

<sup>3</sup> The year that the book was published, I was introduced to Boris Tokmashov and learned the intricacies of how the story was reconstructed. The notepad with sketches of the story told by Leonid Kozlasov is still kept in Boris Tokmashov's private archive.

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## REVIEW OF DYRENKOVA'S ARTICLES ON TURKIC PEOPLES OF SAYANO-ALTAI

Н. П. Дыренкова. Тюрки Саяно-Алтая. Статьи и этнографические материалы [N. P. Dyrenkova. *Turkic Peoples of Sayano-Altai. Articles and Ethnographic Material*] C. Schönig & L. R. Pavlinskaya (eds.). St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2012. 408 p. (Series “Kunstkamera – Archives”, Vol. VI) ISBN 978-5-02-08314-2

In 2012, the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) collaborated with the Institute of Turkic Studies, Free University of Berlin, on a volume in the *Kunstkamera-Archive* Series, which comprised a collection of scholarly works by Nadezhda Petrovna Dyrenkova (1899–1941), a renowned Soviet ethnographer, linguist,

and folklore scholar. The volume contained previously unpublished articles and manuscripts on the history and culture of Turkic peoples of Sayan-Altai, particularly the Shors.

We cannot but completely agree with the project directors' idea that "academic studies are conducted for the benefit of the public and should be accessible to them"; and one can at last feel glad that Dyrenkova's works that had lain deposited at *Kunstkamera* (further, *MAE*) for over 70 years finally came out, even if partially. Besides, this is an event of importance just because *MAE*'s archives, as many know, were not always freely accessible to researchers (Alekseev & Kuz'mina & Toburokov 2003: 14).

Dyrenkova belonged to that special constellation of Soviet ethnographers who matured during the 1920s–30s under the guidance of Shternberg and Bogoras, fathers of the famous Leningrad school of ethnography. Her contribution to research on the languages and culture of the Shors, Khakass, Altai, Teleut, and other Turkic peoples was massive and has not been properly assessed to date because the bulk of data collected during her manifold field trips, as well as of unfinished articles, has never been published. "To edit her unpublished materials is our debt to the scholar whose life and work was a heroic deed and selfless service to the homeland science, and who devoted her talent to the flourishing and development of peoples whom she so deeply and thoroughly studied and loved" (Diakonova 1989).

This was the noble and, no doubt, difficult goal that the editors of the volume set for themselves, and that they have handled very well on the whole. As the preface informs us, a large part of the presented articles deals with the study of traditional worldview of Southern Siberia's Turkic peoples (shamanism, in particular), which was indeed among the scholarly priorities of the author. Texts of the articles are provided in the author's original version.

There is an essay of substantial length on the life and career of Dyrenkova [p.19–88] in the volume. The essay's authors draw on diverse sources including memoirs by Dyrenkova's contemporaries, reminiscences of her student class mates and coworkers, accounts of her field trips, her correspondence with Shternberg, Bogoras, and other colleagues, her field diaries, as well as notes by others such as G. N. Raiskaia [Dyrenkova's niece]. The essay is indeed interesting insofar as it casts light on Dyrenkova not only as a singular tireless scholar devoted to her academic career, but also as a surprisingly unique emotional personality deeply affected by what surrounded her and particularly by the fates of peoples whose culture she chose to study.

The assessment of Dyrenkova's contribution to the development of ethnology is quite positive and generally raises no objections, apart from a few statements that appear perhaps too categorical. Thus, one can express doubts about the author's statement that the "typology of oral folk genres offered by Dyrenkova has been foundationally preserved in domestic folklore studies up to the present" (p. 61); as that classification was of a very basic type and is poorly applicable to the oral genres of many, if not all, Siberian peoples (one can be referred to E. S. Novik's works, for example). Similarly, doubtful is the statement that the custom of extramarital relationship "between the husband's father and the bride in cases when the husband was considered under age", as the authors hold it, "has not been observed in ethnographic literature either before or after Dyrenkova" (p. 64). One can take a look at the classic ethnographic work by A. N. Maksimov to see that it is not so.

There are some inaccuracies and inconsistencies in references to Dyrenkova's work. Authors seem to have had difficulties in deciding on the exact count of her published pieces; they mention "over 15 articles and three fundamental monographs" on p.12–13; but then it is stated that there were "about 30" of them, on p.78.

The major part of the volume, however, is taken by Dyrenkova's articles and ethnographic materials per se. The article on the "Shors" is a compendium of data on the history, environment, occupations, social order, and material and spiritual culture of that particular ethnic group; and it is encyclopedic in its scope. The addendum to the article allows the reader to take a peek at an earlier version of the text which somewhat differed from the one being published.

The nine remaining articles deal with the traditional worldview – primarily, religious notions and concepts – of Sayan-Altai's Turkic peoples. The rather solid and lengthy article on "Water, Mountains, and Forest in the Worldview of Turkic Tribes" draws broadly on comparative data to examine the part that these important natural and cult objects play in making the traditional image of the world among Turkic peoples. We would argue that the entire text is permeated with the idea – very subtly felt by the author – that traditional worldview is a complex and elaborate system of interaction between humans and the natural space surrounding them. The article employs the method of studying traditional culture on the basis of a complex analysis of language, folklore, and ritual practices, which has long become a classic genre. Among the merits of the article undoubtedly is the scrupulous description of the rite of feeding mountain and river spirits among the Shors; and particulars of the rite are examined not just in their reference to different districts or kin groups but actually to each village or *ulus* (p. 155–181).

A smaller article on the "Dedication of Animals among Turkic-Mongolian Tribes" (p. 189–199) presents accurately gathered data that reveal the essence of this ritual. The author concludes that the ritual belongs among sacrificial acts and "differs from the common sacrifice only in that the animal is not slain but sent to a spirit or deity alive". The article entitled "The Meaning of the Term *Bura~Puyra* among the Altai Turks (in Connection to the Cult of Horse and Deer)" turns us toward shamanism and is interesting first and foremost, in our view, because of the parallels that the author draws between epic and shamanic traditions, and correspondingly between the shaman and the epic hero; because of the analysis of semantic rows such as "bird–horse–tree" or "mythical heaven horse – sacrificial horse – drum appearing as a horse – shaman embodied in a horse or deer"; as well as because of the semantic identity of shaman's attributes, such as the drum, stick, and bow/arrow, pinpointed by the author. The text of the article on the "*Albasty* in Religious Notions and Folklore of Turkic Tribes" is but a draft, and probably an unfinished one. Still, it presents a good comparative analysis of notions about the female spirit *Albasty* and its sexual relationships with hunters among various Turkic peoples. The author notes that similar notions did also exist in mythologies of Finns and Slavs.

Fragments of articles on "A Number of Ways of Guarding a Child among the Shors" (p. 245–255) and "On Matchmaking and Marriage [among the Shors]" (p. 256–260) are based mostly on the author's research among the Shors and comparative data related to other Turkic peoples of Siberia. The article entitled "Bow and Arrow in the Culture, Folklore, and Language of Turkic Peoples of Altai and Minusinsk Region" (p. 261–276)

discusses the role of the named cultural objects both as important labor tools and as cult objects having high symbolic significance. Although some of the arguments expounded by the author may seem rather naïve to the present-day reader, one must acknowledge that a number of ideas voiced by Dyrenkova (for example, those on the persistence of ritual significance of material objects that have lost their economic functions; or on the rich religious content of objects important in economic activities) sound quite up to date.

The article on the “Attributes of Shamans among Turkic-Mongolian Peoples of Siberia” (p. 277–339) should be viewed, in our opinion, as the gem of the volume. It presents a thoughtful and comprehensive analysis of a whole complex of shaman’s attributes, the drum being considered in the first place. The author discusses in detail the various types of drums, their ritual and symbolic significance, shaman’s cosmogonic views related to the drum, and specifics of handling the drum; what is very important is that the drum is considered as an integral cosmic whole whose parts and aspects contain special meanings. The article provides references and connections to North American shamanism, traces interesting links between shaman’s attributes and tree symbolism, and contains plenty of other thoughts that have not been conclusively developed in contemporary research.

Considering that the volume has been done quite well in terms of print quality, and that the print run has been limited to 300 copies only, one can and should lament on the inaccuracies with image captions. A large part of those (figures 7–15) – at any rate in the copy we held – appear to have been erroneously placed; which is why there were unattractive glued strips over them with corrected captions.

The closing article in the volume is that “From Shamanic Beliefs among the Shors of the Kuznetsk Taiga” (p. 340–358)<sup>1</sup>, which carries unique materials on the period when shamanism was originating among the Shors; most of these materials came from research done during Dyrenkova’s own field trips. There are a number of versions of this article available in archives of Russia and other countries; and one can only regret that the detailed drawing of a Shors drum that was there in the article version kept at the Shternberg archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences, neighbor to MAE, was not used in this publication. This would have given the description the much needed visual aid.

Most of the text in the volume, as well as various Turkic terms used in the articles, are provided in the author’s original version. On the one hand, this is good because it lets us observe how Dyrenkova’s knowledge of native languages was changing (to the better) as time progressed. On the other hand, minor typos of the author could probably be corrected, or at least pointed to, in footnotes or comments. (For instance, there is a mention of the Shors tale of *Altyn Qymyş* that Dyrenkova edited in the mid-1930s [p.63]; and, obviously, it should have read *Altyn Qylyş*). As for the translation of texts to Russian, the volume editors resorted to providing their own versions solely in the case when there was no translation offered. On the whole, these are quality translations (they are done by the linguist and Turkic scholar I. A. Nevskaya); although one can notice that at times there are untranslated and omitted words (for example, *çoy-ğara*, “black” [p.161]; comments to the word *çoy* are omitted); and at other times translations are oversimplified or incorrect (such as the following translations from the Teleut: *qoltuq ködürzäm*, “if I raise my armpit”, instead of “if I raise my hand” [p.165]; *qol yastyğyn*, “arm pillow”, instead of the “little cushion”, *podushechka* in Russian, which has become long accepted; *qorboçogun qorquspa! ürbeçegin ürküspe!*, “Don’t frighten! Don’t scare the sprout!”).

instead of “Don’t frighten children! Don’t scare the young growth!”; *yek*, “devil”, instead of “evil spirit”, as the term is used as a synonym for *aina* and *körmös*; *yek yamanyn yekirip!*, “disregard the skinny devil” – the translation is stylistically inaccurate and there also is an inaccuracy in interpreting the verb *t’iekker*, “drive out, expel”, possibly “defend oneself”; thus, it should have been, “driving out the evil tiek-spirit”). There are instances of incorrect rendering of verbal forms, sometimes overlapping with incorrect translations (*tarangan*, “combing her hair”, instead of “having combed her hair” (p. 251); *tapšyp kör*, “you let [one] suck”, instead of “feed, do some feeding, try to feed” (p. 253); *ayna yamanyn ayqyr tur*, “spell for the defense against *ayna*”, instead of “drive away the evil *ayna*-spirit”). The ritual language is always full of allegories and allusions, so attempts at literal translation do not necessarily lead in this case to the uncovering of implicit meanings (for instance, see the detailed analysis of, and comments on, the Teleut vocabulary in the book on *Teleutian Folklore* (Funk 2004).

The volume is supplied with the index of names, ethnonyms, geographical places, and administrative designations, which help the reader substantially.

Without a doubt, the volume appears as an important source for studying and understanding the culture of native peoples of Sayan-Altai in the first quarter of the twentieth century. What is just as important, however, is the example of analyzing worldview systems provided in these articles, as well as the object lesson of brilliant comparative research and the very modern way of seeing culture as an integrated whole where each element is connected to all others in a complex manner.

Hopefully, the publication of Dyrenkova’s work will now continue, as it is promised in the introduction to the volume, and the unique materials contained therein will finally become accessible to researchers who have or have not yet had a chance to examine them. It would be reasonable to suggest that the administration of the archive should think about the digitalization of Dyrenkova’s work and making it available on the Internet, which would expedite the process of bringing the scholar’s heritage back to the academic world. An opportunity to study these texts, equal for all interested scholars or students, is, as it seems to us, the most basic condition for the successful development of scientific thought.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Previously, fragments of the archival version of the article (drawn on the copy from the archive of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest) were published once (Funk 2005: 73–74).

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## THREE BOOKS ABOUT EVENKI

Анна А. Сирина. *Эвенки и эвены в современном мире. Самосознание, природопользование, мировоззрение* [Anna A. Sirina. *Evenki and Eveni in the Modern World. Identity, Nature Relations, World View*]. Moskva: Vostochnaia literature, 2012. 604 pages

Ольга А. Поворозник. *Забайкальские эвенки. Социально-экономические и культурные трансформации в XX–XXI* [Olga A. Povorozniuk. *Baikal-Region Evenki. Social-Economic and Cultural Transformations in the 20th and 21st Century*]. Moskva: IEA RAN, 2011

Tatiana Safonova & Istvan Santha. *Culture Contact in Evenki Land. A Cybernetic Anthropology of the Baikal region*. Leiden & Boston: Global Oriental, 2013.

Evenki seem to be the most eagerly studied Siberian indigenous group. Therefore, this is no wonder that the Evenki research has shaped several categories and concepts that are used in Siberian and Arctic studies, or in anthropology in general. First of all, the word 'shaman' comes from the Evenki (or Tungus) language and its spread is rooted in a fundamental work of the Russian Tsarist ethnographer Sergei Shirokogoroff – *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus*. Another of Shirokogoroff's highly influential works – *Social Organisation of the Northern Tungus* – helped to shape pre II World War structuralist social anthropology from Scandinavia to South Africa. Soviet classic ethnographers like Boris Dolgikh, Il'ia Gurvich and Andrei Popov developed their Marxist-Leninist concepts – ethnicity, ethnohistory and culture of using their fieldwork data collected among Evenkis. Another Soviet ethnographer, Vladillen Tugolukov, is appreciated by researchers of nomadism for several accounts based on Evenki reindeer herders. In