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The Manuscript of the Buryat Emchi-Lama D. Endonov from the Mongolian Collection of the COMX of the IMBTS, Siberian Branch of the RAN

Abstract

The article reviews the handwritten manuscript of a prominent Buryat physician or emchi-lama Dondub Endonov (1870?1937?) stored in the Mongolian collection of the Center of Oriental Manuscripts, and Xylographs of the Institute for Mongolian, Buddhist, and Tibetan Studies of the Siberian branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, that is being introduced into scientific use for the first time. Tibetan medicine penetrated Russia in the 17?18th centuries alongside with

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Buddhism spreading among the Buryats, Kalmyks, and Tuvinians. Almost until 1930s, the health of these peoples depended entirely on medical activities of monk-healers (emchi-lamas). One of the brightest representatives of the Buryat emchi-lamas was Dondub Endonov (Dondub Endonovich Munkuev according to Soviet naming). His manuscript is titled “Notes of a Tibetan doctor Dondub Munkuev on treatment of various diseases with Tibetan medicinal drugs.” It consists of 49 sheets bound as a codex. The research team has conducted a thorough and detailed source analysis and made a translation of the manuscript, which was written in old Mongolian vertical script with numerous insertions in Tibetan and Buryat languages. It has been discovered that the manuscript was completed by Endonov on February 10, 1935. It is a summary of his personal medical experience. Endonov rigidly followed the structure of the “Tantra of Instructions” of rGyud bzhi and briefly described all diseases mentioned in chapters 1?41, 63?70, 72, and 74, supplementing them with his own remarks and practical observations from his own medical practice and assessing the quality of Tibetan prescriptions. This manuscript has not lost its scholarly and practical value and is of great interest to contemporary researchers, because its author explains some extremely complicated topics of the theory and practice of Tibetan medicine quite accessibly, concisely, and clearly. It is possible to say that Endonov’s manuscript is a reliable source for studying the history of Tibetan medicine in Russia and Buryatia and for integrating his knowledge into the practices of modern traditional medicine practitioners. An annotated translation of the manuscript in Russian is being prepared for publication.



Keywords

Historical source, IMBTS SB RAN, Mongolian collection, manuscript, Dondub Endonov, Tibetan medicine, Tibetan medicine in Buryatia

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