

MONGOLIAN SHAMANISM, A FLUID RELIGIOUS PHENOMENON OR ANACADEMIC CONSTRUCTION?

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Mongolian Shamanism, which went from a state religion in medieval times to a marginalized religious alternative to the militant Buddhism imposed by the aristocracy, finished by sharing the latter's fate of being banned under the socialist regime. Shamanic rituals were practiced secretly, alongside and sometimes in syncretism with Buddhist ones. After 1990, it came back to public life as an expression of the Mongolian national identity, as well as a symbolical tool for the Mongolians in search of their historical roots and the connection to their ancestors. With a tradition of 'lurking in the shadows' in the border regions of Buryatia and around Khovsgol Lake, when it reached the capital it mostly broke off with its traditional lineages and practices, metamorphing, syncretizing and multiplying to the point of becoming a religious phenomenon so heterogeneous and widespread that, nowadays, it has been described as an 'epidemic'. Furthermore, the commonly used phrase "*Boo boonoor ondoo boolodog*", meaning that each shaman shamanizes in a different way, captures the fluidity of urban shamanism and the difficulty of defining its practices and doctrine. Shamans have become a natural part of the Mongolian society. There are TV programs, magazines and shops dedicated to them, with an estimated 20 to 30 thousand shamans (around 1% of the Mongolian population) in 2017. I present here the cases of an accomplished shaman and that of a shaman apprentice with data obtained through participant observation and interviews. Last, but not least, the results of the application of an Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale questionnaire are corroborated with religious belief and ritual participation in Mongolia.