



A Journey in Southern Siberia

Jeremiah Curtin

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Jeremiah Curtin, writer, polyglot, ethnographer and folklorist, travelled in 1900 to central Siberia to study the religion and folklore of the Buryat people. The Buryats are one branch of the Mongols, who at one point conquered a large swath of Asia, Europe and India. Their home is around Lake Baikal in central Siberia. The first third of this book is a travelogue which describes Curtin's Siberian journey; this is a fascinating glimpse at Tsarist Siberia just before the Revolution. The last two-thirds of the book is an extraordinary record of the mythology of the Buryats. The lore is of great interest, resembling in its fluid, dreamlike narrative the Native American tales. There are many elements found elsewhere through Asia and Europe such as epic horses (and horse sacrifices), battles with giants, a World-mountain and 'the water of life', (see The Epic of Gilgamesh). There are also unique elements such as heroes with oracular books embedded in their bodies.

This one of the last of Curtin's books, published after his death in 1906. Etexts of the full text of other books by Curtin at this site are Myths and Folk-lore of Ireland, Tales of the Fairies and of the Ghost World and Creation Myths of Primitive America.

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