

Abstract

This PhD thesis is about shamanism among the Duha in Mongolia. It is based on 22 months of fieldwork (1999-2012) among the Duha reindeer nomads in Northern Mongolia, and examines why the Duha return to their traditional livelihood as hunters and herders in the taiga has resulted in a turn toward their shamanic traditions.

The main argument of the study is that the Duha return to the taiga encapsulated a return to the practices and the land in which the Duha shamanism subsists as a local and historic tradition. It argues that Duha shamanism is a deeply local tradition centred on local animistic perceptions of kinship relations between humans and spirits, enacted through the practices of hunting and herding. It also argues that the Duha livelihood and land historically has been fashioned and shaped as shamanic by the imaginaries and policies of surrounding states and people.

Finally it discusses how contemporary interventions upon the Duha livelihood and land, such as hunting laws, gold-mining and spiritual tourism, was felt to increase the flow of dangerous spiritual powers, which further encouraged the Duha to turn towards shamanism.