

**February 19, 2013**

## **Reindeer People Discussion**

It seems like biology AND culture affect the reindeer domestication process:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2593925/?tool=pmcentrez&rendertype=abstract>

For fun, type “reindeer domestication” into Summon on the library home page...



Refreshing reading

Why are reindeer so immediate in Eveny lifestyle

- Eveny vs Native Americans (Great Plains)
- animals as a religious symbol
- Animal is center of culture- become dependant on it

Do people use the animals? Or do animals (reindeer) open up environments to people?

Eveny had domesticated reindeer way before the Soviets.....

- they have lived with reindeer for a very long time
- domesticated for at least 3000 years (Vitebsky)

Are reindeer an excellent animal for domestication?

- wild reindeer can just come in and the domestic reindeer will flock away with them
- many different uses

Why/how did the Eveny arise?

climate warms and circumpolar people follow the reindeer north

Reindeer make it possible to go into freezing Russian wilderness  
-difficult environment to survive in

Issue of trust and mutual benefits with people and reindeer

Different ideas about logic

Eveny religious beliefs vs Christian religious beliefs  
-religious beliefs not rational- premise of religion  
-separation between you and the deity

Religion morphs to fit circumstances- forced to fit the situation  
-bears can mean different things for example

Relationship starts as predator prey and then evolves into what it is now

Sahka vs Eveny

Sahka are turkic Eveny are Tungus (both in the Altai family of languages)  
Sahka are horse people, Eveny use reindeer

Why do Soviets want to rid nomadic way of life?

-communism very secular, no belief in god  
-shamanism is backward in Soviet minds  
-modernizing state needs to keep religion out because it is politically powerful

Why do reindeer fly?

-origins- life brought to earth from somewhere else (aliens)  
-many things come out of the sky in myth (sun, rain, stars, birds)  
- different view than Europeans "dome" idea; Eveny have sense of "space"

Why is reindeer herding regulated?

-money? power? economic decision? modernization  
-weird for Eveny people to see reindeer as property

Communism ideas

-Animal Farm  
-Crime and Punishment -- Raskolnikov  
-confesses sins to ground rather than sky  
Siberia- go for redemption

The end Reindeer people was really the only way to survive in the north- ties to Diamond

-inequality exists. why? no one "better" than others just lucky in their environment

Are reindeer fundamentally different somehow?

Are there other domestic animals that have this significance?

Cows, donkeys, horses

Reindeer used for a lot more food and milk

Religion, Santa Claus, Christmas

Mythology

-Norse Myth and ties to Russians

-Russians are vikings too

Animal symbolism in Eveny people and ties to religion

-why is there so much in their culture?

-non-quantifiable difference between humans and animals

What are genetic differences between domesticates and wild reindeer?

-not really any genotypic differences but do see different phenotypes

-is there just a range of temperaments throughout the population

Unpredictability of animals and people

-sometimes a tame animal with just attack unpredictably

Why do Eveny hate wolves?

-they have dogs already

-wolves very wasteful

-wolves are competitors and are out to get the prey

Who are modern day wolves? (bar tender)

greedy predatory person

-fossil fuel companies, wall street

Destruction of Alcohol on the Eveny people (and native americans)

Why?

-start to lose reindeer and try to fill the gap?

-no previous experience of alcohol, trying to keep up with Russians

-was it a deliberate negative introduction (maybe not as malevolent as small pox blankets)

-started with fur trade

“walking to a party easier than walking back from a party”

## Bayanay

- what do they think Bayanay thinks of killing reindeer
- cycle of souls, recycled
- ties to karma
- more of a force than a conscious being?

### **-Bill's post, Destiny, Fate**

- are we actors in a play or do we have free will
- does an animal "taking the bullet" alter fate or is that fate?
- is fate rigid or malleable?
- are people just more inclined to certain things or is it just fate
- reckless driver killed in a car crash. Is that fate or was it just what was coming to you?  
does the same go for a soccer mom?
- How you get to the end goal is up in the air but the end goal is already decided for you
- Christ takes a bullet for everyone, reindeer does it for an Every person
- Can nature change fate?
- if one small thing changes what is the long term effect?
- Maybe it isn't that someone has to die but something bad just has to happen around you
- Different definitions of destiny

## **Chapter on dreams**

Are these dreams about animals they have because they are just so close to reindeer and other animals?

## **How dogs dream: Amazonian natures and the politics of transspecies engagement**

1. EDUARDO KOHN

### **American Ethnologist**

[Volume 34, Issue 1](#), pages 3–24, February 2007

Under the rubric of an "anthropology of life," I call for expanding the reach of ethnography beyond the boundaries of the human. Drawing on research among the Upper Amazonian Runa and focusing, for heuristic purposes, on a particular ethnological conundrum concerning how to interpret the dreams dogs have, I examine the relationships, both intimate and fraught, that the Runa have with other lifeforms. Analytical frameworks that fashion their tools from what is unique to humans (language, culture, society, and history) or, alternatively, what humans are commonly supposed to share with animals are inadequate to this task. By contrast, I turn to an embodied and emergentist understanding of semiosis—one that treats sign processes as inherent to life

and not just restricted to humans—as well as to an appreciation for Amazonian preoccupations with inhabiting the points of view of nonhuman selves, to move anthropology beyond “the human,” both as analytic and as bounded object of study.

Lucid dreams

-ability to control outcomes of dreams and then for Every dreams decide fate

Dreams are very powerful

-create fears

-forgetting things, anxiety

For next time:

How the Dog Became the Dog, pp 17-64.