

Chuluunbaatar, Otgonbayar: Einführung in die mongolischen Schriften. Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag, 2008. 162 pp. ISBN 978-3-87548-500-4. Preis: € 22.80

With this book you can “hit two hares with one shot” – “Нэг сумаар хоёр туулай онох” (152). First, it provides a comprehensive overview of the history and features of all scripts ever used for Mongolian languages. Second, with the help of this book you may teach yourself to read and write the two most important of them – the vertically written classical Mongolian and the Cyrillic Mongolian scripts –, both still used today by the great majority of the speakers of Mongolian languages. The book essentially consists of two main parts. Chapters one to four provide brief but highly informative and intelligibly written outlines of the history of the Mongolian peoples as well as the history and characteristics of their languages, in particular their numerous different scripts. Chapter five, which makes up more than two fifths of the volume, constitutes a teaching-, exercise-, and textbook for both the classical and the Cyrillic scripts.

The author of the book first successfully presents a “History of the Mongols,” which, very short, nonetheless includes all essential facts. Chuluunbaatar explains in a comprehensible way the main strains of this complex and entangled history, sufficiently describing both the periods in which the Mongols played a role in world history, and those in which they were limited to their steppe homelands in eastern central Asia.

The following concise conspectus of the history of the Mongolian languages from their archetypical form to their current variety is based primarily on standard works of renowned Mongolists (G. Doerfer, W. Heisig, N. Poppe, M. Weiers et al.). Chuluunbaatar, however, stresses the peculiar difficulties of the Mongolian language history, especially regarding the sparseness, partly even the total lack, of primary sources. She makes very clear that the so-called “Altaic” family of languages, consisting of the supposedly genetically related Mongolian, Turkic, and Manchu-Tungusic languages (and for some authors also of Korean and Japanese), though today most widely accepted, still remains a *theory*, one which has not yet been possible to prove conclusively. This chapter is completed by a neatly arranged table of all Mongolian languages and dialects spoken today. This table also indicates for which of the languages scripts exist and of which type they are – classical Mongolian, Cyrillic, Latin, or Arabic.

That these four different scripts, used for Mongolian languages today, represent only a small remaining part of a much greater abundance and variety of scripts and writing systems used for Mongolian languages in the past becomes clear in the following chapter, which one may call the heart of the book. Chuluunbaatar not only describes the origins of the scripts and their linguistic features but also the historical, political, and religious contexts in which they have emerged or were created. The various and often changing functions they have had for combating religious, ethnic, and national movements as well as their importance for political rulers and colo-

rial powers are well explained. The great importance the usages of distinctive scripts have had and still have for strengthening ethnic, national, or multinational identities is made clear.

Thus, Chuluunbaatar’s book is not an arid treatise about signs on papers, but rather makes the scripts come alive. This is well supported also by the numerous facsimile prints of examples, most of which are published here for the first time. Especially noteworthy in this regard is the facsimile of a xylograph representing an example of the horizontal square script, which was created in the late 17th century (51). Extremely few specimens of this hitherto hardly known script had been published so far.

In general, the numerous facsimile prints as well as the many other illustrations (all representing examples and variants of the scripts, including even numbers and ornate lettering) show another important facet of Mongolian scripts: their intrinsic beauty! To perceive this also contributes to a more empathic and thus likely deeper understanding of them, and doubtlessly increases the value and attractiveness of this book.

The same can be said of the ten tables of complete alphabets and respective transliterations into Latin letters. To the highest degree reliable, because obviously compiled with ultimate meticulousness, these tables will be invaluable for both future students of Mongolian languages as well as for advanced Mongolists. The alphabets given are: the classical Mongolian, the Phags-pa square script, the Mongolian galik-script, the Oirat-Kalmyk script, the Oirat galik-script, the Soyombo-script, the horizontal square script, the Buryat Vagindra-script, and the Mongolian Latin and Cyrillic scripts. For the Buryat and Kalmyk Cyrillic scripts no full alphabet tables are given, but Chuluunbaatar names the few characters which are used to embody phonemes not existing in Mongolian and, therefore, added to the Mongolian Cyrillic script, used in both cases as the principle base. But here, concerning the Buryat Cyrillic alphabet, a mistake has happened: It is stated that the letter “ж” has been added to it. This is not true. Such a letter was never used in any Buryat script. But exceptions prove the rule. This is the only error the reviewer has detected in the whole book!

The reviewer is, however, not perfectly happy with the transliteration system that Chuluunbaatar has chosen for the Mongolian Cyrillic script. Although it has the advantage to get on without any diacritical signs, it is a rather unnatural one, especially for German speaking readers to whom the book – as it is written in German – is primarily addressed. But this system is a possible and a totally acceptable one. As there are, unfortunately, still no established rules for the transliteration of Mongolian scripts, the only requirement the reviewer considers to be mandatory is to give a complete table of the chosen transliteration system and to be consistent in its use. Both of these are met by Chuluunbaatar. The table of the transliteration system is even printed on a fanfold at the end of the book, which, when folded out, makes it permanently usable, no matter to what page one opens the book;

this is very practical and helpful indeed. By contrast, a glossary of the used abbreviations and linguistic symbols, which would be equally helpful, is unfortunately missing altogether.

The teaching and exercise part of the book, however, is again arranged in a very clear and, what counts here most, in a very workable manner too. All characters of the alphabets are introduced step by step and good explanations of how to write them are given.

The book is completed by an ample bibliography which surely will serve to help many researchers in current and future studies. It has already done so for the author of these lines. "From the book(s) comes all our knowledge" – "Ухаан далай номоос эхтэй" (153). Of the one reviewed here this can be said for sure.

Stefan Krist

Cipolletti, María Susana, y Fernando Payaguaje:

La fascinación del mal. Historia de la vida de un shaman secoya de la Amazonía ecuatoriana. Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 2008. 266 pp. ISBN 978-9978-22-725-1. Price \$ 17.70

The book is an autobiography of Fernando Payaguaje, a Secoya shaman of Ecuadorian Amazonia, as seen through the lenses of an anthropologist. It consists of an extensive introduction, five autobiographical chapters, in which Payaguaje recounts his shamanistic experience with hallucinogenic drugs, and a conclusion.

The introductory part is a "boot section" of the book, comprising all the information – ethnographic, ethnohistorical, and methodological alike – necessary for a correct interpretation of Payaguaje's narration. In fact, the introduction is an engaging "book" in itself. Cipolletti begins with placing her contribution within the broader context of other indigenous autobiographies, in particular those concerning peoples of the Americas. She points, for instance, to an interesting structural similarity between the autobiographies written by authors representing North American Plains Indians and those authored by indigenous intellectuals of Amazonia: both focus on adulthood that is seen as the period of complete, mature, humanity – the only time worth remembering and recounting – before which "nothing of importance happened" (14). In the case of Payaguaje, it is almost entirely the period when he exercised his function as a shaman – that is, the time between his first experience with hallucinogens, on the one hand, and the arrival of missionaries of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) in 1955, whose activities gradually dismantled the shamanistic worldview of the Secoya, on the other. This contrasts sharply with autobiographies written by individuals who were socialized into agrarian societies, and who began their accounts with childhood, or the starting point of a life that is viewed as developing gradually, in steps, each of the stages informing the one that follows next. This part of the book also contains rich ethnohistorical data on the Secoya and other indigenous groups of that part of South America – a reflection of Cipolletti's longstanding research on the history of intercultural contacts in Ama-

zonía (see for instance: "Nostalgia del monte". *Indigenas del oriente peruano según un manuscrito del jesuita Juan Magnin. Anthropos* 103/2.2008: 507–525).

Furthermore, recounting the history of her research in Fernando Payaguaje's village and her interviews with him, Cipolletti is aware of the necessity to "bring the observer to the picture," as the anthropologist's own life history and academic formation conditions the outcome of the inquiry, and it is impossible for the author – as she aptly states – "to disappear behind the data" (19). Still, she successfully preserves the voice of the main protagonist by avoiding any radical editorial interventions into the text of the oral transmission, such as for instance, the imposition of linear chronology of recounted events. She also carefully marks those sections of the account that resulted from her own questions and interruptions, along with many contextual components of the narration, such as laughter and moments of silence. In this way, Cipolletti also makes a clear effort to downplay the academic distinction between literacy and orality – "academic" in the Bourdieuan sense of "consecration" of the first at the expense of the other.

What makes this part of the book particularly elucidating is Cipolletti's comprehensive presentation of the Secoya cosmovision, including their myth of origin, which is necessary for a good understanding of Fernando Payaguaje's shamanistic visions, described in his own words in the following chapters. Finally, in this section the reader also finds the explanation of the intriguing title of the book: "The Fascination of the Evil." To hurt others, to produce evil deeds, says Cipolletti, quoting Payaguaje, is a big temptation only for those shamans who lack a deeper understanding of reality, and whose level of shamanistic knowledge and skills is inferior. Even more interesting is the fact that Payaguaje poses the question of evil as a moral problem, which has not been a traditional element of the shamanistic worldview. Cipolletti views this phenomenon not as a result of any direct impact of Christian teachings on Fernando's way of thinking but rather as his creative elaboration of Christian ethic within the indigenous cultural framework (34). Although Cipolletti does not draw such conclusion, a similar synthesis of shamanistic and Christian elements could be the Secoya concept of creation through word, which she describes as a "rather rare idea in the mythology of South American Indians" (53). One tradition where the motif of the creative word is to be found in a far more elaborate form is the mythology of the Guarani Indians, who were exposed to intensive, centuries long Christianization by the Jesuits.

Chapter 1 is devoted to Secoya conceptions about death and afterlife as presented by Fernando Payaguaje in his accounts of shamanistic flights/voyages to various areas of cosmos, in particular the superior world (*ma'temo*). It is inhabited by celestial beings and by the deceased humans but resembles in many aspects the visible world of the living. Interestingly, there are no ethical or moral requirements that guarantee a dwelling in the superior world. Rather, correct funeral rituals should be observed, in the first place the rubbing of the corpse with