

## Additional Note on the Origin of Lamaism in Mongolia

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In my paper on early Lamaism in Mongolia<sup>1</sup>, I have briefly tried to trace the origins of the contacts between the Southern Mongols, especially the Ordos and the Twelve Tümed, and Tibetan Lamaism in the second half of the sixteenth century; the origin of the invitation extended to the Third Dalai-Lama to visit Mongolia, and the official "reintroduction" of Lamaism into Mongolia. And I have also pointed out that however superficial its impact had remained on Mongolia Proper by the downfall of the Yüan dynasty, Lamaism never entirely disappeared from Mongolia. Indeed, as I have indicated, on a few admittedly rare occasions lamas served as envoys for Mongol princes, or at least accompanied tribute missions from Mongolia. A Lamaist dignitary known in Ming sources as Erh-i-ch'ih is mentioned several times from 1407 to 1410 as sending or bringing tribute to China. He is also described as the "Teacher of the Empire" (*Kuo-shih*) of a Mongol prince, which is strong evidence that for some time at least he had lived in the entourage of that prince. In 1438, we meet with one Ha-ma-shih-li who was an envoy for Toyon of the Oyirad and for whom Toyon also requested presents and a title in accordance with his learning and position from the Ming Court. This Ha-ma-shih-li must have been a member of the tribute mission of that year, and he may well have served as envoy in previous years; the 1438 tribute mission comprised still another monk, and Ha-ma-shih-li served again as envoy in the winter of 1439—1440.

In 1446, Toyon's son and successor, Esen-tayishi, requested a title and religious articles for yet another lama in his entourage, and he made a similar request in 1452 for a Teacher of the Empire and other Tibetan monks. Both in 1446 and 1452, the requests were rejected by the Ming Court but this is of little importance for our present purposes. The very requests indicate that there were Lamaist monks, most probably Tibetans, at the Court of the Mongol qayan and in Esen's own entourage.

Not all Mongol tribute missions have been recorded in the Chinese sources; nor do we always know who the chief envoys were, let alone who were the hundreds of followers accompanying them. It is therefore quite

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<sup>1</sup> "Early Lamaism in Mongolia", *OE* 10, 1963, 181—218.

possible, not to say probable, that there were many more monks making the trip to Peking with the yearly Mongol tribute missions than we know of through the *Ming Shih-lu*, our best record for the tribute missions. At any rate, Yang Ming, a Mongol in the Ming service who remained with the Cheng-t'ung emperor (Ying-tsung) during his Mongol captivity in 1449—1450 and left an account of his adventures in Mongolia, mentions one Teacher of the Empire with the name Ha-pa, who, he adds, had at one time served as an envoy for Esen-tayishi<sup>2</sup>. This Ha-pa, as far as I know, is nowhere mentioned in the *Ming Shih-lu*.

If there is strong evidence of the presence of Lamaism in Mongolia before its official "restoration" in the 1570s, it was among the noble families, more than among the people at large, that the lamas had retained a measure of influence. The nobility and the educated had a better chance of keeping the memory of that close cooperation between Lamaism and the Mongol Court of the Yüan empire; the nobles attracted by the cultural level of Lamaism superior to that of native Shamanism were more likely to want to revive the old tradition than the common people who had largely kept their old Shamanistic beliefs.

Outstanding representatives of this tradition of the nobility were the Altan-qan, ruler of the Twelve Tümed, and his great-nephew Qutuytai-sečen qung-tayiji of the Ordos<sup>3</sup>. As far as we can conclude from Mongol histories, these two men had begun their contacts with lamas from Amdo and Northern Tibet in the 1560s, and by 1577 had become strong enough in their Lamaist belief to invite the Dalai-lama to pay a visit to Mongolia, and it is from the latter's visit in 1578-1588 that the revival of Lamaism is usually dated.

From additional information found in the *Ming Shih-lu*, it is now possible to state that the Southern Mongols must have had contacts with Tibetan lamas long before the Altan-qan's and Qutuytai-sečen qung-tayiji's expeditions into Northern Tibet and the capture of some lamas. This new information shows that Lamaist monasteries and Lamaist monks remained a feature of the Mongol frontiers throughout the Ming period and contact between them and the Mongols must have been both easy and frequent: Buddhism, very often in its Lamaist version, was well established all along the periphery of Mongolia, in Chinese towns and in kingdoms of Central Asia with which the Mongols could not fail to have relations. On many

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<sup>2</sup> YANG MING, *Cheng-t'ung lin-jung lu* [1] (*Chi-lu hui-pien* 19). 3b.

<sup>3</sup> It is sometimes thought that Qutuytai-sečen qung-tayiji was the supreme chieftain of the Ordos; he was not, at least not officially, although he was a very powerful member of the ruling family of Ordos, and it is quite possible that his personal qualities and prestige made him more influential than the jinong of Ordos. In fact both Chinese and Mongol sources mention him as frequently as the jinong.

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[1] 楊銘, 正統臨戎錄

occasions, Central Asian rulers sent monks as their envoys to China to present the tribute, just as the Oyirad princes did from time to time. Or Buddhist dignitaries themselves sent tribute by their own representatives. These emissaries are sometimes called *lamas*, sometimes *Fan* (i. e. Tibetan) monks in the *Ming Shih-lu*; and most of the names and titles recorded are obviously transcriptions of Tibetan originals. All this would go a long way to explaining the presence of those lamas among the Oyirad in the early part of the fifteenth century, and their need for religious articles requested by the Oyirad rulers.

Admittedly the information is somewhat fragmentary and we can do no better than review the available facts and let them speak for themselves. First we shall say something about Han-tung<sup>[2]</sup> and An-ting<sup>[3]</sup>, two areas in the neighborhood of Sha-chou (the old Tun-huang) in modern westernmost Kansu (at that time outside the limits of Ming administration), which during the Hung-wu period had been given the status of military commanderies under native chieftains.

In August 1430, Han-tung sent a simple monk as envoy, but the envoys of February 1439, and January 1445, bore the title of Great Teacher of the Empire<sup>4</sup>. In April 1446, a centurion together with a *lama* sent a monk (*seng*) with tribute<sup>5</sup>.

In the *Shih-lu* entry of September 16, 1446, we read the strange case of a Tibetan monk (*Fan-seng*) with the name Chia-shih-ling-chen (Kaśa?-rinč'in) originally from Ho-chou<sup>[4]</sup> (southern Kansu) who after spending many years in Han-tung went as envoy to the Oyirad. From there he traveled to Peking, apparently as a member of a Mongol tribute mission. In Peking, however, the Chinese found out his previous history, and his earlier peregrinations made him suspected of being a spy. They decided not to let him go back, but instead ordered him to settle down with the Metropolitan Police in Nanking, a way of keeping him under surveillance, of course. Two years later, however, an imperial rescript to the military commander of Kansu revealed that this restless monk had escaped and must by now be on his way home. As it was assumed that he would try to cross the border somewhere in Kansu, the military were ordered to guard all passes and prevent his leaving the country<sup>6</sup>.

Like the chieftains of Han-tung, the princes of An-ting, in their tribute relations with China, often availed themselves of the services of Buddhist

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<sup>4</sup> *Ming Shih-lu*, Taipei 1962; *Hsüan-tsung Shih-lu*, vol. 19: 1617; *Ying-tsung Shih-lu*, vol. 24: 971; vol. 27: 2477.

<sup>5</sup> *Ying-tsung SL* 28: 2760.

<sup>6</sup> *Ying-tsung SL* 28: 2846; 29: 3310. TAMURA Jitsuzô, *Mindai Mammô shiryô*, *Min-jitsuroku-shô*, *Môko hen* 3. 142; *Mok.* 10, App. Tibet, 172.

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[2] 罕東

[3] 安定

[4] 河州

monks, apparently lamas of Tibetan origin, or at least with Tibetan names. As early as 1374, among the regulations regarding return presents granted to tribute envoys incorporated in the *Ta-Ming hui-tien (Collected Statutes of the Great Ming)*<sup>7</sup> we find a special rate of presents for Teachers of the Empire and for ordinary monks from An-ting. This is clear evidence that monks regularly served as envoys. This practice remained in effect long after 1400: indeed, between 1431 and 1444 several cases are recorded in the *Shih-lu*. In January, 1431, the prince of An-ting sent one Dorji-šigya and the Teacher of the Empire Shang-chu-ling-chen (?-rinčen). Both names are certainly of Tibetan origin. In 1439, the same Shang-chu-ling-chen arrived accompanied by his disciples. In February, 1444, the prince of An-ting dispatched as envoy a Teacher of the Empire, She-la-tsang-pu, and a little later we are told that this She-la-tsang-pu was the aforementioned Shang-chu-ling-chen's nephew. Moreover, we learn something of Shang-chu-ling-chen's previous history: he had "surrendered" to the Ming during the Yung-lo period and had maintained relations with China ever since. He had even been given a residence at Hsi-ning<sup>[4a]</sup>, and may have spent part of his time at Hsi-ning and part in An-ting. This time, however, the *Shih-lu* gives him the title not of *Kuo-shih* "Teacher of the Empire", but of *Ch'an-shih* "Dhyana master", but this may be a scribal error. Whatever his title, his nephew inherited it in 1444, which seems to indicate that Shang-chu-ling-chen had died shortly before. She-la-tsang-pu, too, used the residence of Hsi-ning, but when the local authorities became afraid that he knew too much of conditions on the borders, the Court issued orders to send him back to An-ting with instructions to help pacify the people. The same She-la-tsang-pu is mentioned once more in December, 1446: the new prince of An-ting, Ling-chan-wo-tz'u-erh (Rinčin-odzer) sent him with tribute. This time his title is correctly given as Teacher of the Empire.

The presence of Buddhism is equally well attested farther to the Northwest, in the region of Qamıl, Turfan, and Qara-qočo. In February, 1406, the Western Regions (*Hsi-yü*), not further specified, sent relics of the Buddha as tribute. The Minister of Rites saw an auspicious omen in this event and proposed an amnesty for criminals held in jail; the emperor, however, rejected the idea on the grounds that good government required a rule of law to prevent chaos, and furthermore even the religion of Buddha spoke of Heaven and Hell, good and evil, reward and retribution<sup>8</sup>!

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<sup>7</sup> *Ta-Ming hui-tien*, Taipei 1964, 112. 5a: 1655a.

<sup>8</sup> *Hsüan-tsung SL* 19: 1723; *Ying-tsung SL* 24: 971; 27: 2250, 2269, 2462—63; 28: 2876.

<sup>9</sup> *T'ai-tsung SL* 10: 758.

Buddhism must have been fairly strong in Qamil, for in December, 1410, a Buddhist Registry was created there (*seng-kang-ssu*). Qamil had two native princes recognized by the Ming and bearing Chinese titles. In June, 1412, a second Buddhist Registry was created probably in order to have one in the dependencies of each of the two princes. We may also mention that the name of the son of one of those two princes was Budaširi. Later he was to inherit his father's title and position<sup>10</sup>. This Budaširi died in 1439: his death is recorded in the *Shih-lu* on the date of January 8, 1440. His son Ali-soltan succeeded him, and if this name seems to indicate Mohammedan influence, the *Shih-lu* adds that he was also known as Dauad-širi, and in fact from hereon he is always referred to by the latter name. Whatever Islamic influence he may first have undergone, in 1442 he declared to the Chinese Court that he intended to construct a temple in honor of the Buddha in memory of his parents, or as the Chinese put it, to repay his parents' favors<sup>11</sup>. One strange thing in Qamil is that some monks bear Chinese names: thus in 1429, a certain monk T'ai-ts'ang<sup>[5]</sup> was made Director of one of the two Buddhist Registries<sup>12</sup>.

In neighboring Turfan the situation was pretty much the same as in Qamil. In 1408, a monk with the name Ch'ing-lai<sup>[6]</sup> accompanied by a disciple named Fa-ch'üan<sup>[7]</sup> and others came to present a tribute of local products. Ch'ing-lai was made a Teacher of the Empire with a high-sounding title, and Fa-ch'üan was made Director of the Buddhist Registry. During the same year, a monk named Kumaraširi sent a tribute of horses and local products; and in June, 1411, the same Kumaraširi, now called *tsung-t'ung* (governor?, administrator of a monastery?) is said to have dispatched monks to present a tribute<sup>13</sup>.

In 1414—1415, a Chinese embassy visited a number of Central Asian kingdoms and upon their return to China in 1415, the chief envoys Ch'en Ch'eng<sup>[8]</sup> and Li Hsien<sup>[9]</sup> reported in detail upon conditions prevailing in those various localities. With regard to Turfan, they noted that "the people believe in the Law of Buddha and have constructed many monasteries (*seng-ssu*)<sup>14</sup>".

In 1426, we are told that a *Hui-hui* monk brought tribute, but his name Pa-la-ma-ta-shih-li leaves little doubt that he was not a Mohammedan. In June, 1429, a monk with the name Sang-kuo-ta-shih (Sangga-dāsa?) was appointed Director of the Buddhist Registry of Turfan. In 1430, *Fan* (Tibetan?)

<sup>10</sup> *T'ai-tsung* SL 12: 1293, 1593; 14: 2127.

<sup>11</sup> *Ying-tsung* SL 24: 1176—77; 26: 1898.

<sup>12</sup> *Hsüan-tsung* SL 18: 1295.

<sup>13</sup> *T'ai-tsung* SL 11: 1062; 12: 1471.

<sup>14</sup> *Hsi-Yü Fan-kuo chih*<sup>[10]</sup>, 1937, 17a. A good part of this report is also entered in the *Ming Shih-lu: T'ai-tsung* SL 13: 1891.

[5] 太倉

[6] 清來

[7] 法泉

[8] 陳誠

[9] 李暹

[10] 西域番國志

monks such as Fo-hsien<sup>[11]</sup> and others, brought tribute. In August, 1437, the abovementioned Pa-la-ma-ta-shih-li, now a Teacher of the Empire, sent a monk with tribute<sup>15</sup>.

The Chinese envoys of 1414—1415, also noted the large number of monasteries in Qara-qoço: "the town is 10 *li* square with many monasteries (*seng-ssu*), but few inhabitants; to the east is a ruined city: indeed this is the territory of old Kao-ch'ang<sup>[12]</sup> 16".

We may also mention that Shah-Rukh's Persian embassy of 1419—1422 to China, saw "idol tempels of superb beauty" in honor of Śakyamuni in Turfan, and in Qamil they noted the existence of a huge Buddhist temple right in front of a magnificent mosque, and the Persian ambassadors do not seem to have been unduly scandalized by the unholy sight<sup>17</sup>.

The places mentioned thus far, though near enough for regular contacts, were not settled by Mongols. We must now say a word of a Mongol tribe known in Chinese sources as Ch'ih-chin, or Čigil, Mongols. These were neighbors of Han-tung and An-ting in westernmost Kansu, astraddle the road to Qamil and Central Asia, and had frequent relations not only with those kingdoms but also with Mongolia, both Eastern and Western. Now among those Čigil Mongols, too, we find Lamaist influences. There are definite indications that in the 1440s, and probably much earlier, too, Lamaism was known among them. First let us observe that the name of the prince of the Čigil Mongols bore a definite Buddhist stamp: Ch'ieh-wang-shih chia: Tsewang (~ Čeben)-šagya. By 1443, this Tsewang-šagya had come under increased pressure from the Oyirad, and afraid that he would not be able to withstand it any longer, he conceived the idea of moving to a new territory much closer to the Ming borders; Tsewang-šagya even sent a request directly to the Court at Peking asking permission to build a temple (*ssu*) in the mountains near the area he had in mind; he also asked for Chinese craftsmen and construction materials. This plan of moving was not approved by the Chinese, who also refused permission to build a temple, because they

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<sup>15</sup> *Hsüan-tsung* SL 17: 514; 18: 1295; 19: 1551; *Ying-tsung* SL 23: 638. In April, 1437, Fo-hsien, now an officer of the Buddhist Registry of Turfan, was in Peking and requested permission to stay; he was assigned residence in one of the monasteries of the capital while his followers were attached to the Metropolitan Police: *Ying-tsung* SL 23: 557.

<sup>16</sup> *Hsi-Yü Fan-kuo chih* 19a; *T'ai-tsung* SL 13: 1890.

<sup>17</sup> E. M. QUATREMÈRE, "Récit de l'arrivée des Ambassadeurs qui avaient fait le voyage du Khata" p. 389, in "Notice sur l'ouvrage persan qui a pour titre: Matla-Assadein ou-madjma-albahraïn et qui contient l'Histoire des deux sultans Schah-rokh et Abou-Said", in: *Notices et Extraits des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Roi et autres Bibliothèques* 14, 1843, I; K. M. MAITRA, *A Persian Embassy to China, being an Extract from Zubdatu't Tawarikh of Hafiz Abru*, Lahore, 1934, 13, 14.

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[11] 佛先

[12] 高昌

figured that once a temple was there, the Āigil Mongols would insist on settling in the neighborhood<sup>18</sup>.

In 1444, a lama from Āigil with the name Na-ko-chien-tsan sent a tribute; and in 1445, a certain lama Shang-ssu-lung was given the title of Dhyana Master, and was rewarded with a silver seal and silks for assistance rendered in a campaign against the Hui-hui (no place indicated)<sup>19</sup>.

What is perhaps of even greater importance, Lamaism was also represented within territories under direct Ming administration. Tibetan Lamaism was, of course, very well known on the Tibetan-Kansu borders: the *Ming Shih-lu* literally abounds with references to lamas and monasteries in the areas of Hsi-ning, Ho-chou, Min-chou, Lin-t'ao, etc. Those monasteries maintained regular tribute relations with the Ming Court and every year some of them sent missions to Peking. The Mongols often visited those regions and must have known their Lamaist institutions long before 1560. But the Mongols did not even have to travel to the Southern borders of Kansu: there are evidences that the Tibetans had founded monasteries in or near a number of Chinese towns in Kansu almost right on the borders of Mongolia. We shall review here the passages referring to those institutions.

In February, 1446, a lama from the Chin-ch'uan<sup>[13]</sup> monastery near Yung-ch'ang<sup>[14]</sup> presented the tribute<sup>20</sup>.

From 1446 to 1449, there are references to monasteries with at least four different names in Ning-hsia or the immediate neighborhood; the lamas of these monasteries bore Tibetan names and seem to have sent tribute to the Court, at least from time to time<sup>21</sup>.

Another town in Kansu that had lamas was Liang-chou<sup>[15]</sup>. On December 30, 1407, the Assistant-Director of the Buddhist Registry of Liang-chou, named Shih-li-tsan-pu, together with the Teacher of the Empire, Erh-i-ch'ih, mentioned above, presented a tribute of horses. In itself, the presence of a Buddhist Registry at Liang-chou does not imply the existence of Lamaism, but the Tibetan name of its Assistant-Director is quite suggestive. In 1446, another lama from Liang-chou, and one from Ching-lu wei<sup>[16]</sup> in the vicinity also presented a tribute<sup>22</sup>.

P'ing-liang<sup>[17]</sup> had at least two monasteries with Tibetan monks<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> *Ying-tsung SL* 27: 2090; *Mok.* 3. 32; for this affair see my "The Mongols of Kansu during the Ming", in: *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques*, 10, 1955, 310—311.

<sup>19</sup> *Ying-tsung SL* 27: 2385; 28: 2541, 2557.

<sup>20</sup> *Ying-tsung SL* 28: 2728.

<sup>21</sup> *Ying-tsung SL* 28: 2776; 29: 3012, 3212, 3278, 3330.

<sup>22</sup> *T'ai-tsung SL* 11: 1023, where the name is mistakenly spelled Shih-tsan-shih; *Mok.* 10, app. Tibet, 57; *Ying-tsung SL* 28: 2742.

<sup>23</sup> *Ying-tsung SL* 29: 3330.

In 1446, Chuang-lang<sup>[18]</sup> had a Buddhist Registry and Tibetan monks<sup>24</sup>.

Tibetan lamas from monasteries in Kan-chou and Su-chou presented tribute to the Court in 1445, and 1448 respectively<sup>25</sup>.

An important factor in Kansu may well have been that Liang-chou, P'ing-liang, Chuang-lang, and other areas had a sizable Mongol population, either dating from the Yüan period or immigrants who had crossed into China around 1400. These Mongols settled in China who at least in the beginning maintained contacts with Mongolia may well have served as middlemen to make the Mongol people more familiar with Lamaism.

Apart from Kansu, the famous Buddhist sanctuary of Wu-t'ai-shan in Northern Shansi Province seems to have been regularly visited by Tibetan Lamaist dignitaries: the *Shih-lu* entry of August 24, 1407, notes that a Tibetan dharmarāja visited Wu-t'ai, and on February 19, 1446, a lama from a monastery there — apparently a resident of Wu-t'ai — presented the tribute to the Court<sup>26</sup>. We may add here that the Buddhist shrines of Wu-t'ai have always been popular with Mongol lamaists and pilgrimages to Wu-t'ai were not a rare thing.

The present information contains only data from the first half of the fifteenth century, but we have every reason to believe that the situation did not change substantially in later years. There is little doubt that however superficial Lamaism had been under the Yüan among the masses of Mongolia, from around 1400 on there was unlimited opportunity for the Mongols to meet lamas, to visit monasteries, and to learn more about Lamaism; Kansu was one of the regions often visited either peacefully or in warlike raids. We may further observe that throughout the fifteenth century, the Mongols regularly sent tribute missions to Peking where they could not fail to be impressed by the number of Tibetan lamas: not only did Tibetan envoys, mostly lamas, come to Peking in large numbers, but many stayed at the capital for lengthy periods of time to the great dismay of Chinese officials. In sum, I am inclined to believe that after the fall of the Yüan dynasty, Lamaism slowly but steadily strengthened its position in Mongolia, a movement culminating in the activities of the Altan-qan and Qutuγtai-sečen qung-tayiji in 1577.

In a recent paper<sup>27</sup>, Mr F. A. BISCHOFF argues that the Yüan tradition of translating Buddhist works into Mongol may never have been interrupted

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<sup>24</sup> *Ying-tsung* SL 28: 2702.

<sup>25</sup> *Ying-tsung* SL 28: 2520, 3278.

<sup>26</sup> *T'ai-tsung* SL 11: 977; *Ying-tsung* SL 28: 2728; *Mok.* 10, app. Tibet, 56, 109.

<sup>27</sup> F. A. BISCHOFF, "Une incantation lamaïque anti-chinoise", *Central Asiatic Journal* 10, 1965, 133, 135.

during the Ming. I am afraid that this is to overstate the case. One must remember that under the Yüan emperors this translation activity was centered in China; in Mongolia Proper the roots of Buddhism were far too shallow to allow for a continuation of such intellectual work. I have stated above that the noble families who in the second half of the sixteenth century officially reintroduced Lamaism had retained some memory of the power and the glory of Lamaism of the Mongol period, and one may argue that the literary tradition of Buddhism could have survived within those noble families. However, I know of no positive evidence pointing towards such a literary tradition being kept alive. Moreover, one should bear in mind that from 1368 on, Mongolia was the scene of uninterrupted warfare and political chaos, a situation hardly favorable to religious literary activities. It is certain that the memory of that early activity remained more or less alive throughout the Ming period, and when Lamaism came into its own around 1570, it just so happened that Southern Mongolia began to enjoy a time of relative peace under the leadership of the Altan-qan of the Tümed, and he, together with Qutuγtai-sečen, qung-tayiji and other princes immediately resumed the ancient tradition and had monks reissue translations dating from the Yüan, or make new translations of their own.