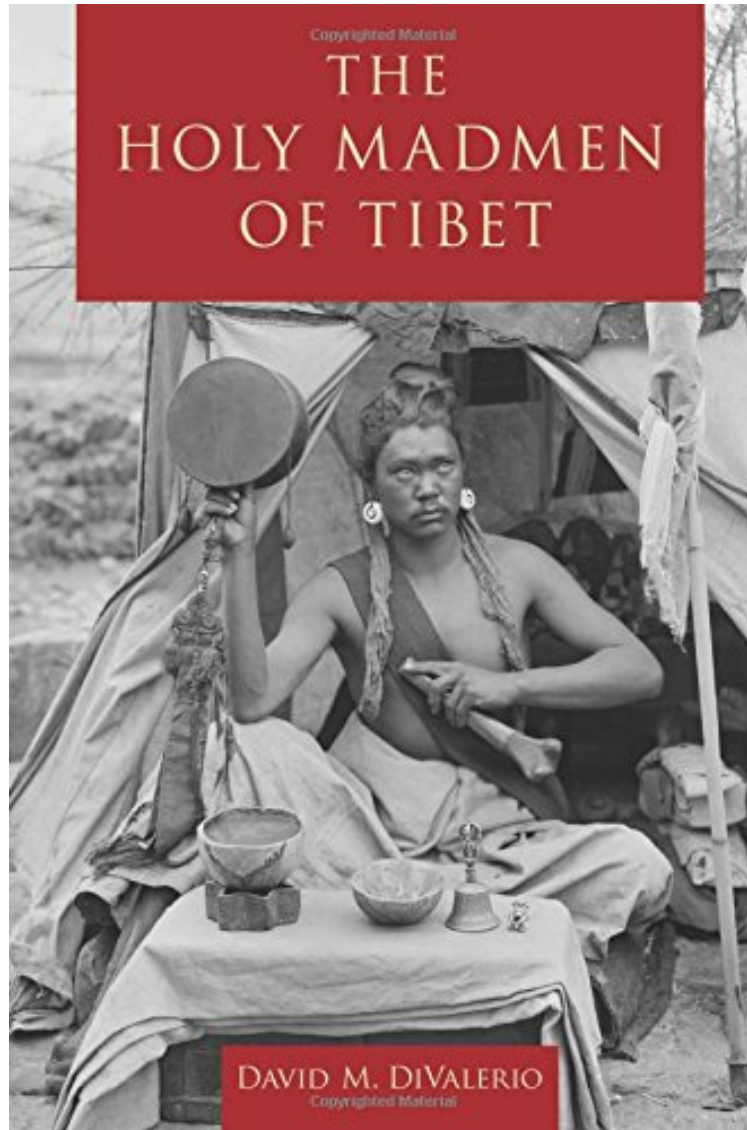


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The Holy Madmen of Tibet

David M. DiValerio

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#1557064 in Books David M DiValerio 2015-07-06 2015-07-06 Original language: English PDF # 1 6.10 x 1.10 x 9.10l, .0 #File Name: 0199391211368 pages The Holy Madmen of Tibet | File size: 58.Mb

David M. DiValerio : The Holy Madmen of Tibet before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Holy Madmen of Tibet:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Not really so mad. By PCHA lengthy discussion of a continuing Tibetan tradition with fascinating details of interest to modern practitioners. The author seems unaware that it is practiced in the United States and Europe today. He clearly did a lot of research with original sources from centuries ago. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. It is a valuable contribution to several fields of study and is

bound to be read with great interest by scholars and students frBy Gregory A. HillisDavid DiValerios *The Holy Madmen of Tibet* (New York: OUP, 2015) is a work of outstanding scholarship on a fascinating and controversial subject within the fields of Tibetan Studies, Buddhist Studies, and Religious Studies in general. Utilizing a rich palette of theoretical perspectives, DiValerio argues that the famous religious madmen of Tibet are anything but crazy, but rather are adept rhetoricians skilled in the art of self-representation within the religious imaginaire of Tibetan Buddhism. It is a valuable contribution to several fields of study and is bound to be read with great interest by scholars and students from a wide variety of academic disciplines. DiValerios writing style is lucid yet erudite. Throughout the book he is able to express complex and at times opaque concepts with impressive clarity that renders them accessible to the non-specialist, without sacrificing the intricacy and nuance of the specific historical, cultural, philosophical, and religious contexts. DiValerio conveys the dense, textured nature of the material to readers outside the relatively narrow field of Tibetan Buddhist studies by drawing on relevant contemporary theorists in his comparative and cross-cultural analysis. Additionally, he manages to employ his clear, concise writing on this difficult and unfamiliar material to support his sophisticated arguments. In addition to making the subject matter accessible to general readers, the book is an exemplary and important piece of original scholarship. The topic of religious madness in Tibetan Buddhism has gripped the imagination of scholars and casual observers for decades, and continues to enjoy a broad popular appeal in trade publications on Buddhism and Asian religions generally. There is a tendency to associate the unconventional behavior of a handful of such Tibetan religious madmen as evidence of their enlightened perspective, much the way that literary reports of iconoclastic Zen masters have done for generations. Prof. DiValerio probes beneath such superficial perceptions of Tibets holy madmen through thorough, painstaking textual research from a wide variety of sources, balanced and complemented by contemporary field interviews. Moreover, he comprehensively summarizes and analyzes the scholarly literature on the subject. DiValerio primarily approaches his subject as a scholar of religious studies. This means that he draws on a number of methodological approaches including historical, philosophical, theoretical, ethnological, linguistic, etc. to describe and contextualize the specific historical figures under consideration, as well as their actions. Whereas this approach may not fully satisfy historians, philosophers, etc., such methodological polytheism is typical in the field of religious studies, and Prof. DiValerio is an extremely able practitioner of the craft. The monograph largely succeeds at creating an absorbing narrative that conveys, to the extent possible, the multifaceted social, political, psychological, and religious landscapes in which these holy madmen operated. DiValerio admirably maintains the thread of his principal argument throughout the books disparate chapters, although at times the reader can become lost in all the details. In the end, however, the books greatest accomplishment is not so much its argument as its complex and intriguing portrait of the phenomenon of religious madness, particularly as it has manifested (and continues to manifest) in the world of Tibetan Buddhism, in Asia and beyond. That in itself is extremely worthwhile. There is no doubt that *The Holy Madmen of Tibet* marks an important contribution to the fields of Tibetan Studies, Buddhist Studies, and Religious Studies. Much has been said about such religious madmen over the years, but this book represents the first sustained scholarly treatment of the phenomenon. For that reason alone, the book is enormously valuable. It also makes a persuasive argument for the need to understand such religious madness from a number of critical perspectives, and that in the end the trope of madness in Tibetan religion has been primarily used by very sane individuals to promote their own unique and creative visions of Tibetan Buddhism. Although this may not be sufficiently breathtaking to cause an intellectual paradigm shift in the field, it is an important insight that deserves our consideration. Finally, scholars, experts, and informed general readers will certainly welcome this study, although it may frustrate or disappoint the readers looking for a new age interpretation. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Highly recommended. By Customer *The Holy Madmen of Tibet* succeeds where other studies of religion falter. The book provides an in-depth analysis of the holy madmen within the shifting social, political and cultural landscape of Tibet in the 15th and 16th centuries. The madmen are presented as fallible humans with their own motivations and desires, not as sanctimonious men beyond reproach. The final chapter on the trope of madness ties all analyses on the madmen together to provide a nuanced view of madness that future studies on mystical practices could greatly benefit from. Highly recommended.

Throughout the past millennium, certain Tibetan Buddhist yogins have taken on profoundly norm-overturing modes of dress and behavior, including draping themselves in human remains, consuming filth, provoking others to violence, and even performing sacrilege. They became known far and wide as "madmen" (smyon pa, pronounced nynpa), achieving a degree of saintliness in the process. This book offers the first comprehensive study of Tibet's "holy madmen" drawing on their biographies and writings, as well as tantric commentaries, later histories, oral traditions, and more. Much of *The Holy Madmen of Tibet* is dedicated to examining the lives and legacies of the three most famous "holy madmen" who were all of the Kagy sect: the Madman of Tsang (author of *The Life of Milarepa*), the Madman of , and Drukpa Knl, Madman of the Drukpa Kagy. Each born in the 1450s, they rose to prominence during a period of civil war and of great shifts in Tibet's religious culture. By focusing on literature written by and about the "holy madmen" and on the yogins' relationships with their public, this book offers in-depth looks at the narrative and social processes out of which sainthood arises, and at the role biographical literature can play in the formation of

sectarian identities. By showing how understandings of the "madmen" have changed over time, this study allows for new insights into current notions of "crazy wisdom." In the end, the "holy madmen" are seen as self-aware and purposeful individuals who were anything but insane.

"Nynpas, or religious madmen, stand among the most colorful and influential figures in the transmission of Buddhism across the Himalaya. Blending translation, historical analysis, and contemporary ethnography, DiValerio offers our broadest and most textured account to date of this fascinating tradition. The Holy Madmen of Tibet is a major contribution to the study of Tibetan religion and culture." --Andrew Quintman, Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Yale University
About the Author David M. DiValerio is Assistant Professor of History and Religious Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.