

Barbara Einzig's version of a Khakasy Turkic shaman chant is based on Russian translations in Wm. Radloff's *Proben der Volkliteratur* (1907). Formerly called the "Abakan" or "Minusinsk" Turks, the Khakasy occupy a section of southern Russia near the Mongolian border. 200 years ago the population in the area consisted of many small tribes speaking languages belonging to three linguistic groups (Turkic, Ketic and Samoyic), but by the 19th Century only the Turkic dialects were being spoken. Under Soviet rule the tribes have been dispersed, and the practice of shamanism has been forbidden. The shamanistic cosmology and rituals of the Khakasy have been well documented in Mircea Eliade's Shamanism, Vilmos Diosvegi's Tracing Shamans in Siberia, and Henry Michael's Studies in Siberian Shamanism.

(Khakasy/Siberia)

BENEDICTION TO THE SPIRIT OF THE FIRE

YOU

FIRE —

our mother,
having 30 teeth!

YOU —

our grandmother,
having 40 teeth!

You care for us in the day,
watch over us at night!
You're at the head of the departing ones,
at the end of the arriving ones!
The sickle of the moon changes
the old year comes
the new year comes
I have come
to refresh your parched lips!

In the twilight you play,
letting down your hair
like a young girl!
You ride on a 3-year-old chestnut mare,
fanning yourself with a red scarf!
On clear evenings
you take on the shape
of a little child!
You fan yourself
with ribbons of light silk!

YOU —

protector
of the black-headed ones,
defender
of the grazing herds!

You rest in the shadow of the thick birch,
having golden leaves!

The white,
the castrated sheep,
the sheep with black jowls
offers himself to you!

You refresh your parched mouth
with the right butt of the sheep,
the butt roasted on 9 spits!

Your adornment—
9
white and
red ribbons!

The frozen breast
of the sheep
offers itself to you!

Your adornment—
that
of a
god!
Red
paint,
claws of many sables!

The wide breast
of the sheep,
the breast
bearing many names
offers itself to you!

Blessing you,
sprinkling you —
 with the white milk
 of the white cows,
 with the precious name
 of the bright moon!

60 braids are flowing
over your back and neck!
50 braids are flowing
over your shoulders and neck!
In the folds of your robe
 the flow of the Abakan
 the windings of the Yenisey!
In the hem of your robe
stretch the mountain crests,
and your veins —
 big
 rivers
 flowing!

YOU

FIRE —

lying here for 30 years,
take on the color of a grey goat!
The grass never grew
in the place of your ashes!

YOU—

 actor
of the seven stars
 speaker
with the one and only god!

in the beginning

MOUNTAINS everywhere first bursting and

FEATHERED BIRDS fluttering,
loosening their right wings;

POWERFUL CLIFFS first springing up

BLACK IRON first beginning to mold itself
out of the earth

from that time on

the white-tipped grass,
split into 6 branches,
flamed up,
you 6 sisters
went your ways
among the peoples!

in the beginning

WHITE BIRCH having 60-branched roots
first growing tall

from that time on

you began
to still the hunger
of the aching ones
to warm
the freezing ones!

Place firmly your stone tripod
for the roasting of meat!
Boil the bronze vessel,
having 9 handles!

Burning the earth,
turning her black!
white clouds flowing under azure sky
heating them up,
turning them red!

TO YOU —

my mother
Ymaj

I offer this cup of food—

Accept it!
Consume it!

You care for us at night,
watch over us in the day!

O precious name
of the bright moon,
partake
of the white milk
of the white cow!

Your hands are pure,
light as a young girl's!
They make you blessed
on each pure day!
Like a mother
you give the people
your right hand
to live by,
you feed them
with your right breast!

Let the ropes of the cradle,
your children,
let them be vigorous and multiply,
the older and younger brothers!
Let the ropes of the cradle,
your children,
be firm and multiply,
the older and younger sisters!

Don't let
the heads of the people get confused!
Don't let
their robes come undone!

O people
above you
the bright moon,
let it be!
O people
surrounding you

the bright sun,
let it be!

Don't let
the mean devil
find his way out
from the 60 branches
of your roots!
Let the great pure Creator aid the benediction
pronounced by us!

O I,
born late
don't turn toward the help of the devil!

Down your back and neck they flutter,
60 braids!

You comb them
with a comb of red copper
of 9 teeth

a comb no horse can lift!
Down your left breast they tumble,
50 braids!

You comb them
with a comb of yellow copper
of 6 teeth
a comb no horse can lift!

You are always speaking
with the water spirit,
the master of rivers and seas,
he lives in a house of yellow copper,
with 9 corners,
by the mouths of 9 big rivers!

You were created then—

in the beginning

60 KINDS of river and water
first flowing

WHITE BIRCH first sprouting roots

THICK BIRCH having golden leaves
first beginning to sway on 9 mountain ranges!

PURE SACRIFICE first being offered

7 OPENINGS first opening in the black earth;

AZURE SKY first powerfully thundering

BLACK EARTH first giving out of itself
white flowers of 60 kinds;

GRAZING HERDS first neighing and lowing,
feeding on the grass!

You ride on 7 blue-grey horses,
there, where rules the water spirit,
master of rivers and seas!

Having given you
the thick birch
having golden leaves
growing on the shore of the flowing water,
and the golden table of sacrifice,
having 6 legs;
we walk around
the white birch
3 times
and we walk around
the white,
the castrated sheep,
the sheep with black jowls,
we bend his right leg under and
we kill him,
we dig the living heart and liver
out of the sheep's body!

You fan yourself with white and blue ribbons
as long as a horse is high!
Bringing to you this sacrifice,
may you bring all joy
to all rivers,
may the rivers flow about the stirrups
of those who cross the waters!
May you bring all joy
to the strong trees,
having many roots,
growing by the mouths of 9 big rivers!

Your adornment —
9
white and
blue ribbons! -