

SOCIALIZING WITH GODS IN THE MONGGHUL BOG RITUAL

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ABSTRACT

This article introduces a communal ritual, known as Bog, as practiced among the Mongghul, a linguistically and culturally distinct group of people of the northeast Tibetan Plateau. The main activity of the Bog ritual involves deities and ancestral souls being invited to a sumptuous "banquet" where religious practitioners, called *fashi*, chant scriptures, sing, dance, joke, and burn incense to delight the "guests." This essay provides a thick description of the ritual. To provide context for this description, we introduce the community on which our description focuses, and also discuss the role of *fashi*. A chronological account of the ritual follows that includes not only descriptions of the ritual activities, but also interpretations of the meaning of these events from the perspective of the ritual practitioners. We also provide an analysis of the performances given during the ritual and how they contribute to creating a spectacle that delights both human and non-human participants.

KEYWORDS

fashi, Mongghul (Monguor, Tu), ritual, shaman, Shenjiao