out a path forward based on the vision. The shaman may also interpret animal or dream **language** that occurs within visions.

There are images that come to a dreamer while semiconscious or asleep. These are special dreams but not visions. However, they are another means through which the spirit world communicates with the dreamer and, as such, they are interpreted with the care of visions. See also **dream incubation; trance; vision quest**.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Erdoes, Richard, and Archie Fire Lame Deer. *Gift of Power: The Life and Teachings of a Lakota Medicine Man*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co., 1992.

Vision Pit

The vision pit is a grave-shaped hole dug for a form of **vision quest**. The pit enhances the already pronounced and frightening feeling of dying that precedes the connection with **spirit** that allows the **visions** to come.

Tobacco ties are used to mark the pit and flags marking the four directions are planted at the four corners. Then the quester crawls into the pit and is buried to the neck with the head covered or a tarp is spread over the pit and strewn with **earth** and grass. To pray for visions while buried alive inside the pit is the hardest way to quest. The quester sees, feels, and hears nothing. To stay like this for days, fasting and alone, takes great courage and a profound need for vision. See also *hanblecheya*.

Erdoes, Richard, and Archie Fire Lame Deer. *Gift of Power: The Life and Teachings of a Lakota Medicine Man*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co., 1992.

Vision Quest

The vision quest is a solo **journey**, usually three to four days, into the wilderness to ask for **visions** from **spirit** of wisdom and guidance. Preparation involves a combination of fasting, **prayer**, meditation, **cleansing**, or **purification**. During the quest, the deliberate pursuit of visions is enhanced by the use of **sacred** trance technologies, including, but not limited to, prolonged chanting, praying, isolation, fasting, sleep deprivation, and performing **ritual**.

The vision quest is an archetypal spiritual activity found in many **cultures** and **religions**. There are as many forms for how to quest as there are cultures of people who need to quest for spiritual guidance. The **Inuit** of **Greenland** practiced vigorous vision fasts, retreating for weeks into the remote, icy wilderness. Biblical prophets fasted for revelation in the wilderness, desert, and on mountaintops. Ancient Celts fasted for three days uninterrupted inside **caves** or *sidhe*, **chamber mounds**, while questing for visions.

There are personal and social reasons for a person to seek **power** through vision questing. It can take years to prepare for a single vision quest, and the quests themselves involve personal **pain** and suffering. Even when every aspect of the quest is executed correctly, the visions do not necessarily come.

In **North America**, native peoples used the vision quest as a means to receive guidance for a variety of life issues. Every boy quested at least once, at **initiation**, for a vision to determine what kind of life he would lead in manhood. Traditionally, girls quested for their life path in equivalent, but different, rituals in the **moon** lodge.

Those who respect and understand the power of true visions also fear them. The vision can put you on a path you don't want to follow. For example visions may tell a man that it is his path to become **shaman** or **Two Spirit**, both lives demanding challenge and self-sacrifice.

Visions are distinguished from imaginings, fantasy, and most sleeping **dreams**. Visions must come *to you*, not *out of you*. Actually visions can come to an individual through any of the five senses, for example one can hear a vision rather than see it.

To receive a vision on a quest does not make one a shaman; it makes one human. However it is often on a quest that an individual will receive a vision that defines his or her path to become a shaman. The **training** and initiation of a

shaman is significantly more complex than a single vision quest.

Male and female shamans both use the vision quest to gain power and guidance for personal and professional issues. Usually the shaman reserves the vision quest for very hard **healings**, issues of life and death, **divinations** that will impact the whole community, or personal healing and guidance.

Vision quests can also be used as a part of the novice's training. For example, young Nepalese shamans were blindfolded and left overnight to seek visions on precarious platforms perched high in **trees** known as *da suwa*, or life trees.

Contemporary scholars explain that the isolation and solitude disrupt the routine patterns of **ordinary reality** and the expected social structures. The interruption can allow a return to simple human nature (the body) and the innate connection to sacred **knowledge** (the **soul**). Fasting and sleep deprivation then trigger physiological responses which induce ecstatic **altered states of consciousness**. Scholars suggest that the commitment, physical hardship, and ritual self-sacrifice involved in undertaking a vision quest may be vital to opening the connection with spirit and receiving visions of sacred knowledge.

Many shamanic traditions hold the belief that any solitary **time** that is spent in nature for purposes of reflection and guidance reawakens the individual to his or her own life purpose and to remembering the **original medicine** that is uniquely his or hers to offer to all creatures. See also **chant; Nepal; trance**.

Arrien, Angeles. *The Four-fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Erdoes, Richard, and Archie Fire Lame Deer. *Gift of Power: The Life and Teachings of a Lakota Medicine Man*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co., 1992.

Vital Soul

The vital soul is the aspect of the **soul** that sustains the physical body. It is the sensing soul that remains in the body.

Vodoun

(Also: voudun, voodoo) Vodoun is a spiritual practice of the people of Haiti and areas of **North America** and **South America** to which Haitian peoples have migrated. Vodoun, a word from the Fon people of Dahomey (now Benin) in West Africa, means "introspection" and "the unknown." The name implies a **journey** into the depths of the unknown in search of mystery or God. Vodoun presents a complex, metaphysical worldview distilled from profound religious ideas that have their roots in **Africa**.

Vodoun is a system of profound spiritual beliefs about the relationships between man, nature, and the invisible spiritual forces of the universe. It relates the Unknown to the known, finds the order in **chaos**, and renders the mysterious intelligible for people in their ordinary lives. Vodoun provides an essential bond for the community of people who practice it.

Participants in Vodoun are expected to embody a set of spiritual concepts that prescribe a way of life, a philosophy, and a code of **ethics** that regulate their communal behavior. For practitioners of Vodoun there is no separation between the **sacred** and the secular and thoughts, words, and deeds in one realm affect things in the other.

The Vodoun **priests** and priestesses are called *houngan* (male) and *mambo* (female). They function as the "**shamans**" of the Vodoun society. They practice a complex system of traditional **medicine** that is both physical and magical. The practice also involves a distinct **language, art, music**, and the participation in traditional Vodoun **rituals** and **ceremonies**.

The *loa* are "major forces of the Universe" given specific, anthropomorphic characteristics by the **culture**.

Vodoun has evolved into a practice that serves the *loa*, who are the major forces of the Universe expressed in anthropomorphic characteristics as they are seen by the Vodoun culture. They are the multiple expressions of God. There is a Supreme Force at the apex of the Vodoun pantheon. However, the Haitians interact only with the *loa* on a daily basis.

The *loa* are powerful and predictable. If offended or dishonored they can do great harm to humans. However, when served properly, they bring humans good fortune. The relationship between the humans and the *loa* is interdependent, each bringing to the other something they need and value.

The humans serve the *loa* through life and they give birth to them at death. In a ritual held one year and a day after death the **souls** of the deceased are placed in the inner sanctuary of the temple. Those ancestral souls become part of a vast pool of ancestral **energy** from which the *loa* emerge.

The Vodoun pantheon includes four hundred and one *loa*. Examples of the older and more central *loa* are Legba, **spirit** of communication between the realms; Guede, the **spirit of the dead**; Agwe, the spiritual sovereign of the sea; Ogoun, the spirit of fire, war, and metallurgical **elements**; and Erzulie, the spirit of Love.

The central ritual of the Vodoun practice is the **invocation** of and **possession** by the *loa*. In a ritual to induce this **embodiment** trance state the *mambo* or *houngan* prepares the ritual space within the temple. The **altar** is prepared, candles are lit, and the *vévé*, the symbol of the *loa* being invoked, is carefully traced into the earthen floor of the temple. A series of **libations** are left as **offerings**.

The *hounsis*, or initiates, are brought in, moving counter-clockwise in a **dance** around the centerpost, or *poteau mitan*. The *houngan* or *mambo* conducting the ritual recites the mysteries of an ancient tradition accompanied by a sacred **rattle**. Then the **drums** begin.

First the *cata*, the smallest of the drums, followed by the rolling **rhythm** of the middle drums, and finally the *maman*, the largest of the drums joins in the complex rhythms. The *mambo* adds her voice to the invocation of the drums.

The *ogan* (iron shaft), *assons* (gourd rattles), and bells are played with the drums. The *ogan* functions as a clapper, the rhythms of which can be heard above the drums. The *ogan* is always played by a woman. The *assons* are used to call in the energies of the **east** and the magical powers of the **ancestor** stars. The bells are used to call in the energies of the **West** and the magical powers of the stars of the future.

The *hounsis* begin to dance with purpose and resolution. They dance with the intention of being possessed by the *loa*, "to be mounted and ridden by the Divine Horseman." After thirty to forty minutes of drumming and dancing, the *loa* arrives. The rhythm changes and dancers begin to convulse with the beginnings of their dance of possession. The *mambo* sprays the dancer with libations of **water** and rum for the *loa* and directs the *loa* with the **sound** of her rattle.

The Vodoun temple is the home of the giant celestial serpent who came from the stars. The Serpent possesses all the secrets of the magic language. That language is magnified by the sacred music created in Vodoun rituals and ceremonies. See also **energy** and **trance**.

Davis, Wade. *Shadows in the Sun: Travels to Landscapes of Spirit and Desire*. Covelo, CA: Island Press, 1998.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Volva

Female Norse **shamans** or **seers** who performed the *seidr*, a **divination** ritual involving a deep **trance** state induced by the ecstatic **singing** of a chorus. The *seidr* was originally the **art** of the

goddess *Freyja* and was associated with the feminine, death, and the cycles of Nature. Prior to the spread of monotheistic **religions** across Eurasia, Nordic **shamanism** was practiced primarily by the *volvas*.

As Norse traditions evolved the older, fertility-based deities were known as the *Vanir* and the younger, warrior-based deities were known as the *Aesir*. The shamanic, trance-based practices were linked to the *Vanir* and a special **energy**, *ergi*. *Ergi* was derived from the transformation of sexual energy through the singing of the chorus. Men

and male gods could not participate in the *seidr* because of the special **power**, *ergi*, was believed to be linked to gender variance, particularly in men. The warrior-based **culture** feared that to experience *ergi* was shameful. See also **gender variant** and **ritual**.

Hoppál, M., and O. J. von Sadovsky. *Shamanism: Past and Present (Vol. 1 & 2)*. Fullerton, CA: International Society for Trans-Oceanic Research, 1989.

Høst, A. *Learning to Ride the Waves*. København: Scandinavian Center for Shamanic Studies, 1991.

W

Wabeno

(Also *wabánowûk*, *wábano*) *Wabeno* is a class of **Algonquian** shamans, both male and female, who received their **power** from *wapanânâ*, the Morningstar, via **dreams**. These **shamans** were renowned as the best **clairvoyants** or **seers** across a vast expanse of **North America**. They were also known for their public **power displays** of **mastery of fire**. The *wabeno* chewed fire **medicine** and sprayed it on their arms and hands enabling them to handle fire without harm.

Wapanânâ gave the *wabeno* an understanding of and ability to direct the **manitou** force inherent in sexual **energy**. In their **initiation** rituals and ceremonials the *wabeno* danced naked, channeling this vital **healing** force through their bodies. An aspect of the *wabeno* **training** was learning to release erotic energies for healing from their **trance** states.

The *wabeno* ceremonials are usually performed as a group, men and women together, using **drums** and **rattles** constructed particularly for the percussive **rhythms** of trance **induction**. In many respects the development of the *wabeno* shaman paralleled the formation of the **Midewiwin Society**. See also **dance** and **ritual**.

Grim, John A. *The Shaman*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Wissler, C. *The American Indian*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938.

Wacah Chan

The Mayan **Tree of Life**. *Wacah chan* coexists within and connects three realms of the Mayan world. The branches of *wacah chan* reach into the highest layers of the **Upperworld** and the roots touch the deepest layer of *Xibalba*, the **Lowerworld**, providing a means by which the **shaman** can travel to these worlds. *Wacah chan* is represented by the color blue-green and is associated with specific **birds**, gods, and **rituals**.

Trees, in general, were essential to **Maya** life, providing food, **medicines**, dyes, paper stuffs, materials for homes and tools, and their ambient living environment. The *ceiba* is the Maya's most **sacred** tree. The great *ceiba* often grow at the entrances to **caves**, marking this portal in the natural world as the *wacah chan* marks the portal in the spirit world.

Wacah chan is the porthole through which the beings of one world accessed another. The **souls** of the dead fall down *wacah chan* to *Xibalba*. Her trunk provides the path for the **sun**, **moon**, stars, and planets on their daily **journeys**.

The *wacah chan* could be materialized through ritual anywhere in the physical or spiritual landscape. Specifically, the *wacah chan* was created within the shaman and the **ahau state shaman** in their ritual performances. In ecstatic **trance** states the shaman becomes the living representation of the central axis that connects all realms. See also **ancient Maya**.

Hammond, N. *Ancient Maya Civilization*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1982.

Schele, Linda, and David Freidel. *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*. New York: William Morrow, 1990.

Wakan Tanka

The source of all **healing** power for the **Lakota**. *Wakan tanka* translates literally

to “great mysterious one.” The term formerly referred to the Thunderbeings and now is more closely translated as the **power** of the universe or the **Great Mystery**.

Something that is *wakan* is holy or **sacred**. A **shaman** or medicine person is a *wakan* person. See also **medicine man**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Healing*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Waking Dreams

Waking dreams are dream-like, **altered state of consciousness** experiences that occur while the “dreamer” is awake. Waking dreams are commonly called **visions**. They may come on spontaneously, without provocation or they may be induced using a physical set up, like a **vision quest**, or by ingesting the milder **plant hallucinogens**.

Like sleeping **dreams**, waking dreams are recognized as either big dreams that contain a message for the community or little dreams that contain a message for the individual who has the vision. Waking dreams are interpreted as gifts from **spirit**, either the spirit of the dreamer, the dreamer’s **helping spirits**, or from Spirit in the greatest sense.

Warajun

The **Wurunjerri** word for **soul**. The *warajun* is the aspect of the soul that travels in the **dreamtime** outside of the limits of **space** and **time**. See also **Australia**.

Water

Water, one of the elemental powers, can be used for **healing** in its physical form and called on by the **shaman** energetically (as a **helping spirit**) in the invisible world during his or her **journeys**. Water is considered life-inducing; it is the Source-of-all-things. The theme that all life arose out of the primal waters of

creation is woven through the creation **myths** of almost every culture. Water purifies and regenerates, heals, and restores. The role of water in **shamanic healing** rituals is to provide the **energy** of **purification**, **cleansing**, restoration, or reconciliation. Water may be used in healing, for example, as a **libation** (offering) or to cleanse the shaman or patient. The shamans of many **cultures** use the energy of water directly from specific sites by conducting their healings or **initiations** near wells, springs, pools, waterfalls, the sea, or other manifestations of water where there are special energies to draw on. Shamans also immerse themselves in **sacred** pools or falls to cleanse themselves in the regular maintenance and restoration of their own energy.

The **spirit** of water is used by shamans in many different ways in their journeys to facilitate the healing of the patient. For example, water can be used to restore or regenerate lost **souls** prior to returning them to the patient. In other healing processes, the shaman may need to guide the patient’s soul on a journey of return to the Source so that the soul can remember where it came from and reconnect with its life’s purpose. Water is so deeply essential to human life that it arises in a myriad of different ways for the shaman to use in healing and restoration of others.

The role of the water is defined specifically culture by culture. For example the **Dagara** live in a part of West Africa where there are two seasons each year: a wet season and a dry season. The Dagara use the energy of water in **rituals** for peace, focus, and reconciliation. In contrast, the native peoples of **Amazonia** who live in a land of rivers and rain forest see water as a direct connection back through their **ancestors** to the **First People**. They see as enormous snakes the vast network of rivers that undulate through the rain forest. With their tails at the Source and heads open at the river’s mouth, the rivers (literal home of the anaconda) are symbolic of the celestial anaconda who

brought the first people, a man and a woman, from the Milky Way in a canoe with the yuca, **Coca**, and yajé (sacred **plant hallucinogen**).

Wells are held particularly sacred as places of healing and transformation. For the shaman they are a direct opening to the **Lowerworld**, providing a connection to all other realms of the invisible world. The well is also a direct connection to wisdom and the Source-of-all-things. Wells are held sacred for a third and practical reason; they play an essential role in the prosperity of the land. When the well, or spirit of the well, is abused or treated with disrespect, the well runs dry and the land, the crops, and all of the people suffer.

Shamans from around the world believe springs, rivers, lakes, wells, and the sea flow ultimately from the Source and thus bring messages from spirit up from the Lowerworld. For example, **Celtic** shamans of Europe and the British Isles believed that the water itself was wise, in part because of its beginnings at the Source and, in part, because of the **knowledge** gained by moving through the many transformations of form and reconciliation of opposites necessary for water to complete its cycle from evaporation at sea to its ultimate return. See also **Africa**.

Cowan, Tom. *Fire in the Head: Shamanism and the Celtic Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

Wayfinding

The Polynesian/Hawaiian art of navigation, used to sail vast distances across the Pacific Ocean, often spending weeks in open seas. The art of wayfinding is based on the practitioner's ability to become One with the stars, **moon**, **sun**, ocean, and its waves. Wayfinding is a specific application of the esoteric art of

journeying and **shapeshifting**. See also **Hawaii**; **journey**; **kahuna**.

Weather

Weather can be used as a source of **power** for **shamans**, and in this way weather is a **helping spirit**. Weather can also be the thing influenced by the actions of the shaman. Weather can be the shaman's means or his or her end.

Shamans derive a great deal of intrinsic power from an intimate relationship with the natural world. Much of this is achieved through a powerful association with the **elements**. The interplay of the elements gives us weather. Once a weather pattern is formed, it can be used like the elements as a source of power for the shaman. For example, shamans can call on the power of various weather patterns in their **ritual** work. Lightning and wind can be used for instantaneous change or rain can be called on for **cleansing** or rejuvenation.

Shamans are also called upon to change the weather. In the past the health of crops was a common reason to ask for more or less rain. Today the request may come to assure good weather for a sporting event, instead of the concern for crops. In Malaysia, an eyewitness reported that, after the shaman "tied" the rain with a knot in a kerchief, the rain fell around the field, but not on the spectators or on the football game they were watching.

Matthews, John, et al. *The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Ltd., 1991.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Weather Shamans

Shamans with the capacity to influence weather, acting upon the elements in various ways. Pacific Northwest Coastal shamans, for example, will be given the task to stop rain, while **medicine societies** in the Southwestern region are called upon to

make rain. A weather shaman is sometimes a specialist. Shamans with the **power** to influence the weather are able to either disperse or call up clouds, rains, storms, or hurricanes, and to create and direct high winds to do things like confuse the enemy in battle.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

West

The west is a directional **energy** used by **shamans** in their **ritual** work and the creation of **sacred space** within ordinary **space**. The west is one of six directional energies (**east**, **south**, west, **north**, above, and below) which together define the location of the seventh point, the center. Shamans must remain aware of their center at all times to keep from becoming lost while traveling in the boundless and ever-changing realms of **non-ordinary reality**.

Each of the directions is associated with an element, season, time of day, **color**, animal, deity, etc. These associations show both consistency and variation across **cultures**. The energy of the west is tidal, it ebbs and flows. For many cultures, though not all, the element associated with the west is **water**, the season is autumn, the time is sunset, the **life cycle** passage is the adult who faces fears, the **power** is wisdom, and the **journey** is one of introspection and inner vision, leading to letting go, death, rebirth, and harvest.

Wicasa Wakan

A **shaman** or **sacred** person in the Dakota language. **Wochangi** from all living things flows into the *wicasa wakan* all the time and something equally mysterious and powerful flows from the *wicasa wakan*.

Grim, John A. *The Shaman*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

Wi-Kovat

The *berdache* (*berdach*) of the Pima people of the North American southwest. Pima mythology does not suggest the wisdom in accepting and valuing gender variance in people. Pima mythology blames gender variance in Pima men on witchcraft practiced by their Papago neighbors, who do respect the *berdache*. The Pima, unlike their neighbors, do not respect their *wi-kovat*, and the term, which means "like a girl," is derogatory. See also **gender variant**.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Wikwajigewinini

The *wikwajigewinini* is the **Ojibwa** sucking shaman, a **shaman** who heals by sucking **disease** causing **energy intrusions** from the patient's body. The *wikwajigewinini* works in an **embodiment** trance state with a hollow bone tube (approximately 3 inches in length and 3/4 of an inch in diameter) and a pan or other means of disposal for the **disease object**.

During a typical *wikwajigewinini* **healing** ritual the shaman prays to his **helping spirits** and calls them into his body, entering an **embodiment trance** facilitated by drumming and **singing**. He swallows a tube and regurgitates it into his mouth where he holds it while sucking. The *wikwajigewinini* kneels over the patient, locates the energy intrusion in the body, and, placing his lips on the body, sucks. After repeated sucking the disease object is sucked into the tube and is spit into a shallow dish along with the tube.

The healing **ritual** may need to be repeated to remove the entire intrusion. A stronger **spirit** may be called into the shaman's body to assure success in the subsequent sessions. Variations in the specifics of form do occur, for example disposing of the disease object in the **fire** instead of a bowl or pan and

taking it outside. However the functional steps of the process remain consistent. See also **sucking shaman**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Windigokan

(Also *wetigokanûk* [Plains Cree], *bûngi* [Plains Ojibwa]) The Cannibal Dancers **healing** society among the **Ojibwa**. The *windigokan* dancer/healers were called on to heal the sick by exorcising the demons of **disease**, when the **diagnosis** determined that the **illness** was caused by “disease demons.” The **costumes** of this society consisted of clothing from rags and a grotesquely painted mask with a gigantic nose, much like the **masks** of the False Face dancer/healers of the **Iroquois**.

Members of this society were men who had had a significant **dream** of a *päguk*, a skeleton **spirit**. When they performed their healing work they used inverted speech, saying the opposite of what they meant. As a result they are referred to as “clowns,” much like the *heyóka* of the **Lakota**.

The *windigokan* dancer/healers go to the home of the patient where they **dance** in full costume and masks, pounding their **rattles** on the ground, **singing**, and whistling. A primary function of the dance is to frighten the disease demons. To this end the dancers approach the patient looking menacing, and run back, again and again in all manner of gymnastics, fierce antics, and grotesque actions. See also **False Face Society**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Winkte

A **gender-variant** Lakota male. The *winkte* is a *berdach* (*berdach*), though

some specialized in **healing** mental and physical **illness**. More often they specialized in preparations of the dead and their funerary **rituals**. Many *winkte* were given powerful healing **songs** to aid in childbirth.

The **Lakota** explain that the *winkte* form a third group, different from either men or women. Their unique existence is **sacred**, a creation of *wakan tanka* like everything else. For the Lakota a person is what nature or his **dreams** make him. Traditionally, people are accepted for what they are, what they are guided to be, and encouraged to develop and share their **original medicine**. In his uniqueness the *winkte* is given certain unique powers that must be shared.

Young men who have a **vision** of Double Woman, White Buffalo Calf Woman, or the White Buffalo Calf Pipe during their **vision quest** are presented with the tools of the feminine gender. Young men who accept these tools are accepting the role of the *winkte* (*win* meaning “woman” and *kte* meaning “would become”).

A young boy who has a dream or vision of an Ancestral *winkte* is potentially being called to become a *winkte*. At about twelve the parents of such a boy take him to a ritual designed to communicate with the Ancestral *winkte*. These **spirits** have the **power** to verify whether the boy’s gender-variant inclinations are a phase or a calling. If the proper vision takes place during the ritual, one involving communication with the Ancestral *winkte*, then the boy is recognized as a *winkte* and he is raised appropriately.

The Moon Being is also a common **helping spirit** to appear in the visions of boys whose path it is to become a *winkte*. Though the specifics of these visions vary, the pattern persists. The Moon Being usually appears with a man’s bow and arrow in one hand and a woman’s tool in the other. The boy must choose between them in his vision. Through this type of vision the boy’s role as *winkte* and the high status of

being instructed directly by the Moon Being are recognized.

Many *winkte* are not permitted by the spirits to be married and some are. This varies from one person to another. Some *winkte* marry men and others marry women, have children, and still fulfill the *winkte* role. For most *winkte* the role makes sex with a woman or another *winkte* inappropriate. A *winkte* must define his own path, like all other Lakota, as they are guided by *wakan tanka*. See also **gender-variant male** and **transformed shamans**.

Conner, Randy P. *Blossom of Bone: Reclaiming the Connections Between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1993.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Wintun

The Wintun were once a vital and flourishing people of the northern **California region** of **North America**. The Wintun nation occupied a territory from roughly Mount Shasta southward to what is now the San Francisco Bay area and from the Sacramento River to the Pacific Ocean. In 1870 it is estimated that the Wintun numbered in the 12,000s. After one hundred years of racial violence, white man's epidemic **diseases**, poverty, relocation, and intermarriage, the Wintun population was no more than 1,165.

Traditionally the Wintun have five kinds of "doctors" who all work in **trance** states. The dreamers and singers possessed the **power** of clairvoyance, but not of curing. Tracer doctors were able to locate lost objects, people, or **souls**. **Healing** doctors invoked trance states, diagnosed illnesses, prescribed remedies, and possessed the power to cure through these means. The sucking doctor was traditionally the most powerful, possessing all the powers of the others with the addition of the power to cure by sucking **extraction**,

involving the removal of **pains**, or energetic intrusions.

Traditionally, Wintun **shamans** were initiated in the *lahatconos*, an elaborate communal, night-long **dance** ritual, though that did not exclude those initiated in spontaneous individual ecstatic experiences. Either way, after this initial encounter with a helping **spirit** elder shamans care for the candidate, **singing** to empower, administering **medicines**, and performing necessary healings and extractions. When the novice had resolved this initial ecstatic experience, elder shamans take the novice to a *sauel*, a **sacred** place to pray, purify the body, and acquire power.

The **helping spirits** then teach healing skills, techniques, and **songs**. As the novice cultivates his or her power and skills, the spirits and the helping spirits of the elder shamans must find the novice acceptable. Even so, the novice will not begin practicing for many years. The novice continues to **sing** the healing and **power songs**, visit *sauel* to pray and purify, and to enter trance states to work with and learn from the helping spirits.

Helping Spirits

Wintun helping spirits do not have form. They may be *yapaitu*, spiritual forces residing in sacred places or celestial bodies, the spirits of animals, or *lehs*, the souls of departed relatives or people. The shaman continues to acquire power throughout his or her lifetime because each spirit is endowed with its own personality and usefulness. Helping spirits are acquired through doctoring and the appropriate **prayers** and **sacrifices** at places of power.

Wintun shamans may smoke **tobacco** to invoke the helping spirits. When the spirits come to the shaman the audience hears a whizzing or whistling noise. The shaman then feels a hotness overcome the body as the spirits enter and the shaman moves into trance. The same spirits do not always come and if one leaves, another will come. Four or five helping spirits was considered a large number.

While entranced Wintun shamans frequently deliver prophetic speech, *Yupas* too speak from trance. *Yupa* distinguishes the shaman's **altered state of consciousness** during **rituals** from his or her ordinary state of consciousness. Often the shaman speaks in a secret **language** of spirit in which one word can mean many things. The shaman's assistant or interpreter knows who the spirit is that speaks through the shaman and interprets the spirit's message

In the past shamans would find things by singing and extract things by sucking. In the singing, the spirit in the doctor sees the intrusion and shows the doctor where to suck. Today doctors sing more, when in the past they went into deeper trance and sucked more. It is harder and less successful to pull a poison out with the hand. The **illness** just needs sucking.

Training

Wintun doctors undergo months to years of **training** depending of the type of doctor they are called to be and the power of their helping spirits. Training comes in **dreams**, trance states, and during ritual experiences with elder shamans. The shaman must learn songs, techniques, and mastery of trance. Novices may go to elder shamans for a "singing" to strengthen them. The Wintun believe that in order to keep a spirit, the shaman must take care of himself. Shamans observe food and **water** taboos, some traditional and some imposed by particular helping spirits.

Gender

The training of male and female shamans differs in areas where the genders have different responsibilities. This is an issue of balance and honoring unique roles, not one of separation. The Wintun believe that each gender has a unique relationship to creation. Therefore there are teachings for men and teachings for women to assure that both relationships are fully realized for the balanced good of the people.

Healing Rituals

Wintun shamans perform disease-object extraction by *winina* (sucking) or by *sehmin* (massage) or both. The *winina* is the most common and successful healing method. Generally described, the shaman "scans" the body with hands and **intuition** to find the areas containing energetic intrusions. A bone tube (femur bone of an adult eagle) is placed over the area with one hand while the **rattle** (turtle shell) is shaken vigorously near the area with the other. The disease-causing intrusion, or illness, is sucked from the body into the tube and then spit into a container of some kind.

The *lehstconos*, also an extraction healing, requires more power than the *winina*. Only the most powerful shamans can perform the *lehstconos*, which requires **mastery of fires** to successfully perform this healing ritual of **exorcism** and extraction of **energy intrusions**.

The *ehldilna* is considered the most difficult healing **ritual**. It is used only in dire cases of **soul loss**, when the patient's *lehs*, soul, has left the body because the illness has brought the patient so near death or because the *lehs* has been stolen by a malevolent spirit. The shaman's spirits must go in search of the soul and retrieve it or the patient will die.

Causes of Illness

The most common cause of illness is the intrusion of a *dokos*, or pain, into the body of the patient, usually as a result of **sorcery**. With the aid of spirit, shamans are able to "see with spirit eyes" and see the *dokos* in the patient's body as if the body were transparent. If the shaman's spirit is stronger than the sorcerer's spirit then the shaman will be successful in drawing the *dokos* out, usually by sucking or cupping.

The other two traditional causes of disease were spirit **possession**, thought to arise from violation of social **taboo**, and soul loss, believed to be caused by the wandering of the soul while

unconscious or soul theft by a malevolent spirit. The former required *lehst-conos*, exorcism, and the latter *ehldilna*, **soul retrieval**.

Today the Wintun shaman attributes many diseases to some form of self-inflicted stress, either emotional, physical, or psychological. Many of these conditions are treated with medicinal herbs and corrections in attitude, care of the body, and proper nutrition. The diseases of the white man, e.g., ulcers, cirrhosis of the liver, certain cancers, etc., are considered beyond the healing powers of the shaman unless detected very early.

Paraphernalia

Shamans carry a tube, horn, or length of hollow bone for the sucking extraction of "pains." Rattles are essential and found in various kinds. Shamans who perform *ehldilna* have a staff with a small basket attached for retrieving the lost souls. Sacred yellow hammer **feathers** are used to extract harmful or violent dreams from the patients. Some shamans carry a wooden pipe that embodies spirits who can be consulted for advice.

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Knudtson, P. H. "Flora Jones, Shaman of the Wintu." *Shaman's Drum* 39 (Fall 1995): 27–30.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Wiradjeri

A tribe of **Aboriginal** people living in eastern New South Wales, **Australia**. The following is the traditional "**making**," or **initiation**, and **training** of Wiradjeri **shamans**.

The Call

Early signs in childhood of a natural gift are necessary for candidacy. The Wiradjeri test the child's ability to interpret

signs in conversations built with specifically constructed sentences. The child undergoes intense training in the tribal mythology and the simpler aspects of the profession. The child receives an individual **helping spirit** in addition to the hereditary **spirit** of his or her tribe.

After his initiation into manhood, the young man's **teacher**, usually his father, rubs quartz **crystals** into his body and puts them into his **water** to drink. This transmission of **power** enables the boy to begin to see spirits.

Initiation

Initiation occurs in several stages. After he succeeds in seeing spirits, he is taken by his teacher to the grave of spirits who rub his body and insert more crystals. The initiate's individual helping spirit is sung into his chest and he is taught the **song** and **ritual** needed to release it from his body. This helping spirit leads the boy and his father to a hollow tree containing little snakes or *Daramulans*, the sons of *Baiami*, the creator of the first man. The *Daramulans* rub the initiate's body transmitting to him more power.

Finally the initiate has gathered enough power to ascend with his father on the father's magical cord into the **Upperworld** to meet *Baiami*, the true source of power for Wiradjeri shamans. *Baiami* will complete his initiation. The opening in the **sky** that grants access to *Baiami* opens and shuts quickly and continuously. Anyone touched or caught by the opening will lose his powers and die as soon as he returns to **earth**.

First *Baiami* causes *kali*, liquefied quartz crystals, to fall in a great waterfall on the initiate. The *kali* is spread all over the body and completely absorbed in a rite is called *kurini*. In the next stage *Baiami* **sings** a piece of quartz from his body into the initiate's head to give him **spirit vision**. He then sings a flame, from his body into the initiate's chest and teaches him how to release the flame. In the final stage, *Baiami* sings a magical cord in the initiate, up

one leg across the chest and down the other leg. The initiation is complete.

Training

The ability to work with the powers of the *kali*, crystal, flame, and cord must all be mastered. Years are required to become proficient in the applications of these magical substances. Some shamans will become more powerful and able than others. They all must learn how to **diagnose** and treat **illness**, produce the magical stones, cords and helping spirits from his body, summon the spirits, and exercise various psychic powers.

When these powers are mastered, Wiradjeri shamans are able to send their helping spirits to learn what was happening at a distance or to transform into animal form to go there himself. They “fast travel,” moving effortlessly at abnormally high speeds over great distances, disappear and reappear in an separate location, and display **mastery of fire**. The retention of these powers depends on self-discipline and the observance of traditional taboos.

Wiradjeri shamans also gain power from *Wawi*, a serpent-like creature who lives in deep waterholes. Shamans who succeed in finding *Wawi* and entering his den are given new **power songs** to bring back to their people. See also **the call**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Elkin, A. P. *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994.

Kalweit, Holger. *Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Wirikuta

Wirikuta, which means Paradise, is the Sacred Land of Peyote and the place of the mythological origin of the **Huichol**

people. It is found in the mountains near San Luís Potosí and is the destination of the Huichol **peyote hunt**.

Witch Doctor

A somewhat pejorative term of uncertain origin, usually used incorrectly to refer to a sorcerer or practitioner of the **sacred** arts of ill repute. A witch doctor is actually a practitioner who can doctor the harmful effects of witchcraft. For example, witch doctors are called on to reverse the effects of *tokoloshe* (ghosts sent by witches) throughout **Africa**. Witch doctor can also refer to a **shaman** who is skilled in counteracting the *tagati* (hexes) placed on others by witches. See also **sangoma** and **Zulu**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Mutwa, Credo Vusa'mazulu. *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Openings, 1996.

Wochangi

The **power** received by the **shaman** from a **helping spirit** or other source. The **Lakota** believe that *wochangi*, or spiritual power, is found in all things because all things are **sacred**. Thus, *wochangi* can also be given by all created things if one is attentive.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Wohpe

The **Lakota** term for the White Buffalo Calf Maiden who brought the Sacred Calf Pipe. See also **sacred pipe**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Womb

For the **shaman** the womb is both literal, a **helping spirit**, and symbolic, a metaphor of the cosmic womb from which all life comes. The boundaries of All-That-Is, the whole universe, are found within the cosmic womb. For shamans, the cosmic womb is the feminine force that contains the masculine force, consciousness, which together are the divine, androgynous, creative force that is the **Kosmos**.

The Source, the path to the center, and the womb are all represented in the **spiral**, common in shamanic **cultures**, and in the labyrinth. The spiral represents the path to The Source, the point of origin within the Unknown. The spiral cycle is a symbolic reminder of the infinite process of death and rebirth that resonates with the vibrations and **rhythms** of the universe itself.

Each new shaman was once a novice who died in his or her **initiation** and was reborn a shaman. Thus **cave** and wombs are often the locations for initiations. A **journey** into the “womb” during initiation represents a journey to the center, a return to The Source.

Many shamanic people see the physical configuration of the womb reflected in the hexagon and in particular in the hexagonal rock **crystals**, like quartz, emeralds, and tourmaline. Therefore these stones are often prized and powerful tools for the shaman.

The womb is also literally a place of **power** for female shamans. The **spirit** of the womb is a helping spirit. The womb itself is the **dreaming** organ of the female body. With the womb as a **teacher** of the cosmic womb, females have the opportunity to perceive **knowledge** directly.

In terms of **energy**, females know The Source directly through the womb. In **training** they do not have to move toward it, but they must learn to understand it. The male in training is always approaching, moving toward knowledge, but never reaching it. The male novice builds understanding step by step.

These are equally valid ways of understanding, yet they are very different ways of experiencing life and energy. These differences affect the ways male and female shamans are trained and initiated.

Donner, Florinda. *Being-in-Dreaming: An Initiation into the Sorcerer's World*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1992.

Ripinsky-Naxon, M. *The Nature of Shamanism: Substance and Function of a Religious Metaphor*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Words

Words and **song** are used by **shamans** to heal, charge remedies, call in **spirit** energies for **power**, and to guide others along their own altered state **journeys**. Words have creative power all their own when carried by the breath of the shaman. The words spoken over a remedy or the song sung during the **healing** are an essential part of the cure. For example, the **payé** works with **ayahuasca** and **icaros** (songs) together in healing sessions. One South American shaman said definitively, “What good do you think my remedies would be if I didn't **sing** to them?” See also **altered states of consciousness** and **South America**.

Schultes, R. E., and R. F. Raffauf. *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia*. Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2004.

World Axis

The world axis is the connection between the seen (physical) and the unseen (spiritual) worlds; it is the **axis mundi**. Found in most **cultures**, it is visualized as a great tree creating a central axis that connects all of the **Kosmos**. See also **Tree of Life**.

World Hypothesis

A world hypothesis consists of the fundamental beliefs about the nature of the world and reality that underlies the life and work of a community. The majority of people in a community then take this set of assumptions of their **culture** or subculture unquestioningly and interpret the world through that lens. Their consensual world hypothesis goes unquestioned and supports their worldview.

Practically speaking, this means that any individual's interpretation of a given phenomena will be largely determined by his or her personal beliefs, philosophy, and world hypothesis. And that this process of arriving at an interpretation is largely unconscious and appears to the individual as "the way it is."

At the same time diverse philosophies and spiritual traditions can nudge individuals to become conscious of their own world hypothesis. The worldviews of others can provoke an individual to question the underlying assumptions of his or her worldview. In the face of this diversity of ideas we must all acknowledge that we just do not know, indeed cannot know, the ultimate nature of many things.

The world hypotheses of shamanic cultures are based on the stories of "a **time** before time" when humankind was not separate from God. In contrast, the story of the separation between God and humankind is fundamental to the world hypotheses of most first-world nations. These stories profoundly shape their respective worldviews. For this reason it is a challenge for contemporary humankind to understand the **shaman** and the shaman's experience of the world. See also **religion**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

World Mountain

(Also: Cosmic Mountain) A legendary mountain that stands at the center of

the world from which grows the **World Tree**, or **Tree of Life**. The World Mountain is central in the beliefs of many shamanic **cultures**, particularly across Asia, marking the interconnection of the physical and spiritual realms.

The World Mountain has three, four, or seven steps, symbolizing passage into **sacred** spiritual realms. At the top of the World Mountain grows the World Tree, the connection used by **shamans** to move between the many realms of the **spirit** world and the source of life and immortality. In many cultures the shaman is born or initiated on the World Tree.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Dieties*. Delhi: Book Faith India, 1996.

World Tree

The World Tree is the connection between the seen (physical) and the unseen (spiritual) worlds; it is the **axis mundi**. Found in most **cultures**, it is visualized as a great tree connecting all of the **Kosmos**. See also **Tree of Life**.

Wounded Healer

The **shaman** is often referred to as the "wounded healer," because he or she must heal him/herself from a spontaneous wound or **illness** inflicted by the spirit world. This mysterious sickness is in many traditions **the call** by which the novice is challenged to become a shaman. Those who learn from the spirits how to heal from this illness become shamans and continue their **training**. Those who do not are left weak, or sickly, mentally ill, or dead.

This transformational crisis is ubiquitous throughout shamanic **cultures**. Whether this experience is considered the call, the **initiation**, or both may vary culture to culture, but is nonetheless essential for the emergence of a new shaman.

The “wound” may be a physical or mental illness or an emotional or spiritual crisis. The illness is often the direct result of a spontaneous **trance** state caused by unintentional spirit **possession**. Whether or not the wounded is aware of spirit as the cause of the distress, the experience forces the wounded to learn from the spirit world and trust it to recover.

Wounding of the depth and breadth to transform one into a healer is unplanned and uncontrollable by humans. When an individual quests for the experience intentionally, it rarely occurs. As with the **visions** of a **vision quest**, the individual’s intention and desire alone do not assure its occurrence.

Shamans who have experienced this type of initiation describe their internal experience as that of journeying in the spirit world, while externally their body lies sick or semi-comatose. In the spirit world they are challenged, trained in shamanic work, and initiated by their spirit **teachers**. In this way they experience **healing**, learn skills, and receive the wisdom to serve the community. If successfully initiated, they return to their body, heal physically, and begin their life as a shaman.

The phrase “wounded healer” is commonly used as a psychological metaphor referring to any human experience that brings the individual close to physical or psychological death due to a disconnection from **ordinary reality**. This experience does not make the individual a shaman, literally. However, the path of the shaman can serve a powerful metaphor for this type of healing and personal transformation. See also **journey**.

Achterberg, J. “The Wounded Healer: Transformational Journeys in Modern Medicine.” In G. Doore (Ed.), *Shaman’s Path: Healing, Personal Growth and Empowerment*. Boston, MA: Shambala Publications, 1988.

Wu

The **shamans of ancient China**. The spiritual traditions of pre-Confucian, pre-Buddhist **China** were shamanic, pantheistic, and matrifocal in character. The spiritual functionaries were predominantly female, the *wu*. Males, the *xi* or *hsi*, served traditional roles within the spiritual service, some as shamans and some as **transformed shamans**. In practice the shamans were called *wu*, regardless of **gender**.

The *wu* communicated with the **spirits** and deities in **trance** states induced with drumming, dancing, meditation, and **song** to perform **divination**, diagnose and heal **illness**, guide the **souls** of the deceased to the next life (**psychopomp**), foretell the future, and perform magic, particularly to control the **weather**. In early Chinese traditions **rituals** were conducted to honor the **Ancestors**, offer **sacrifices**, and maintain harmony between Heaven and **Earth**. Some *wu* performed these functions on a familial level, while others performed them for the court as **state shamans**.

The ancient Chinese believed that all the wisdom affecting human affairs lay in the **Upperworld** and that access to that wisdom was necessary for political authority. The *wu* were responsible for communication between earth and deities of the Upperworld. Therefore the *wu* were a crucial part of every state court. Some scholars propose that the king was actually the head shaman.

The *wu* was a person upon whom “the Bright Spirit” had descended as they entered trance. *Wu* practicing in the northern provinces of China tended to use journeying trance states, similar to their neighbors in **Siberia**, in which the *wu*’s soul flies into the **spirit** world. *Wu* practicing in the southern provinces tended to use **embodiment** trance states, similar to their southern neighbors, in which the deity or **helping spirit** is invoked in the body of the *wu*.

Texts from 500 B.C. state that the *wu* stood apart from others in their

exceptional awareness and deeply penetrating understanding of the interrelating realms of the physical and spiritual worlds. The *wu* were believed to be exceptional individuals who were highly vigorous, virtuous, lively, reverent, and principled. The *wu* were wise and radiant individuals, who some believed drew the Bright Spirit to themselves through their exceptional character and personal force of spirit. See also **journey**.

Heinze, R. I. *Shamans of the 20th Century*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Yuan, Chu. *The Nine Songs: A Study of Shamanism in Ancient China*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1973.

Wurunjerri

A tribe of Aboriginal people located near Melbourne in Victoria, New South Wales, Australia. The essential and profound root of Wurunjerri **culture** is *Tjukurpa*, the **dreamtime**. *Tjukurpa* is existence—past, present, and future—and the explanation of existence. It is the land, the people, their actions day-to-day, like hunting, gathering, marrying, and conducting **ritual**, and the Dreamtime laws that govern these actions.

Tjukurpa has always been and it is still unfolding alongside present events. It is being recreated and celebrated by certain Aboriginal people today who live in a cyclical timeframe with nature and the seasons. For 40,000 years they have walked the same paths on the same day at the same time as their **Ancestors**. They live with a connection to all things that generates an awe-inspiring responsibility toward the gift of life in all things.

Initiations

A Wurunjerri boy is first “made a man” in his **initiations** into adulthood, before he can be “made a **clever man**” or **shaman**. At approximately ten to twelve years of age, the boy is taken to a secret, sacred **place** where the power of the

bala, his hereditary **totem spirit**, is sung into him by his **teacher**, who is usually his father or grandfather. The **bala** gives the boy permission to begin to train to become a shaman.

Boys who have shown signs of shamanic potential in their childhood must cultivate a relationship with a teacher. This teacher, usually the father or grandfather, trains the initiated young man to work with the **power** of his **bala** and teaches him secret aspects of mythological, spiritual, and esoteric **knowledge**. Much of the teaching transpires between the **spirit** of the teacher and that of the novice in the Dreamtime.

The novice must learn to master the **chants**, rituals, and powers of concentration necessary to bring forth the **bala** from his body and into manifestation. When the novice can manifest this **vision** of the tribe’s patron and protector, he is ready to begin the final rituals of initiation.

Final Initiation Rituals

Baiami, a Dreamtime ancestor and creator of the first man, is the ultimate source of the Wurunjerri shaman’s power. Prior to this stage the teaching has been one-to-one and mostly in secret. These final three phases of initiation are carried out in public, in a place sacred to **Baiami**, with all of the novices and their teachers present.

The novices and teachers chant to call in **Baiami**, who manifests as a “clever man” with light radiating from his eyes. His mouth foams with sacred **kali**, liquefied quartz **crystals**, which he makes flow over the initiates in a process called *ku’rini*, “penetration into them.” The **kali** penetrates immediately into the bodies of the initiates giving them the special power to sprout **feathers** from their arms. The ritual is closed. Over time the initiate’s feathers will grow into wings.

Several days later, **Baiami** is summoned again for the second phase of initiation. He begins by showing the initiates how to fly with their new wings.

Baiami then draws a crystal from his body and “sings” it into the forehead of each initiate to endow them with the ability to “see” into other realms. Finally, *Baiami* takes a flame from his own body and sings it into the chest of each initiate. With that act the ritual is closed. The initiates integrate these experiences and the powers they have been given with their teachers.

When **fire** and crystal have penetrated each initiate and they have all learned to fly, *Baiami* is invoked a third time. *Baiami* lays a cord over each initiate from legs to chest and sings it into their bodies. The initiates practice with their cords and will ultimately learn to use them for **healing** and other acts of power. When the string is mastered then the *warajun*, the **soul** of the initiate, and his **helping spirits** can travel freely throughout the Dreamtime. The final initiation is complete and *Baiami* has definitively “made a clever man.” See also **making**.

Clanton-Collins, J. “An Interview with Burnam Burnam.” *Shaman’s Drum* 14 (Fall–Winter, 1988).

Kalweit, Holger. *Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Wyrđ

Wyrđ is the ancient **Anglo-Saxon** version of the **Great Mystery**—the unexplainable force underlying all of existence and at the essence of all shamanic practices. Originally wyrđ meant the strange or unexplainable in **sacred** realms, though today it simply means weird in mundane realms.

At the essence of wyrđ is the belief that the universe exists within polarities

of forces, similar to the **Zulu** concept of the original and eternal battle between Fire/Light and Ice/Dark or the Eastern concepts of yin and yang. The Anglo-Saxon creation mythology that speaks of wyrđ is best preserved in Germanic and Norse **myths** and stories. The Anglo-Saxon universe originally consisted of **fire** and ice, two mighty, unimaginably vast force regions. They came together and exploded, creating a great mist of magic and vitality that exists beyond **time**, like the substance of the **dreamtime**.

This “mist of knowledge” conceals wisdom about the nature of life in **ordinary reality**. It can only be parted in certain states of consciousness by individuals with the **knowledge** of magic, **shamanism**, and **sacred technologies** of **trance**. With these skills the boundaries of the mist becomes permeable and inner and outer realities can be transcended.

Wyrđ is also a vast web of living fibers that flow through the entire universe, linking absolutely everything—each person, object, event, thought, and feeling. This web is similar to Grandmother Spider Woman’s web of life in **North America** or the web of *aka* threads used by Hawaiian *kahuna*. The European **shamans** envisioned a web of fibers so sensitive that any movement, thought, or happening, no matter how small, resonated through the entire web of wyrđ. See also **Hawaii**.

Allen-Coombe, J. “Weaving the Way of Wyrđ: An Interview with Brian Bates.” *Shaman’s Drum* 27 (Spring 1992): 20–29.

Bates, Brian. *The Way of Wyrđ: Tales of an Anglo-Saxon Sorcerer*. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, 2005.

X

Xahluigax Xaikilgaiagiba

Xahluigax xaikilgaiagiba is the Ghost Ceremony or Devil Ceremony of the Pomo of the **California region of North America**. This **ceremony**, conducted to atone for misdeeds against the dead, is one of the most vital ceremonial acts performed by the Pomo. Because offenses against the dead can cause

illness among the living, the *xahluigax xaikilgaiagiba* also functions as preventative **medicine**.

The ceremony, most often held in the spring, is performed in a special **dance** house traditionally built anew for each ceremony. Only initiated men perform this four-day **ritual**. Illness could befall the presence of those who do not belong at the ceremony. There are two classes of dancers who participate: the ordinary ghost-dancer and the other is the *katsa'tala*, or **art** dancer, who performs fire-eating displays of **power**. See also **fire**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Y

Yachaj

(Also *yachaq*) *Yachaj* is the **Quechua** word for **shaman**, “the one who knows.” *Sinchi yachaj*, “strong shaman” refers to a powerful or a master shaman.

Yagé

Yagé is another name for the *ayahuasca*, a hallucinogenic drink prepared from rain forest plants that is widely used by South American **shamans**. The shamans say that *yagé* has **power** and force of will all of its own. When consumed, *yagé* shares its **knowledge**, allowing the shaman to reach the stars of their origin, enter the **spirit** of plants, animals and people, to know the true intent of people’s actions, to foresee the future, to **diagnose** and cure **illness**, and to travel throughout all the realms of the **Kosmos**. See also **South America**.

Langdon, E. Jean, and G. Bear. *Portals of Power: Shamanism in South America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992.

Yajé

See *ayahuasca* and *yagé*.

Yakee

See *epená*.

Yakut

The name given the Sakhá, a native people of **Siberia**, by the Russian colonists. Sakhá was reinstated as the official name in 1990. The Yakuts are found in the central Lena Basin of Northeast Siberia. The general patterns

found in the **shamanism** of this region it that of Siberian **shamans**.

Cosmology

The Yakut classify the *bis*, or gods/goddesses and **spirits**, in two large classes: those of the **Upperworld**, the *tangara* or celestial *bis*, and those of the **Lowerworld**, the subterranean *bis* below. There is no opposition between them and they are equally powerful. It is more a classification based on where they are found in the spirit world.

The celestial *bis* are benevolent, but passive and uninvolved in human existence. The highest celestial deity is *Art Toyon Aga*, who resides in the ninth layer of the Upperworld, or **Sky**. He shines like the **sun** and speaks through the voice of the thunder. There are seven other great deities “above” and a multitude of lesser deities.

The subterranean *bis* can be malevolent and vindictive, as they are closer to the **earth**, and allied to men by ties of **blood**. The highest subterranean deity is *Uliü-Toyon*, “the All-Powerful Lord of the Infinite.” *Uliü-Toyon* and *Art Toyon Aga* are treated as equals. The *bis* below are also comprised of eight great deities and an unlimited number of spirits. *Uliü-Toyon* is not ill-disposed to human and is highly involved and interested in their affairs.

Uliü-Toyon personifies active existence, in all of its suffering, desires, struggles. When *Uliü-Toyon* walks the earth shakes and the hearts of the mortals burst with terror if they look into his face. *Uliü-Toyon* gave humankind **fire**, taught the shamans to relieve suffering, and created the **birds**, woodland animals, and the forests themselves.

First Shaman

In Yakut mythology, Eagle is the creator of the **First Shaman**. Similar to the Buryat, it depends on the story whether the Eagle is parent or **teacher**. The Eagle is called *Ai*, the “Creator”, and *Ai Toyon*, the “Creator of Light.” *Ai Toyon*’s children are represented as bird spirits, who may be the **souls** of deceased Yakuts,

perching in the branches of the **Tree of Life**. At the top of the tree, a birch, is the two-headed eagle, *Toyon Kotor*, the “Lord of the Birds.” All **ancestor** spirits who play a role in the selection of new shamans are the descendants of the mythical “First Shaman” selected by *Ai Toyon*.

The First Shaman was extraordinarily powerful and equally prideful. He refused to recognize the supreme **power** of *Ai*. *Ai*, noticing that the First Shaman had transformed his body into a mass of snakes, sent down fire to burn him. Unbelievably a toad emerged from the flames. The animal **helping spirits** from whom the outstanding shamans of the Yakut acquire power came for this original toad, the essence of the First Shaman.

The Call—Dismemberment

The future Yakut shaman is called spontaneously by a spirit who may be a deity, mythical being, **animal spirit**, or *ämägät*, the soul of a deceased shaman. The candidate lies in the yurt as if dead for several days or suddenly loses **ordinary consciousness** and withdraws into the forests, feeds on tree bark, and throws himself into **water**, fire, and onto knives, all means of validating **trance**.

While the candidate’s body displays symptoms of unexplained mental or physical **illness** the candidate has entered an altered state. His soul is taken into the spirit world where he is dismembered. There are numerous accounts of the **dismemberment** suffered by individuals who became shaman. For example, one candidate’s limbs were removed with an iron hook; his flesh was scraped away and with the **bodily fluids** thrown away, the bones were completely cleaned, and his eyes torn from their sockets. After this dismemberment all the bones were gathered by the spirits and fastened together with iron.

The altered state experience of the candidate often continues from three to seven days, creating the regeneration

and maturation of the candidate’s new shaman’s body. The mythical “Bird-of-Prey-Mother” appears only twice in a shaman’s lifetime: at his or her birth through dismemberment and at his or her death. This great bird has the head of an eagle with an iron beak, iron **feathers**, hooked claws, and a long tail.

She lays her eggs on the Tree of Life and sits on them as the new shaman’s bodies develop. Great shamans are hatched in three years, middling shamans in two, and lesser shamans in one. When the shaman’s soul is hatched from the egg, the Bird-of-Prey-Mother gives it to a great shamaness, with only one eye, one arm, and one bone. She rocks the soul in an iron cradle and feeds it clotted blood as she teaches. In other stories the soul is taken to the lowerworld and locked in a house for one to three years where it is dismembered and taught by spirits.

The Bird-of-Prey-Mother then flies with the soul to the lowerworld and leaves it to mature on a branch of a pitch pine. When the soul has matured to its capacity, the Bird-of-Prey-Mother flies with it to the **Middleworld**, where the body is cut to bits and distributed among the malevolent spirits of **disease** and death. Each spirit devours a piece of the body, which gives the future shaman the power to cure the corresponding disease. When the malevolent spirits depart, the Bird-of-Prey-Mother restores the bones and the body, and the candidate, still lying in the yurt, wakes as if from a very long and strange **dream**.

Obtaining Power

Shamanic power is obtained from the spirit world; it is not hereditary among the Yakut. However, the *ämägät*, the soul of the shaman, tends to remain associated with its family after death. It may later incarnate itself in the same family and the individual with then become a shaman.

The call is only the beginning of obtaining shamanic powers. After the experience, **training** continues with the

helping spirit and a master shaman. Later there will be a public **initiation** involving a series of ceremonies and demonstration of shamanic abilities. Often after the strangeness of “the call,” the new candidate’s family appeals to an old shaman to teach the frightened and confused youth the various kinds of spirits, the **songs** and techniques to summon, and most important the mastery of various trance states.

Initiation

There are levels of mastery in the shaman’s training that are marked with the performance of initiation **rituals**. The level of the following initiation ritual is unclear. The master shaman takes the new student up on a hill or into a plain with eighteen chaste young men and women, nine of each. The student is given a new **costume, drum, and drumstick**, all objects of power. The master shaman then dons his or her own costume and takes the novice’s soul on a long ecstatic **journey**.

They begin on the **World Mountain**. The master shows the novice the forks in the road that lead to the paths that lead to the peaks where the spirits of sickness live. Together they enter a house and the master shows the novice how to recognize the sicknesses in the various parts of the body and cure them. Each time the master names a part of the body, he or she spits in the disciple’s mouth. The student swallows the spittle that conveys the **knowledge** and power to cure.

When the student has learned to cure all the diseases in all the parts of the body, the master shaman takes the student to the Upperworld to learn of the celestial spirits. When this teaching is complete the two return from the spirit world. The new shaman’s body is said to be consecrated and he or she can practice professionally. The new shaman completes the ritual by killing the sacrificial animal and consecrating his or her costume with its blood. The animal is then shared by the participants.

Shamans and Priests

The power of a shaman is determined by the power of the spirits who assist him/her. This, in addition to where the shaman goes in trance, is used to distinguish different types of shamans, healers, and **priests**. To journey to the *bis* below is to travel *allara kyrar*. To journey to the *bis* above is to travel *üsä kyrar*.

The *ai oyuna* conduct ceremonies in which animal **sacrifices** are made to the celestial *bis*. This type of “shaman” does not work in trance and is better described as shaman-priest, or white shaman. The *orto oyuna* work in trance and are typical shamanic healers. They conduct rituals in which they associate with the spirits of the Middle and Lowerworld. They are often referred to as black shamans.

The “great” shamans are the most powerful as they receive their power directly from *Ulii-Toyon* through the helping spirits. They are healers and powerful magicians who work in trance states with the spirits and deities from all the spirit realms. **transformed shamans** are traditionally found among the Yakut. The power of these **gender-variant male shamans** is determined by the spirits who initiate them, as with other Yakut shamans.

There are also the *kennikî oyuna* who are **seers** who work primarily in passive trance states in which they receive information. They are diviners and interpreters of dreams who treat minor illnesses.

Healing

Yakut **shamanic healing** rituals usually includes four stages: evocation of the helping spirits, **divination** to determine the cause of the illness, expulsion of malevolent spirits, and the shaman’s ecstatic journey to the Upperworld.

The third stage, the struggle to expel the malevolent spirits, is dangerous and exhausting. There are many methods, from threats and frightening noises to pulling it from the body of the patient, chasing it away, sucking and spitting it

from his mouth, and driving it away with hands or breath. In extreme cases the shaman must take the malevolent spirit into his or her own body to extract it from the patient. In doing so, the shaman struggles and suffers as he or she fights to overcome the spirit and send it away.

The shaman is often bound in preparation for his or her ecstatic journey to the Upperworld. This practice is found in many **cultures** across Asia, the Arctic, and **North America**. The Yakut do it to ensure that the spirits do not carry the soul of the shaman away completely. The host of the ritual prepares two nooses from strong thongs. One end is secured to each of the shaman's shoulders and the other ends are held by the people present at the ritual.

The shaman's **healing** ritual begins in **silence** with the shaman staring into the fire. He begins to summon his power by putting on his shamanic costume and smoking. A white mare's hide is spread on the floor by the assistant. The shaman drinks cold water and offers it to the four directions. The assistant throws horsehairs on the fire and then covers the ashes with another hide, bringing the room into complete darkness. The shaman sits down on the mare's hide and dreams into a light trance summoning the spirits.

The spirits begin to arrive making birds **sounds** and other noises. There is a faint humming coming from the shaman as he begins to **chant**. The shaman begins to beat the drum and murmur his song. The **singing** and drumming rise to a crescendo. The sounds alternate between bird cries and silence several times. As the shaman feels the spirits coming closer, the **rhythm** of the drumming and singing intensify.

The shaman invokes the help of the *ämägät* and his helping spirits and resumes drumming and singing with furious intensity. The spirits arrive, sometimes so suddenly and violently that the shaman falls over backwards. Then the audience clash iron cymbals

over him, murmuring chants, **invocations**, and encouragement.

The shaman, filled with the power of the spirits, begins leaping and dancing. The fire is rekindled, and he continues to drum and **dance** and leap, in a costume hung with thirty to fifty pounds of **metal** power objects. As he dances he converses with the spirits in many voices. Finally he goes to the patient and summons the spirit who is causing the illness and expels it from the body.

When the malevolent spirits have been expelled, the shaman begins his ecstatic journey to escort the soul of the animal, sacrificed as an **offering** for the success of the ritual. On returning from this ecstatic journey the shaman asks to be "purified" by fire.

Drum

The most powerful drums are those made from the wood of a tree that has been struck by lightning.

Secret Language of Nature

In the course of his training the novice must learn the secret **language** that allows him to communicate with the spirits and animal spirits during his rituals. This secret language is learned from a master shaman or directly from spirits. This is the language of all Nature, of all life, from the time when all things were One.

Costume

The costume of the Yakut shaman displays a complete bird skeleton made of iron along with thirty to fifty pounds of other metal **power objects**. These ornaments create a cacophony of noise during the shaman's wild ritual dance. These metal objects are all alive. They have a spirit and they do not rust.

Metal bars representing arm bones (*tabytala*) are arranged along the arms of the caftan. Small metal "leaves" representing the ribs (*oilgos timir*) are sewn along the sides of the torso. A large round breastplate is worn as well as objects representing the liver, heart, and other internal organs. Images of the **sacred** animal and bird helping spirits

are attached. A small canoe containing the image of a man, which together represent the “spirit of Madness,” is also attached.

Metal disks are hung on the back of the caftan. One disk represents the **Sun**. Another, a pierced disk, represents the earth and the central opening the shaman uses to access the Lowerworld. Other objects on the back of the caftan include a lunar crescent and an iron chain representing the shaman’s power and resistance.

The costume of the transformed shaman consists of a woman’s jacket made of the skins of fowl and a white ermine cap.

According to Yakut legend, there were shamans who really flew into the sky not long ago. The **power animal** flew across the sky first, followed by the shaman’s drum, and finally the shaman dressed in his or her costume hung with iron. These shamans, the great shamans, were said to be serious, possess tact, above all to possess **humility**. In the spirit of his or her great power, these shamans were not presumptuous, proud, or ill-tempered. In their presence, one could feel both the awareness of power and compassion toward others. See also **altered states of consciousness; ash; black and white shamans; Buryat (Buriat); death and dying; gender variant**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Vitebsky, Piers. *The Shaman*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.

Yapaitu

Yapaitu is a **Wintun** word for a **spirit** from the hills or from Nature. The *yapaitu*, along with the *lehs*, can become a **helping spirit** for a **shaman**. The *yapaitu* is formless and rarely seen; its presence is felt by the shaman.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Yayatü Society

(Also: *yayaat*) One of two curing societies among the Hopi, the other being the Poswimkya. The **shamans** of this society acquire the powers of **healing** and the **mastery of fire** from Hawk. Corn **fetishes** called *yaya*, or *iärriko*, are used in the rituals and ceremonies performed by this society. *Yaya* are made only by shamans following a precise ritual process that involves eagle and parrot **feathers** the latter of which can only be acquired from Mexico. The *yaya*, sacred **power objects**, are placed on the **altar** during rituals and ceremonies. See also **Poswimkya Society** and **sacred**.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Yi dam

The second **soul** of the human multiple soul that resides in the heart. In **Tamang bompo (shamans)** this soul contains all the **mantras** and **healing** knowledge the *bompo* has gained in his or her lifetime. At death, the *bompo* passes the *yi dam* on to his or her best **apprentice**, who is usually within the family. If there is no apprentice or family member, the *yi dam* is passed on to an unsuspecting but worthy candidate.

The *yi dam* of a shaman is more an aspect of the shamanic lineage extending from the **First Shaman** deity, Nara Bön Chen, than it is simply the personal **spirit** of the human shaman. It is a primordial source of shamanic **power** that works through the human it inhabits. For that human, the *yi dam* functions like the tutelary or guardian spirits found in other shamanic traditions.

The Tamang consider the *yi dam* an inner *guru* (**teacher**). The *yi dam* teaches through **possession**, causing the initiate to shake violently, bounce, and often speak incoherently. Apprenticeship with a human *guru* helps the initiate learn to receive instruction from the *yi dam*, allowing it to reveal new things throughout the years of **training** and the entirety of the *bompo's* life. See also **knowledge** and **multiple soul belief**.

Peters, L. G. "Mystical Experience in Tamang Shamanism." *ReVision* 13, no. 2 (1990): 71–85.

Yomuse

(Also *yommüse*, *yomta* [Miwok]) The most common Maidu term for **shaman**. Maidu *yomi* are divided into three groups relative to the **spirits** who empower them. There are valley *yomi*, foothill *yomi*, and mountain *yomi*. The techniques and procedures of these groups vary slightly.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Yopo

Yopo is a hallucinogenic snuff made from the ground seeds, or beans, of *Anadenanthera peregrina*, a mimosa-like tree growing in the open grasslands of the tropical zones of the Orinoco region and the adjacent Amazon River basins of **South America**. The flat, thin, round, glossy-black seeds occur in rough, woody pods called "Beans of the Hekula Spirits."

The most intense use of *yopo* is found among the Waiká, living in southern Venezuela and the adjacent parts of northern Brazil. The Waiká use the snuff daily, blowing enormous amounts of it into each others nostrils through long tubes made from the stems of plants. The Waiká explain that *yopo* originated in the beginning in the spirit world when the

Sun created various beings to function as intermediaries with humankind. The Sun kept *yopo*, one of those intermediaries, in its navel where the Daughter of the Sun found it. The Daughter of the Sun took *yopo* and gave it to humankind.

Yopo is so valuable as an intermediary with the spirit world that highland peoples, who live in regions where *Anadenanthera* does not grow, trade for it with people of the tropical lowlands. There is evidence that *Anadenanthera* was cultivated outside of its natural range in the past. It was also grown in the West Indies centuries ago, where the snuff is called **cohoba** by the Taino people of that region.

Yopo snuff is believed to have been in wider use prior to the conquest by the Spaniards in South America. Evidence of *yopo* use is found among Chibchan and Muisca tribes as far west as the Colombian Andes and to the east by all the peoples of the upper Orinoco.

There are two species of *Anadenanthera* that provide hallucinogenic snuff. The second species, *Anadenanthera colubrina*, grows in southern South America where the snuff, called *vilca*, *huilca*, and *sebil*, was used by the indigenous peoples of Argentina and southern Peru in pre-colonial times. The **Inkan shamans** are reported to have added *vilca* to their **chicha** for **divination**. The Mashco of northern Argentina continue to smoke the seeds and snuff the powder today.

Use

Yopo is snuffed by the **payé** (shaman) to induce **trance** states that enable the *payé* to communicate with the *hekula* spirits to divine information, diagnose illness, prescribe remedies, perform **healings**, and to protect the tribe against epidemic **diseases**.

In some **cultures** or tribes *yopo* is snuffed by all adult males, like the Waiká, for example. *Yopo* is also used by hunters to make themselves and their dogs more alert. It is sometimes taken as a daily stimulant, as it is by the Guahibo people.

Preparation

Yopo is prepared from the ground seeds, or beans, of *Anadenanthera peregrina* of the bean family. There is a great deal of variation in the preparation of *yopo* from one tribe to another and from one area to another within tribes. Generally speaking, the beans are moistened and rolled into a paste or toasted dry before being ground into a powder. The resulting gray green powder is usually mixed with an alkaline plant **ash** or lime from snail shells. Other plant admixtures are never added.

In one traditional preparation, the Maypure gather and break open the pods of *Anadenanthera*, soak the beans in **water**, and allowed them to ferment until they turned black. This process softens the beans so that they can be kneaded into cakes with cassava flour and lime from snail shells. The cakes are allowed to dry and then ground into powder when the snuff was needed.

In a different traditional preparation the Guahibo gather the seeds of *Anadenanthera*, roast them, and then grind them into powder with a wooden platter and pestle. The resulting snuff was stored in a container fashioned from the leg-bone of a jaguar. The snuff is blown into the nostrils through a Y-shaped tube made from the leg bones of a long-legged bird, like a heron.

Active Principle

The psychoactive constituents in *yopo* are tryptamine derivatives, which belong to the class of indole alkaloids including open carbon chain derivatives, dimethyltryptamine (DMT) and bufotenine, and the closed carbon chain derivatives, 2-methyl- beta-carboline and 1,2-dimethyl-6-methoxytetrahydro-beta-carboline. The active constituents of *A. peregrina* and *A. colubrina* are the same and equally psychoactive.

Ritual of Receiving the Plant Spirit, or Plant Medicine

The Waiká *payé* begins by chanting to the *Hekula* spirits, either alone or with other adult men. The *payé*'s **chants** call

the *Hekula* spirits into the **ritual** so that they are available to communicate with those who enter a *yopo* induced trance state. Long tubes of plant stems or animal bone are used to blow the *yopo* into each of the receiver's nostrils.

After an initial period of head **pain** and muscular contortion, the *payé* rises to **dance**, chant, and shriek as he continues to call in the *Hekula* spirits. When the spirits are present and the *payé* can proceed with the divination, healing, or other purpose of the ritual.

Characteristics of the Induced Altered State

Immediately after the snuff is administered, the face contorts and the muscles, especially of the upper body, tremble or spasm. In this phase *yopo* causes muscular twitches, slight convulsions, and a lack of muscular co-ordination, followed by nausea. Within approximately five minutes, the pain gives way to an ecstatic trance state filled with **visions** of the spirit world.

This phase of trance, which lasts from thirty to sixty minutes, can involve dancing and chanting punctuated by violent actions and shrieks as the individual calls on the *hekula* spirits for communication. This activity gives way to a third phase of deep trance or sleep filled with visions which continue for some time.

Songs and Dances

The *payé*'s chants are an essential part of working with *yopo*. The chants are used to call in the *Hekula* spirits so that they will make themselves available the people in trance who are seeking connection and communication. See also **altered states of consciousness; Andes, South America; entheogen; plant hallucinogens; plant medicines.**

Schultes, Richard Evans, Albert Hofmann, and Christian Rátsch. *Plants of the Gods: Their Sacred, Healing, and Hallucinogenic Powers.* Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 2001.

Yualai

(Also Yualayi, Euahlayi) **Aboriginal** people of New South Wales, **Australia**. Male **shamans** are selected from initiated young men who have shown innate skills and an inclination toward the profession during childhood. For their shamanic **initiation** they are taken by older shamans to a grave where they are bound and left for several nights. As soon as the initiate is alone, several animals appear and touch and lick him. Then a **spirit** man appears with a stick that he thrusts into the initiate's head, creating a hole into which he puts a magical stone the size of a lemon. Then spirits appear to teach him the **healing songs** of the art.

Baiami, the Creator of the first man, is held to be the source of the magical **crystal** inserted in the shaman's head. **Baiami** detaches fragments of crystal from his throne in the **Sky** and throws the fragments of crystal down to **earth**. The crystals are believed to be solidified light and are the source of the shaman's **power**. **Baiami** performs the initiation of some young men by sprinkling them with liquefied quartz crystal, which is absorbed into the body, charging the initiate with **sacred** power.

After initiation the new shaman is connected to his individual **helping spirit**, or *yunbeai*, who assists the shaman in his profession. Any injury to the *yunbeai* hurts the shaman, therefore there are strict **taboos** against hunting or eating one's *yunbeai* in **ordinary reality**. When in danger the shaman can shapeshift into the *yunbeai*.

Yualai shamans also have a *minggah*, or spirit tree. The most powerful shamans also have *goomah*, or spirit stones. A shaman's *yunbeai* may dwell in the *minggah* or the *goomah* as well as any other spirit friendly to the shaman. When the shaman needs the assistance of the spirits dwelling within these objects, he or she either goes to the tree or stone where they exist in nature or travels to them in spirit in the **dream-time**. Both tree and stone provide a

place of refuge for the shaman in times of danger, however the *goomah* is a more powerful sanctuary. See also **shapeshifting**.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Parker, K. L., et al. *Wise Women of the Dreamtime: Aboriginal Tales of the Ancestral Powers*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International Limited, 1993.

Yupa

Yupa is a **Wintun** word that means to speak from **trance**. It refers to the prophetic speech of **shamans**, whose **helping spirit** speaks through them when they are in a deep **embodiment** trances during **ritual**. *Yupa* distinguishes the shaman's **altered state of consciousness** during **sacred** ceremonies from his or her ordinary state of consciousness.

When the Wintun shaman makes a **diagnosis** or speaks about the subject in hand he or she is in an ordinary state of consciousness that includes a general communication with his or her helping spirits. This is distinguished from the shaman's deep trance states used during **healing** and other sacred rituals.

Lyon, William S. *Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism: Sacred Ceremonies of North America*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

Yup'ik

The Yup'ik are a whaling people of southwestern Alaska who reside primarily in the Kuskokwim and Yukon river deltas, along the Bering Sea and Norton Sound coasts. The Yup'ik language and some aspects of the **culture** have survived over time. However, the shamanic practices, in particular *Agayuliyararput*—the highly visible masked dancing **rituals**, were ruthlessly

eradicated by Christian missionaries during the nineteenth century.

Agayuliyararput means “our way of making **prayer**,” which is the function of this masked dancing ritual. Specifically, *Agayuliyararput* was danced to open a connection with the spirit world to express particular needs and concerns and to ask for help. These intense and dramatic **dances** were serious spiritual undertakings and always expressed with joy.

The **masks** were conceived of by the *angalkuq* (**angakok** or **shaman**) who saw the masks in **dreams** or **visions**. New masks were created each year according to the *angalkuq*'s vision. They were carved from wood, painted, and decorated in ways rich in Yup'ik symbolism.

These masks were often ugly, at times made from the head of an actual animal. Red and blue were used to denote the masks of spirits or *angalkuqs*. Round mouths usually indicated spirit mouths. A small human face anywhere in the mask represented the spirit within the central figure. *Angalkug* masks were sometimes created with background boards that presented the central figure in the context of land, **air**, or **water**.

Concentric hoops on a mask denote the **Eskimo** universe, composed of five **Upperworlds** and **earth**. An animal in the mouth of a mask expressed the wish for abundant food. A hand with a cutout hole expressed the wish for continuing abundance in the food supply. The intent of the creator of the mask was not to make a realistic mask, but to convey a vision or idea.

The masks embodied the vision of the things the people were asking for from the spirit world, like animals to hunt, good **weather**, the **power** for a particular **healing**, or intercession in other human affairs. Common masks were animals, such as the loon or seal, *ellangaut* (representations of the universe), and Ancestral spirits from the **myths** of the Yup'ik.

The *angalkuq* was a central figure in the dance rituals. He often danced in

masks created to embody his *tuunra* (**torngraq** or **helping spirits**). The powers of the *tuunrat* enable the *angalkuq* to help the community by seeing into the future, curing **illness**, and communicating with the spirits beings of the visible and invisible worlds.

New masks were presented by the *angalkuq* and danced at the rituals. The *angalkuq* explained the new mask's meaning from his vision and the purpose for its creation. After dancing the new masks the ritual process was closed by burning the powerful masks or leaving them in a **sacred** way on the tundra away from the village.

Fienup-Riordan, Ann. *Agayuliyararput, Our Way of Making Prayer*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996.

Yuwipi

The *yuwipi* is a traditional **healing** ritual performed by **Lakota** shamans. The *yuwipi* **ritual** is a form of the **Spirit Lodge** or shaking tent ritual common in **North America**. The name *yuwipi*, from the Dakota language, refers to the binding and wrapping of the practitioner before he or she enters **trance**.

The ritual is performed in a dark space, traditionally a tent or a room in a house or lodge. The **space** is cleansed and made **sacred** by the **shaman** in accordance with the shaman's traditions and **helping spirits**. This usually involves the formal exhibition of the shaman's **power objects** within a square, a ritualistic pattern honoring the four cardinal directions common to practices in the Northern Plains.

The *yuwipi* is attended by members of the community who will support the shaman's trance by **singing** sacred **songs** and drumming. After everyone has entered the **sacred space** and settles, the patient is brought in. The drummer begins and the community joins in the singing. When the shaman is prepared to enter more deeply into trance, he or she is bound and the last

light extinguished. In total darkness the shaman begins to pray out loud. The **prayer** becomes a trance-like song that continues for a long time. The community **sings** and **drums** periodically alternating this with prayer.

The shaman speaks the last prayer and the room becomes silent. Into the **silence** emerges the **sounds** and sensations of the **animal spirits** that have been summoned to help the sick. With their help the shaman works to heal the sick. When the shaman signals that the ritual is over, the lights are turned on the shaman is seated free of the blanket and bindings, now arranged neatly before him.

The *yuwipi* is differentiated from other Spirit Lodge performances by the intricate ritualism with which the ceremonial **paraphernalia** is laid out and by the **offerings of blood** sacrifice. Slices of flesh and skin cut out of the arms, usually of women, and made into offerings to the **spirits** was a traditional part of important Plains rituals. Today the *yuwipi* is also distinguished by the use of a square room or cottage instead of a tent.

A summarized account of a Lakota *yuwipi* ritual follows:

The *yuwipi* is formally requested with the offering of a ceremonial pipe to the shaman. The shaman accepts the request by accepting the pipe, lighting and smoking it. The shaman then instructs those who wish to participate to pray and to believe in the spirits without doubt. Those who cannot suspend doubt, or whom the shaman expects cannot, are asked to leave.

Those who remain prepare themselves by **cleansing** in a steam bath followed by rubbing sweetsage seeds on their head and arms. The shaman takes a seat in the center of the room on a bed of sagebrush, enclosed in a square defined by a string of 147 prayer ties (small red cloth bags filled with **tobacco**). The shaman arranges his power objects, creating an altar within the square and begins to **smudge** the space with dried sage. The drummers begin to drum and **sing**.

The young woman who will make the blood **sacrifice** steps forward onto the blanket facing west. The shaman strokes her left arm with sagebrush to cleanse it and prays over her. The drums thunder and the people sing. Using a razor the shaman cuts thin slices of skin and flesh from the girl's upper arm, leaving wounds that bleed profusely. The same process is repeated, taking a blood sacrifice from an older woman, often the shaman or shaman's wife. The flesh of the two women is collected in a little gourd and placed on the **altar** as an offering to the spirits.

The shaman is stripped to the waist, hands bound tightly behind his back, and wrapped then in a blanket that is secured from neck to feet with a second rope. As the shaman is bound he begins to sing and call on his helping spirits to come. Assistants cover the shaman's face and place face down on the floor. The last lights are extinguished.

The drumbeat changes and the tempo becomes faster and faster inducing the shaman's deep trance state. The singing and drumming have built to an intensity at this point. Nonetheless, a **rattle** can be heard in the midst of the turmoil, moving around the room approximately two meters in the air. The drums and singing stop. The spirits have arrived.

The spirits are beseeched in prayer by those present who ask for specific cures, care, and protections. With the signal of the shaman's song the drumming and singing may begin again with even more force than before. More spirits arrive, animating objects like drums and rattles and speaking from moving points about the room.

The shaman's voice can also be heard coming from all over the room. The shaman speaks aloud when there are messages from the spirits for the people present. These messages are given in response to the prayers and questions of the participants. Healings are performed through the **power** of the spirits present. If necessary to heal the patient, the shaman will signal for more

drumming and call on even more powerful spirits. See also **Shaking Tent Ceremony**.

Hultkrantz, A. "Spirit Lodge, a North American Shamanistic Séance." In *Studies in Shamanism*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962.

Williams, W. L. *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Z

Zulu

The Zulu are Bantu-speaking people of the Natal Province of South Africa. They are related to the Xhosa, Nbedele, and other people of southern **Africa**. The Bantu **language** is closely related to Xhosa and Swazi with which it forms the Nguni language group.

There are many classes of Zulu practitioners which involve mastery of **trance** states and other esoteric arts. The *iNyanga*, *sangoma*, and *sanusi* are the three classes, who like the **shaman**, work in altered states with **helping spirits** to serve their community. An individual practitioner may serve more than one role as his or her skills evolve over a lifetime.

These practitioners must strive ceaselessly to be ethical in everything they do. They do not practice **sorcery** or use supernatural powers to attain ordinary human desires. The fate of the tribe or nation may depend upon their discernment. They are accountable for the natural and the supernatural realms, and ultimately to the entire pattern of the universe.

Cosmology

Zulu mythology describes the origins of the continuous battle between dark and light within the human **soul**. The *sangoma* helps others to fight this battle. This is the battle that must always be fought and never won. Restoring balance to this dynamic is the basis of the *sangoma's* efforts to heal.

In the beginning, the Zulu tell us, nothing existed but the Fertile Darkness, floating on the invisible River of Time. At some moment desire arose in the River of Time for the Fertile Darkness to give birth to something out of nothing. From the fertile nothingness

came the spark of consciousness, the Living Fire.

Living Fire was aware; aware that it was alone. From this awareness came the Great Loneliness. All creatures since then share a little of that loneliness, the loneliness that emerges when consciousness sees itself alone in the vastness of everything. In its fury and loneliness, Living Fire began to grow into blazing light in the darkness of Nothingness. And so began the eternal battle of light and dark throughout the universe.

The Wise Ones observe the eternal battle. They know that if Fire and Light were to prevail all living things would die in a roaring universal flame. Conversely, if Darkness and Ice were to prevail all living things would grow cold and stiff until the fire of consciousness ceased to be. Therefore the battle must continue.

The Zulu believe that all life depends on this Great Struggle. Only *Unkulunkulu*, the Great Spirit of Life, can watch over the Great Struggle and remain calm. The Zulu pray to *Unkulunkulu*, asking that this one Great Battle go on while all the lesser ones are given up.

Though the Zulu believe in the Great Struggle, they also believe that the earth is meant to be in peace. Their mythology tells of the Great Earth Mother who created four strong brothers to hold up the earth, to maintain peace, and ultimately to live together in harmony. In the land of ice in the **north** she placed the white brother, in the warm **south** she placed the black brother, in the **west** she placed the red brother, and in the **east** the yellow brother. This is why the *sangoma* believe that all four races of humans are responsible for the stability and peace for all peoples on the earth.

Tree of Life

Zulu legends tell of the progenitors of humanity traveling from their home in the Cosmos to the Sirius solar system before finally arriving on this earth. The Zulu say that all creatures come from these ancient **ancestors**, the *Amadlozi*,

and are, therefore, connected in a great web of life and **evolution**. They believe that we are one human family, in both our origins and our destiny.

Sima-Kade, the Zulu **Tree of Life**, is an expression of the Zulu awareness of the connection of all things. *Sima-Kade* means the One who stands for all **time**, who has been standing for all time, and who will continue standing for all time. All people and things are connected to *Sima-Kade* and through *Sima-Kade* they are all connected to each other.

The most ancient time described in the Zulu mythology is *Endelo-ntulo*. It is similar to the Australian **Aboriginal Dreamtime**. It was a time when everything of the Earth was being formed. The rocks were soft and images were made in stone by the Ancestors as messages left for future peoples.

Patterns of **dreaming** were also laid down during *Endelo-ntulo*. These **dreams** contain messages from the Ancestors that still affect the lives of humans today. The Zulu believe that some of these dreams make us crazy and some make us wise. It is one of these ancient dream patterns from the Ancestors that a person experiences when they are called to become a *sangoma*. This dream experience is called **Ukutwasa**.

The Call—Ukutwasa

During *Ukutwasa*, animals come to the dreamer, usually four lions or leopards and sometimes crocodiles or serpents. The dreamer is pulled apart and devoured by the animals, as in the **dis-memberment** dreams of the shamans of many different **cultures**. After he or she wakes, the dreamer is recognized as *twasa*, an **apprentice** who will begin **training** to become a *sangoma*. The animals who come in *Ukutwasa* become the *sangoma's* helping spirits.

The *sangoma* is one of many people in Zulu culture who are “called to a destiny they do not desire and are helpless to resist.” **The call** must be followed. For Zulus there is a guiding **power** in life that navigates the human soul through

its cycles of reincarnation. This guiding power decides when they are born, in what form, and when they should die. Thus, a recurring theme in Zulu mythology is the acceptance, after great struggle, of a destiny one does not desire and is helpless to resist. This is the fundamental metaphor for the Zulu soul.

Training

The *sangoma's* training is a highly ordered, strictly regulated, process. Candidates must work their way up through twelve stages, or ranks. In each stage they learn to work with one of twelve “vessels” or types of spirits. Few *sangoma* succeed in mastering the twelfth and final stage.

Traditionally the *sangoma* is a woman. However, there are male *sangoma*, many of whom are **gender variant** or **transformed shamans**.

The *twasa* must learn the tribal and community history, mythology, and ceremonies while engaged in a strict regime of personal **healing** and **purification**. The *twasa* must also learn the esoteric skills necessary to perform **divination** and the **diagnosis** of **illness**, witchcraft, sorcery; design and lead healing **rituals**, retrieve lost soul parts, prepare herbal **medicines**, control the **weather**, foretell the future, and interpret dreams. He or she must also learn to enter into **embodiment** trance states with helping spirits, to exercise *tokoloshe* (ghosts), and to counteract *tagati* (hexes).

Trance

Umbilini is the primal source of the *sangoma's* power. Like the *kundalini* of Indian traditions, the *umbilini* is experienced like a snake of **energy** that lies coiled in the pelvis of the practitioner. Through its arousal the *sangoma* enters an altered state for divination, diagnosis, and healing.

The *sangoma* works with the **drum** or meditation and proper breathing to arouse the *umbilini*. While drumming the *sangoma* experiences the *umbilini*

heating, rising up the spine, and bursting through the top of the head. In this energetic state, the *sangoma* is able to call upon the hidden powers of his or her soul to join with the great powers and helping spirits of the unseen world.

The *sangoma*'s goal in entering trance is to draw **knowledge** from "the Hidden Lake," a huge unseen lake in the spirit world where all the knowledge of the universe, past, present, and future, is found.

In some situations Zulu practitioners use suffering and prolonged fasting to arouse the *umbilini*. At other times it is more appropriate to enter trance through happiness and **ecstasy**. In these situations drumming or meditation is used with food and **water** taken sparingly.

Plant Hallucinogens

Two plant species of *Helichrysum* may be used by Zulu shamans to induce trances. *Helichrysum* is a tall, erect, branching herb with a strong scent that can be smoked. The active principles of these plants have not been determined, though coumarine and diterpenes have been reported from the genus.

The Soul

The healing practices of the *sangoma* are based on the Zulu awareness of the soul. The Zulu believe the human soul is an integral part of the Universal Self (God) and that human souls came into being when God created Itself. Therefore, humans exist because God exists.

The human soul is shaped like the person it embodies. It is made out of a spirit substance (the *ena* soul) which contains a transparent sphere (the *moya* soul). The sphere contains two worm-like creatures, a red creature of evil impulses and a blue creature of good impulses. The red and blue creatures move, **dance**, and struggle with each other ceaselessly.

Each individual is perpetually involved in the Great Struggle, in creating balance between good and evil within the *moya*. This balance is essential for

a soul to exist, because both perfect goodness and perfect badness would bring on the premature demise of the soul.

The Zulu believe that women have three souls and men have two. The *moya* is the first, the immortal human soul of men and women. It can be reborn in any form. The *ena* is the second, the mortal human soul, or self. The *ena* is created anew each time the *moya* takes a new form. Therefore a human *ena* is created in a human incarnation and an animal *ena* in an animal incarnation. After the death the *moya* reincarnates while the *ena* wanders the Earth for a bit and then dissipates.

The *ena* soul develops anew in each incarnation to help humans survive by bringing back messages of guidance and warning from the future. The *ena* is able to leave the body and fly through the air, female souls on transparent wings and male souls hovering. Through this **soul flight** the essence of a person can go out into the future and experience things before the body does. If the future event would be best avoided, the soul can speak to the person, usually through a dream, so that the person can make the choices necessary to avoid creating that future event.

For this reason the Zulu place a high value on heeding and attending to their dreams. Dreams are one of the few senses that humans have not lost that allow them to receive messages from *enas*. Relearning to use the lost senses is an important part of the *sangoma*'s training.

After death the *ena* dissipates unless it is nourished with the **prayers**, thoughts, and the **offerings** of the living. Therefore, ancestral *enas* are nourished by their descendants. These *enas* are consulted in times of trouble and serve as intermediaries between the living and the spirit world. Ancestral spirits are the primary helping spirits of the *sangoma*. If not nourished, these *enas* pass into non-existence and a valuable means of communication with the spirit world is lost.

Illness

From the Zulu perspective both physical and mental illnesses are caused when a disruption in some power, or powers, of the universe occurs. This disruption tips the balance of the Great Struggle within the *moya* of the patient. The *sangoma's* responsibility is to determine what power is disrupted and how to restore balance and harmony again.

Once the cause and the means of healing have been diagnosed, the *sangoma* will take action to aid the healing. Some **diseases** will be considered physical and treated as such. Other diseases will be considered non-physical and treated as the result of disembodied, living entities. Usually these entities begin to devour human souls when the individual's fear has thrown the entity out of balance.

For non-physical diseases, the offending entities must be extracted. However, treatment is not limited to the *sangoma's* **extraction** work. For both physical and non-physical diseases treatment may involve **sacrifices**, physical preparations of herbs or foods, as well as **amulets** or other **power objects** that work on both the physical and non-physical levels to aid healing.

Healing

The *sangoma* uses divination, usually with **dingaka bones**, to diagnoses illness and to determine the source of the disruption of power. A second divination determines the means necessary to restore harmony and balance to the patient and all forces involved. The *sangoma* works in one or more of a variety of ways: malevolent spirits are removed and returned to their appropriate place, offerings are made to pacify or propitiate offended **nature spirits**, lost souls are retrieved, or mundane issues of **diet**, blockages in the body, or good breathing are addressed.

Medicines

The *sangoma* may apply any number of medical or magical remedies. Medical remedies include herbs, roots, seeds,

minerals, and the bodies of ground insects. Therapies include massage, herbal teas, salves, snuffs, and poultices. Magical remedies include smoke, eggs for extracting harmful energies, ritual, and occasionally animal sacrifices.

Extractions or Exorcisms

At times direct spiritual intervention is necessary, for example when a person is possessed by a particularly malevolent or energetic disembodied spirit. In this case *sangomas* work together to conduct a healing **ceremony** which usually involves an animal sacrifice, because **blood** is usually necessary to placate disruptive spirits. When the offending spirit is finally exorcised the air fills with a terrible stench, followed by smoke or a dark cloud.

Soul Damage and Loss

Some illnesses are caused by a weakening of the soul. The *moya* is believed to inhabit parts of the body, like organs or joints. The *sangoma* can heal by working with the *moya* where it inhabits the body. There is also a state of mind that aligns with the *moya* in each part of the body. The *sangoma* can work with the specific part of the *moya* that he or she feels is weakened in the patient, through the body part or the associated mental state.

A more serious wasting illnesses or death can be caused by **soul loss**. People are very vulnerable to opportunistic illnesses when they have lost a part of their soul. The soul is sensitive to many experiences which can all result in soul loss.

People can lose parts of their soul accidentally or by the actions of others. Individuals can, knowingly or unknowingly, capture parts of a person's soul through insensitivity, disparaging attitudes, or disbelief in Zulu cultural values. The soul can also be damaged or stolen through projections of evil (sorcery) or hatred.

The *sangoma* must determine the cause of the loss and location of the lost soul. The *sangoma* moves into a trance state to perform a **soul retrieval** ritual. The *sangoma* recovers the lost

soul and reattaches it to the patient's body. In cases that involve sorcery, the *sangoma* may have to use magic to battle the sorcerer for the return of the patient's soul.

Creativity

The Zulu believe that to be creative is to heal. A whole community can be healed by creating something beautiful nearby, like a **shrine**, **sacred** hut, or stack of standing stones. The Zulu have pursued **art** in all forms for many generations to cultivate the healing power of creativity. The *sangoma* pursues art, writing and all forms of communication between humans. To be a traditional Zulu healer is to be able to communicate with people on all levels in all possible ways.

Storytelling

Storytelling is another tool of traditional Zulu healers. A story is considered a very important thing, a means of instruction, healing, and enlightenment. Sharing a story is also a way of showing the deepest friendship to another.

Dreams—Preventative Medicine

The Zulu believe that the future can be changed because it is no more static than the present. One action today can initiate a whole series of actions in the future and one action avoided today, can stop a series of future actions.

This allows for a kind of preventative medicine. The *ena* soul can go voluntarily into the future, through the performance of certain rituals, to learn of something that is yet to happen. When the *ena* returns to the present with this knowledge, action can be taken to avoid harm and disease.

Divination Tools

Dingaka bones:

Zulu divination is the art of casting and interpreting divining bones, or *dingaka*. They are used to divine the answers to questions of all kinds including the diagnosis of illness and prescription of treatment. Once the question is formulated, the *dingaka* are cast. The position of each bone, the interrelationship of

the bones, the overall pattern, and any unique relationships patterns all contribute to the meaning of the answer.

The four *dingaka* bones are found during the *sangoma*'s apprenticeship. The *sangoma* and *sanusi* may continue throughout his or her lifetime to collect meaningful bits of seashell, animal bones, and bits of ivory to add to their set of "bones."

Divinations of extreme importance whose answers will affect life and death are performed in several different places. The same question is asked in each of three locations. The *dingaka* are cast indoors, outdoors, and at a sacred **cave** or mountain top. If the indications are the same at each place the answer is considered highly reliable.

Instruments

Drum:

There are many roles for the drum in Zulu life and many different drums. Special drums are used only for worship and ritual. These drums are cared for by "Drummers of High Honor." When they have deteriorated beyond repair, these drums are buried with the full honors given a chief. These drums are created by the master woodcarver and are decorated with the continuous pattern of the Eternal River of Time flowing around them.

The *sangoma* uses the drum to aid in divination and entering altered states. The drum may be played by the *sangoma* or the *sangoma*'s assistant, depending on the complexity of the ritual. The drumbeat creates a barrier of impenetrable noise. Inside this barrier, the *sangoma* enters a trance state and focuses the powers of his or her mind on a single point, be it the answer to a question or an act of healing.

Flute:

Sangomas also play flutes. These flutes are very loud. The voice of the flute is sometimes added to the barrier of **sound** created by the drum to support the *sangoma*'s **journey** or divination.

Costume

Generally, the *sangoma* and *twasa*, wear brightly colored robes for ritual and ceremony. The dress depends on rank and the level of **initiation** within a rank. In ancient times *sangoma* wore blankets of animal skins that have been replaced today with *heia* cloth. The different patterns in the *heia* have different symbolic meanings.

A female *sangoma* wears a long, wool, beaded wig which denote her **humility** before the Universal spirits, a headband denoting the purity of her thoughts, a leopard skin skirt showing her courage and honesty, and sometimes a red blouse symbolizing her readiness to sacrifice in service of her people.

Male *sangoma* adopt the distinctive beaded wig and attire of their female counterparts.

Helping Spirits

The *Amadlozi*, the Ancestral spirits, are the primary helping spirits.

Totem animals are connected to people by tribe. The whole tribe observes **taboos** against eating or harming their totem animal. Totem animals are usually animals familiar to the region in which the people live.

Trickster

The Zulu people believe that it is wise to remember that creation is not perfect and that we are all prone to mistakes. Therefore, heroes who are also fools and the **trickster** are much loved **teachers**. *Kintu* is the hero-fool and the tales of his escapades with the people are many. In the animal kingdom *Mpungushe*, the jackal, is a trickster. He is the eater of dung whose keen nose finds the trails that are invisible to humans. He is loved for stealing **fire** from the village of the gods to warm the first humans. *Anansi*, the spider, also a trickster, weaves the web of creation which is full of many tricks.

Writing

The Zulu have an ancient system of writing consisting of notches called

coolu or *igamm*. This system is very similar to the **ogham** writing system of the **Celtic** people of the British Isles.

Supernatural Senses

Traditional Zulus believe all humans possess twelve natural senses, seven senses beyond the basic five. Examples of these senses are to foresee future events, to move consciousness outside of the physical body at will (usually in times of crisis), and the ability to influence objects, like the roll of dice. Sharing information about these senses outside of the Zulu people is still bound in secrecy.

Song of the Stars

The mythology and history of the Zulu people, like other African peoples, are full of descriptions of stars and planets, of the intelligent beings that belong to the stars, and of how these beings have interacted with humans and animals. The black people of South Africa possess amazing knowledge that has been handed down generation to generation about the Cosmos and our solar system. For example, the Zulu have always known that the earth orbits the **sun**.

Part of the *sangoma*'s responsibility is to pass this information to the next generation. It is also the *sangoma*'s responsibility to be prepared for first contact with a variety of different beings from the stars.

A **song** of the *sangomas* says, "There shall arise out of the ashes of man, a newer man who shall rule the far stars, carrying with him the seven laws of love; and that the first and the greatest law of God—doing unto others as you would have them do to you—will be the law of that time. Then humanity can stand fearlessly and joyfully before the Universe, with love in his heart, and be welcomed home as a long-lost child." See also **altered states of consciousness; costume; dreamtime; exorcism; Ngungi, the Crippled Smith; plant hallucinogens**.

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Zuñi Man-Woman

See *Ihamana*.

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About the Author

Shaman, author, and teacher Christina Pratt is the director of the Last Mask Center for Shamanic Healing in Portland, Oregon, and New York City. As an experienced healer and teacher, Pratt weaves her shamanic experience, her training, and her studies with shamans in Ecuador, Nepal, Tibet, and Africa into healing rituals for contemporary people in contemporary communities. She is on the faculties of the Omega Institute, the Rowe Center, and the Center for Spirituality and Healing at the University of Minnesota.

She is a frequent speaker for the American Holistic Medical Association and served as the spiritual advisor to its board from 2003 to 2007. Her course, Foundations of Shamanism, at the University of Minnesota is the first of its kind in the United States. Her major work, *The Cycle of Transformation*, is a four-year training in the use of shamanic skills, rituals, and ceremonies for personal and cultural transformation.

