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Note : les règles d'écriture des références bibliographiques peuvent varier selon les différents domaines du savoir.
Singing Story, Healing Drum: Shamans and Storytellers of Turkic Siberia.
By Kira Van Deusen. (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University

Singing Story, Healing Drum includes narrative, music, poetry and
descriptions of shamanic practice as practised by the people of the Turkic
republics of Tuva and Khakassia in south Siberia. The author visited
these areas six times between 1993 and 2002, which explains why the
book is authoritative in content. Yet it is communicated in storytelling
fashion. The author does not hesitate to use the first person, to interject
her own thoughts and feelings about the Turkic shamans, their land,
lives, beliefs and narratives. She avoids imposing outsider theory and
lets the words of the shamans speak for themselves. There are, though,
several startling references to western science, for example, as an
explanation for why they consider genetic ancestry important. Van
Deusen postulates that perhaps shamans are seeing their own DNA
structures (141). On the other hand, these references do provoke
thought and are generally well integrated into the text.

They also support Van Deusen’s presentation of shamanic practice
as a vital process, contexted in a long history. She skilfully places
shamans in contemporary life, mentioning, for example, the present
role of women in storytelling and as shamans; the role of local narratives
in fostering an ecologically sound approach to land use; the many
contacts with the West and spread of ideas such as “ecotourist
shamanism”; and the negative effects of politics, particularly postwar
Soviet, on local practices.

In the introduction the author positions herself and her goals clearly
in relation to the material. I would like to know as much about the
shamans and storytellers with whom she spoke; we have their names,
but in many cases, few details. But we are introduced to this remote
area through an excellent variety of photographs of faces, scenes, and
artefacts.

Van Deusen discusses Tuvan overtone singing, which by now many
westerners have heard. She presents other unique approaches to singing
from this area, such as the Asian predilection for minute timbral
alterations in contrast to the western emphasis on melodic-rhythmic
variety. While she ably discusses all of these sound concepts with words,
there are some instances where I would like to see more detail. Perhaps
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