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ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH ABOUT TIBET

XIA Xiyuan (Peking University)

Cultural Order in 'Mdo Sde' Ceremony

This essay is mainly based on a participant observation of the four-day “mdo sde” ceremony of Samye Monastery located in Shannan, which is the first monastery in Tibet with so long a history of over 1000 years. As one of the most significant functions in Samye Monastery, “mdo sde” ceremony itself involves a range of holy rites and dramatic acts also such as chanting, praying, lama dancing and god’s being carried through the street. The monastery architectural structure, the dancing, the episodes of ceremony etc. all along represent the communion of locality, Han and Indian culture in Tibetan Buddhism, in which the influence of local Shamanism shall be noted. In this respect, we manage to interpret the connection of those several cultures above which is showing especially in the “mdo sde” ceremony’s Bildung effect: to include other ideas or cosmologies but make them subordinate, exactly what the concept of “encompassing of the contrary” means in French anthropologist Dumont’s famous Homo Hierarchicus.

LI Weihua (Peking University)

A Visual Representation of 'Mdo Sde' Ceremony

This is a participant visual anthropology film which lasts for about 20 minutes, and the complete edition is 100 minutes. It recorded the “mdo sde” ceremony held annually in Samye Monastery in the Shannan region of Tibet. The ceremony includes several parts as “Make an offering and pray for the Buddha”、 “vpho ba”、 “Praise the Mandala” and so forth. A profound structure is embedded therein, manifesting vividly the cosmology, world view and outlook on life of Tibetan Buddhism. It can be seen through this rite how the close but also distant relation, on this sacred Tibetan area, is maintained between religion and profane life. This film is also a trial of the so-called “collaborative ethnography”, where the collaborators present a synchronic work in different means (as texts and videos), which are both echoing and independent at the same time.

HE Beili (Peking University)

Guru Rinpoche and King

During the Tibetan Tubo kingdom, Tibetan king Thrisong Deutsen invited Indian monk Shantarakshita and Padmasambhva to build the Samye Monastery, the first monastery with three Jewels: Buddha, Dharma and Sangha in Tibet. Later in the history, these three persons are known as “king and teachers”, and there were different descriptions of their relationship in the historical books. Through comparative analysis of the text of these documents, the paper gets following preliminary conclusions: Tibetan civilization is formed with combination of two models of thoughts - one is the saints, represented by Padmasambhava, the other is the "kingship - Sangha" in the feudal system, and these can be referred to as "Saints - Kingship" coincidence model.