

Centre for the Humanities and Medicine  
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Convergence and Collisions: Disease, Religion, and Healing in Asia

**Leprosy's Demons, Religion and Medicine in Tibetan Context: Untangling  
the Embodied Environment and Healing It**

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My paper explores the interrelationship between Buddhist and modern medical concerns in Tibetan communities. Through textual and historical analyses of Buddhist and Tibetan medical texts like the *Rgyud bzhi* on demon diseases (*klu'i gdon nad*) and fieldwork research in Tibetan communities in Lhasa, Tibet and Dharamsala, India, this paper examines the correlations and tensions between religion and medicine. *Klu'i gdon nad*, a disease believed to be caused by offended snake-like creatures, is an ideal site to discuss the religious and social concerns of Tibetan medical practitioners who face challenges from modern biomedicine in Chinese and Indian settings. This paper will also reflect upon the Tibetan medical tradition's long historical concerns with empiricism and its relationship with the religio-environment.