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Crucifix Fish [Mexico]

Amulet carved from the internal cranial bone structure of the black bullhead catfish (*Ameiurus melas*), dried and sectioned. Its distinctive shape evokes the image of the crucified Christ.

Regarded as a tangible sign of the divine presence in nature, it is used as an apotropaic and narrative object, believed to offer comfort, protection, and inner strength to those facing illness or moments of vulnerability.



Kāla Sarp Doṣa Nivāraṇa Yantra [India]

Yantra amulet in embossed copper used for protection against physical and psychological illness believed that arise when the axis of karma is 'trapped by the serpent of time' (sarp).

In Vedic astrology, it is used to counteract and neutralize (*nivāraṇa*) the negative effects of a specific planetary configuration (*doṣa*) 'bound' by time (*kāla*), in which all planets are 'trapped' between two entwined lunar nodes.



Kuman Thong [Thailandia]

Talisman from Thai folk tradition for the protection of health, especially of children and vulnerable individuals.

It represents a swaddled child or a newborn wrapped in cloth and bound with strips, often with a golden face.

Object of veneration, it is kept at the heart of the home, cared for and nourished with offerings of milk and sweets, as if it were a child (the term *Kuman*, from *pali Kumāra*, means "child" or "son", while the word *thong* means "gold", "golden").

Traditionally crafted from terracotta, covered with gold leaf and painted, wrapped in consecrated textiles and cords.



Ga' u [Tibet]

Sacred vessel and portable altar for spiritual protection and healing, receptacle of blessings and active instrument in the composition of rituals.

Made of chiseled silver, adorned with important Buddhist symbols, a miniature *Bodhisattva* in the central niche, the 'threefold jewel' (*triratna*) at the top, the "eight auspicious symbols" (*asṭamangala*) on the sides. Inside, hidden from view, are preserved written prayers on paper, *mantra* and ritual medicinal pills (*ril bu*).



Toli [Mongolia]

Ritual mirror in bronze and brass, an object of profound symbolic significance, central to the ceremonial practices of Mongolian Shamanism.

"Vessel" of the shaman's spiritual power, worn as part of a ceremonial dress to channel and retain energy from the sun, moon, and stars, used as a protective shield against attacks from aggressive spirits that threaten physical and mental well-being, and to transfer healing energy to a sick person during the healing ritual.



Gri gug (Kartika) [Tibet]

Ritual instrument of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition (*rDo rje theg pa / Vajrayāna*), symbolizing the capacity to sever attachment, mental afflictions, and disturbing emotions.

Employed in medico-spiritual practices and during energetic healing rites to symbolically "cut" ties with negative energies and illnesses.



Dung Gyas'khyi [Tibet]

Ceremonial horn-trumpet of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition (*rDo rje theg pa / Vajrayāna*) crafted in silver and shell, with incised decorations and decorative inlays of *pietra dura* and *lapis lazuli*. Used as a ritual instrument with strong symbolic value to dispel negative energies and illnesses, to purify the ritual space and to protect spiritual health, invoking, mobilizing and disseminating through its sound the sacred content of the doctrine (*Dharma*).



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Tšerot [Nigeria]

Twāreg amulet worn to protect the body and health from negative influences and illnesses. Composed of a triangular chased-silver compartment containing Qur'anic verses written on paper. The amulet's active essence lies in the sacred value of the words contained (*Tšerot* = "testo", "messaggio"), amplified by the healing power attributed to the metal of the vessel.



Byōki heiyo Omamori [Japan]

Amulet for the protection of health and defence against illnesses, consecrated at *shintō Kashihara Jingū* shrine in Nara. Composed of a small cloth pouch enclosing a fragment of wood inscribed with a prayer or sacred formula blessed by the shrine priest. Externally decorated with the words *byōki* 病氣 ("illness") *heiyo* 平癒 ("healing, recovery of health"), *omamori* 御守 ("honorable protection").



Yphantó Phylachtó [Greece]

Votive amulets dedicated to *Hágios Stylianós* (Saint Stiliano), protector of children, particularly infants, and healer of childhood illnesses. Composed of a woven textile pouch decorated with Byzantine motifs, containing blessings and fragments of prayers from the Greek Orthodox liturgical tradition. The amulet's active essence lies in the sacred value of the words it contains, amplified by the symbolic power of the cross.



Umúthi [Zulu • South Africa]

Ceremonial vessel for medicinal plants and sacred remedies prepared by *inyanga*, healers, used in rituals of health protection, purification, and communication with ancestors. A symbol of balance between body, spirit, and nature. Composed of a small dried gourd, painted and decorated with strands of coloured beads.



Yabrānnā kētāb [Ethiopia]

Manuscript amulet on parchment, with painted images and writing in *gə'əz*, the ancient liturgical language of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Known as *Yabrānnā kētāb* ("Book of liberation"), it contains prayers, invocations, and apotropaic formulas intended to repel negative influences and to protect and heal the body from illnesses. Kept rolled or unfurled and hung above the bed, worn on the person, or used in ritual ceremonies. To provide protection "from head to foot", its length is determined by the height of the individual who owns and uses it.



Ex voto [Italy and Greece]

Recorded since Greco-Roman antiquity and in the Paleo- Christian era, and widespread across the Mediterranean basin and later in parts of Central and South America, the *ex voto* represent, in the context of health and illness both as a symbolic act and as a tangible expression of gratitude (*ex voto* "thanksgiving", a votive offering given *post factum*), of faith or as a plea for help in times of distress (*ex voto* "propitiatory" or "dedicatory", a votive promise made *ante factum*) addressed to a deity or sacred figure, following a healing or during illness as an appeal for protection, thereby integrating the spiritual dimension with the therapeutic one.



Om Mani Padme Hūm [Nepal]

Ritual tablet with the *mantra* *Om Mani Padme Hūm* dedicated to the *Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara* whose recitation and visualization are considered a powerful source of protection, spiritual transformation and healing in *Mahāyāna* and *Vajrayāna* Buddhist traditions. Used in devotional and spiritual healing practices to purify the energy channels (*nāḍī*) and promote the harmonious flow of *prāṇa* (vital energy), to spread blessings and protection, to purify space, activate the sacred dimension, and ward off malevolent influences.



***Ma ni chos 'khor* [Tibet]**

Prayer wheel of the spindle type, a ritual instrument of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition (*rDo rje theg pa / Vajrayāna*). Used as an “amplifier” within meditative and devotional practice, uniting physical movement, mental recitation and the instrument’s symbolic efficacy, to protect and promote physical and spiritual health. It encloses a long strip of paper inscribed repeatedly with the *mantra* of the Medicine Buddha *Bhaisajyaguru* intended for the purification of physical and mental illnesses.



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***Saṇṇi Yakumā* [Śrī Laṅkā]**

Ceremonial masks used in the *Saṇṇi Yakumā* or ritual of the *Daha Aṭa Saṇṇiya* (“18 illnesses”), an ancient healing ceremony elaborated through dance and documented in Sri Lanka traditions since the earliest times. The complete ritual unfolds as a sequence of 18 dances, each performed in a distinctive style by a mask that visualizes and represents one of the 18 principal “families” of physical and psychological disorders, understood as caused by demons and other malignant forces. During the performance the healer (*yakadūra*) summons the demon (embodied by the mask), offers it a tribute, and persuades it to withdraw from the patient by placing it under control.



***Názbas k'é* [Diné / Navajo]**

“Circle of sacred relationship” of the *Diné / Navajo* tradition. Protective amulet, symbol of health and source of healing, connected with the earth, ancestors and the cosmos according to principles of harmony, beauty and balance, and in observance of the sacred relations with Mother Earth, Father Sky and the cycle of life. The circle and the cross, drawing on the potency of forces present in nature, function symbolically to protect health, to keep away illness and to restore the individual to an original spiritual equilibrium.



***Mālā* [India]**

String of beads used in the practice of *japa*, to support the repeated sequential recitation of *mantra*, invocations and devotional and contemplative prayers. Used as an aid to intensify concentration in meditative practices and in spiritual healing practices. They may be made from a range of materials that possess distinct energetic and symbolic values according to Ayurvedic, Tantric, and Buddhist traditions, energetically charged through *mantra* repetition and consecrated by a spiritual teacher, serving as a symbolic safeguard for the health of body and mind.



***Zhēnwǔ shényin* [China]**

Ritual seal of Emperor *Xuánwǔ*, a central figure in Daoist tradition, harmonizer of the elements and spiritual sovereign of the northern quadrant. Carved into a block of mahogany, it is used to imprint talismans and amulets on paper for the protection of bodily health (in healing rituals, these paper talismans are burned, dissolved in water, and taken to protect oneself and cure illnesses).



***Sphragītha Prospóron* [Greece]**

Seal of the Greek Orthodox tradition incised with letters, words and geometric forms of particular symbolic significance, used to stamp the dough of the “bread of offering” (*prospóron*) prior to baking. The round form symbolizes the womb of the *Theotókos* (“Mother of God”), which receives, nourishes, and protects Christ the Redeemer. Decorated and consecrated by the impression of the seal, the ceremonial bread is “offered” to God during the liturgy and consumed within the household to symbolically safeguard the physical and spiritual health of people.



***Sānqīng shényin* [China]**

Ritual seal of the “Three Purities” (*Sānqīng*), principal deities of the Daoist pantheon and manifestations of the *Dào*, controllers of formless time. Carved from peachwood, it is used to imprint talismans and amulets on paper for the protection of bodily and mental health.



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Penca de balangandā [Brazil]

Copper and brass pendant-jewellery used as an amulet for the protection of health.

Composed of a cluster of metallic charms with symbolic meanings related to the protection of health, fertility, and longevity, and associated with protective deities (*orixás*) of the Afro-Brazilian tradition.



rDo rje phur pa (Vajrakīla) [Tibet]

Ritual dagger in gilded bronze in the form of *Vajrakīla*, a wrathful deity central to the ancient tantric corpus (*rnying rgyud*), which symbolically represents the enlightened activity of all the *Buddha* directed to dissipate spiritual obstacles on the path to awakening. Depicted with three faces, outstretched wings, and a lower body shaped as a *phur pa*, in union with his spiritual consort, he holds in his hands a pyramidal dagger, his principal attribute. Used as a symbolic instrument in purification and healing rituals, it is invoked for the protection of physical and mental health and to neutralize negative energies manifesting as illnesses.



Ité Ogwú [Nigeria]

“Medicine vessel” of the *Igbò* of Nigeria.

Ritual terracotta vessel in the shape of a human head, ‘prepared’ with medicinal herbs, animal bones, and objects of symbolic value (stones, seeds, metal fragments, talismans, sacred words), consecrated and ‘employed’ in practices of healing for the body and the mind.



Milāgros [Mexico]

Votive wooden cross, enriched and adorned with a plurality of metal *ex voto* representing organs and parts of the human body, animals and objects.

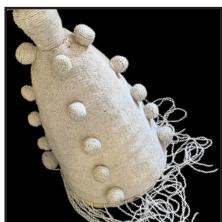
The power of the cross, acting as a catalyst of faith and hope for salvation and healing, is augmented by the *ex voto* to protect the body and health from negative influences and illnesses.



Tâma Papouútsia [Greece]

Votive footwear in laminated aluminium, decorated with the effigy of *Taxiárchis Mantamáthos* (Archangel Michael of *Mantamáthos*), revered as the highest thaumaturge, venerated as protector and healer for those facing illnesses or physical hardship.

Offered by the faithful at the sacred sanctuary of *Mantamáthos* on the island of Lesbos, as a sign of gratitude or supplication for healing, and displayed as an amulet for the ritual protection of physical and spiritual health.



Yorùbá Adé [Nigeria]

Ceremonial crown-headpiece reserved for sovereigns and priests of specific deities. A therapeutic talisman, symbol of royalty and ancestral connection, it embodies the spiritual power of *àṣé*, the cosmic creative energy that links the visible and invisible worlds and can be channelled for healing and benevolence.

At the top of the crown is concealed a potent ‘medicine’ (*òògùn àṣé*) composed of herbs, powders and consecrated objects, prepared by the herbal healer (*oníṣègùn*) to treat physical and spiritual illness, strengthen vital energy and protect against negative influences.



Phā Yant [Thailand]

Talismanic *yant* (*yantra*) shirt worn to symbolically protect the body from weapons in battle, to strengthen vitality, to protect against illnesses and to maintain physical and spiritual health.

Made from *pha* textile ‘purified’ and dyed with ‘aloe’, ‘empowered’ by diagrams, magical formulas, figures and devotional images painted with ink mixed with animal bile, ‘activated’ through blessing rituals, meditation or the recitation of formulas *khata* (*mantra*). Consecrated at *Wat Bang Krabao* temple, renowned for its healing practices and a pilgrimage destination.



Bhaiṣajyaguru mantra

Mantra of the Medicine Buddha