

“Ata Zhol” in Kazakhstan: Spiritual Revival through Neo-Shamanism

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ABSTRACT This paper explores “Ata Zhol,” a spiritual trend. Shamans (*sunkars* and *akkus*) have been mediators between disappointed spirits (*aruaks*) and people. They have given a blessing (*bata*) from a spirit to a person, have healed and brought people to sacred places. Sufis established a tradition of going on trips to sacred places. While Sufis were spreading Islam, they accepted ancestor worship of nomads, although Arabian Islam denies ancestor worship. Thus, shamans have been involved in the revival of Folk Islam, Kazakh Islam or Sufi Islam. Shamans of the “Ata Zhol” are not traditional shamans (*baksy*). In contrast to traditional shamans, they are not connected with the lower level of spirits (water, woods, jins or *Albasty*). They can give *bata*, keeping clarity of mind (not faint and do not roll eyes). In addition, there is a revival of spiritism at a personal level, because participants cannot deny all the words of shamans.