

Justine Buck Quijada, *Buddhists, shamans, and Soviets: Rituals of history in post-Soviet Buryatia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2019. 256 pp., hardback, £64.00. ISBN: 9780190916794

*Buddhists, shamans, and Soviets* is a very welcome addition to the multi-perspective literature on Siberia's and more broadly northern Eurasia's past and present. This theoretically sound anthropological study is written against the backdrop of protracted socio-economic and political uncertainties in Buryatia, which are connected to the post-Soviet transformations but in fact largely accompanied the Soviet period, and seeks to extend decentralised, indigenous perspectives on the past and present. Justine Buck Quijada's theoretical goal was to advance the field of anthropology of history, which investigates how people produce knowledge about the past, and she has most definitely succeeded in this endeavour. Her training and experience allowed Quijada not only to employ multi-disciplinary and global outlooks, with post-Soviet studies, indigenous studies, and the anthropology of religion informing her research, but also to explore indigenous histories without Orientalising or romanticising them. She addresses Buryatia without isolating it from the post-Soviet and global contexts and not through the narrow nationality approach. Furthermore, Quijada studies urban rituals, which is not common in indigenous studies and therefore much appreciated.

Quijada demonstrates brilliant command in anthropological, historical and other literatures and makes several important points in the on-going methodological discussions. Although she acknowledges the disconnection of people from the personal past due to socio-economic and political changes, and their subsequent reconnection with it through ethnic identification, she provides a valuable critique of the 'collective memory' as a popular enterprise paradigm. Relying on the anthropology of history, Quijada foregrounds the entanglements between written and oral histories and the different performative uses of historical facts.

Quijada's main theoretical device is chronotopes, the conceptions of time originally suggested by the literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin: 'Chronotopes, generated by ritual practice, offer new perspectives from which to make the present meaningful through different connections of the present and the past' (p. 3). Quijada convincingly demonstrates that rituals are not expressing any presumed underlying (national) beliefs, but in fact producing 'new identities, collectivities, chronologies, and cosmologies' (p. 4). Exploring the different conceptions of time and space and subjectivity in the multi-layered religious and civil setting of Buryatia, Quijada reveals different genres of knowing the

past, produced through ritual, as the resources which Buryats use to negotiate the present. Quijada complicates Buryatia's religious landscape, confirming the important yet still not predominant argument that nationality does not equal religion. Furthermore, Quijada makes an important argument that there is no dominant conception of Buryat nation due to the variety of chronotopes.

Quijada's fieldwork in Ulan-Ude and a few surrounding areas in 2003, 2004–5 and 2012 involved both observation of rituals and discussion of them with her interlocutors. The methodology of the study is reflected in the book's structure. Taking the constructedness of the past seriously, Quijada drops the usual historical background from the Introduction in favour of discussing history-making and indigeneity. This is most welcome, since another brief overview (most of which still draws on Russian and Soviet chronologies) is hardly necessary. The six subsequent chapters present rituals and the respective histories (genres of history) and collective subjects in the present produced by them, as well as the respective chronotopes. Quijada grasps these histories indirectly by exploring how they were indexed within the rituals and focusing on the different historical genres. The structure has admirable balance. The six chapters offer glimpses into two secular (City Day and Victory Day), two Buddhist (connected to the body of Dashi-Dorzho Itigilov or Etigelov) and two Shamanic rituals, juxtaposing the different civic and religious contexts but at the same time demonstrating the entanglements between them. The chapters on the secular rituals are especially innovative, as they demonstrate that the same people have different modes of dealing with the past, while the production of Soviet selves still co-exists with religious practices.

Overall, the study is written in a vivid and highly readable manner. There are, unfortunately, a few errors in the dates—for instance, the last *datsan* was closed after 1936 (p. xiv); Speranskii finalized the reform in 1822 (p. 24); and 'Mongolian' was dropped from the republic's name in 1958 (p. 29)—and some typos. The study is both captivating empirically and very illuminating in theoretical terms. It is a must-read for everyone working on Buryatia and would be of great interest for historians and anthropologists of northern Eurasia and other contexts. The photographs by Roberto Quijada provide much-appreciated visuals to the study. The topic also has great potential to be explored further, with the rituals and chronotopes of Buryats living outside of Buryatia being of great interest.

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