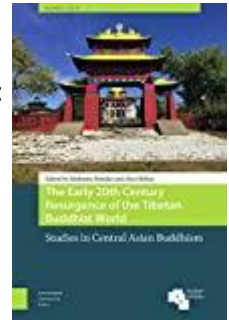


**Ishihama Yumiko, Alex McKay, eds.** *The Early 20th Century Resurgence of the Tibetan Buddhist World: Studies in Central Asian Buddhism (Global Asia)*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021. 264 pp. \$136.00, cloth, ISBN 978-946372864-5.



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For Tibet and Mongolia, the early twentieth century proved to be a kind of threshold, a transitional period in which the foundations were laid for their political fate later in the century. The two regions were closely linked by their deep religious and cultural ties and their inclusion, albeit to varying administrative degrees, in the Manchu Qing Empire. This connectedness, however, has not often been reflected in English-language scholarship in the past few decades. Only recent years have seen renewed interest in the multifaceted interconnections of the Tibetan-Mongol world, as evidenced by publications such as Matthew King's scholarly work *Ocean of Milk, Ocean of Blood: A Mongolian Monk in the Ruins of the Qing Empire* (2019). This volume, edited by Ishihama Yumiko and Alex McKay, is the outcome of a panel at the conference of the International Association for Tibetan Studies in Paris in 2019. It focuses precisely on these political and religious entanglements that shaped the Tibetan and Mongolian path to modernity at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. It

gravitates around the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's sojourn in Mongolia, an event that influenced later political developments in many ways. The volume excels in the abundant use of mostly not-yet-explored primary sources in Tibetan, Mongolian, and Russian. The wealth of sources alone makes this volume worth reading. But it has other merits as well. In his learned introduction, Alex McKay outlines the imperial context against which the individual contributions must be read and highlights the encounter between the various forms of Western colonial modernity, including Russia. It is still rare in Anglophone scholarship that Russia is included in considerations of Western modernity as an equal Western partner. McKay also takes his own stance with regard to postcolonial considerations: instead of interpreting Buddhist reform efforts as a reaction to Western criticism and attributing change solely to the encounter with European ideas, he emphasizes internal Buddhist developments before the European impact.

Before I go into the content of the volume in more detail, I have to say a few words about the

copyediting, which leaves a lot to be desired. We find many printing mistakes in the Tibetan transliterations, for example in the article by Sergius Kuzmin (see the title of the chronicle of the Fifth Dalai Lama on page 132 which contains numerous transliteration mistakes), as well as repetitions, for example in Baatr Kitinov's (p. 179n50) and Hamugetu's articles (p. 233 and p. 234). Also, annoyingly, in Hamugetu's article the footnotes are not properly counted. Starting with footnote 10, one cipher is doubled, which leads to footnote 100 for 10, 111 for 11, et cetera, carrying on through the rest of the article and again asking for a more thorough copyediting.

Of the volume's nine contributions, five deal with various aspects of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's sojourn in Mongolia, having fled there from the British forces advancing on Lhasa. Three other articles focus on Buddhism among the Kalmyks and the Buriats in the Russian Empire, while the last article covers events in Inner Mongolia. Taken as a whole, the contributions paint a nuanced picture of what is arguably one of the most important phases in Tibetan-Mongolian history, one that decisively shaped the fate of both regions in the twentieth century.

In the first paper of the collection Ishihama Yumiko discusses the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's sojourn in Mongolia in the years between 1904 and 1909, when he severed his relations with the Qing court. She addresses his attempts to enforce discipline in the Mongolian monasteries by composing "monastic constitutions" (Tib. *bca' yig*) for them and briefly comments on their structure but fails to mention the seminal study of the Tibetan *bca' yig* by Berthe Jansen.[1] Examining the Dalai Lama's establishment of monasteries, including the Buddhist temple in St. Petersburg, and his numerous encounters with Mongol lay Buddhists on his travels through Mongolia and adjacent regions, Ishihama asserts that through his pivotal position Buriats and Mongols, who had been separated from each other by tightly drawn borders

of the Qing and Russian Empires, were reconnected and revitalized. This in turn brought about their "feelings of national consciousness" (p. 52).

Dealing with the Dalai Lama's sojourn in the Khalkha territories and Qinghai during the years 1904 to 1907, Daichi Wada considers the influence Buriat Tibetan Buddhists of Russia whom the Dalai Lama met on his travels had on him. His analysis, which is based on Russian, Chinese, and Japanese sources, stresses how the Dalai Lama oscillates between a "modern diplomacy" approach based on his understanding of modern international relations between nation-states and a "traditional diplomacy" approach following Tibetan Buddhist notions, mainly of the *yon mchod*-nature. Wada succeeds in showing the Buriat impact on the Dalai Lama's ultimately unsuccessful attempts at reform after his return to Tibet.

The third article concentrates on the often neglected economic aspects of the Dalai Lama's stay in Mongolia. Makoto Tachibana shows that the Dalai Lama's presence led to a redistribution of customary Buddhist offerings, to the detriment of the Jebtsundamba Qutuytu, adding to the already existing tension between the two Buddhist dignitaries. Furthermore, through the case study of the first minister of foreign affairs in independent Mongolia, Khanddorj, the essay discusses the Tibetan economic presence in Mongolia, which continued to exist even after 1913. The author argues that in the early twentieth century moneylending was not solely in the hands of Chinese "loan-sharks," as often maintained in academic scholarship, but that "moneylending by Tibetans was an important aspect of the Mongol-Tibetan relations" (p. 88). On the one hand, the case study highlights the ambivalences that characterized Tibetan-Mongolian relations at the time; on the other hand, it illustrates the shifts in political power in Mongolia itself, which culminated in the Bogd Khaan's loss of political power through the proclamation of the Mongolian People's Government. This article is a fine example of one of

the main advantages of this book: it provides indeed new and sometimes unexpected insights into the joined Tibetan-Mongolian history of these times.

Drawing on documents from Russian and Mongolian archives, Sergius L. Kuzmin presents a continuous narrative about the “Tibet-Mongolia Political Interface in the First Half of the Twentieth Century,” once again focusing on the two main protagonists, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and the Eighth Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu. Contrary to Dai-chi Wada, he holds that the sources do not confirm the oft-stated tensions between the two, but that the Mongols were in favor of bringing into being a joint Tibetan-Mongol independent state with the support of Russia. As one result of these efforts he considers the famous 1913 treaty between Tibet and Mongolia. Kuzmin discusses Tibetan-Mongolian relations up to the 1930s, when persecution of Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhist monks was at its height under the Mongolian socialist government. Perhaps due to his chosen narrative format, some of his statements are rather conjectural. For example, on page 114 he claims that the Mongols preferred a Tibetan as their ruler “rather than a Mongol because there were not enough charismatic leaders among the descendants of Chinggis Khan and the search for a suitable candidate among the Mongols could lead to civil strife.” However, it is well known that the reasons why all the rebirths of the Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu occurred in Tibet after the first two incarnations are closely related to the Chingünjab rebellion of 1756 and the role that the Second Jebtsundamba had in it, which resulted in the Qianlong emperor’s decree of 1758 in which he stopped the search for the rebirth of the Jebtsundamba among the Mongolian nobility.[2]

The last article with a focus on the Thirteenth Dalai Lama’s stay in Mongolia, by Ishihama Yumiko and Inoue Takehito, is the only reprint in the edited volume. However, as this article was first published in Japanese in *Inner Asian Studies* 33

(2018), it is all the more gratifying that it is now being made available to scholars who do not know Japanese. The article discusses three undated letters attributed to Agvan Dorzhiev. The authors present proof that the first two letters were actually written by the Kalmyk Tayisha Tse ring zla ’od. They were addressed to the Dalai Lama and Tsar Nikolai II respectively. Only the third letter was written by Agvan Dorzhiev, to the four Tibetan students who studied in England from 1913 to 1916. The letters are extensively discussed, transliterated from the Tibetan, and translated. The facsimile reproductions provided, however, are incorrectly numbered: On page 137 the authors provide the sigla “Letter A”, differentiating them into “Letter A-1” and “Letter A-2” for the two letters of Tse ring zla ’od, and “Letter B” for the letter of Agvan Dorzhiev. The facsimile letters are given the sigla A1 to A3, B1 to B2, and C1 to C2. The facsimiles Letter A1, A2, and A3 (pp. 159-61) are in fact Letter B, while the facsimiles Letter B1 and Letter B2 on pages 162-63 are in fact Letter A-1. Letter A-2 is found on pages 164-65 under the sigla Letter C1 and C2. Two mistakes have crept into the transliteration of Letter B (facsimile: Letter A1): In line 2 read *ched* for *ches* and *khyed* for *khyad*. Notwithstanding this incorrect labeling, the paper provides unique access to previously unknown primary source material and enriches the volume considerably.

The next three contributions shed light on two Mongol groups that played an important role in the Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist network that encompassed large parts of Inner Asia, including southern Siberia and the Wolga regions. Drawing on Russian archival documents, Baatr Kitinov analyzes the external and internal factors of the revitalization of Buddhism among the Kalmyks in the Russian Empire. Identifying two stages of this process, from 1869-70 to the beginning of the twentieth century, and from 1904 to 1920, he shows that the renewal movement among the Buddhists of the empire was essentially driven by transregional personal communicative interac-

tions, which were, however, closely monitored by the Russian authorities.[3] The article is rich in previously unknown information about the revival of Tantric practices that characterized the Buddhist revitalization among the Kalmyks. Moreover, the article stands out among the others because it not only provides previously unknown historical details but also offers a theoretical analysis of the role of religion in identity-formation processes among the Kalmyks.

The time period on which Inoue Takehito's article focuses is actually beyond the temporal scope of this book, but it does allow us to see the developments among the Kalmyks of Russia in their historical depth. Thus, it contributes to a better understanding of the later events described by Kitinov. Takehito takes a look at the relations between the Don Kalmyk Sangha and the Russian Orthodox Church in the 1830s, which were negotiated in the conflicting interests of Buddhism and military as well as religious obligations to the tsar. Using the case study of the opening ceremony of a Kalmyk parish school for children, he examines the communicative strategies of the actors involved and demonstrates that, despite their divergent interests, Russian Cossacks and Buddhist monks acted together as mediators in rallying the Kalmyk community to the spiritual authority of the Russian tsar. The article contains the full translation of the report about the opening ceremony.

Although some articles in the volume repeatedly address the important role of individual Buriat actors in the Tibetan-Mongolian relations of the period, the article by Nikolay Tsyrempilov is the only one in the volume devoted solely to the Buriats. Based on an as yet unknown handwritten document written by one of the Buriat delegates to the tsar's coronation in 1896, he concentrates on the Buriat understanding of the enthronement ceremony of Tsar Nikolai II. Tsyrempilov argues that the Buriat Buddhists developed a unique understanding of the ceremony. They gave a new, spe-

cifically Buddhist meaning to it, incorporating the tsar and the Russian Empire into their own Buddhist worldview. He bases his carefully researched article, which also includes numerous illustrations and even photos (thus including and drawing on visual materials as well), on a little-known work by the famous Buriat lama Lubsan Samdan Tsydenov, whose life the author has already studied in detail elsewhere.

The last paper of the volume is dedicated to Inner Mongolia. Hamugetu discusses the relationship between tradition and modernity in the early twentieth century of the Tibetan Buddhist world through the lens of the Seventh l<sup>ci</sup>ang skya Khutukhtu's activities in the Republic of China and in Inner Mongolia, thereby concentrating not on the political, but on the religious perspective. He reads the modernization processes that were virulent in Inner Mongolia at the time as ultimately religious processes. Hamugetu deals with a topic that has received little attention so far, which is very welcome. However, his terminology is irritating, as he describes the historical political realities in the modern idiom of the People's Republic of China. This leads to an incorrect understanding not only of Qing-period institutions, but also of the precise nature of the Qing Empire itself. To give but one telling example: on page 232 the Lifanyuan, the "Court for the Administration of the Outer Regions," is translated as "the Board for National Minority affairs of Qing Dynasty." [4] In the appendix it would have been helpful had the list of temples included the Mongolian names and not only the Chinese (pp. 243-244).

Minor errors have crept into individual contributions, some of which, like the dates for the Yuan dynasty in McKay's introduction, should be corrected in a second edition. Despite such errors and the insufficient copyediting, this volume is a welcome addition to our knowledge about the Tibetan-Mongolian sphere of influence in the context of the Eastern and Western colonial powers at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the

twentieth century and helps paint a more multifaceted picture than we have known to date.

#### Notes

[1]. Berthe Jansen, *The Monastery Rules: Buddhist Monastic Organization in Pre-Modern Tibet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018).

[2]. Peter Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA:

Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 278-79.

[3]. The abstract to Kitinov's article mentions three stages (p. 169), but in the article itself two stages are singled out (on pp. 170 and 170 respectively).

[4]. See Dittmar Schorkowitz and Chia Ning, eds., *Managing Frontiers in Qing China: The Lifanyuan and Libu Revisited* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

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