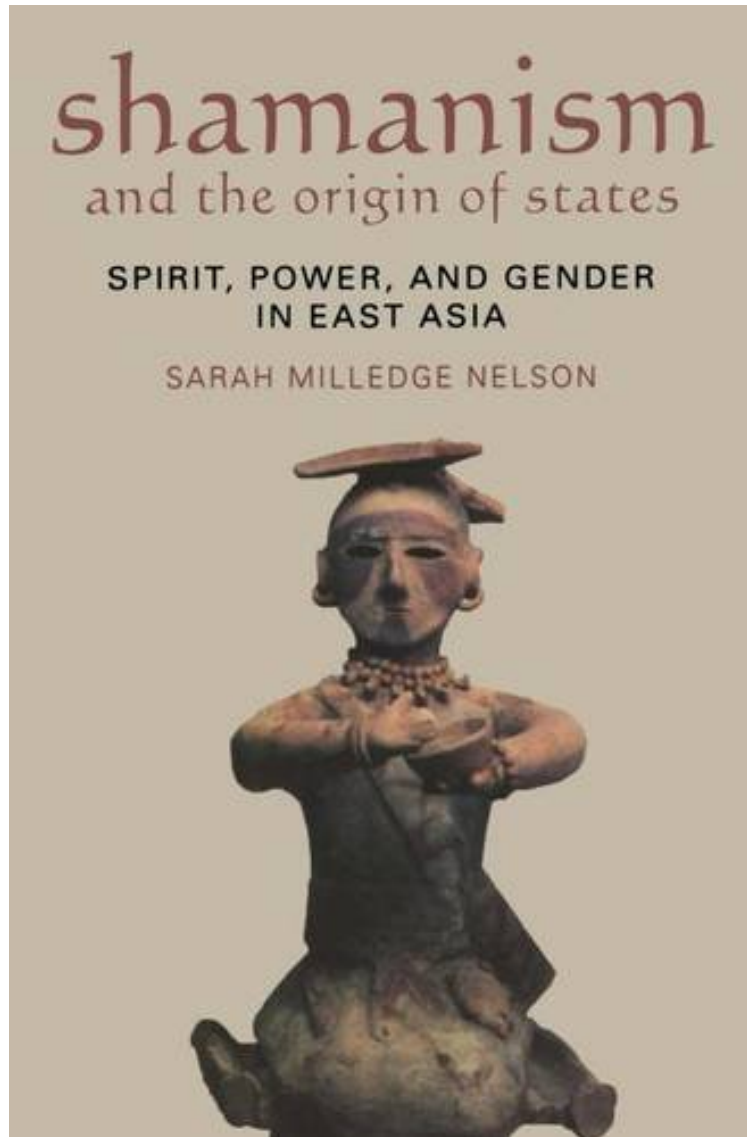


Shamanism and the Origin of States: Spirit, Power, and Gender in East Asia

Sarah Milledge Nelson

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Sarah Milledge Nelson : Shamanism and the Origin of States: Spirit, Power, and Gender in East Asia before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Shamanism and the Origin of States: Spirit, Power, and Gender in East Asia:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. In depth By Teresa H. Garcia I appreciated the depth that went into

this book, and the pictures that were included. This book took me a while to get through, to be sure that I absorbed and processed all the information accurately. I did use it for reference material in one of my recent papers, which proved very helpful to me given the specialty of some of my studies. I found lots of other references in this book as well, which further helped my studies.

Sarah Milledge Nelson's bold thesis is that the development of states in East Asia (China, Japan, Korea) was an outgrowth of the leadership in smaller communities guided by shamans. Using a mixture of historical documents, mythology, archaeological data, and ethnographic studies of contemporary shamans, she builds a case for shamans being the driving force behind the blossoming of complex societies. More interesting, shamans in East Asia are generally women, who used their access to the spirit world to take leadership roles. This work challenges traditional interpretations of the growth of Asian states, which is overlaid with later Confucian notions of gender roles. Written at a level accessible for undergraduates, this concise work will be fascinating reading for those interested in East Asian archaeology, politics, and society; in gender roles, and in shamanism.

"In this book Sarah Milledge Nelson suggests that shamanism was a significant building block for state formation in East Asia, and that women, who often had the shamanistic access to the spirit world, played an important role in this process. She shows how this would have been the case, by systematically going through archaeological, historical and ethnographic records of various regions of East Asia and surrounding areas, from Palaeolithic through early historic times, unravelling and rewinding various strands of mythological, ideological, documentary, and simply anthropological. Very convincingly, [Nelson] demonstrates the fun and value of an alternative approach to East Asian archaeology." Fumiko Ikawa-Smith, McGill University

From the Inside Flap: Sarah Milledge Nelson explores a bold thesis that the development of states in East Asia (China, Japan, Korea) was an outgrowth of the leadership in smaller communities guided by shamans.

About the Author: Sarah Milledge Nelson is John Evans Professor of Archaeology at the University of Denver. She is a specialist in cultural development, the origins of agriculture, and gender in the ancient world. Recent books include *The Archaeology of Korea* (1993), *The Archaeology of Northeast China* (ed.) (1995), *Handbook of Gender and Archaeology* (2005), and two editions of the textbook *Gender in Archaeology* (1997/2004), which won the Choice Outstanding Academic Book Award.