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## **Culture of Tuva and its Investigators (S.I. Vainshtein)**

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*The article is devoted to the creative and scientific work of Sevyan Izrailevich Vainshtein who dedicated more than fifty years of his life to the investigation of the history of Tuvan culture. Given in the article is the survey of the problems studied by S.I. Vainshtein. The author emphasizes the necessity of an integrated study of folk culture phenomena in a tight interrelation of all its components and parts, which requires special qualifications of the scholars committed to have a large interdisciplinary knowledge.*

*Keywords: Ethnography, musical culture, shamanic rituals, archeology, history of the culture of Tuva.*

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The article is devoted to the creative work of professor Sevyan Izrailevich Vainshtein who dedicated fifty years of his life to the investigation of the history of culture of Tuva. The turn of attention of present-day scholars to the investigations made by their predecessors and the conceptualization of their experience and the heritage they left behind them is now becoming more and more topical. His Holiness Dalai-Lama the Fourteenth said: «The nation who wants to have a future must base itself upon its own history, language and culture».

Now, the time is ripe to conceptualize not only the history but also the works of the scholars who made a great contribution in the investigation and preservation of the culture of people.

The works of S.I. Vainshtein are of special interest to us because they convey a vivid conversational intonation of the scholar. The

last years of his life, S.I. Vainshtein expressed many ideas in an oral form by taking part in almost all of scientific forums held both in Russia and abroad. The preserved shorthand reports therethrough represent an integral part of his academic heritage.

Sevyan Izrailevich Vainshtein was born in 1926 in the family of a professor of philosophy I. Ya. Vainshtein who was subjected to repression in 1936 and shot in 1938 (exonerated afterwards). His mother, F.I. Litvin, was a French and German teacher. This information was obtained in due time from S. I. Vainshtein's mother. I interviewed her when she was in her advanced age. S. I. Vainshtein's assisting wife, Alevtina Nikiforovna Petrova, a piano teacher in a Moscow school married him in Tuva. All the written works of S. I. Vainshtein passed through her hands. She helped him edit and type them.

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In 1954, Sevyan Izrailevich Vainshtein entered the Moscow State University. It is in there that he received basic knowledge in humanities that formed the basis for an integrated comprehension of culture including ethnography and archeology. It is important to note that it is in Moscow State University that all the breadth of his investigator's nature developed. He did not restrict himself in the study of culture of one people but got interested in the history, ethnography and religion of different peoples of the world. During his studies in the Moscow State University, Sevyan Vainshtein also attended a number of courses in the department of archeology including the course on the methods of the carrying out of excavations.

After the graduation of history department in the specialty ethnography he was sent in Tuva in 1950. He was appointed to be the acting director of Tuva National Museum in Kyzyl (the museum has celebrated its eightieth anniversary in 2009).

Since the end of 1953, S.I. Vainshtein worked in Tuvan Scientific-Research Institute as a senior academic officer. When meeting me he always warmly remembered his young years spent in Tuva. He remembered with love his colleagues M.B. Kenin-Lopsan, V.A. Dubrovsky, I. Yu. Aranchyn, M.D. Biche-ool, N.A. Serdobov, M.Kh. Mangnai-ool and other Tuvan scholars.

Since he had received a versatile fundamental education and was a broad-minded person who combined practical work with theoretical conceptualization of material, S.I. Vainshtein managed to lay foundations for various investigative research directions and to become one of the founders of Soviet ethnography. S.I. Vainshtein belonged to the category of scholars who, knowing the works of his predecessors, perceive their ideas not dogmatically but inventively. Continuing academic traditions of Soviet ethnography, he was not afraid of arguing his ideas even with oracles in this field.

His erudition and encyclopedic knowledge gave him a feeling of inner freedom and enabled him to debate creatively with his predecessors. The issues, he dealt with throughout his life, were quite broad and based on the ethnic material. Discussed in the article will be only published academic works of the scholar.

S.I. Vainshtein believed that any researcher must begin his investigation with a clear-cut identification of the object to be investigated. He was one of the first researchers who asserted the necessity of an integrated study of folk culture phenomena in a tight interrelation of all its components and parts, which requires special qualifications of the scholars committed to have a large interdisciplinary knowledge. For example, he told the author of the article that theoretically any researcher involved in music or folklore studies must be professionally skilled in ethnography, choreography and philology.

As we know, S.I. Vainshtein became interested in Tuva as early as the middle of the last century. His publications on Tuva allow us to get acquainted with unique culture of Tuva and its rich historical heritage. Archeological findings by S.I. Vainshtein made it possible to establish that mammoth hunters had lived in Tuva as early as Stone Age. His speculation that in Scythian time, i.e. more than 2,500 years ago, the steppes of Tuva were populated by early nomads is corroborated by present-day archeologists K. Chugunov, Vagner, V. Semenov and M. Kulinovkaya who found in Tuva amazing artifacts which date back exactly to that period of time.

Over three decades, S.I. Vainshtein carried out archeological excavations not only in Tuva but also in Khakasia, Mongolia, and among Tofalars. One of such expeditions – currently famous fortress Por-Bazhyn which relates to the population of taiga territories of Eastern Sayan Mountains – Todzha. During repeated expeditions to Todzha, S.I. Vainshtein collected information

on shamans, reindeer herders, folkways and ritual practice of Todzha-Tuvans.

In 1956, S.I. Vainshtein defended Kandidat dissertation. Every scholar knows that research work requires much time and energy in order to carry out field work and collect necessary data. That is why it is only fifteen years later in 1969 that he defended doctoral dissertation.

The investigation of the history, ethnography, culture and art of the Tuvan people remained the main scientific interest of S.I. Vainshtein in more recent years too. His laborious work resulted in publication of six academic monographs translated abroad into English and German and about three hundred scientific articles on ethnography and archeology of Tuva, and history of Nomadism in Eurasia. For all this work he obtained honorable title of Honored Worker of Science. His publications were submitted for Russian Federation State Prize for remarkable contribution in the study of the issues of ethnology and anthropology.

According to recollections of Tuvan authors and scholars, S.I. Vainshtein was an approachable scholar. For example, Tuvan Scientific-Research Institute of Language, Literature and History Ondar Kish-Chalaaevich recalled: «I went on field trips with Sevyan Izrailevich many times. I had to cook and write Tuvan words at his dictation. It was always comfortable to work with him. Though he was from an aristocratic family he was never capricious and behaved equally with us. He never showed his superiority over people». People's Writer of Tuva Stepan Saryg-ool recalled: «Having bought presents, S.I. Vainshtein, in spite of all his awkwardness, used to mount a horse in his white trousers and go to see his informants. He used to eat anything what was offered him.». The prominent literary critic Anton Kavaevich Kalzan was full of admiration for him. According to A. K. Kalzan, the anecdotes told by Vainshtein deserved to be filed in an archive. M. B. Kenin-

Lopsan who is People's Writer of Tuva, doctor of history, holder of the title «Leaving Treasure of Shamanism» awarded by American Foundation for Shamanic Studies noted: «I knew only two people who never used State cars. They were ethnologist and ethnographer Sevyan Izrailevich Vainshtein and minister of culture of the Tuvan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic Matpa Sambuevich Khomushku who, in his black demi-overcoat, went by bicycle to solve the matters of national importance at highest level». Such warm recollections was written down from authors and scholars by the author of the article during the days of culture of the Republic of Tyva in Pii-Khem District in 1975.

In due time S.I. Vainshtein told me that he had recorded lots of information in old Tuva in Kyzyl. Here is one of such records. One day, when he stayed in Tuva, some Russians built a nice house with a hot-bath and a solid fence in Chuldum street. The Russians built a house there (he usually told stories with humor and it is almost impossible to convey the way he told them) and went to sleep. Suddenly, they heard someone beating the drum and dancing. They went out – there was nobody. The following night they went to sleep again. And again someone was beating the drum and dancing. This happened every night again and again. Then the Russians disassembled the house and moved to another place. It turned out that the ones who beat the drum and danced were the spirits of the shamans who had been shot at that place in times of repressions. 'All this happened long time ago. Since then I started to believe shamans', told Sevyan Izrailevich.

In Kungurtug he met a real shaman called Shonchur. The shaman had a stone face with a otherworldly smile. He lived in a small log hut. It looked so that it was hard to imagine it had been built by a human being. When we asked him to show us his shamanizing in the local club, as there was much room in it, the shaman

Shonchur replied very seriously: «The shamans never shamanize where there are many people, especially on stage. It is a sin. The shaman can see his connections with the other world. Nobody knows when exactly the spirits appear. It is believed that in ancient pagan times a cry of a shaman could wake the spirits up. If a shaman begins shamanizing on stage the people will be badly hit: they will begin falling and stumbling. To my question how they will begin stumbling, he replied, «*araga darylaar*» (which literally means ‘to drink alcohol and go mad’). How can it be possible to begin shamanizing without any visible reason? I shall appeal to something, right? I’m able to find the reason of your illness, to heal you, to burn it in public and to call spirits to help me. The rule of any shaman is connected with a definite time of the year. How can I know whether you open yourself for the spring, fall, awaking nature, changes or whether you probably free yourself from something needless. You may have taken someone’s precious thing with this person’s energy». He got angry and said that anything could happen. «The spirits of the dead relatives of the people sitting in the club can appear, especially when the energy is in stagnation. It is possible to call the spirits but one must know how to send them back or, otherwise, they will stick around people. It is not without reason people say: ‘*Bo cheer eelig*’ – ‘There is a house-spirit somewhere here’. This is how the spirits of dead people get lost among their relatives and begin eating away all of them. My shamanizing may lead me somewhere and I shall faint. May be, ‘*Burgan bashkydan dileer*’ – ‘I will have to ask forgiveness from deities’, so shaman Shonchur said. According to S.I. Vainshtein’s story, this shaman cured him when he was ill with **peri-peri illness**.

One day, Sevyan Izrailevich asked me to notate Shonchur’s shamanizing. Sevyan Izrailevich was very afraid of the sounds of

Shonchur’s shamanizing and, as it took me some time to do the notation, he constantly hurried me and asked when I was going to finish notating. «Zoya, the shaman Shonchur did not allow me to notate his shamanizing. I don’t feel well. His spirit may be flying over me» – so S.I. Vainshtein said.

It is my opinion that the recollections of Tuvan authors and scholars and my records about S.I. Vainshtein allow us to realize all the entire spectrum of his interests and revitalize S.I. Vainshtein’s personality and his vivid intonation.

As a musician and artist, he also collected musical folklore of the Tuvans. In collecting Tuvan musical folklore, he tried to learn how to play the Tuvan musical instruments and especially to perform Tuvan throat-singing. He was fascinated by traditional Tuvan throat-singing skillfully performed by talented folk singers. His field work aimed to collect musical folklore of the Tuvans resulted in the publication of the article on Tuvan throat-singing entitled *A Musical Phenomenon Born in the Steppes* in the journal «Soviet Ethnography» in 1980. In the article S.I. Vainshtein puts forward a hypothesis about the time and place of the formation of Tuvan throat-singing. He dates it back no later than the first millennium AD (Vainshtein, 1980, p. 62). He also collected material about Tuvan traditional instruments during his field work in Todzha. This material was published in his monograph *The Todzha-Tuvans* (Vainshtein, 1961) at a later time. A variety of materials about arts and crafts of the Todzha-Tuvans collected by S.I. Vainshtein were published in the monographs *Folk Art of Tuva*, *Nomads of Central Asia*, *Mysterious Tuva*, *The Completion of the Formation of the Tuvan Ethnos*, and his other foreign publications. S.I. Vainshtein wrote a large number of articles dedicated to the problems of the origins of reindeer herding in Eurasia published in the journal «Soviet Ethnography».

When he became the senior academic worker in the Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR he became a member of the editorial staff of the periodical journal «Soviet Ethnography» published by the Institute of Ethnography. At the same time, he did not stop his teaching work and supervised the training of scientific personnel on history and ethnography. In 1970, S.I. Vainshtein was elected professor of Moscow State University named after M.V. Lomonosov and over some years he lectured on ethnography of the peoples of the South Siberia at the department of history. Though he did not lecture in the last years of his life, his teaching activities continued in the form of scientific consultations for ethnographers and archeologists from Moscow and specialists from the regions and republics of the USSR including those from Tuva.

His field and research work was aimed to comparative historical study of the ethnography of Tuva and neighboring peoples (the Ket, Tofa, Khakass, Mongol, Buriat, and Altai peoples) at later period as well. Thus, in investigating Tuva, he took part in the writing two volumes of *History of Tuva* in collaboration with the scholars from Tuvan Institute for Humanities Research.

From 1960s to 1980s, S.I. Vainshtein carried out stationary work on collection and record of ethnographic materials connected to Tuva: folk songs, shamanic rituals, traditional instrumental music. All those who visited Vainshtein in Moscow (people from Tuva often visited him, someone even stayed for some time there), probably, noticed that one wall of his apartment was hung with pictures dedicated to Tuva (as an artist, he painted many pictures about Tuva). He had a large number of cassettes and CDs containing Tuvan music. He usually said: 'My little unknown Tuva'. He always said to everybody: «If you have never been to Tuva you did not see Russia».

Here is one of S.I. Vainshtein's recollections about Tuva: « One must see Tuva with eyes of an ethnographer or archeologist. The Tuvans are warm-hearted, kind and sentimental people. When I was in Tuva I purposefully chose quiet isolated places to go because all I wanted was to meet ordinary people and observe their unhurried life. The pleasure to communicate with these people was the most important thing for me in my trips around Tuva. Whenever I came I was offered tea and meat. The Tuvans did not drink alcohol except *araka*. There was everything when I worked in Tuva. The Tuvans never locked their doors because nobody stole. They closed the doors of their dwellings just with a wood chip though inside there were good saddles with ornaments, silver bridles and adornments and copperware. I always noticed that the Tuvans had good and solid dishes. In summer-time they kept dairy products in birch-bark vessels. That is why milk was protected from microbes in summer-time. In addition, milk was boiled right after the milking and only after that it was given to children. When I traveled around Tuva in winter I saw little girls whose cheeks were as red as apples. This is probably because of milk, I thought. And now they write such cock-and-bull stories about Tuva in the internet that I cannot believe my eyes. Isn't it civilization that influenced people so badly?», asked S.I. Vainshtein.

In recent years, the name of S.I. Vainshtein as a prominent ethnographer gained a worldwide recognition. He was often invited abroad to participate in international scientific forums. Thus, from 1987 to 1989 he worked in Japan and different states of the USA with the exhibition «Nomadic Peoples of Eurasia». He also visited England, France, China and other countries. He participated in academic events organized by Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Sweden Royal Academy. Along with this, S.I.

Vainshtein delivered lectures on ethnography of the people of Siberia in Stockholm in which he dedicated much time to traditional culture of the Tuvans. In 2008, the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of Russian Academy of Sciences solemnly celebrated eightieth birthday of S.I. Vainshtein. For all his scientifically-practical activities he was awarded N.N. Miklukho-Maklai Prize of the Russian Academy of Sciences for remarkable contribution in the study of the issues of ethnology and anthropology.

In conclusion I would like to say that I feel privileged and blessed to have worked with such coryphaeus as Sevyan Izrailevich Vainshtein, Alexander Danilovich Grach, Yury Luduzhapovich Aranchyn, Vera Pavlovna Dyakonova, Dorug-ool Aldyn-oolovich Mongush, Mongush Dopchunovich Biche-ool, Zoya Borandaevna Chadamba, Nikolai Alekseevich Serdobov, Boris Isakovich Tatarintsev, Mongush Khurgul-oolovich Magnnai-ool and many other investigators who encourage all their successors to continue the investigations they began.

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## Культура Тувы и ее исследователи (С.И. Вайнштейн)

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*Статья о творчестве профессора Севяна Израйлевича Вайнштейна, который посвятил полвека своей жизни изучению истории культуры Тувы. Дается обзор научной проблематики исследований С.И. Вайнштейна, подчеркивается необходимость комплексного исследования явлений народной культуры в тесной взаимосвязи всех составляющих его компонентов, что требует особой квалификации ученых, обязанных обладать знаниями в смежных областях науки.*

*Ключевые слова: этнография, музыкальная культура, шаманские обряды, археология, история культуры Тувы*

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