

Notes on Shamanism

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(Summary)

The article sums up the continuous research that the author has carried out for many years on Shamanism in Eurasia. Shamanism is a complex system of beliefs, whose central element is the figure of the Shaman in his role as a mediator between the world of the people and that of supreme powers. The tasks that the Shaman performs in benefit of the traditional community encompass healing, fortune telling, sacrifices, preservation of historical and mythological knowledge, complemented by rituals' practical enactment. The article sheds light on the idea of Shaman's selection and predetermination, on his attributes and on his capacity to evoke phantasms. From a terminological point of view, the author offers a more neutral definition of Shamanism as a system of beliefs that are connected with certain social roles. Today, they no longer exist within the sacred sphere of culture, but stay on the boundary between the sacred and the secular; they are not in the sphere of religion, but are rather in-between religion and everyday popular beliefs. This is an important conclusion in contemporary explorations and it probably explains the fact that Shamanism adjusts itself to the everyday life of people nowadays.