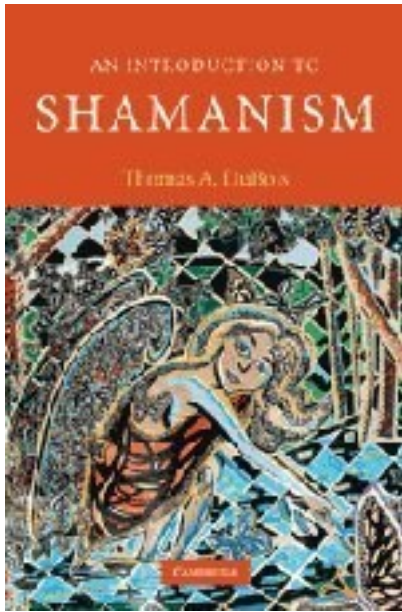


An Introduction to Shamanism



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Shamans are an integral part of communal religious traditions, professionals who make use of personal supernatural experiences, especially trance, as a resource for the wider community's physical and spiritual well-being. This Introduction surveys research on the topic of shamanism around the world, detailing the archaeology and earliest development of shamanic traditions as well as their scientific 'discovery' in the context of eighteenth and nineteenth century colonization in Siberia, the Americas, and Asia. It explores the beliefs and rituals typical of shamanic traditions, as well as the roles of shamans within their communities. It also surveys the variety of techniques used by shamans cross-culturally, including music, entheogens, material culture and verbal performance. The final chapters examine attempts to suppress or eradicate shamanic traditions, the revitalization of shamanism in postcolonial situations, and the development of new forms of shamanism within new cultural and social contexts.

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目录:

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