

## **Healing Practices Regenerate Local Knowledge: The Revival of Mongolian Shamanism in China's Inner Mongolia**

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### **Abstract**

Shamanistic healing practices, including divination, have coexisted with other religious and medical practices in modern Inner Mongolia and China for many years. However, scholarly research has yet to investigate the effectiveness of shamanic healing and its physical and psychological benefits.

This paper discusses the practice of shamanic activities, including healing rituals, on the boundaries between the spiritual communities and the masses in Eastern Inner Mongolia, and how the contrasts between the perspectives of healers or practitioners and the lay people's more fluid understanding of the practices impact health, illness, and ethnic/cultural identity. Why is it that shamanistic healing is not included in any of the official healing systems, despite its importance as a health resource and as a factor in identity formation in Inner Mongolia.

This study will show that shamanistic healing is not included in the official healing systems due to several historical forces and geopolitical events, such as the invasion of exotic cultures and China's ban on religious activities during and after the 1940s, when land reform, socialist transformation policies, and the Cultural Revolution took hold in Inner Mongolia. In addition, the official recognition of Mongolian medicine as a national medicine in the 1960s left no room for other local healing practices, including shamanistic healing. I argue that the revitalization of shamanism during the decades since China has reformed and opened up is due, in part, to the suffering of both individuals and communities from cultural tensions, eco-cosmological crises, and lost traditions and the effectiveness of these practices in healing these wounds. Healing practices or rituals have continued to exist in this modernizing socialist state because of their effectiveness.

**Keywords:** *Healing practice, Local Knowledge, Shamanism, Inner Mongolia*

## 1. Introduction

Given the limited effectiveness of modern medicine, some people have sought healing for both physical and mental ailments through folk and traditional medicines, which have gradually become popular again in the modern world. In the case of Inner Mongolia, which is medically pluralistic, these folk and traditional medicines include shamanistic healing practices and rituals.

This paper discusses how folk healing and the initiation processes for a *böge* (male shaman or shaman) or *uduyan* (shamaness), *yasu bariyači* (bonesetter), and *üjgegeči* (diviner) have been practised on the border between shamanism and modern medicine in Eastern Inner Mongolia. This paper also analyzes why the number of shamans have increased in recent decades in the borderlands between the agricultural and nomadic cultures of Eastern Inner Mongolia.

Furthermore, this paper argues that the revitalization of shamanism is due to the suffering of both individuals and the community from cultural tensions, losing traditions, and identity crises in modern Inner Mongolia. The effectiveness of these healing practices or rituals is why they have survived in Inner Mongolia as the world has modernized.

## 2. Shamanism in Inner Mongolia

### 2.1. The Definition of Shamanism

After China's 1982 Constitution granted freedom of religion to all citizens,<sup>1</sup> shamanism revived in the Mongol communities in Eastern Inner Mongolia. Likewise, the numbers of shamans and scholars studying shamanism have also increased. The purpose of this chapter is to determine the definition and position of a "shaman" in Eastern Inner Mongolia and to discuss the interactions between shamanism and identity politics in the region. Then, this paper will position this understanding of the shaman within the framework of shamanism in the Mongolian region.

The term "shaman" originated from "saman," which indicates a kind of religious profession in the Tungusic language family of northeast Asia, and the religious practices mediated by shaman are called "shamanism" in English (Shirokogoroff, 1935; Harva, 1989). Therefore, early shamanism studies focused on the folk religions practiced among the people of northern Asia, especially among the Tungusic people. For example, Eliade said that "shamanism in the strict sense is pre-eminently a religious phenomenon of Siberia and Central Asia" (Eliade, 1964: 4). In the common sense of shamanism research, shamans are religious professionals who use trance techniques. Japanese scholars have stated that the term "shaman" originated from the Tungusic language family used by the people living in the wide

area ranging from the northeast of China to the northern Lena River area, the eastern Sea of Okhotsk, the western Yenisei River Basin, and from the south of Lake Baikal to northern Mongolia (Sasaki and Kamata, 1991: 24). Shamans are also found in a wide area of the Eurasian continent and in Africa, the Americas, Oceania, and the Arctic Circle. The subject of shamanism research has become wider now. This is because shaman or shamanistic practices exist in each part of the world.

In Inner Mongolia, especially in the eastern area of the Qorčın and Hölün Buyir regions studied by the author, *böge* (*böö*<sup>2</sup>) and *uduyan* (*udyan*<sup>3</sup>) act as religious professionals similar to shamans. The words “*böge mörgül*” (shaman prayer) and “*böge-yin šasin*” (religion of shaman) are equivalent to the English term “shamanism” and the Chinese words “wu” (巫) and “wushu” (巫術).

Given the wide geographic areas in which shamanism is practiced, the subject of shamanism research has become wider. The scope of shamanism research has expanded from a limited region centred on Siberia to a broader sense of shamanism, including similar phenomena existing in various parts of the world. The shaman has the ability to interact directly with gods and spirits and to gain supernatural abilities or play a religious role. This kind of shamanic ability is called the “technique of trance.” For example, shamanism research so far has focused on whether shamans have the technique of possession (Findeisen, 1977) or the technique of ecstasy (Eliade, 1964).

The first of these techniques is the possession type of trance. Findeisen pointed out that shamanism is a phenomenon involving the words and acts of priestly figures possessed by spirits. In his argument, direct contact and interaction between the spiritual world and the human world are enabled through the technique of possession, through which the spirit possesses the shaman and gradually gives him supernatural abilities to play the role of shamanism in the society (Findeisen, 1977: 18).

The second of these techniques is that of ecstasy. In North Asia, shamans only use the ecstasy type of trance. According to Eliade, ecstasy involves the shaman's soul leaving his body, rising to heaven, and interacting with the supernatural world during his trance (Eliade, 1964: 3-13). Although Eliade's claim requires a standard definition of shamanism and shaman, the scholars of shamanism research have challenged his definition in favour of one that also incorporates the possession technique.

For example, Japanese scholar Hagiwara, who conducted his field work for shamanism in the northeastern region of China in 1996, questioned Eliade's theory of ecstasy since he did not find any shaman using the technique of ecstasy among the peoples of Evenki, Dagur, Manchu and Orochon. However, as he pointed out, shamans among these peoples did use the technique of possession (Hagiwara, 1997: 105-124). Certainly, there are

many cases in which a person plays the role of shaman when he enters into a state of possession.

The technique of ecstasy, where the soul of a shaman leaves his body and travels to the spirit world, and the technique of possession, where a spirit or spiritual existence possesses a shaman, have been discussed previously in shamanism studies. Such as Harva pointed out long before these studies that the trance phenomenon in shamanism involves two techniques: ecstasy and possession (Harva, 1989: 478). Japanese anthropologist Sasaki also referred to the anthropological literature on the trance phenomenon when describing the techniques of ecstasy and possession in shamanism and pointed out that the trance phenomenon in shamanism includes both ecstasy and possession (Sasaki, 1980: 34-35). Thus, the phrase “phenomenon of trance” in current studies of shamanism should include two kinds of meanings.

The definitions of “shaman” and “shamanism” are considered to be as follows. A shaman is a religious professional who offers oracles (pontifications), prophecies, the healing of illness, and rituals through direct interactions with gods or spirits. In addition, shamans can gain supernatural abilities by going into a trance state and making direct contact with gods or spirits. Shamanism is a religious practice involving a worldview centred on shamans, rituals, believers and client groups. However, despite these general definitions, how locals define “shaman” is important, and anthropologists need to correctly explain the shaman’s trance state from an etic perspective based on local knowledge. For example, the people in the region of the author’s field work define “*böge*” (shaman or male shaman) and “*uduyan*” (female shaman) as religious professionals who perform rituals in shamanistic conventions using trance and give different names to different functions of the shaman, such as “*andai böge*” and “*bariyaçi böge*.” The author will discuss these terms a little later in this article.

In this study, the author will emphasize the local definitions and knowledge of shamanism. According to the author’s field work in the Qorčın and Hölün Buyir regions in Eastern Inner Mongolia, most shamans are possession-type shamanic practitioners. It is also common for Mongols to describe a shaman’s entry into the trance state during a ritual with the modern Mongolian word “*orusıqu*,”<sup>24</sup> which means possessing the shaman with an ancestral spirit. Therefore, in this study, shamanism is treated as a way of using the technique of possession, which is a state of trance entered into during rituals and shamanic practices.

## ***2.2. Shamanism in the Mongolian Region***

The Mongolian region considered in this study covers the regions in Russia, Mongolia and China where Mongolian ethnic minorities live. In the Mongolic world, there are three wide areas where different shamanistic practices have

developed based on cultural phenomena, as well as structural, historical and social changes. These three large areas are the residential regions of the well-known groups of ethnic Mongols of Buryat, Darhad and Qorčïn in the Mongolic world.

The first shamanism is that of the Darhad people, which has been practised among the ethnic Darhad in Mongolia for many centuries. It is also very influential in the shamanic society of contemporary Mongolia.<sup>5</sup> The second shamanism is that of the Buryat people, which has now been widely adopted by the Buryat Mongols living across the borderlands of the Buryat Republic of Russia, Mongolia and the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region of China.<sup>6</sup> The last shamanism is that of the Qorčïn people, which has mainly been revived and popularized among the Qorčïn Mongols in Eastern Inner Mongolia.<sup>7</sup> In addition, Bargu shamanism, Dagur shamanism, and Evenki shamanism have emerged in the Hölün Buyir region of Eastern Inner Mongolia.<sup>8</sup>

The complicated geopolitical changes that have occurred in the modern history of these Mongolian regions have brought great changes to the indigenous cultures shared by the Mongols and have caused different social problems in different regions. Shamanism is intertwined with many different social issues and reflects the characteristics and identity of the Mongolian people living in that region.

From the perspective of identity politics, the shaman, the religious professional, must protect his identity while performing rituals so that he can symbolize the community or group who are trying to survive within a changing social environment and political space. From a counter-narrative perspective, the social, economic, political, and cultural anxieties and uncertainties of ethnic minorities are often expressed as spiritual expressions in shamanism within multi-ethnic structured societies. In other words, the sense of crisis caused by the pressure or loss of individual or group identities is represented as a personal or group possession. Each region has differences in their perspective on the ideal way to deal with social problems, and their shamanism is practiced as a form of cultural nationalism in response to these problems. In short, as described by Fischer and Pleines, shamanism is a reflection of the ethnic, political, and socioeconomic identity crises in post-socialist societies (Fischer and Pleines, 2008: 11) that often occur in multi-ethnic societies. To solve the mental chaos, pain, and suffering experienced by individuals or societies due to anxiety or uncertainty, a shaman tries to “manage the crisis of identity” (Konagaya, 2013: 425-447] with various rituals or sacrifices that communicate with the spirits. For this reason, healing behaviours in shamanism are considered to be a way to maintain an identity that is being lost.

This article will focus on the healing practices of Eastern Inner Mongolian shamanism, which is a type of alternative medicine and survival tool used in the ethnic Mongol communities in China.

### 2.3. Shamanism in Inner Mongolia

Qorčın shamanism is typically practiced in the eastern part of the Qorčın region of Inner Mongolia. Shamans are also active among the Mongols living in the Hölün Buyir region. It may be said that both are in the same cultural sphere of the Mongols. However, even in these two areas, there is less and less cultural sharing, perhaps due to the social and cultural changes that have geopolitically occurred in the modern history of Inner Mongolia.

Qorčın Mongols have lived in a broad range of areas, including the city of Tongliao (formerly Jirim League) in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, adjacent to the city of Chifeng (formerly Ju Uda League), as part of the Hinggan League, in the Fuxin Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture of Liaoning Province, and in the South Gorkus Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture of Jilin Province.

Shamanism in the Qorčın region has long been known to involve hereditary shamans, such as *böge*, *uduyan*, *čayan eliye*<sup>9</sup>, and *qundan* or *qundun*.<sup>10</sup> In addition, syncretism has appeared in the Mongolian area, since Tibetan Buddhists allied with the Qing government to suppress Qorčın shamanism in the early Qing dynasty. As a result, shamans called “*laičing*,”<sup>11</sup> “*gürdem*,”<sup>12</sup> and “*čojjing*”<sup>13</sup> emerged who were culturally transformed and represented syncretism. Furthermore, according to their functions in rituals and therapeutic abilities, these shamans were classified as *domči*<sup>14</sup>, *tölgeči* or *üjegeči* (fortune tellers), *bariyači*<sup>15</sup>, and *andaiči*.<sup>16</sup> In addition, Mansang, one of the Inner Mongolian scholars, classified Qorčın shamans as *emči böge* (doctor shamans), *yasu bariyači böge* (bone-setting shamans), *tölgeči böge* (fortune teller shamans), *andai böge* (shamans who heal *andai*), and *demči böge* (magician shamans) based on their profession (Mansang, 1990: 197). Since the 1930s, shamanism has also been studied by Japanese and German scholars, such as Akamatsu and Akiba (1941) and Heissig (1944, 1980). In the second half of the 20th century, shamanism studies have also become popular across the world, particularly in China since the 1980s.

Qorčın shamanism has a common worldview with other forms of shamanism around the world, incorporating ideas about the sky as heaven, the earth as the human world, and the underworld. In addition, “everything has a soul” in the local shamanic world. Within such a worldview, humans also have souls, and their souls will not die even if their body dies. Thus, the Qorčın Mongols believe the heaven and earth, mountains and rivers, sun and moon, fire, *oboo*, and ancestors have spirits and worship those souls or spirits through rituals.

According to a study by Buyanbatu, shamans can perform rituals for sanctifying animals, rituals for *tengri* (also *tnгри*) worship, *oboo* sacrifices, rituals for calling the soul, fire festivals, and rituals for *šangsi modu* (the

deified old tree) in addition to initiation and healing rituals (Buyanbatu, 1985: 40-59). However, according to the author's fieldwork, some of these rituals have almost disappeared in the late half of the 20th century due to the semi-agricultural and semi-pastoral area of the Qorčïn region. It is also said that shamanism has been revived in the region, but what can be observed now are initiation rituals, healing rituals, *tengri* rituals, ancestor rituals, and *oboo* sacrifices, which are held in only some of the regions.

In the Qorčïn region, Qorčïn Mongols and ethnic Han Chinese live together. However, in the rural areas of the Hölün Buyir region, Buryat Mongols, Bargu Mongols, Dagurs, and Evenkis live together, and ethnic Han Chinese are concentrated in the urban areas. The Mongols who live in the Hölün Buyir region, which has a multi-ethnic social structure, have the characteristics of their own ethnic community, though the Mongols, Dagurs and Evenkis share some shamanistic beliefs and often work together. In other words, they may act alone or participate in various rituals collectively. According to the author's observations, the Mongolian, Dagur and Evenki shamans who participated in one client's initiation ritual all performed a similar ritual process of ancestral possession, though they interacted with the spirits in their own languages. However, after the ritual, the shamans communicated with each other in a common language of Mongolian or Chinese. In addition, the Mongolian master shaman accepted the disciples from the Dagur and Evenki, and the Dagur master shaman accepted the disciples from the Mongols and Evenki. Thus, in the modern society of the Hölün Buyir region, a kind of shamanistic inheritance can transcend ethnic boundaries culturally and socially. What is most interesting is that some shamanic communities will not allow this cross-border inheritance in some cases. For example, one of the Dagur shamans in the Hölün Buyir region did not accept a Buryat Mongol client who came as a disciple from the Buryat Republic of the Russian Federation to become an individual shaman.

As mentioned above, the shamanism practiced among Mongols with multiethnic identities is collaborative and has a lot in common across nomadic groups. Therefore, this study mainly uses the term "Hölün Buyir shamanism" or "shamanism in the Hölün Buyir region" to refer to all of the previously mentioned shamanisms.

The practitioners of shamanism in the Hölün Buyir region believe that all things in the universe have souls. Therefore, based on that view of the soul, the shamanic world believes that humans also have souls. Furthermore, the universe is divided into the upper world of heaven; the middle world of humans, animals, and plants; and the shadow world of dead souls and evil spirits. The human world is sandwiched between the two worlds and is helped by divine spirits or cursed by evil spirits. The shaman is the mediator between the three worlds.

The practitioners of shamanism in the Hölün Buyir region have various rituals to worship the *tengri*, *oboo* (the god of earth, especially the god of the mountain), the god of fire, animal spirits and ancestral spirits. In addition, some rituals, such as initiation rituals, rituals for sanctifying animals and healing rituals are held in what Turner describes as the liminality between human lives, the period from birth to death and give the participants new social status. Even the same ritual can follow different conventions, depending on the client.

The shamanism in the Hölün Buyir region is spatially sandwiched between Qorčın shamanism and Buryat shamanism and is culturally complex due to the multi-ethnic society in which it emerged. In addition, the influence of Chinese culture is reflected in its shamanistic practices, as in the Qorčın region, which is located within a marginalized space of Chinese culture.

### 3. Initiation Ritual as Shamanic Healing

#### 3.1. Shamanic Illness and Its Symptoms

The process of becoming a shaman involves an initial ecstatic experience and a lengthy period of training to gain command of what Eliade called the “techniques of ecstasy” (Eliade, 1964: 3-13). However, possession, another type of trance technique used during the early initial period of Inner Mongolian shamanism in which an ancestral spirit possesses a candidate unconsciously, can bring sickness, dreams, fainting fits, frights, lightning strikes, or car accidents to the candidate or his family members until the spirit is accepted consciously through an initiation ritual. Within shamanic studies, this condition is called “shamanic illness.” The locals in Eastern Inner Mongolia call it “*böge-yin ebedčın*” (illness of shaman) or “*sayudal-un ebedčın*,”<sup>17</sup> meaning that the initial blow constitutes a physical and psychological ordeal that sends the candidate into a non-routine state where he is absent or isolated from his society. Recurrently, in the case of Inner Mongolian shamanism, this spiritual crisis portends family suffering or community disorder through the individual’s physical and mental pains before a new social status is obtained in his community. The crisis is managed through a healing ritual treating the individual’s illness so that he can become an independent shaman. The social disorder is also resolved after the actor interacts with the spirit.

According to Walsh (1990: 105-108), in modern medicine or state-run traditional medicine, the illness, the “*sayudal-un ebedčın*”, is usually diagnosed after a patient shows symptoms of epilepsy, hysteria, or integration dysfunction syndrome. In contrast, Mongolian medicine diagnoses this sickness as heart disease, *žirüken-ü kei ebedčın*, or cardiac neurosis, *žirüken-ü*



*mederel-ün ebedčin*. Regardless, the more medicine the patient takes, the more his symptoms worsen, and the patient will be unable to control his symptoms when (s)he is attacked by the illness, according to the author's field work.

In the following section, I will analyze this shamanic healing process and spiritual interaction, especially in terms of the function of the patient, whose spiritual communication with his ancestor's spirit can bring effective healing. This process can also help an individual become a shaman in Inner Mongolian shamanism.

### **3.2. The Initiation Ritual Process**

The type of initiation ritual can be firstly observed in Qorčın shamanism. In most cases of Qorčın shamanism, the process of becoming a shaman includes experiencing the initial illness and practicing the initiation ritual leading to healing. The initiation rituals in which the client is possessed by the ancestral spirit are practiced almost every day under the instruction of a master shaman until the client becomes an independent shaman. Shamanic healing during the initiation process can be divided into two steps. The first step is the master shaman's diagnosis and healing ritual. The second and most important step is the healing of the client through a trance state during the ritual that lasts until the symptoms of the illness have disappeared (Saijirahu, 2012: 73-97). This ascetic practice is repeated day after day until the client becomes an independent shaman.

In the first step, the master shaman diagnoses the client's illness while he is in a trance condition in the ritual. In the second step, the client accepts the possession of the ancestral spirit. This step involves the self-treatment or group-treatment of the client (Saijirahu, 2012: 73-97). The client's possession is called "*qobčalaqu*"<sup>18</sup> in Mongolian, which refers to wearing a shaman's cloak, headdress, and footgear and holding a shaman drum and drumstick to summon and possess the spirit within a shaman group. Shamans believe that the client's suffering will be healed if the patient repeats the *qobčalaqu* process. After many incidents of possession and narratives<sup>19</sup>, the client's illness will be healed and finally he will become an independent shaman. The effects of these healing conditions are similar to the effects of the symbolic acts described by Lévi-Strauss in *Structural Anthropology* (Lévi-Strauss, 1963: 186-205).

The second is the case of Hölün Buyır shamanism. In the Hölün Buyır region, the cause of shamanic illness is unknown to modern medicine, but it is said to be caused by ancestral spirits mediated by the selected candidate. This illness is related to becoming a shaman, as it is believed that a human being suffering from this psychosomatic disorder will heal if the candidate becomes a shaman. If the sick person undergoes the initiation ritual by accepting the

possession of the ancestral spirit, the illness will be cured gradually. The ritual for becoming a shaman is called “*sitügen bosqaqu*” or “*böge yaryaqu*” and refers to an initiation ritual in which a master shaman invites an ancestral spirit to possess a disciple shaman. The shamanistic meaning of the term “*sitügen bosqaqu*” is to make the client’s ancestral spirit active in the human world. In other words, after the ancestral spirit possesses the client, the ritual gives shamanistic influence to the spirit in the relevant society. For that reason, a master shaman often warns his client that “if you are not possessed by ancestral spirit, your symptoms will worsen.” Then, the master teaches the disciple various performing skills to become a shaman, and the disciple recurrently enters a trance state and interacts with the ancestral spirit to cure the illness. The possessed initiator (disciple shaman) acts as an intermediary between the ancestral spirit and the descendent and conveys the intentions of the *tengri* to the human being. Therefore, the initiation ritual is an important event that can symbolize that the participant (disciple shaman) has entered the shamanistic world. The ancestral spirit finds his representative in the human world, is reborn to the earth through the new shaman, and performs shamanistic functions in the society of the newborn shaman.

The *sitügen bosqaqu* ritual begins when the client with the psychosomatic disorder visits a fortune teller or shaman to ask about the cause of his illness or his suffering. The practitioner then states that an ancestral spirit has possessed the client and points out the following:

The spirit of your ancestor is searching for his incarnate among his descendants to gain a *sayudal* (seat) in this human world. My *sitügen* (the spirit of the ancestor) told me that the spirit of your ancestor likes you, has selected you, and wants to possess you. So the spirit has made you sick. If you complete the *sitügen bosqaqu* (initiation) ritual, your illness will be cured.

In the second step of the initiation process, the client confirms which of his ancestors were shamans. After confirming the ancestral shaman, the client decides to join the shamanic group as a disciple and prepares for the initiation ritual. For example, the client must make money to pay for participating in the ritual, visit the master shaman frequently, and receive the shamanic training, which includes kneeling at the front of the altar in which the ancestral spirit of the master shaman is worshipped. During that part of the training, the master chants to the ancestral spirit to accept this disciple while beating a drum rhythmically. Then the date of the initiation ritual is decided by the fortune telling of the master shaman.

In the final step of the initiation ritual, the client’s illness is treated by the master shaman and the client himself. It is a very complicated process that begins with preparing the ritual site, setting up a *ger* (Mongolian yurt) and an altar to the north of the inside of the *ger* where the dolls of the ancestral spirits

can be placed, planting seven white birch trees<sup>20</sup> or nine white birch trees around the *ger* to symbolize the rebirth and reproduction of new shamans, and preparing three sheep as a sacrifice to the ancestral spirits and *tengri*. Next, the master shaman and the members of the master shaman's group are possessed in an orderly manner, and the ancestral spirits communicate with the audience through the possessed one and "diagnose" the illness of the clients or teach a lesson to his future generations. Finally, the master shaman trains the disciple shaman (client) on how to enter a trance state. The client beats the drum and chants the shamanic songs with the crowd to invite the *sitügen* to possess him. During the possession, the ancestral spirit of the client tries to communicate with the audience through the possessed client. During a client's first possession by an ancestral spirit, the client cannot be completely possessed. At the end of the ritual, all shamans will beat their drums and chant the shamanic songs to send their ancestral spirits. In addition, all the participants will celebrate the birth of the new shaman and chant "*qurui, qurui, qurui*<sup>21</sup>" repeated three times under the instruction of the master shaman to express their congratulations.

The initiation ritual practiced in the shamanism of the Hölün Buyir region is very symbolic. When the client accepts the possession of the ancestral spirit, his illness is cured symbolically.

#### **4. Shamanic Healing as Alternative Medicine**

At the end of the 20th century, China designated traditional medical practices, such as Chinese medicine, Tibetan medicine, Mongolian medicine, and Uyghur medicine, as orthodox medical systems. Ever since, under a state policy of "attaching equal importance to both Chinese and Western medicine," traditional medicine has coexisted with Western medicine in a pluralistic system and played an alternative and complementary role to clinical practice. However, Chinese academia has ignored the cultural importance of this medical practice in China. In the modernized world, Western scholars have marginalized traditional medicine as "alternative medicine." As a result, few scholars have considered the real significance and practical value of alternative medical care. In the Western world, any health care approach outside of Western medicine is classified as "complementary and alternative medicine" (CAM). This designation includes physical and spiritual regimens that achieve or promote health and vitality in the human body, such as Ayurveda medicine, traditional Chinese medicine, homeopathy, Chinese qigong, Indian yoga, and various food therapies or nutritional supplements. In addition, belief treatments and healing rituals in shamanism or Buddhism are part of alternative medicine. Thus, all medical systems other than Western medicine can be considered alternative medicines.

The American scholar Ross (2012) and Japanese scholars Kamohara Seika (2002) and Ueno Keiichi (2002) have explained what alternative medicine is. They have emphasized from a macro perspective that the knowledge and practices related to human health care outside Western medicine fall under alternative medicine. In their classification, the physical and mental healing methods of shamanism also belong to the category of alternative medicine. A general understanding of alternative medicine can be divided into three sub-cultural categories: the professional medical sector and its theoretical system, material or physical therapy, and ritual therapy related to the supernatural world. Taking the healing of Qorčïn shamanism in Inner Mongolia as an example, the shaman diagnoses and implements a ritual therapy from a worldview or calamity theory that incorporates spiritual beings. In the context of shamanism, a ritual treatment occurs when a healer shaman completes the rite without a sacred possession. For example, the *andai* healing rituals (Sajirahu, 2005: 105-109), bone-setting therapies, *rasiyan ukiyalγa* rituals, *čandan güyüdel-ün jasalγa* rituals, *oboo* sacrifices, and spiritualism practised in the shamanism of Eastern Inner Mongolia are shamanistic alternative therapies. The social and cultural elements of these treatments are supported by individuals or groups who believe in the existence of spirits.

#### **4.1. *Andai* Therapy**

The *andai*<sup>22</sup> ritual, also called “*andai* therapy,” “dancing *andai*,” or “singing *andai*,” was an integral part of Mongolian shamanic healing practices until the 1950s. The term “*andai*” denotes both a mental illness and its treatment, and it is both a cultural designation and, today, a kind of folkdance that remains popular among the Mongols in Eastern Inner Mongolia. The *andai* dance was also included among the first batch of skills for the China Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2006, and with the folkdances appearing as number III–29.<sup>23</sup>

Many scholars have paid attention to *andai* in the last five decades.<sup>24</sup> However, recent studies of *andai* have ignored the shamanic function of the *andai* ritual and focused only on its cultural heritage. Here, I would like to discuss briefly its ritual process within shamanism. “*Andai*” in Mongolian refers to a kind of mental disorder within a married or unmarried female who is about 18-25 years old. In *andai* studies in the second half of the 20th century, *andai* was divided scholarly into *ada andai*, *eliye andai*, and *uruy andai*, depending on the symptoms of the illness.

The first type, *ada andai*, includes the term “*ada*,”<sup>25</sup> which means “evil spirit.” *Ada čïdkür* (devils or demonic possession) and *ada tüidker* (a kind of evil spirit bringing misfortune and turbulence to human beings) use the term “*ada*” in Mongolian, and both refer to evil spirits possessing human beings

to bring them suffering. If the young female is possessed by *ada*, her desire of mad love will be inspired, and the patient will fall into an abnormal mental and physical state.

The second type is *eliye andai*. The Mongolian term “*eliye*” means “kite” (a bird of prey in the hawk family) in English and, in the context of Mongolian shamanism, symbolizes a sort of evil spirit that is the messenger of hell. If the *eliye* possesses a human being, it will bring a kind of illness called “*eliye andai*” to the relevant persons. Banzarov stated that an *eliye* appears in the form of a bird of the same name and predicts misfortune through its appearance (Banzarov, 1971: 39). In the context of Mongolian shamanism, an *eliye* appears as a cultural symbol that brings disaster and misery to the Mongols. If it possesses a young female, the client will get sick, and the patient will experience symptoms such as madness, self-harm, insomnia, groaning, and shaking of the head and body.

The third type is *uruy andai*. In contemporary Mongolian, the term “*uruy*” refers to marriage and the kinship structure constructed by marriage. Therefore, this kind of sickness is related to marriage and feelings of love between young males and females. The symptoms include appetite loss and feeling sick after pregnancy. Moreover, a young pregnant bride with the illness will desire various bitter and sour things and will feel like she is possessed by devil. Alternatively, if a female is married at a young age and is jealous of others or does not receive affection or is unable to marry her loved one, she will not want to talk anymore and will become sick, feel weak, and gradually lose weight (Chigchi et al., 1984: 23-25).

One informant who had *andai* disease in the early 1940s<sup>26</sup> stated that her family took her to see a lama doctor when she had an unexplained sickness around the age of 18.<sup>27</sup> Even acupuncture and Mongolian medicine did not heal her, so her family took her to see a healer shaman. Once her disease was diagnosed as *andai* disease, her family and the healer shaman arranged for an *andai* ritual inside or outside of the family's house.

The process of the *andai* ritual was divided into three stages: the preparation, healing process, and ending stage. First, the healer shaman selected as his assistants two male young *andai* singers with experience in *andai* rituals and the male crowd were invited to participate. The healer shaman then chose the north or west side of the patient's house to set up an altar and offered things for worship and prayed for the ancestral spirit to come. At that time, the assistant washed the hair of the patient, combed her hair, and covered her face with hair.

During the healing process, in addition to the singing and dancing of the crowd, the healer shaman beat a drum and swung a whip with a bell to let the patient know when to talk to him about the cause of her suffering (usually the patient keeps silent). Steps for surprising, asking, persuading, impressing,

and swearing were orderly practiced by the healer shaman for the patient during the singing and dancing. The overall healing process can take several days or longer until the patient can say everything to the shaman and stand up for the singing and dancing of the participants under the instruction of the healer shaman.

At the end of the *andai* ritual, performances called “*andai sergügehü*” and “*andai γaryahu*” take place, and a doll called *jöliy*<sup>28</sup> is abandoned instead of the patient, symbolizing the patient’s recovery and return to the community. In short, the aim of the *andai* ritual is to heal the illness with singing and dancing. Without the shaman’s instruction and healing, it is believed that a young woman’s psychosomatic disorder could not be cured.

*Andai* therapy makes use of a number of well-studied Mongolian cultural themes. For example, because this treatment is combined with folkdance and folksongs under the instruction of specialist shamans, there is a link between healing and Mongolian folklore. Likewise, because of the involvement of the shamans, there is a connection to Mongolian religious study. Therefore, *andai* studies cannot make clear the effectiveness of the healing ritual without considering the role of shamanic belief in the process.

#### **4.2. Bone-Setting Therapy**

Studies have shown that bone-setting is common and popular in Eastern Inner Mongolia (Saijirahu, 2008a: 338-356; 2008b: 19-34; 2009: 31-38; Li and Li, 2006: 237-253; Altanjula, 2006: 163-183), particularly in the Qorčïn region, as noted by Mongolian medical historian Jigmed (1985: 49-56; 106-111) and well-known bonesetter Bao Jinshan (1984); in the Hölün Buyir region, as described by Humphrey and Onon (1996); and among the Buryats, as reported in the work of Hruschka (1998: 21-44). In this article, the author will discuss the process of becoming a bonesetter with a shamanistic function.

In terms of its dynamic theory and clinical skills, bone art in Mongolian medicine appears to predate the influence of Tibetan medicine. In modern Mongolian, the practice is called “*Yasu bariqu jasał*” (bone-setting therapy), while the bonesetter is known as “*bariyačı*”. The bonesetter uses his hands to reset broken bones while spraying alcohol from his mouth onto the affected body part, which is fixed with small splints. The patient should feel no pain but is usually advised to rest afterwards. The bones heal quite rapidly.

Culturally, bonesetters are closely related to shamanic practitioners, such as the *böge*, *uduyan*, and *üjegeči*, whose healing abilities are considered to be a supernatural power bestowed on them by the spirits through worship. Bonesetters have no professional medical training, and their skills are either handed down through their families or, in some cases, believed to be imparted by ancestral spirits through dreams. Currently, bone-setting is considered an

independent branch of Mongolian medicine and, traditionally, the *bariyači* are not educated in biomedicine or in the Indo-Tibetan-derived tradition of Mongolian medicine.

The author's research suggests that three factors are essential to becoming a Qorčın folk bonesetter: the *borjigin oboγ* (the family of the Chinggis Qayan's clan), the illness,<sup>29</sup> and the spirit-dream. If one of these three factors is missing, a bonesetter cannot become a true healer, and that shortcoming will usually negatively influence his healing skills (Sajirahu, 2008a: 338-356; 2008b: 19-34; 2009: 31-38).

As a traditional cultural phenomenon, bone-setting has existed at the overlapping points of modern medicine, institutional traditional medicine, and shamanic healing for a long time. It is structured on the basis of a shared religious belief system, a healer, and a client. A *yasu bariyači*, or bonesetter, is initiated through shamanic illness, dreams, and by *udumsil* or lineage, drawing the blood relationship from an ancestor. This kind of practitioner benefits from a community's cultural beliefs in descendent authority and ancestor worship, becoming and serving as a healer while maintaining the social order of the bone-setting system. In addition, clients' needs protect the bonesetter's status in a medically pluralistic society.

The author has examined the relationship between a shaman and *yasu bariyači* in the Qorčın region (Sajirahu, 2015: 201-248). A shaman must be experienced in the shamanic initiation process and must enter a trance state by practicing initiation rituals. Shamans treat mental disorders caused by the possession of any kind of spirit, good or evil. They can control trances after becoming specialists. However, *yasu bariyači*, after experiencing illness and dreaming about their ancestors' intentions, heal through their initiation into bone-setting. Instead of undergoing training, as shamans do, *yasu bariyači* must practice setting broken bones to become specialists. Although both shamans and *yasu bariyači* are initiated in shamanic communities, the difference between them is whether they will go into a trance or not.

#### **4.3. Rasiyan ukiyalya Ritual**

The *rasiyan ukiyalya* ritual, which heals mental disorders or psychological needs, is practiced by shamans in the Hölün Buyir region. This rite has been frequently practiced during other shamanic rituals or at the end of the *oboo* and ancestor rituals. The term *rasiyan* means nectar in modern Mongolian, the sacred spring that one can drink the water from or wash himself/herself in to treat any disease, purify the body, and cleanse the heart. The term "*ukiyalya*", derives from the Mongolian verb "*ukiyaqu*" (to wash), meaning the ritual of washing with *rasiyan*. Religiously, its meaning is similar to "baptism" in that the *rasiyan* can purify or cleanse the dirt (sewage) from mental or physical

possession or the stain from a client. The aim in practicing *rasiyan ukiyalya* is to heal the illnesses of clients if they have mental and physical disorders and to pray for their health and happiness if they do not have any illnesses. During the rite, the shaman does not go into a trance and heals the client with his shaman's song and melody while hitting the shaman drum.

The method of making *rasiyan* is similar to that of making a spring in the spring treatment (medicated bath) of traditional Mongolian medicine. The difference is that the shaman puts some selected Mongolian medicine plants, special shamanic stones, and bronze mirrors into water and boils them. During the rite, the shaman sprays the special water on the client's body while chanting the shaman songs.

The Mongols in the Kōlūn Buyir region often invite a shaman to practice the *rasiyan ukiyalya* to maintain their psychosomatic health and to heal their illnesses in the summer season.<sup>30</sup> In Inner Mongolia, symbolic healing without interacting with an ancestor's spirit is a form of alternative medicine.

#### **4.4. Čandan güyüdel-ün ĵasalĵa Ritual**

During the author's field work in the Kōlūn Buyir region in 2005, shamanic rituals to drive evil spirits from clients who were considered to be possessed by human or animal evil spirits were observed. One of the rituals, *čandan güyüdel-ün ĵasalĵa*, was a healing practice similar in principle to the *andai* ritual. In a local dialect of the Mongolian language, the term "čandan" (also called "šandan") refers to a spirit or the place of a grave, especially the spirit of a shaman that protects the mountains or the land. The term "güyüdel" in the modern Mongolian language means the flow or current of something. If someone is attacked by the *güyüdel* of the earth while sleeping under a tree in a field, he will get *sa* disease (cerebral infarction in modern medicine) or *ada* disease (a kind of mental disorder caused by an attached evil spirit). The word "ĵasalĵa" means "therapy."<sup>31</sup>

When sick with this condition, the client experiences mental and physical disorder. As a part of the body becomes numb, the client suffers from headaches, sweatiness, or unconscious movements or has a reduced appetite and digestion problems and becomes emaciated. In more extreme cases, the patient may become autistic and speechless or cry wildly with an unknown etiology. Modern medical treatments for this illness have no effect. Then, the client will ask for healing from the Buddhist lama and diviner and see no effect, until finally he will ask for a shaman's help.

After the patient has been diagnosed as being affected by the current of a spirit in the mountain, the healer will decide to treat his/her illness with *čandan güyüdel-ün ĵasalĵa*. First, the shaman and her assistant will prepare a drum, *kei mori-yin dalbaya* (a kind of flag with a picture of a flying horse),



two *kölügs* (horse-headed staffs),<sup>32</sup> bronze mirrors, *erike* (*beads*), alcohol, milk, tea, and *yangya ebesü* (a cleansing plant). Then the assistant will purify and sanctify the tools with the alcohol, milk, and tea while the healer chants a shamanic song.

The next step is the healing process. The shaman stands facing the windows in the centre of the client's house, reports to the woman's ancestral spirit about the client, and asks him to give her the supernatural power to easily heal the client. Meanwhile, the assistant offers alcohol, milk, and tea to the spirit while the healer hits the drum with a drumstick and sings. Then, the shaman diagnoses the client's illness with her *erike*. The healer sprays alcohol on her own *erike* and uses it to massage the client's head, chest, back, sides, and hands and hits the client's back strongly.

Finally, the assistant sketches and cuts out nine human figures from white paper. The shaman then asks the client to tear those nine paper figures into many pieces and throw them onto a crowded crossroads at a distance from the house.

Shamans in Inner Mongolia believe that the figures will take away the evil spirit that possessed the client through the power of the shaman's ancestral spirit. This is a common example of a healing ritual, like the *andai* ritual in the Qorčın region, for an illness caused by an evil spirit. In this case, it is believed that the client will recover after the spirit is thrown away by the shaman with human paper figures.

#### 4.5 *Oboo Sacrifice*

*Oboo*, *ovoo*, or *obo*, which is also written "*oboγa*" in the traditional Mongolian transcription, means "heap" and "cairn" and is a sacred stone heap used as an altar or shrine in Mongolian folk religious practice and in the religion of other Mongolic peoples. *Oboos* are usually made from rocks with wood and are often found at the tops of mountains and in high places, like mountain passes or in the middle of plains. They serve mainly as sites for the worship of *tengri* (sky or heaven), the *tengrisim*, mountain gods, and earth gods led by shamans and kin's elders, though they are also used for Buddhist ceremonies. In addition to these religious meanings, *oboo* can refer to a boundary sign and a signpost.

Many scholars have paid attention to *oboo* in the world. The representative ones are Agnes Birtalan (1998: 199-210), Christopher Evans and Caroline Humphrey (2003: 195-211), and Urtunasutu (2012) in recent years. These researchers have mainly considered the location, structure, function, text, and ritual process of *oboo*.

Every year since ancient times, the Mongols have sacrificed *oboo*. In particular, after the end of the Cultural Revolution when the state implemented

a policy of religious freedom, the Mongols in China restored the *oboo* rituals and set up *oboos* in every administrative region to sacrifice at religiously and administratively. In addition, the author found during fieldwork in the Hölün Buyir region that some Mongol families structured by blood relationship called “*obok*” or “*oboy*” set up private *oboo* and sacrificed to it with the help of shamans. Whenever Mongols pass near *oboo*, they dismount from their horses or get out of their cars to worship the *oboo* with milk, alcohol, or cigarettes to make the spirit or god of *oboo* happy and bless those who pass by. Thus, the existence of *oboo* in the Mongolic world closely relates physically and mentally to the Mongols’ daily life and symbolizes the Mongols’ reverence for nature and harmonious coexistence with the ecological environment.

Therefore, an *oboo* is a part of the nomadic Mongols’ religious cultural heritage and a site for offering sacrifices to *tengri* and other nature spirits. Inner Mongolian anthropologist Urtunasutu said that in modern times, it is a stone heap with wood set up at the top of a mountain or in the middle of a field for sacrifices that symbolizes the collective mentality, behaviour, spirit, identity, and memory of the Mongolic people. At the same time, an *oboo* also symbolizes sacred ground where the nomadic Mongols can cultivate a collective consciousness and sense of community (Urtunasutu, 2012: 12-13]. Thus, *oboo* and the sacrificial culture of *oboo* are closely related to the social structure and folk religious beliefs of the Mongols.

The Mongols always remain in awe of nature, living in close relationship with nature generation after generation, because the Mongols believe that everything in nature has a spirit. For example, according to the natural law of the Mongol society, no one is allowed to move the rocks of the mountains, cut down forests, or pollute the springs and lakes. If this taboo is committed, *tengri* or the patron saint of the affected item will punish the perpetrator and bring him unexplained diseases, disaster, or misfortune. This kind of worldview affects the ecological and environmental behaviour of Mongols and maintains their physical and mental health, which is quite obvious in *oboo* sacrifices.

The Mongols regard an *oboo* as a sacred place with supernatural power. They believe that they live under the supernatural power and protection of *oboo*. Therefore, if they do not hold *oboo* in awe and veneration correctly, attack it with various words, or move the stones of *oboo* casually, they will encounter disaster. The purpose of setting up and sacrificing to *oboo* is to restore the grasslands and livestock, enrich the rainwater, eliminate disasters, and prevent diseases. In addition, the Mongols believe that the revival of their hometowns and prosperity of their families can be attributed to their correct sacrifice to *oboo*. Therefore, the Mongols are very proud to set up an *oboo* in their hometowns and sacrifice to it because of its supernatural power.

Urtunasutu states that the supernatural power of *oboo* is divided into the *oboo nekekü* (holy questing) and *oboo qaraqū* (holy waiting) according to his case study on *oboo* in the Üjümüčün region of Inner Mongolia (Urtunasutu, 2012: 561-576). According to his classification, *oboo nekekü* (holy questing) refers to anyone who attacks or satirizes *oboo* with inappropriate word or treats *oboo* with unreasonable behaviour, causing the spirit of *oboo* to get angry. The patron saint of *oboo* gives certain signals to the physical body and mind of the person and brings disorder to his everyday life, so that he clearly recognizes he has made mistakes and can correct them immediately (Urtunasutu, 2012: 561-571). Literally, *nekekü* is to “chase, pursue, run after, and seek” in contemporary Mongolian, meaning in this folk religious context that the spirit of *oboo* will punish the related person who satirized the *oboo*, made mistakes, or was irreverent to the *oboo*.

*Oboo qaraqū* (holy waiting) refers to when a person makes mistakes in the customs and rules for sacrificing to *oboo* and encounters misfortune or disorder in his body, mind, and everyday life as a consequence (Urtunasutu, 2012: 572-576). In modern Mongolian, the literal meaning of *qaraqū* is to “see, look at, watch, and keep under surveillance.” However, in the context of *oboo* culture, *oboo qaraqū* is the spirit of *oboo* always looking at the behaviour of the person who holds his own *oboo* to ensure he correctly and continuously sacrifices to it. If the holder commits mistakes or exhibits incorrect behaviours, the spirit of the *oboo* will send signals to warn and remind him to perform the ritual correctly.

Consequently, in the local knowledge naturally formed in Mongolian folklore, many taboos exist about touching or moving the stones, soil, or forest around the *oboo*. Individuals are also not allowed to exhibit incorrect behaviour during *oboo* rituals or satirize or speak ill of *oboo*. Thus, *oboo* sacrifices have influenced the behavioural health of the Mongols for many years.

## 5. Conclusion

Shamanism coexists with Buddhism in modern Inner Mongolia. It has maintained its status by syncretizing with Tibetan Buddhism to treat mental and physical disorders in the past (through the *andai* ritual) and today (through the initiation ritual). Because of its ability to meet clients' needs and its flexibility under China's religious policy, shamanic healing or folk religious healing behaviour will continue to play a role in the health care system in Inner Mongolian society by being practised in parallel with other systems.

Anthropology has been concerned with magic, religion, and medicine around the world since the work of British doctor, psychiatrist, and anthropologist Rivers (1924) was first published in the early 20th century. However,

the field did not pay sufficient attention to shamanic healing in Inner Mongolia until the early 21st century. Meanwhile, shamanic studies have discussed the healing function between shaman and client, but only minimally considered the relationship between shaman and client and the patient's role in the effectiveness of a healing ritual. In fact, the patient plays an important role in the healing ritual.

There is no doubt that shamanism has reemerged in Inner Mongolia since the end of the 20th century and that the number of shamans has increased.<sup>33</sup> According to recent anthropological research on Inner Mongolian shamanism, the reason for shamanism's revival is China's loosened policies toward both ethnic minorities and religions under their reforms and open-door policy. However, in the author's view, the reasons are so complicated that they cannot be so easily described (Saijirahu, 2015). Of note, an identity crisis has developed in multiethnic areas where the people have ethnically and culturally been loosely organized in modern Inner Mongolia. Possession by an animal soul or human spirit is an example. It is believed that one possessed by an animal soul will become a diviner and one possessed by a human spirit will become a shaman. The healing process is the means by which one becomes and serves as a shaman in modern society.

In addition to this folk religious belief, the world views of behavioural health have influenced the ecological, environmental, cultural and social thought of the Mongols for thousands of years. Their healing practices, including bone-setting therapies, *rasiyan ukiyalʻa*, *čandan güyüdel-ün jasalya*, and *oboo* sacrifices, all of which are defined as alternative medicines in this article, are closely related to the long-held medical and religious behaviours of lay people. In the context of folk religious belief, their healing practices and ritual sacrifices effectively manage and handle the problems caused by human-made ecological environmental crises.

## Notes

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1. All previous Constitutions of the People's Republic of China have granted freedom of religion to citizens. After the end of the Cultural Revolution in particular, Act 36 of China's 1982 Constitution was implemented and clearly

- stipulated that “citizens of the People’s Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief.”
2. In modern spoken Mongolian, *böö* refers to the male shaman. In traditional Mongolian, *böö* is transcribed as “*böge*.” *Böö* is also a collective term for Mongolian shamans.
  3. In modern Mongolian, *udyan*, also called *ituyan*, refers to the female shaman. In traditional Mongolian, *udyan* is transcribed as “*uduyan*.”
  4. In modern Mongolian, *orusiqu* is a verb akin to “has,” “exists,” and “lives” and has the same stem as the verb *oru*, meaning to “enter,” and the noun *oru* or *orum*, meaning “position.” As a religious (Buddhist or shamanist) term, it means that a human body has been possessed by a spirit or a god and has entered a trance state.
  5. For more details about Darhad shamanism, see Hangartner (2011).
  6. For more details about Buryat shamanism, see Shimamura (2014).
  7. For more details about Qorčïn shamanism, see Saijirahu (2015).
  8. These survival areas of Mongolian shamanism have been studied in detail by many scholars from around the world. For example, Humphrey and Onon (1996) discussed the shamanism practised among the Daur Mongols living in the Hölün Buyir region of Inner Mongolia.
  9. The *čayan eliyе* was a kind of Qorčïn shaman who mainly healed *eliye andai*, one of the *andai* diseases.
  10. Although the etymology of the shamanic word “*qundan*” or “*qundun*” is unknown, this type of shaman is said to be the most powerful professional among the shamans, as he mainly administers the rituals for worshipping the *tengri* (sky or heaven) and the god of thunder.
  11. “*Laičing*” is a kind of shaman involved in the healing ritual. This shamanic term is a variation of the Tibetan Buddhist term “*gnas chung*.” This type of shaman gained the technique of ecstasy from the Tibetan Bon religion, which is considered to be a pre-Buddhist religion. This type of shaman is also said to originate from *gürdem*, a kind of Buddhist monk who was influenced by Mongolian shamanism (Heissig, 1980: 41-43). According to the author’s field work, the possessed *laičing* in the Qorčïn region strikes two gongs at a ritual and dances beautifully.
  12. “*Gürdem*,” one of the terms for Mongolian shamanism, originated from the Tibetan language *sku rten pa* and refers to a type of Mongolian shaman influenced by Tibetan Buddhism. When the *gürdem* enters the trance state, it drives away the devil and treats the disease.
  13. “*Čoijing*,” also one of the terms for Mongolian shamanism, originated from the Tibetan language *chos skyong*. This kind of shaman is also influenced by Tibetan Buddhism and mainly deals with the aftermath of a thunder disaster, performing rituals to determine the destination of the dead at the funeral (Kürelsha et al., 1998: 56).
  14. One of the shamanic actors who symbolically heals the mental and physical disorders using folk therapy, such as magic or spells, is called “*dom*” in Mongolian. This term has been passed down from ancient times.
  15. A *bariyači*, also called *yasu bariyači*, originally was a bone-setting shaman who uses supernatural power to connect fractures and restore dislocated bones.

16. An *andaiči*, a shamanic healer, can cure a kind of mental illness called *andai* that married or unmarried (mainly unmarried) young women suffer from.
17. *Sayudal-un ebedčün* in Inner Mongolian shamanism is the sickness experienced while gaining the shaman's status (seat). The Mongolian term "*sayudal*" means "seat," so the whole meaning of this shamanic term is the illness experienced while getting the shamanic seat or shamanic status. Depending on the culture, it is interpreted as shamanic sickness, divine illness, or spiritual emergency.
18. The term "*qobčalaqu*," also called "*qobčasulaqu*" in modern Mongolian, means to wear or to dress up something. For more details about the *qobčalaqu* process, see Hasuntuya (2012: 45-56).
19. "Narratives," used here means what Kleinman stated the "illness narratives" in his medical anthropological studies, for more details, see Kleinman (1988).
20. One of the seven trees is planted 10 m due south of the *ger* where an altar is set up and the spirit of the ancestor comes after the ritual starts. Another four trees are planted 3 m southeast, southwest, northwest, and northeast from the *ger*. The two white birch trees are planted in the middle of the *ger*, and the trees go through the *toyonu* (skylight) of the *ger* to the sky. In the Hölün Buyir region, these two trees are called "*egür modu*" or "*tooroo modu*" in the languages of the Mongols and Dagur, respectively. According to Shirokogoroff, *tooroo* trees have been used frequently in the initiation rituals of the Manju-Tungus people in northeast Asia, and not only the two white birch trees planted in the *ger* but also the white birch lined up on the outside are called *tooroo* (Shirokogoroff, 1935: 351-352). Thus, among the Mongols in the Hölün Buyir region, the customs for this initiation ritual have also been influenced by the shamanic culture of the Manju-Tungus people.
21. "*Qurui*," is a verb in modern Mongolian meaning the blessing and calling good luck, health and peace for human being.
22. In Mongolian, there is no exact definition for the term "*andai*."
23. <http://www.ihchina.cn/> (accessed on July 25, 2020).
24. For more details from eminent works, see Chigchi (1984), Kūrelsha (1985: 70-93), Konagaya (1992: 156-200), Süyüge (1995), and Nachinshongqur (2001).
25. In modern Mongolian, the term "*ada*" means evil spirit. Banzarov explained that evil spirits are thought to be the enemies of human beings, good spirits, and *tengris*. Among them, the *ada* will fly and act in the sky, surprise people, spread disease, and inspire crazy desires (Banzarov, 1971: 39).
26. The author conducted the field work about *andai* in 2001 and 2002 at Kūriye Banner in the city of Tongliao, China, and visited and interviewed the informants who had the *andai* illness and were still alive at the time.
27. In Inner Mongolia, a Mongolian medical practitioner was called "lama *emči*" (doctor) before the 1950s. The Mongolian term "lama" originates from Tibetan and refers to a priest or monk in Lamaism or Tibetan Buddhism. Mongolian medicine, which originated from Indo-Tibetan medicine, was also influenced by Tibetan Buddhism. Throughout the history of Mongolian medicine, most medical practitioners were lamas who were educated in a Buddhist temple.
28. "*joliy*," is a Mongolian word referring to a doll meaning ghost. In the context of Inner Mongolian shamanism, when it seems that something like a demon

- possessed a human being, the healer shaman makes a humanoid object in order to remove it from the client's body and throws it away as a substitute for a patient.
29. For more details on the idea of "shamanic illness" as part of the shaman's initiation, see Eliade (1964: 28).
  30. For more details about *rasiyan ukiyal'a*, see Saijirahu (2015: 186-190).
  31. For more details about *čandan güyüdel-ün jasal'a*, see Saijirahu (2015: 190-199).
  32. A shaman staff, called "kölüg" in Kölün Buyir region, is similar to what Vilmos Diószegi described as a shaman staff in a work on Buryat shamanism. For more details, see Vilmos Diószegi (1998: 83-106).
  33. For more details about the reemergence of Inner Mongolian shamanism, see Zhao (2014).

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