

BATAA OCH, NOMINDALAI NARANTUYA

Mongolian Traditonal Medicine in Poland

Abstract

Mongolian Traditional Medicine is presented in this article as a part of Mongolian-Polish relations divided into three phases. The main data concerning each of these phases is discussed with a strong emphasis put on the person of the Mongolian doctor Włodzimierz B a d m a j e f f (1884–1961) and his activity in Poland as well as on the practice of Mongolian Traditional Medicine today.

Introduction

Mongolian Traditional Medicine¹ has a long historical tradition which developed in accordance with its regional natural conditions, peculiarities of nomadic way of life and civilization which gradually developed on Mongolian steppes. Mongolian Traditional Medicine is an independent coherent system which differs from the allopathic, or Western European biomedicine. It is on the other hand inseparable from the medical systems of Inner Asia, to which it belongs.

According to D a s h z e v e g (1999: 23) Tibetan medicine was introduced to Mongolia already in the 13th century and later developed in the 17th and 18th centuries to the extent that it became “a new branch within the Tibetan medical system. By mixing Tibetan medicine with local medical traditions as well as Chinese medicine, the skill and knowledge of Mongol *emchi* was praised in Tibet, and as a result Mongol physicians were even appointed to the Manchu court as personal doctors of the emperors”. (G a n z o r i g

¹ We are pleased and honoured to present this humble contribution about Mongolian Traditonal Medicine in the anniversary volume dedicated to Prof. Stanisław Godziński. We would like to thank A. Bareja-Starzyńska and F. Majkowski for the English translaton of the paper.

2008: 107). Medicine was not only the practice of healing. It was transmitted at monasteries and covered philosophy, history, sociology and many other aspects of Buddhist education. This resulted in knowledge “as vast as an ocean” (Demberel in Lunreg Dandar, 1993: 3) .

Translations of Tibetan medical treatises into Mongolian, including the most famous, “The Four Tantras” (*rgyud bzhi*), were made and gradually Mongolian scholars of medicine composed their treatises and commentaries in Tibetan, as it was the most widely spread language of science among the Buddhists in Inner Asia. Later these treatises were also translated into Mongolian.²

There are discussions whether Mongolian Traditional Medicine should be treated as Tibetan Medicine. As it differs, however, in its actual practice and it may also differ in the use of ingredients for making medicines,³ the authors of the present paper prefer to use the name Mongolian Traditional Medicine (*mongol ulamjalt anagaakh ukhaan*), under which it is also known and practised in Mongolia today.

Similarly to contacts with Tibetan Medicine in the 13th century, the encounters between the Mongols and the Poles started, as well. It is well known that the Mongolian warriors troubled the lands inhabited by the Poles, however, the journey of a Polish Franciscan monk Benedict who travelled to Mongolia with the Pope’s mission received less attention.⁴ Together with Giovanni di Piano Carпинi, Benedict spent in 1246 four months among the Mongols, being present also at the election of Khan Guyuk. Though there is no description of his contacts particularly with Mongolian physicians, we may assume that he had witnessed many aspects of Mongolian way of living, and perhaps medical practices, regardless of what sort of medicine they represented, as well. Therefore Mongolian-Polish medical encounters might be 800 years old and it is possible to propose a division of this period into three phases:

1st phase – a possible encounter with Mongolian Medicine during the visit of Benedict Polak at the court of the Mongolian Khan Guyuk

2nd phase – Mongolian Traditional Medicine practised in Poland by Włodzimierz Badmajeff (1884–1961)

3rd phase – the 1990s and the 21st century – Mongolian Traditional Medicine practised in Poland by modern Mongolian physicians.

² More about Mongolian translations and works on medicine in Ganzorig 2008.

³ In Buriatya about 80% of the original Tibetan ingredients disappeared over time and were substituted with local herbs (Dashiye v 1999: 12, quoted by Saxer 2004: 12).

⁴ This is known among the specialists historians and Mongolists. For more information see Strzelczyk 1993: 224–231.

Włodzimierz Badmajeff

A very important personality and actually the one who brought Mongolian Traditional Medicine to Poland was Włodzimierz Badmajeff, 1884–1961 (Brodowski 1932: 167–179; Saxer 2004: 59–68). He was born as Jamyan (Brodowski 1932: 167–169), a son of Budda – his father, and Khanda – mother⁵, in Tabtanai, a place 180 versts distant (one verst is about 1066,78 m) from Chita situated in Zabaikalski Krai in Russia. The year of his birth is given by Brodowski (1932: 167) as well as by the official birth certificate (Brodowski 1932: 177) and the citizenship granting act (Citizenship Granting Act of 7.06.1920) as December 10th, 1884.⁶ Badmayeff's family members were descendants of the great Mongolian ruler – Chinggis Khan.⁷ Uncle of Włodzimierz, Pyotr Alexandrovich Badmaev established their family genealogical tree⁸ which claimed as their ancestors Ligden Khan's daughter and Barshukhan, who was a descendant of Chinggis Khan in the 7th generation. Their grandson in the 5th generation was Badma, grandfather of Włodzimierz Badmajeff. The place of Tabtanai was one of Badma's estates and all his descendants were born and lived there. Włodzimierz loved his motherland and left beautiful descriptions of its maidenly beauty. He also described how his family members used to collect herbs and plants which served for preparing medicines (Brodowski 1932: 170).

Owing to a very noble origin of the Chinggisid lineage the family led comfortable life in Siberia and Jamyan, the future Włodzimierz, could feel privileged at the monastery of Aga (known as Aginsky Datsan) where he was taught from the age of 8 to 12 personally by the abbot (*shiretiii*, Brodowski 1932: 173) with whom he stayed.⁹ Thereafter he was taken by his uncle, Pyotr, to St. Petersburg, to become a pupil in his school. Sources vary: Saxer (2004: 59) gives years 1893 or 1895 as probable dates of Jamyan's arrival to St. Petersburg, while Włodzimierz related that he arrived there when he was 12 years old, which would be around 1896. This date agrees with memories written down by his son and grandson (Badmajev 1982: 15). Though brought up and educated as a Buddhist, Jamyan was baptised as Vladimir Nikolayevich Badmaev in 1897.¹⁰ His godfather was tsar Nikolai II.

How did it happen that these Mongols – the Badmaevs – appeared in St. Petersburg and were admitted to the highest circles of the Russian society? Uncle

⁵ The Act of granting citizenship on 7.06.1920 says it is given „synowi Buddy i Handy z Tubczynów” [to the son of Budda and Khanda from the Tubchins] .

⁶ In Wołodkiewicz 2000: 21 the date of birth is given wrongly as 1886.

⁷ Brodowski 1932: 168: The great-grandfather of Włodzimierz Badmajeff, Basutu called *zasogol* received in 1803 from Peter the Great an edict confirming his Chinggis Khan's ancestry. Basutu was the grandson of Ligden Khan.

⁸ Reproduced in Polish in Brodowski 1932: 56–57.

⁹ Saxer (2004 : 59) writes that Jamyan stayed in the monastery “from the age of about four”. Perhaps the mistake originated from the information that he actually stayed in the monastery for four years, which he, Włodzimierz Badmajeff, related in *Chi Szara...* (1929), see Brodowski 1932: 167.

¹⁰ In Badmajev (1982: 15) the year 1894 is given, which must be a printing error.

of Vladimir, Sultim (Tsultim) Badma, was a famed lama physician among the Mongols in Buryatia (Saxer 2004: 25). In the eastern border of Russia its military divisions under the command of General Muravyev-Amurski were stationed in order to protect the borders from the Japanese. In the 1850s the army was severely troubled by an epidemic, which was successfully controlled by Sultim Badma. He was then invited to St. Petersburg, baptised as Alexander Aleksandrovich Badmayev and his godfather was tsar Alexander II himself. Sultim Badma, now Alexander, was allowed to open a pharmacy on Poklonnaya Gora with Tibetan-Mongolian medicines and to continue his medical practices among the Russian elites. His brother Jamsaran, educated in Irkutsk, came to St. Petersburg as well. He was also baptised, received the name Pyotr Aleksandrovich¹¹ and was favoured by the tsar. He was involved in politics and influenced the Russian policy towards annexation of Mongolia, Tibet and Manchuria (Saxer 2004: 32–34, 37, Brodowski 1932: 73–88). Regardless of his political activities he worked as a successful physician. He opened a clinic and translated two parts of the Tibetan medical treatise “The Four Tantras” (*rgyud bzhi*) into Russian. He established a school for Buryats, which had a program of gymnasium. To this school he invited four of his nephews, including Jamyan, later known as Vladimir.

Vladimir did not feel well in St. Petersburg and was taken to Kyakhta and later to Kazan', where he studied in gymnasium. After graduation he was again taken to St. Petersburg. He became a student of the Military Medical Academy for 3 years (Brodowski 1932: 178) and at the same time he received medical education from his uncle in his clinic and pharmacy on Poklonnaya Gora established by Alexander. When the academy was temporary closed, Vladimir moved to Moscow where he subsequently graduated from the Medical Faculty of the university as a doctor of medicine (Brodowski 1932: 179).

During the First World War Vladimir worked as a physician in a train hospital. (Saxer 2004: 59). He married with a Tatar woman and when the Revolution started they escaped with their daughter to Poland and lived in Tomaszów Mazowiecki, not far from Warsaw. Wladimir Badmayev received Polish citizenship on June 7th, 1920 and became Włodzimierz Badmajeff, starting a new life as a physician in Poland (Saxer 2004: 59), which freshly regained its independence in 1918.

In the 1920s¹² the Badmajeffs moved to Warsaw and there one of Włodzimierz's patients was Tamara Ramlau, a woman from a noble family who used to live in Russia, but lost her main relatives and became impoverished during the Revolution. Włodzimierz left his first wife and started a new life with Tamara (Saxer 2004: 59).¹³

Owing to Tamara Ramlau's connections Włodzimierz Badmajeff became popular as a medical doctor among the Polish elite. Among his patients were the most prominent personalities: President Stanisław Wojciechowski (1869–1953, in office

¹¹ More about him in Brodowski 1932: 11–107, Badmajev 1982:, Saxer 2004: 25–58.

¹² In Badmajev (1982: 16) the year 1925 is given.

¹³ In other books and documents Tamara's family name is given as Brzozowska (Wołodkiewicz 2000: 21).

1922–1926) and President Ignacy Mościcki (1867–1946, in office 1926–1939) (Saxer 2004: 59), though these two politicians belonged to the opposite political options. Włodzimierz Badmajeff was allowed to practise what he called Tibetan Medicine. Eventually he opened his own clinic and a pharmacy.

Besides his activity as a doctor he worked as a scholar and an editor. Between 1921–1961 he published over 50 scholarly texts on medicine. These included: *Tajemnica zdrowia* [Secret of Health] in 1931, *Medycyna tybetańska, jej istota, cele i sposoby działania* [Tibetan Medicine, its Essence, Aims and Methods of Treatment] published in 1933, an article „Właściwości zdrowotne kumysu” [Healing qualities of kumis] in 1933, *Ex oriente lux: cherchons la santé* in 1934, and *Na drogach życia i zdrowia człowieka* [On the Man's Paths of Life and Health] in 1935, *Diagnoza syntetyczna w świetle filozoficznych założeń medycyny tybetańskiej* [Synthetic Diagnosis in the Light of Philosophical Assumptions of Tibetan Medicine] in 1935, in 1932–1935 – a journal *Lekarz Tybetański* [Tibetan Doctor] etc.

He re-worked medical recipes and replaced certain herbs and other ingredients by those available in Europe. Main thoughts of Włodzimierz Badmajeff on medicine were introduced by him in the book *Chi Szara Badahan*, published in Warsaw in 1929.¹⁴ The book raised interest in the Asian medical systems and Asian philosophy. One of the results was another book, written by Feliks Brodowski: *Badmayeffowie. Medycyna Tybetu w zetknięciu z cywilizacją Zachodu*, [Badmayeffs. The Medicine of Tibet in contact with the civilization of the West] published in 1932 by Księgarnia F. Hoesicka in Warsaw. Apart from presenting biographies of Pyotr and Włodzimierz Badmajeff it described the principles of “the science of jud-shi” (i.e. *rgyud bzhi*, the Four Tantras) and the relations between nature and civilization.

Similarly to Pyotr Badmajeff, who excluded from his translation of the Four Tantras all fragments dealing with Buddhism, in order to make it better fitted for the Western reader, Włodzimierz in his book *Chi Szara Badahan*, while presenting Mongolian medical system based on Tibetan Medicine attempted to make it as close as possible to the European way of thinking and perception. He combined his knowledge of the two medical systems, Asian and European (biomedical).¹⁵

The fact that Włodzimierz Badmajeff's healing can be called ‘Mongolian Medicine’ is proved by his terminology which is the Polish rendering of Mongolian words: *chi* for Mong. *kei* (Tib. *rlung*) – ‘wind’, *szara* for Mong. *shar-a* (Tib. *mkhris*)

¹⁴ It was translated into German in 1998 (Saxer 2004: 61). Wołodkiewicz 2000: 21 gives wrongly the date of publication as 1928.

¹⁵ Saxer (2004: 61–62) commented it: “It is a complete blend of Tibetan and Western philosophy, Tibetan medicine and biomedicine. [...] The biomedical concepts of cells and blood cells are confidently incorporated into Tibetan medicine as if it had been so forever”. Saxer describes some of his ideas on nature and culture and the way of living and adds that Włodzimierz Badmajeff proposed “a holistic path towards a better life”. His methods echo with modern approach of the so-called “integral or integrative medicine”, which combines the conventional medical care with complementary methods. It treats the mind, body, and spirit – all at the same time, just like Włodzimierz Badmajeff postulated in his book (Brodowski 1932: 187–194).

– ‘bile’ and *badahan* for Mong. *badagan-a* (Tib. *bad kan*) – ‘phlegm’. It is interesting to observe that his son and grandson, Peter and Vladimir (jr.) while presenting Tibetan Medicine to the Western milieu still used these Mongolian terms (*chi, szara, badahan*), evidently owing their medical terminology to Włodzimierz’s teachings and publications (B a d m a j e v 1982: 5–6).

The uniqueness of Włodzimierz B a d m a j e f f ’s medical practice lied in the fact that owing to his both Russian and traditional Mongolian Buddhist education he could serve as a bridge between the Mongols and the Poles. Moreover, he was an excellent ambassador of Mongolian Traditional Medicine in Europe. He had patients not only in Poland, but also in France and Germany (B a d m a j e v 1982: 16, S a x e r 2004: 61).

And indeed the fate of his medical methods and recipes was to go further to the West: when Włodzimierz died¹⁶ and conditions in the communist Poland made it impossible to practice Tibetan-Mongolian healing and produce medicines,¹⁷ his son Peter and grandson Vladimir (jr.) eventually assisted in the production of the medicine Padma Lax and Padma 28 in Switzerland and moved to the United States of America (B a d m a j e v 1982: 17–19, S a x e r 2004: 68).

To sum it up, we can say that when allopathic medicine developed rapidly in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, it limited at the same time the possibilities for “traditional Asian medicines” to co-exist. Nevertheless, such persons as Włodzimierz B a d m a j e f f were pioneers in promoting what he called a “synthetic medicine” and what we call today as “integrative medicine”.

The B a d m a j e v juniors, Peter and Vladimir formulate Włodzimierz B a d m a j e f f ’s core ideas as follows: “For thousands of years the practitioners of lamaistic medicine have appreciated the integrity of the total person in relation to nature. They have utilized this integrity in the service of total health. They have stressed prevention, natural ingredients, sane attitudes and behavior, and the importance of an intelligent doctor-patient relationship. They have known the necessity for cooperation with a skilled physician whose responsibility it is to teach the person to understand his being at all levels – physical, mental-emotional, and spiritual-psychical” (B a d m a j e v 1982: VIII).

The third phase

Aspects of Tibetan-Mongolian Medicine mentioned above are stressed by modern Mongolian physicians practising Mongolian Traditional Medicine, both in their motherland

¹⁶ Translation of obituary: “Włodzimierz B a d m a j e w, doctor of medicine, the requiem mass will take place in the Church of St. Carlo Borromeo in Powązki on March 27th, 1961 at 12.10”. *Życie Warszawy*, 1961 March 27 nr 73, Nekrologia, Press Clipping Office.

¹⁷ Peter tried to give all his father’s formulations to “Herbapol”, the government run industry producing herbal medicines under the condition of using his father’s name, but he was refused due to strict procedures that were imposed on this industry by the authorities (B a d m a j e v 1982: 18).

and abroad. When conditions in Poland changed with democratization in the 1990s, Mongolian doctors went there and started their medical practices.

Already in the late 1970s Mongolian physicians in the Mongolian People's Republic, nowadays Mongolia, explained qualities of Tibetan Medicine on the level of living cells' membrane. Over 20 scholars have participated in this process in the last 30 years (A m b a g a, S a r a n t s e t s e g 2009: 25).

The key person of the research was Prof. Miyegombyn A m b a g a, who proposed "the new enriched definition of living cells, which emphasized that main regulating mechanisms of living cells are the three states of membrane-redox potentials, providing a normal flow of protons and electrons (...)" (A m b a g a, S a r a n t s e t s e g 2009: 25).¹⁸ In his membrane theory,¹⁹ Prof. A m b a g a has used the theory of Tibetan-Mongolian traditional medicine of three humors, in Tibetan: *rlung*, *mkhris* and *bad kan*. He explains that abstract terms such as *rlung*, *mkhris*, and *bad kan* are the three states of membrane-redox potentials of living cells (A m b a g a, S a r a n t s e t s e g 2009: 25).²⁰ This theory serves as the "main scientific-methodological basis of the Newly Coded Medicine (NCM), which originated from the integration of traditional and modern medicine" (A m b a g a, S a r a n t s e t s e g 2009: 25).

Today at the Medical University in Ulan Bator the Inner Asian Medicine is studied as the Newly Coded Medicine (NCM) under the supervision of Prof. A m b a g a. The old medical texts are studied and explained in accordance with the knowledge and methods of modern medicine in order to make them fully understood and synthesized. This would enable the further use of them and result in the development of medical sciences. Under Prof. A m b a g a's supervision in the last 30 years in Mongolia and abroad dozens of doctors of medical sciences (Ph. D.) and five doctors of science (D. Sc.) have been trained.

Prof. A m b a g a emphasizes that the Newly Coded Medicine should not be understood as a simple combination of traditional and modern medical systems. He estimates that in the Newly Coded Medicine approximately 30% of its theory is derived from Traditional Medicine, 30% from Modern Medicine (i.e. allopathic or Western Medicine or biomedicine) and 40% is a brand new content (A m b a g a, S a r a n t s e t s e g 2009: 25). He believes that the NCM will bring new horizons for medical sciences and eventually help many patients all over the world.

¹⁸ The main principles of the NCM are explained in more details in the article by A m b a g a and S a r a n t s e t s e g (2009: 25–27).

¹⁹ M. A m b a g a, B. S a r a n t s e t s e g, *Хий Шар Бадганы мембрант байгууламж* [khii, shar, badgana membrane structure], no date of publication.

²⁰ "[...] whole organism's membrane structure, existing in the three basic states as fluid-alpha state, crystal-solid state and fluid-crystal intermediate gamma state can play the role of such biological substance, i.e. beta state of membrane structure. Its external functional properties correspond to an abstract notion of *badgan*, alpha state of MS – its functional external properties summarized under an abstract notion of *mkhris* and intermediate gamma state of MS, external functional properties which are symbolized under an abstract notion of *rlung* (A m b a g a, S a r a n t s e t s e g, no date, p. 73).

Today Mongolian doctors, Prof. Ambaga's disciples, practise Mongolian Traditional Medicine in many places all over the world, including Poland.²¹ They have received education in both medical systems, traditional Asian and modern Western European, similarly to Włodzimierz Badmajeff, the main character presented in this article. As physicians who practice Tibetan-Mongolian Traditional Medicine they share his hope that their work will contribute to people's health and happiness.

Bibliography

Ambaga, M., B. Sarantsetseg, "NCM – Shine anagaakh ukhaany onol, arga zuin ündes" in: *Mongolyn Anagaakh Ukhaan – Mongolian Medical Sciences*, 2009, No 3 (149), pp. 25–27.

Ambaga, M., B. Sarantsetseg, *Хуи Шар Бадганы мембрант байгууламж*, no date of publication.

Badmajeff, W., *Chi Szara Badahan. Zasady medycyny tybetańskiej*, Warszawa 1929.

Badmajev, P. (Jr), V. (Jr), Park, L., *Healing Herbs. The Heart of Tibetan Medicine*, Red Lotus Press, Berkeley 1982.

Brodowski, F., *Badmajeffowie. Medycyna Tybetu w zetknięciu z cywilizacją Zachodu*, Księgarnia F. Hoesicka, Warszawa 1932.

Lunreg Dandar, *Mongol ulamjlalt anagaakh ukhaany tüükh*, transl. I. Demberel, Printing House of Academy of Sciences, Ulaanbaatar 1993.

Dashiyev, D., "Experiences with Comparative Studies of Tibetan Medical Formulae", in *Ayur Vijnana*, vol. 6, International Trust for Traditional Medicine ITTM, Kalimpong 1999, pp. 10–16.

Dashzeveg, N., *Mongol anagaakh ukhaany товч түүх*, Ulaanbaatar 1999.

Ganzorig, D., "Lunrig Dandar: Life and Works of One of the Last Great Scholars of Tibetan Medicine in Mongolia" in *Biographies of Eminent Mongol Buddhists, PIATS 2006: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Eleventh Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, Königswinter 2006", ed. by Elverskog, Johan, IITBS, Halle, pp. 107–116.

Saxer, M., *Journeys with Tibetan Medicine. How Tibetan Medicine came to the West. The story of the Badmayev Family*. Martin Saxer submitted as masters thesis at the Institute of the Social Cultural Anthropology, University of Zurich, Prof. Dr. Micheal Oppitz, December 2004.

Strzelczyk, J. (ed.), *Spotkanie dwóch światów. Stolica apostolska a świat mongolski w połowie XIII wieku. Relacje powstałe w związku z misją Jana di Piano Carpiniego do Mongołów*, Wydawnictwo ABOS, Poznań 1993.

Wołodkiewicz, W., „Dr med. Włodzimierz Badmajeff – prekursor medycyny tybetańskiej w Polsce”, *Wiadomości Zielarskie*, 7/8, 2000, pp. 20–21.

Życie Warszawy, 1961 marzec 27, nr 73, Nekrologia, Biuro Wycinków prasowych.

²¹ The authors of these lines are both Prof. Ambaga's disciples.



Dr. Med. Włodzimierz Badmajeff

1. Photograph of Włodzimierz Badmajeff from the book of F. Brodowski (1932)

O d p i s

Ministerstwo
Spraw Wewnętrznych

Nr. A.E. 8870/23
Warszawa
dn. 17 maja 1923 r.

Akt Nadania Obywatelstwa

Na zasadzie art. 12 Ustawy z dnia 20 stycznia 1920 r. Dz.U.R.P. Nr. 7 p. 44 i art. 1 i art. 8 rozporządzenia ministerjalnego z dnia 7 czerwca 1920 r. Dz.U.R.P. z dnia 7 czerwca 1920 r. Dz.U.R.P. Nr. 52 poz. 320 nadaje Panu Włodzimierzowi Badmajeffowi, zamieszkałemu w Tomaszowie Mazowieckim urodzonemu dnia 10 grudnia st. st. 1884 r. w Czycie na Syberji, synowi Buddy i Handy z Tubczynowów, obywatelstwo Państwa Polskiego.

Obywatelstwo to nabywa razem z p. Włodzimierzem Badmajeffem żona jego Anne z domu Ogdy-Seredina Jefremow, urodzona w r. 1892 w Warszawie oraz córki Nina, urodzona r. 1913 w Moskwie i Tamara, urodzona dn. 3 grudnia st. st. 1915 r. we wsi Bobrownia.

Za dzień nabycia obywatelstwa uważa się dzień, wymieniony powyżej w dacie.

Zapiseano we właściwym rejestrze pod L.b. 730. -

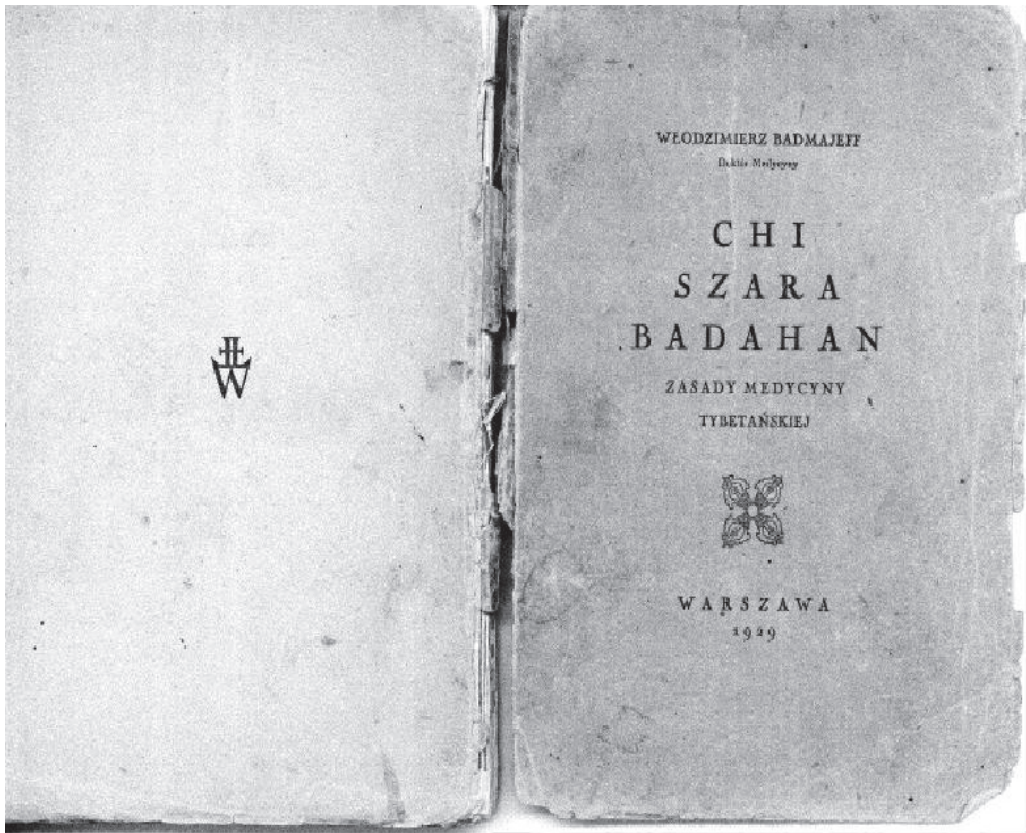
pieczęć: godko
Rzeczpospolita Polska
Min. Spr. Wewnętrznych

Za Ministra
/-/ Olpiński
Podsekretarz Stenu

zgodność z oryginałem stwierdzam
Warszawa dnia 7 września 1940 r.

geprüft 9/18 1940
Aerzte Kammer
im DISTRIKT WARSCHAU
Bieluina

-4-



3. Cover of the book by Włodzimierz Badmajeff, *Chi Szara Badahan*.
Zasady medycyny tybetańskiej, Warszawa 1929