

Kingship and Religion in Tibet

IATS 13, Ulaanbaatar, 21–27 July, 2013

This panel aims to bring together the disciplines of philology, history, anthropology, and the study of religion in order to examine the relationship between kingship and religion throughout Tibetan history and culture. Kingship recommends itself as an ideal heuristic device for approaching some of the larger themes in Tibetan culture, such as the relationship between spiritual and temporal power, chiefly because of its long and varied history as a topic of academic enquiry. For anthropologists such as A.M. Hocart and Lucien Scubla, and for theorists like James Frazer, Sigmund Freud, and René Girard, kingship lies at the root of humanity's social origins and its first religious beliefs. Kingship is also a repository in which complexes of ideas and practices are constellated. One finds its imagery in local religions, as in the case of the symbolism of the *dmu* cord and its use by Magar ritual specialists in northern Nepal, and also in world religions, as in the symbolism of tantric initiation. Among the issues that we hope to address in this panel are the relationship between royal and popular ritual/performative traditions, the king's role as a patron of religion and often as arbiter of doctrinal disputes, and the dynamic between a tolerant or "ecumenical" royal harnessing of religion and one that is more exclusive.

We welcome participants who focus on any period of Tibetan history, any place in the Tibetan cultural area (broadly defined), and from any relevant discipline. We also welcome unsolicited queries about participation, for which please email brandon.dotson@lrz.uni-muenchen.de.