

Jan Martinus Agnes VAN DER VALK: CURRICULUM VITAE

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Main areas of research

Contemporary practices of Sowa Rigpa (Tibetan medicine) medicine; Tibetan medicinal plant identification; Indian herbal trade; industrial manufacture of polyherbals; regulations of traditional herbal (medicinal) products; potent substances; macroscopic authentication of Asian *materia medica*

Present position

7/2017 – Tibetan medicine practitioner at *upel menkhang* (“the blue poppy”, self-employed), the first residential Sowa Rigpa herbal and therapeutic practice in Belgium (<http://www.deblauwepapaver.be>)

Degrees

2012 – 2017 **PhD in Anthropology** (supervised by Alexiades, M.N., Peluso, D.) at School of Anthropology and Conservation (SAC), University of Kent (funded by Kent 50th Anniversary Scholarship and a GEN Foundation research grant), dissertation title “*Alternative pharmaceuticals: the technoscientific becomings of Tibetan medicines in-between India and Switzerland*”

2012 – 2016 Three-year Basic and one-year Advanced **Courses on Tibetan medicine** theory and practice (including hands-on workshops and consultations, taught by amchi Arya, P.Y.) at Tibetan Medicine Education Center, Colombier, Switzerland

2011 – 2012 **M.Sc. in Ethnobotany** at SAC, University of Kent, UK (received Ethnobotany Prize for Best Student), dissertation title “*A macromorphological authentication study of seeds and fruits traded on the UK market as Traditional Chinese Medicine*” (supervised by Ellen, R.F., Leon, C.J.) [Distinction]

2005 – 2010 **M.Sc. in Biology** (major Ecology & Conservation, minor Plant Evolution & Diversity), University of Leuven, Leuven, Belgium, dissertation title “*Plants as food for the living, the livestock and the dead: A paleoethnobotanical view on subsistence, taphonomy and mortuary ritual by macroremains analysis of Middle Bronze Age Gibala – Tell Tweini, Syria*” (supervised by Van Neer, W., Marinova, E.) [Cum Laude]

Main previous positions

2012 – 2015 part-time **Graduate Teaching Assistant** at SAC, University of Kent, conducting weekly seminars and course-related work for Anthropology undergraduate modules on ethno-pharmacology and ethno-biology

- 4 – 10/2012 **Research Associate** at the Chinese Medicinal Plant Authentication and Conservation Centre, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, London
- 8/2010 – 7/2011 **Scientific Researcher** at the Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences, Brussels, Belgium, paleo-ethnobotanical analysis of plant remains from medieval archaeological sites in Brussels

Important academic presentations

- 2017/8/1 invited paper presentation at the Longevity, Yoga and Tibetan Pharmaceuticals conference at University of Vienna titled “*The pharmaceutical becomings of Tibetan medicines in Switzerland: Making things with humans along PADMA’s assembly line*” [convened by Kloos et al., attendance funded through Ratimed ERC funding]
- 2016/10/12 invited paper presentation, opening the ArgO-EMR Seminar Series (Anthropology Research Group at Oxford on Eastern Medicines and Religions) on Botanical Ontologies in Asian Medicines titled “*Testing Tibetan materia medica scientifically: Hybrid ontologies in practice?*” [organised by Hsu, E. at University of Oxford]
- 2015/5/9 invited paper presentation at closed interdisciplinary workshop on Tibetan medical formulas at EASTmedicine, University of Westminster titled “*Commensurating plant identities in Sowa Rigpa: the issue of botanical identification*” [organised by Schrempf, M. with Wellcome Trust funding]
- 2014/6/4 paper presentation in ‘Ethnomedicine and Socioeconomic Implications’ session, 14th ISE conference (International Society for Ethnobiology, Bumthang, Bhutan) titled “*A case study on the impact of (inter)national regulations on the sourcing and processing of Tibetan medicinal plants*”
- 2013/9/9 paper presentation in ‘Asian Pharmaceuticals’ session, ICTAM VIII (International Congress on Traditional Asian Medicine, Sancheong, South Korea) titled “*From plants to Tibetan pills: Pharmaceutical transmutation at the interface of India and Europe*” [travel costs funded by IASTAM]

Co-organised conferences, panels and workshops

- 2017/8/9-10 Co-organised and chaired (with Gerke, B.) a double panel on potent substances in Sowa Rigpa and potency across Asia consisting of nine papers. ICTAM IX, CCA University Kiel, Germany
- 2016/9/1-2 Co-organised (with Gerke, B., Cantwell, C.) a two-day workshop titled “‘Potent substances’ between Asian and Europe: redefining *materia medica* in Tibetan and Himalayan Medicine and Buddhist ritual”. Institute of South Asian, Tibetan, and Buddhist Studies, University of Vienna [funded by EASAS and PADMA AG]
- 2015 Co-organised and chaired (with Knight, A., Bizard, V., and Montesi, L.) a three-day symposium titled “Repositioning the social at the heart of the anthropocene: a transdisciplinary dialogue”. School of Anthropology and Conservation, University of Kent (30/10 – 1/11/2015) [jointly funded by ESRC and the School]
- 2013 Co-convened (with Rohs, L.) a workshop titled “issues of ethnobotanical research on medicinal plant trade”. Society for Economic Botany Annual Meeting, Plymouth University (28/6 – 2/7/2013)

Research projects, networks and memberships

- 2014 – 2019 **Project Associate of Ratimed** (Reassembling Tibetan Medicine, Principal Investigator Kloos, S.), a large-scale interdisciplinary ERC-funded project on the transnational Sowa Rigpa industry (<http://www.ratimed.net/>)
- 2013 – **Member of PharmAsia** (coordinated by Pordié, L.), an international social sciences research network dedicated to the study of the herbal pharmaceutical industry in Asia (<http://pharmasia.vjf.cnrs.fr/>)
- 2012 – Member of the International Association for the Study of Traditional Asian Medicine (IASTAM), International Society for Ethnobiology (ISE), and Society for Economic Botany (SEB)

Key international cooperation partners

Mark Nesbitt and Christine Leon (Economic Botany Collection, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew; dissertation research project leading to collaborative journal article); Stephan Kloos (Ratimed PI, Vienna); Barbara Gerke and Cathy Cantwell (co-organised a workshop at University of Vienna titled “*Potent Substances between Asia and Europe*” [1-2/9/2016, funded by EASAS and PADMA])

Ethnographic fieldwork experience

- 2013 – 2016 at PADMA AG, a pharmaceutical company producing medicines and supplements based on Tibetan medical formulas (Zürich, Switzerland)
- 2013 – 2015 with Tibetan medicine practitioners and pharmacy experts at Men-Tsee-Khang (Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, India), and with medicinal plant growers, processors, traders and exporters in Himachal, Amritsar and Delhi
- 2012 with Chinese medicine practitioners, dispensers and sellers (Chinatown, London, UK)

Other qualifications

- 2014 – 2015 Associate Teacher Accreditation Programme (ATAP) Certificate for higher education teaching (part-time), University of Kent
- 9/2013 5-day Basic and 10-day Advanced Course on Tibetan medicine (Men-Tsee-Khang College, Dharamsala, India)
- 2011 – 2012 Graduate School Global Skills Award (workshops and lectures on cross-cultural communication, team working, media training, and networking), University of Kent
- 6/2011 International Course on Economic Botany (taught by Mabberley, D.J.), University of Leiden / National Herbarium of the Netherlands, Leiden, the Netherlands

Languages

Dutch (native), English (excellent), French and German (professional), Mandarin Chinese and Tibetan (adequate)

Volunteering

- 3 – 5/2014 Botany and English language teacher for Tibetan medicine students and staff at Men-Tsee-Khang (Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, India)