

Adventures in Shamanism

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Introduction

နိဒါန်း

1. This is a short presentation on Shamans from Myanmar and other countries. If sufficient time and space are given, there are a lot of interesting stories in the world of Shamans (Bodaws in Myanmar).
2. The term Shaman has its origin from Siberia. Different countries have different names and definition for it. Here both Bodaw and Shamen are used for the same meaning.
3. In Anthropology whether you believe it or not, serious study are being made on this topic by scholars from many countries. There are even Ph.D thesis done on Myanmar Shamanism by candidates from abroad.
4. Another kind of Shaman is 'Messiah'. A Messiah employs magic to recruit armed followers against bad rulers. In Myanmar, Maung Thant and Saya San were good example. Many such example existed in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam to stand against French colonialism.
5. The third kind is Millenarian. It is a kind of Shaman who led the people by prophesy, offering hope or scaring them to believe and behave. Here arms struggle is not resorted to. It is a socio-religious movement with politics added to. Examples are Ywa and Telakon movement of the Karens on Thai side. These are under serious study by teams from Chiangmai and Tokyo university.
6. In all races, there is a belief that a shaman can communicate with 'nether' world and relieve suffering of the people. Like fortune tellers and spirit mediums, they are serving the society of which they are a part. Where doctors are not available, they serve a helping hand.
7. Readers should know about bad guys like Jim Jones. You will read about him here in this book.
8. The Shaman without service to the people is never recognized as such by the people. They are self-made shamans. A good Shaman helping a bad guy is like watering a poisonous plant. All good people will never honor such service. Selfish shaman are to be avoided. Only when a shaman helps good people in trouble, does all good people would praise him.

