

Panel 2: Mongolian Medicine

Panel Description: outstanding

Panel Organiser: to be announced

Participants and abstracts

2.01 Healing Acts as Conversion Narratives in Early Mongolian Religious Histories

Matthew King

In the historical records of the second, more consequential diffusion of Buddhism into Mongol lands from Tibet in the 16th and 17th century, there is a re-occurring narrative in which a Buddhist master ritually cures the malady of a particular khan. These healing dramas are determining factors in the eventual acceptance of Buddhism by the leader in question (and by extension his people), having triumphed over traditions that failed to cure (such as Daoism, Confucianism or shamanism), or over competing Buddhist sects. In these very important and widely recorded narratives, it is foremost the healing abilities of these figures that demonstrate their spiritual power and accomplishment, over and above other ritual or miraculous activity. In the early periods of Mongolian Buddhism, we see

a similar pattern in hagiographies and religious histories that describe the life and activities of Sakya Pandita and Phags pa, the third Dalai Lama Sonam Gyatso, the first Khalkha Jebdzundamba Khutugtu, Zaya Pandita, the fifth Dalai Lama and so on. In source histories like Saghan Sechen's Precious Summary, Lubsangdanzin's

Golden Summary, Dharmatala's Rosary of White Lotuses, Zawa Damdin's Golden Annals, as well as relevant hagiographies, these healing rituals are described in some detail. Some Buddhist figures command ritual healing techniques outside of the Buddhist tradition, such as Chinese soothsaying or shamanist scapulimancy. This paper will survey the prevalence of these narratives in this period of Mongolian Buddhist history and investigate their diverse healing ritual content, as well as analyze how the diseased body of the khan and its healing are linked to the process of religious conversion and social change.

2.02 Shamanic Healers in Modern Inner Mongolia

Saijirhu Buyantsuglaa

Shamanism has revived with its crisis of existence in both rural and urban areas of eastern Inner Mongolia in the 21st century. With the influence of both Tibetan Buddhism and modernization in Mongolian areas, how do shamans survive in the regions? In order to answer this question, I have done my field research for several years to investigate shamans' activities in eastern Inner Mongolia.

In this article, I will focus on some surviving elements of shamanic activities which have been related to the treating of bodily suffering and soul illness. The first, as a fortuneteller, shaman cures clients' both trouble and suffering. The second, as a healer, shaman holds some kinds of rituals to heal clients' illness.

Although the use of shamanic healing has gradually declined in the face of Tibetan Buddhism, shamanic healers have adapted their practices in line with changes in Mongolian society and the culture. In regard to the medical pluralism in Inner Mongolia, there are Mongolian medicine, Chinese medicine, and Western medicine in this region. From another perspective, however, another medical system, paralleled with above-mentioned medicine, has existed with the Mongols as a part of their

indigenous culture. There are clients or patients who have supported this system through their belief in the indigenous religious culture.