

Northern Notes

The Newsletter of the International Arctic Social Sciences Association

IASSA

Issue 30 • Spring/Summer 2009



The IASSA secretariat is located at the Stefansson Arctic Institute in the Borgir Research Building – the white building to the right

Published by the IASSA Secretariat
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University of Lapland, Finland's website and enter your own information to be included in an upcoming publication of the International Directory of Arctic Social Scientists. Similar to Ernest Tiger Burch's paper directory from the mid-1990s, the online directory is searchable and updatable, and there is no cost to participate or for the paper version of the directory. The new directory is sponsored by IASSA, the Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland, the Greenland Home Rule Administration, the Arctic Institute of North America, the Sami Center of Umea University, the Scott Polar Research Institute, the Barents Centre of the Humanities in Russia, and the U.S. National Science Foundation. Any information you submit is protected according to international and national laws, and entries will be screened by the Arctic Centre's webmaster before they are posted to the web. For more information, contact Dr. Robert Wheelersburg (wheelersburg@etown.edu), who will shortly be in touch with ICASS IV participants by email to join the directory. halldor@teikn.is

Many Strong Voices

<http://www.manystrongvoices.org>

Arctic Voices Join 'Many Strong Voices' for Tackling Climate Change By the Many Strong Voices Team (For further information, contact Ilan Kelman through <http://www.ilankelman.org>)

Within the wide range of environmental changes that have affected the Arctic over past centuries, contemporary climate change is starting to take its toll. New and creative efforts are continuing to determine how to deal with this long-term disaster and its spin-off effects. One research and action project, Many Strong Voices, joins coastal communities from around the Arctic and from the 51 Small Island Developing States (SIDS, <http://www.sidsnet.org>) in recognition of the similar vulnerabilities to climate change that both regions experience.

Many Strong Voices, launched in December 2005 by the United Nations Environment Programme, brings together Arctic and SIDS participants to share and enhance knowledge and expertise about, and to collaboratively devise strategic solutions to, climate change challenges. Those involved include researchers, policy makers, practitioners, and those with subsistence livelihoods. The aims are to:

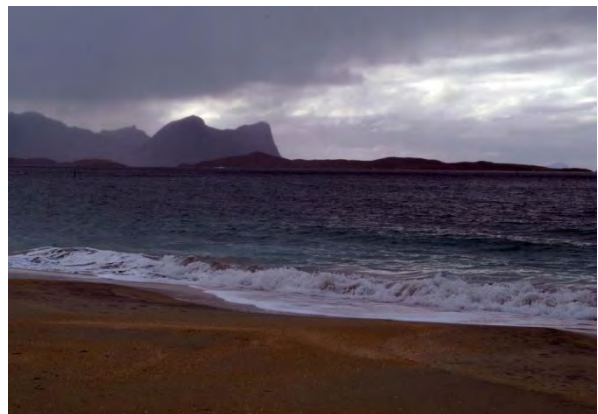
1. Develop capacity to strengthen the role of the two regions in negotiations on reducing greenhouse gases and on climate change

adaptation.

2. Raise awareness about the effects and vulnerabilities of climate change in these regions.
3. Increase understanding of knowledge, needs, and solutions, including through research.
4. Motivate action on addressing and preventing climate change's adverse impacts.

One prominent strand is designing a research programme that will explore the assessment of climate change vulnerability and adaptation. This research builds on and draws lessons from experiences with community-based research and assessment work undertaken both within and beyond the Arctic and SIDS and is currently focused on using that work to assess vulnerability and adaptation for the SIDS.

The project's focus, though, remains on catalysing local action. While external and top-down interventions and exchanges are useful for supporting local action, the most effective manner of reducing vulnerability and living with climate change is through community-based initiatives grounded on solid experience and knowledge, especially local knowledge.



Senja island in Norway's Arctic (Photo: Ilan Kelman)

One important theme has been recognising that climate change is just one challenge and opportunity amongst many others facing the Arctic and SIDS. Other ongoing concerns include rapid rural-to-urban migration, the potential loss of languages and cultures, gender and minority inequities, erosion of local knowledge and experiences, manipulation by richer governments and corporations, and unsustainable natural resource extraction. These multiple factors must be considered simultaneously to ensure that tackling one problem, such as climate change, does not create or exacerbate other problems emerging from the myriad of social and environmental challenges which Arctic peoples have dealt with over the past centuries.

Many Strong Voices provides the grounding, inspiration, impetus, and opportunity to build and

maintain community-based processes that contribute to enhanced ability and actions to reduce vulnerability and to contribute to sustainability. With such comprehensiveness, cooperation, and exchange, Many Strong Voices - involving many strong Arctic voices - will be heard, locally and globally, leading to positive action for positive change.

EXHIBITIONS

Shamans of Siberia – Magicians, Intermediaries, Healers

Linden State Museum of Ethnology, Stuttgart, Germany

December 13, 2008 – June 28, 2009

(in cooperation with the Russian Museum of Ethnography, Saint Petersburg)

Shamans of Siberia – Magicians, Intermediaries, Healers is the result of a collaboration lasting several years between the Linden State Museum of Ethnology, one of Europe's oldest ethnographic museums, and the Russian Museum of Ethnography in Saint Petersburg. Curated by Erich Kasten, it is among the largest and most comprehensive exhibitions ever mounted on the subject. It features films, photographs, full-scale models of nomadic dwellings, and hundreds of artifacts including nearly 200 rare objects from the collections of the Russian Museum of Ethnography, many of them never before seen in western Europe. Instead of taking a static approach to shamanism as a historical phenomenon, particular attention is given to the dynamic features of shamanic worldviews, their openness to religious concepts of other peoples with whom shamans came in contact, and the consequent transformations and variations.



An important goal of the exhibition is to inform the museum visitor about non-western concepts of dealing with nature and the supernatural, whose representatives had to be consulted and treated in a respectful way. Early explorers and scientists viewed Siberian shamans against the background of the respective *Zeitgeist* of their own cultures, and many continue to do so even today. Western observers first dismissed shamanic concepts as irrational beliefs during the Enlightenment, then viewed them in romantic transfiguration, and eventually – during the past 50 years – used them

as an ideological tool for growing criticism of western civilization. But how can we do justice to the phenomenon of shamanism from the point of view of the peoples of Siberia, for whom it has been an important part of their cultural identity? In the long wake of *perestroika* they are still seeking new ideological orientations and striving to reconnect to traditional worldviews. In contrast to a certain arbitrariness by which almost any kind of spirituality is often seen today as shamanic, this exhibition aims to show the particular historical and regional contexts from which shamanic worldviews and ritual practices evolved, within which they have been embedded in Siberia, and what shamanism can mean to people there today and in the future.

The overarching theme linking shamanic worldviews with traditional concepts of human relations with nature runs throughout the exhibition. The first section of the exhibition provides examples of particular natural environments of Siberia, establishes the historical and geographical context, and introduces the special character of sacred objects that are shown. In the next hall, overall concepts of human relations with nature and ritual interaction are explained by the examples of two different seasonal reconciliation feasts, the Yhyakh of the Sakha and the O-lo-lo of the Koryak (Nymylans). Specific shamanic concepts dealing with unexpected crisis situations are closely identified and demonstrated by regalia. Beautifully conserved sacred objects are shown side-by-side with archival photographs of them in their original contexts. Object installations focus on important themes such as becoming a shaman, shamanic cosmology, and the role of spirit helpers in traveling and communicating with the worlds beyond. After examples of earlier syncretisms and the disconnected transmission of shamanic knowledge due to anti-shamanic campaigns in the Soviet era, the Czech photographer Stanislav Krupar presents images of revitalized shamanic performances in Tuva in a slide show, while recordings of modern shamanistic rock music can be heard at a listening station.

As the shamanic ritual was crucial for the shaman's success, he or she had to be an excellent performer in front of the members of the community. Instead of showing (fake) scenarios of "real" shamanic séances that might only work in the proper natural environment of Siberia, a unique multimedia installation creates an interpretive experience through old and new technology. "The Shaman's Journey," created by anthropologist and media artist Thomas Ross Miller (Curatorial Consulting, New York) with the assistance of video producer Craig Campbell