MANCHU PATRONAGE AND TIBETAN BUDDHISM 
DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE CH'ING DYNASTY 
A REVIEW ARTICLE

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From the latter half of the seventeenth century the series of reincarnations known as the Lćān skya Qutuqtus served as an important link between the Manchu court and the Mongol, Tibetan and Chinese elites. Rol pa'i rdo rje, the second Lćān skya Qutuqtu, stemmed from an illustrious Tibetanized-Mongol family of western Kansu province whose members assumed prominent roles as scholars and administrators of the Dge lugs pa. As a novice, Rol pa'i rdo rje learned Tantric practices from the most prestigious scholastic of the day, the Abbot of Dga' ldan monastery, Khris chen Blo bzhan bstan pa'i ni ma. At once a distinguished scholar and a celebrated teacher—he tutored the Ch'ien-lung Emperor in Tibetan Buddhism and Sanskrit—the Lćān skya Qutuqtu also wrote prolifically on philosophy and hagiography. In fact, a review of his achievements indicates he played a more prominent role in Ch'ing cultural life than is commonly supposed. As editor and philologist he brought together and supervised the translation commissions for the Tibetan Tanjur into Mongolian and the Chinese Kanjur into Manchu, compiled a Tibetan-Mongolian Dictionary, the Mkhlas pa'i 'byun gnas, and wrote a commentary to Thon mi Sambho'sa's grammar. He authored words on 'Thags pa Lama, the Seventh Dalai Lama Blo bzhan bskal bzaṅ rgya mtsho, and his former teacher, the Abbot of Dga' ldan. But he is perhaps best known for the diplomatic negotiations he conducted with the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama, and Rje btsun dam pa Qutujtu concerning the tumult caused by the Zhungar-

*I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Ruth Dunnell for having generously taken the time to read earlier drafts of this essay and for having discussed with me the broad historical context of the problems I have described in this paper.
Kaltsha wars in Mongolia. His friendship with the emperor enabled him to speak with special authority on matters of importance to the Manchu ruling house and, conversely, to express directly to the throne the concerns of the Dge lugs pa. The biography, in short, deals with the life of a cultivated, knowledgeable representative of Tibetan Buddhism and companion of the Manchu emperor who enjoyed great privilege and moved in the highest echelons of Ch'ing society as a scholastic and man of affairs. The record of Rol p'ai rdo rje's remarkable spiritual, literary and diplomatic activities therefore provides a personal focus for the religious and ritual concerns of the Manchu court when the growing power of the Ch'ing dynasty neared its zenith in Inner Asia.

Hans-Rainer Kämpe has accumulated and brought under control a considerable amount of data in preparing his informative introduction to this useful text. Methodologically, he generally follows the model for textual studies of bi-lingual Tibeto-Mongol literary sources set out by Rudolph Kaschewsky in his work on the biography of Tsoṅ kha pa. Kämpe has mastered the philological and literary sources dealing with the complex Ch'ing period materials and has put together an edition that is nearly an explication de texte. The result is an excellent piece of scholarship and a most provocative introduction to a literary monument of the mid-Ch'ing period.

The editor presents his materials in four parts. In part one, he considers the history of the text, presenting well-ordered bibliographic data, the whereabouts of various copies in specific manuscript collections and a discussion on the text's literary relationships. He then gives a brief account of its author, Nag dban thub bstan dban phyug, Rol p'ai rdo rje's brother, covers other sources on the life of Rol p'ai rdo rje, and provides a thumbnail sketch placing the subject within the historical context of his times. In part two, he ranges, though not as extensively as did Kaschewsky, over the text folio by folio to summarize its essential facts in what often amounts to a line-by-line paraphrase (and in many cases a word-for-word translation) of the Tibetan text and its Mongol translation. In part three, he provides notes to the previous sections and includes a glossary of religious and secular Tibetan, Mongol, Manchu and Chinese titles and technical terms associated with individuals named in the text, as well as identifications of place names. Part four consists of facsimiles of the Tibetan and Mongol texts.

The assessment of the critical source value of this hagiography presents special problems of interpretation. The description of the diplomatic and religious duties Rol p'ai rdo rje carried out as liaison between the Ch'ienlung Emperor and the Dge lugs pa prelates ruling Tibet and Mongolia, together with specific accounts of court-centered Tantric rites, makes it clear the biography is addressed to members of the Tibeto-Mongol clerical community. It is of significant value therefore in attempting to determine how eighteenth century lamas looked at their vocation. Because the author's major concern was to depict the life of a Buddhist saint with respect to his influence on the lives of others by his example and doctrine (and in the case of the Lčan skya Qutuqto those he influenced were members of the Manchu imperial household) it raises an historiographical question: Were the Manchu rulers devout believers or merely generous benefactors who assumed their role as patrons of Tibetan Buddhism along with their sovereignty of the eastern portion of Inner Asia?

In what follows, I will attempt to outline this historiographical issue from the vantage point of Manchu studies and the cognate discipline of Mongolistics, to see what these two areas of study can bring to bear on the question of Tibetan Buddhism during the first half of the Ch'ing dynasty.

A glance at the religious observances of the court mentioned in the biography makes such events seem inappropriate, if not inexplicable, had not the ruling house indeed professed Tibetan Buddhism. In this regard, most specialists of Ch'ing studies relying predominantly on Chinese sources have skirted the issue of Manchu conviction in Tibetan Buddhism, favoring the interpretation that imperial patronage began as a measure for holding the loyalty of the Mongol nobility. Such a policy obviously came to serve Sino-Manchu ambitions in establishing protectorates in Mongolia and Tibet. Now, thanks largely to David Farghuiar's exploration of the antecedents of the Manchu theory of state and religion, a conceptual framework exists to explain how the monarchy organized its relations with the Tibetans and Mongols of the Ch'ing state.4

Behind the policies for the restabilization of Buddhist Inner Asian society established by the Pax Manjusricia lay a fundamental conception of Buddhist monarchy, one of the constitutional features of which was close cooperation of crown and clergy. Its interpreters exhorted the emperor to promote publication and study of the sutras, and encouraged his devotion and that of his family and officials to the Dharma as the basis for preserving the state against natural calamities, public disorders and foreign invasions. The association of the Manchu ruler with his chaplain provided a measure of continuity with established precedents, which, in fact, amounted to the Manchu application of rites and customs that antedate even the Yuan pattern.

Medieval Chinese documentary and hagiographic sources contain references to foreign ācāryas as National Masters (Kuo-shih), noting that they initiated various T'ang emperors as Bodhisattvas/Jen-wang or Cakravarmita/Lun-wang. The Sung dynasty followed T'ang precedents in subsidizing translations of canonical works including those outlining the benefits religiously-inspired monarchs could expect. For example, affairs of state held a prominent place in the Jen wang hu kuo po jo po lo mi to Ching
and in the *Lun wang chi pao Ching.* Tantric works which urged consecrated sovereigns to adopt the twin goals of Bodhisattvahood and universal dominion. That the Manchuhs in the seventeenth century would have a high regard for related Tibetan doctrines while conversely—as a matter of theology as well as self-interest—Tibetan prelates would be supporters of the regime, seems plausible in light of the traditional application of Buddhist theology to statecraft.

While this religiously-motivated stance of the ruler helps to make sense of the reasons why the Manchus would adopt the Tibetan rite, the elements of these theocratic and political equations are still incomplete and the manner in which they were integrated with one another is poorly understood. Consequently, much remains to be done in reconstructing events and assessing states of minds before it can be shown why the Manchuhs involved themselves in Buddhist affairs in general and for what ends in Tibet and Mongolia in particular. But whether considered as a reflection of political realities or measured in terms of partisan or international objectives, the existance of Manchu patronage does not affect the point that the ruling house had a sincere belief in Tantric doctrines or that imperial policies were shaped by a conviction in the truth of Buddhist teachings.

Therefore imperial support for Tibetan Buddhism went beyond reasons of personal piety—not to mention notions of legitimacy and stability, crucial though such notions were. The recognition of mutual interests between the Manchu ruling house and various hierarchies of Tibetan Buddhism preceded official contacts with the Dge lugs pa in 1637. Institutionally and theologically, formal relations between the throne and Tibetan prelates drew heavily, albeit not surprisingly, on Mongol experience and preferences for the Sa skya pa. Though the history of the Sa skya pa mission to the Manchuhs remains unwritten, it may not be premature to describe the circumstances whereby certain lamas succeeded in establishing themselves at the pre-dynastic Manchu court, and the effects of their having done so. 

To summarize what follows, the early accord between the Manchu ruling house and Tibetan Buddhism took the form of a traditional Buddhist monarchy, a constitutional feature of which was the partnership of the ruler and his chaplain. Here I would like to consider, in a limited way, what the influence of this relation was on the ideological development of the Manchu monarchy during the initial reigns of the Ch'ing dynasty. Study of several Tibetan Buddhist monuments in Manchuria illuminates pre- and early Ch'ing religious behavior, allowing us to see something of the formalism of the spiritual bond between the Manchu rulers and their religious advisors. Furthermore, the identification of this factor will serve as an orientation for some simple points concerning the role Tibetan Buddhism played as a major unifying force in the Manchu polity during the reigns of Nurhaci (Ch'ing T'ai-tsu, r. 1616-1626), the founder of the Manchu dynasty, and Abahai (T'ai-tsung, r. 1626-1643), his son and successor, and the cultural precedents it established for later reigns.

More than half a century ago, Oshibuchi Hajime, the Japanese epigraphist, outlined the characteristics of the formative stage of the Manchu conversion to Tibetan Buddhism. Confining my remarks largely to his findings, the ensuing points present a number of details that will help to order the evidence regarding a religiously-inspired monarchy.

Early seventeenth century Tibeto-Mongol sources refer to contemporary Tibetan missionaries established in the Cahar Khanate, while supporting Manchu documents suggest the movement of individual lamas eastward from Cahar into its dependencies in Manchuria. This period, which coincides with the extension and consolidation of Nurhaci's regime into northwestern and southern Manchuria, also marked the arrival of Tibetan missionaries at the Manchu court. At an undetermined date prior to 1621, Buddhist influence had progressed to the extent that Nurhaci had taken initiation and appointed his lama, the Olug Darhan Nangso, as Dharma-master of the Manchu realm. Consequently, the emperor placed under the Olug's jurisdiction a temple outside the capital at Lia-yang, the Lien-hua Su, and endowed it with landed property and servitors, the so-called La ma Yüan. This is the first attested instance of Manchu patronage of Tibetan Buddhism. An appropriate inference to be drawn from the prosopographical data is that the lama—a possessor of rights of lordship over several hundred Korcin and Sahalca households who followed him to the capital—took his place in Manchu society as a peer of the Manchu and Mongol aristocratic retainers of the emperor.

These facts, whatever the details, show that Nurhaci's consecration and the resulting benefice established on the outskirts of the pre-dynastic capital as a patrimony for the Olug—a property which subsequently became the inheritance of his successors—mirror the emperor's desire to be associated with Tibetan Buddhist ideals. Taken together with the lama's "national" prestige (cf. n. 11), they point toward Manchu acceptance of the social doctrine associated with the dichotomy of society into secular and religious spheres, an arrangement that had long distinguished Tibeto-Mongol culture.

Nor do these cases stand alone. A review of the onomastic evidence makes it possible to place the founding Manchu emperor personally with respect to such ideas. At present, however, it remains an open question whether one should interpret the establishment of an imperial chaplaincy by Nurhaci roughly at the same time as his declaration of dynastic ambitions as emperor of the Later Chin (Hou Chin) dynasty in 1616 as an expression of religious endorsement for Manchu expansionism. The true significance of these events, I feel, lies not in the ruler's need to hold the support of a group of Mongol partisans per se, but rather in the cultural appeal of Tibeto-Mongol Buddhism and the aura of authority of the
cakravartin which Nurhaci’s involvement in the lama-patron relationship suggests.  

TIBETAN BUDDHISM IN THE REIGN OF CH’ING T’AI-TSUNG

Given the foregoing vantage point, I would like now to connect Nurhaci’s involvement in the lama-patron relationship to the flourishing of Tibetan Buddhist activities that took place during the reign of his son, Abahai. The religious interests underlying Nurhaci’s conversion anticipated; in part, Abahai’s decision in 1635 to found the Temple of Mahâkâla at Mukden in order to enshrine the image of the guardian deity of the Sa skyà pa, the remains of the Sa skyà Lama Sarpa Qutuštuhu, and the Mongol Kanjur. Political considerations surrounding the fall of the Cahar Khanate notwithstanding, when the group of Sa syka lamas who had transferred their allegiance from the last Mongol qağan, Legdan, consecrated Abahai, they affirmed a link with the religious practices embarked upon by Nurhaci and the Olug Darhan Nangso Lama.  

At the same time, the throne began to alter its relation to religious authority. A review of the evidence for the endowment of Tibetan Buddhist communities at Mukden during the following decade shows extensively funded branch temples and stupas for a grand program of temple construction. This period of augmented imperial support belongs to an epoch of changed political circumstances, i.e. the extermination of the Cahar Khanate and the rapid westward expansion of Manchu power over the Mongols south of the Gobi. Over the course of a generation (1610s-1640s), the dual principle of the theoretical equality of the emperor and his chaplain, and by extension the parity of state and religion—the distinguishing trait of the medieval Mongol-Sa skyà pa alliance (Tib. lugs gtsis Mong. qo yaw yosun)— came to occupy a place in Manchu ideas about statecraft. This came about partly because of Manchu alliances with, and annexations or conquests of, various Mongol tribes.  

With these facts in mind, most would agree (nor would I dispute) that this pro-Buddhist policy dictated the main lines of strategy in relation to the regime’s Mongol allies, and was aimed at accepting Manchu authority. Adoption of the model of cakravartin monarchy not only enhanced the Manchu emperor’s ability to govern the Mongols, but imitated intentionally the pattern of groups and institutions traditionally thought to have unified Yuan society. Outwardly, this explanation shifts only slightly the received interpretation that the throne patronized Tibetan Buddhism to ensure Mongol support. But here I wish to stress a critical difference in emphasis. As well as satisfying Mongol expectations about the nature of the evolving Ch’ing state, Manchu support for Buddhism defined a characteristic of the realm’s political development according to the medieval Mongol-Sa skyà pa model: a polity in which a religiously-inspired monarchy headed a theologically-grounded state.  

As a result, the foundation of an imperial sanctuary at the capital dedicated to the worship of Mahâkâla was more than an elaborate gesture of good intentions and, in fact, indicated an act of continuity with medieval and contemporary Mongol images of monarchy. On several occasions the sanctuary provided the appropriate ritual environment when the Sa skyà pa enlarged the imperial household’s sacral image according to traditional Tantric initiations. These initiations and public rites coincided with the period when Abahai received investiture as qağan and secured the homage of his Manchu and Mongol supporters. Not only did these rituals entitle Abahai, himself part Mongol, to be called emperor, but they furnished him with the overarching ideological basis for establishing a successor state to the medieval Yuan dynasty and for reconstituting its political components. As a further step toward that end and as a consequence of his enthronement, Abahai proclaimed the Dayicing (Mong. Dayicingsh. Ta-ch’ing) dynasty.  

Keeping in mind the relation of these ideas of applied theology to the central event of formally establishing the dynasty, I would argue that the Manchu state, at this stage of its development, had taken on the trappings of a traditional Buddhist realm. It had enshrined a sacral ruler, sanctioned the theoretical dual organization of state and religion first endorsed by Nurhaci and the Olug Darhan Nangso Lama, and embraced as its own the dynastic cult of Mahâkâla to celebrate and preserve the Manchu ratification of state and religion. Against this background it is apparent that as early as 1635, if not already in the time of Nurhaci, the Sa skyà lamas (with imperial encouragement) had recast the medieval claim for their brand of Buddhist Tantrism to be the state religion of the nascent Ch’ing dynasty.  

A further sign of the honor the Manchus paid to these Sa skyà pa ideas took place in 1643 when Abahai’s religious advisor Bilihâi Nangso began to direct work on the extension of the Mahâkâla complex. Under the shared patronage of Abahai and Fu-lin (i.e., the Shun-chih Emperor, r. 1644-1662), the Sa skyà pa completed in 1645 an elaborate complex of four temples and adjacent stupas—the Rnam par sna’ ba’i lha kha’n, the Thugs rje chen po’i lha kha’n, the Tshe dpag med mgon gyi lha kha’n, and the Dus kyi ‘khor lo’i lha kha’n—to encircle the Temple of Mahâkâla, the palace of the cakravartin, and the capital of Mukden within a mandala. On the one hand, the construction of this architectonic representation of the Buddhist cosmological order (an arrangement reminiscent of the ensemble of Bsam yas at the old Tibetan imperial precinct of Brag mar) celebrated Abahai’s succession as cakravartin, defined Manchu dynastic right, and set the Manchu capital and realm under the protection of Mahâkâla. On the other hand, it identified the interests of the ruling house with its sanctuary and the presiding lamas while demonstrating an abiding conviction in the efficacy of the Sa skyà pa world view.
If the above data and the facts and arguments presented in their support are reliable, a number of conclusions can be drawn about early Manchu imperial devotion to Tibetan Buddhism:

There seems sufficient reason to assert that the first two reigns followed a cultural pattern well-known to students of Tibetan history. Both rulers accepted Tibetan Buddhism, both showed deference to their lamas (Abahai, in fact, patronized several), and both endowed their chaplains’ temples in commemoration of their initiations. Both, their posthumous personas as T’ai-tsu and T’ai-tsung notwithstanding, were consecrated rulers whose vows committed them publicly and personally to support Tibetan Buddhism.

These experiences, I contend, represent more than episodic dealings with Tibetan Buddhism. The acts of imperial participation and material assistance documented in the epigraphical and architectural monuments and collateral sources show that Nurhaci and Abahai regarded themselves as Buddhist monarchs, and illustrate the official recognition of the religious bonds the first two sovereigns had with their lamas. This religious theme is especially apparent in the iconography of the Mahakala complex, perhaps the most eloquent of contemporaneous architectural expressions of Tantric Buddhist dynastic right to be found outside Tibet. Beyond question, in terms of conception and scale, it appears to dwarf any seventeenth century sanctuary except the Potala and points to having played an analogous role in the evolution of Manchu imperial culture.

In this regard, the early Manchu Buddhist monuments constitute evidence favoring the interpretation that the most powerful political institution of the Manchu polity—the monarchy—at its political centers of gravity, first at Liao-yang and then at Mukden, identified itself with the ideals of Tibetan Buddhism long before it claimed to rule the majority of Tibetans and Mongols. The self-definition of a religiously-inspired monarchy ruling a Buddhist state obviously dignified the sense of emerging Manchu national importance. But the most striking thing, in historiographical terms, is that it marked the formation of a realm ideologically indistinguishable from the manner in which the contemporary Mongol khanates viewed themselves. Together with other elements of Mongol statecraft and trappings preferred by the Manchu ruling house prior to the conquest of China, the founding emperors embraced the notion of a Tibet-Mongol style Buddhist monarchy as one of the components of imperial authority, though in what proportion to the whole remains undetermined.

What this means, among other things, is the approval in Manchu ruling circles of Mongol-Sa skyan pa ideas. But my point is that, based on the cultural pattern established in the pre- and early dynastic periods profiled above, this body of material should be interpreted as evidence of a Manchu predilection for a Buddhist-inspired polity. Certainly no one would argue that contemporary Mongol monarchies lacked this religious inspiration.

Yet the material evidence relative to Buddhist devotion in the early Manchu Khanate surpasses any of the published monuments from the seventeenth century Mongol-Buddhist states. Moreover, I would argue that the Manchu ruling house, at this stage, chose to patronize Tibetan Buddhism not simply because it wished to subordinate the Mongols to Manchu rule. Rather, because of its own mixed cultural legacy and the realm’s diverse ethnic composition of Manchus, Mongols and Chinese, it anticipated that its dynastic ambitions as a successor state to the Yuan dynasty would be better served by adopting the Mongol-Sa skyan pa pattern of the hybrid political and social order that had existed under medieval Mongol rule. The Mukden Buddhist monuments, and to a lesser degree the complex at Liao-yang from which they most likely evolved, symbolize a Buddhist world order conceptually distinct from the Sinocentric model conventionally attributed to the Manchu in their efforts to form a state in the pre-dynastic era.

To recapitulate: of the factors surveyed in this essay to demonstrate the existence of the partnership of the ruler and the representatives of Tibetan Buddhism, I feel two are the most significant for defining the nature of the relationship between them. First, the devotional—the formal recognition of a personal spiritual bond between the Manchu emperor and his chaplain, the so-called lama-patron relationship. Second, the institutional—the establishment of Tibetan Buddhism as an officially recognized, state-supported national institution.

Both factors contributed to the theological foundation of the Manchu monarchy. The evidence shows that cordial relations between the imperial household and the Sa skyan pa in the 1620s-1630s relied on reciprocity between crown and clergy remaining steadfast, and did not depend on the outcome of international relations prompted by geopolitical ambitions in Tibet or Outer Mongolia, or by the political limitations the Manchu imposed on allied Inner Mongolia. Under the influence of the Sa skyan pa, the Manchus instituted the fundamental bond that the Mongol ruling house had established with its chaplains at the formative stage of conversion to Tibetan Buddhism during the period of the Mongol world empire. Without enumerating all the problems surrounding this relationship, it should be obvious that the Manchu organization of state and faith paralleled medieval and contemporary Mongol conventions, an association of crown and clergy rooted in Tibetan practice.

Meanwhile, at Liao-yang and then Mukden, the Manchus had formulated a coherent policy towards Tibetan Buddhism and perpetuated it once they had moved the government to Peking. Prolonged involvement with the Sa skyan pa meant that the Manchus brought with them a set of well-formed expectations about the nature of a Tibet-Mongol Buddhist-inspired monarchy and a full comprehension of the lama-patron relationship when the Manchu regent, Dorgon, proposed to meet the Dge lugs pa hierarchs at Peking in 1651.
While Ming loyalists operated in the southwest of China, the Ch'ing had strategic reasons for entering into favorable relations with the Dalai Lama. But an alliance with newly unified Tibet was not the only Manchu concern. More formidable by far were the internal conflicts that had to be resolved if foreign diplomacy was to succeed. Divisions within the imperial clan that surfaced following Dorgon's sudden death in 1650 posed a dangerous threat to central authority and required the immediate attention of Manchu policy makers. Dorgon's successor, Jirgalang, an advocate of imperial prerogatives, viewed the lack of unity and rampant partisanship as the most critical political factors to be overcome in reasserting imperial rights. Consequently, talks with the Dge lungs pa mission convened amidst grave political strains that plagued the regime until the middle of 1652.

How, in this instance, internal politics determined external policies may never be known. But some consideration of the weakened condition of the monarchy and the recent overthrow of Dorgon's faction could not have failed to have affected the course of the negotiations. As the restoration of the monarchy was the one solid achievement of his regency, Jirgalang could not afford to forego traditional Buddhist sanction to make it enforceable. On this account, we have seen that ideological currents in the highest circles of Manchu society had moved in the direction of a universalist, Buddhist-inspired succession for some time. The new dispensation of 1653 that replaced the Sa skya pa with the Dge lungs pa culturally and ideologically benefitted the regime's well-established Buddhist identity. Given the consequence of the antecedents and models ratified by Nurhaci and Abahai and their respective chaplains, a case can be made for the logic behind why the Shun-chih Emperor supported the Dge lungs pa and gave his protection to the Dalai Lama. The emperor's patronage (under Jirgalang's guidance) was a measure of his satisfaction with the sacralization of his restoration, and an endorsement of his policy of centralizing power over the aristocracy. At the same time, this authentication of his reign serves to explain why Dge lungs pa influence at court was not called into serious question, and how the sect's capacity to pursue its religious mission with more autonomy was strengthened.

The Manchu-Dge lungs pa accord—an arrangement that won the sect significant state subsidies—produced profound social and economic consequences too. If this pro-Buddhist policy was followed, as the evidence indicates it was, it was of considerable importance, since the effect was to increase the community of interests between the Mongol lords and their Tibetan Buddhist chaplains as a class, together with the Manchu ruling house and its chaplains. What impact Tibetan Buddhism had on the lives of Manchus outside court circles is an important subject requiring further study. At the very least, however, it appears as if the discriminatory allocation of power over socially subordinate groups and landed property to the Dge lungs pa, in those regions under Manchu domination, grew out of a favorable climate of opinion surrounding the continuing contributions of Buddhist ideas in the evolution of the Manchu monarchy. It did not, as it is sometimes disparagingly said, begin as an instrument of social control to instill Mongol submission to the Manchu emperor, but instead developed in accordance with traditional Tibeto-Mongol cultural standards which the Manchus acknowledged as their own. This does not mean, of course, that individual hierarchs and monastic institutions always treated their subjects in an exemplary fashion, any more than members of the lay aristocracy so treated theirs.

Having detected the reality of a religiously-inspired Manchu monarchy, and keeping in mind the inevitable gaps between theory and practice, what historiographical relevance does it have for Ch'ing era Sino-Tibetan and Sino-Mongolian studies? There are, in my opinion, two interrelated interpretive changes that stand out.

First, it shifts the focus of early Manchu patronage away from Tibetan Buddhism as merely a pragmatic policy instrument for Tibeto-Mongol affairs towards intrinsic religious motivation and its corollary principle of Buddhist monarchy.

Second, it means that Manchu ideology with respect to the Tibetans and Mongols has to be re-interpreted in terms in which the development of an idea of a traditional, cohesive Buddhist state becomes more important, and the notion that patronage of Tibetan Buddhism served the Manchus' divide and rule policy becomes much less important.

That Nurhaci, Abahai and the Shun-chih Emperor used their religious charisma and personal relationships with their lamas to influence their Buddhist subjects as circumstances permitted seems undeniable. But to suggest, as have some, that Manchu rulers patronized Tibetan Buddhism as a state policy predominantly to impose a system of divide and rule, results in a distorted and misleading interpretation of the amalgam of personal relations, religious beliefs and institutional factors that made for affairs of state and faith. As in the case of the Yuan dynasty, Manchu policy toward Tibetan Buddhism must be explained by personal religious considerations as well as by partisan and ideological motives.

**TIBETAN BUDDHISM DURING THE MID-CH'ING PERIOD**

The early history of crown and clergy outlined above brings into relief the sincere regard the Manchus had for the lama-patron relationship. Subsequent Manchu rulers thought this relationship had a salutary effect too, and took care to credit the first emperors with establishing relations with Tibetan Buddhism. The fact that the K'ang-hsi Emperor endorsed it at the time he enfeoffed the first Lsai skya Qutugu tu to attests to conditions prevalent during his reign and to the vitality of the constitutional principle of the crown-clergy partnership. Therefore, however remote the 1620s-1640s and the 1690s-1780s (i.e., the era of the early Manchu-SA skya
pa alliance and the era of the mature Manchu-Dge lugs pa alliance) are from each other, it is important to know that they are linked to a cultural legacy connected with a theoretical organization of the regime. The paradigm of a state ruled by a Bodhisattva or a cakravartin may seem abstruse, yet it mirrored an imperial ideology—whatever the political realities—where a hierarchy of shared religious values and experiences influenced the conduct of political and social relations. While one might object that the first two or three reign periods do not clinch the case for a customary dynastic partnership between ruler and chaplain or its corollary dual principle, an overview reaching through the Ch’ien-lung period presents definite elements of continuity in spiritual values, and from it emerges evidence for imperial confidence in this bond.

Toward that end, the biography of Rol pa’i rdo rje contains significant information relative to the antecedents of, and continuities with, the pre- and early dynastic eras. The text is, in my opinion, illuminated by the author’s awareness of the Buddhist heritage of the Manchu ruling house, against which heritage he has measured contemporary eighteenth century devotional acts. Given the nature of this evidence, several events of the mid-Ch’ing period reported in the biography may now be considered in order to see how they accord with the conclusions on imperial conviction in Tibetan Buddhism I have drawn above.

As noted in the text, the Lcāṅ skyā Qutuṅtu engaged the emperor in rites which in the lama’s thinking had an underlying theological continuity with the court-Buddhism of the Yuăn. The Ch’ien-lung Emperor, despite competing demands for his attention, had an abiding interest in the distant origins of his house’s support of Tibetan Buddhism. The text contains data for understanding the imperial family’s consciousness of its Buddhist heritage and its desire to continue its role, which formally obligated the ruler to uphold the Dharma and protect its institutions:

—in 1743, the Ch’ien-lung Emperor invited the Lcāṅ skyā Qutuṅtu and the Abbot of Dga’ ldog to his palace at Mukden. They examined and paid their respects to the monastery—the shrines of the body, speech and mind [of the Buddha], and the shrine of the chosen divinity [thugs dam=yi dam] of the refuge of sentient beings, Thags pa Lama, the image of Mahākāla—and other Buddhist shrines built by the emperor’s father, grandfather, and ancestors.

—in 1746, the Lcāṅ skyā Qutuṅtu bestowed the Cakrasamvara initiation on the Ch’ien-lung Emperor, a rite the Qutuṅtu equated with the establishment of the lama-patron relationship begun by Qubilai and Thags pa Lama.

—At an unspecified date during the Yung-cheng period (1723-1735), an image of the Ch’ien-lung Emperor’s father, the Yung-cheng Emperor, depicted as a lama, was installed at the Sung chu Temple, the Lcāṅ skyā Qutuṅtu’s residence in Peking. This was because the emperor was regarded as the bearer of the crown of the Yellow caps and the Buddha’s universal doctrine, as a great lord of religion and the immeasurable compassion he possessed as a lama who had increased ancient (religious) tradition.

—in 1777, the Lcāṅ skyā Qutuṅtu held a requiem for the emperor’s mother.

—in 1780, he translated at the Ch’ing court for the Panchen Lama, who praised the Ch’ien-lung Emperor as protector of the Yellow Doctrine, and granted him the Mahākāla and Cakrasamvara initiations. At that time, the Panchen Lama entrusted the Yellow Doctrine and the protection of the chief monasteries of Tibet to the emperor.

While the underlying historical character of these rites and iconographies remains undetermined, they furnish incontrovertible evidence that the pattern of a religiously-inspired ruling house in effect during pre- and early Ch’ing dynastic times was preserved and even extended and perfected in the Ch’ien-lung period. Nor were such associations with Tibetan Buddhism in any way inconsistent with the Confucian and shamanistic ceremonies held at the Manchu court: similar state ceremonies and animistic rites had been performed at the pro-Buddhist Yuăn court. A detailed investigation and sensitive interpretation of the biography promises to reveal more about the contemporary religious attitudes and practices of the Manchu imperial household, its participation in Tibetan Buddhist ceremonies and the general level of Buddhist culture and belief at court.

Even at the present level of research, the specific points relative to court observances, consecrations and iconography extending from pre-dynastic to mid-Ch’ing times indicate that the Manchu imperial household held to a characteristic Buddhist ethos. The existence of this cultural pattern appears comparable to the confidential relationship of crown and clergy that existed under the Yuăn. It is not surprising, given the range of these circumstances, that the Manchu ruling house had a positive and unstinting regard for Tibetan Buddhism as a pillar of the regime since the early seventeenth century.

In the areas of the history of the relations of the Manchu sovereigns with Tibetan Buddhism and the religious convictions of the ruling house, to mention just two possible subjects for further study, the biography of the Second Lcāṅ skyā Qutuṅtu serves as a significant source for fruitful work to be done. Cultural and intellectual historians as well as Buddhologists stand in Kämpfè’s debt for making this hagiography available.

NOTES

2. David Farquhar, “Emperor as Bodhisattva in the Governance of the Ch’ing Empire,” H/AS 38, 1975, 5-25. In opposition to this viewpoint stands the influential divide-and-rule theory pioneered by Owen Lat-
timore, Inner Asian Frontiers of China, Boston 1967 reprint, p. 219: "The Manchu Empire, intervening in the affairs of the Mongols, 'froze' the development of the Lama church and effected a permanent cleavage between the Mongol state (divided between many princes) and the Mongol church (unified and powerful but not supreme), thus preventing a national unity of all the Mongols." See also ibid., pp. 232-233.

3. Amoghavajra translated the Jen wang hu kuo po jo po lo mi to Ching Taishō, no. 246) into Chinese in 765, and Dānapāla, a Tantric active at the court of Sung T'ai-tsung in the late tenth century, translated the Fo shuo lun wang chi pao Ching (Taishō, no. 38).


5. The history of Tibetan missionaries at the pre-dynastic court represents a neglected area of Manchu studies. Farquhar concentrates on the Chinese and Tibet-Mongol ideological antecedents and their consequences during the dynastic era. Prior to 1637, he observes "no evidence available shows that Buddhism of any kind was a very important religion [to the Manchus]." See, "Emperor as Bodhisattva," p. 20. Walther Heissig, "A Mongolian Source to the Lamaist Suppression of Shamanism in the 17th Century," Anthropos 48, 1953, 1-30: 493-537, p. 500, earlier came to a similar conclusion.


7. A review of the early epigraphical sources and architectural monuments provides a point of departure for the study of Tibetan Buddhism in the Ch'ing era; any work on contemporary Sino-Tibetan or Sino-Mongol studies otherwise must remain partial in its reach and conclusions. These undervalued Buddhist historical sources, the Sino-Manchu inscription of 1630 on the outskirts of the pre-dynastic capital at Liao yang and the quadrilingual (Manchu-Mongol-Tibetan-Chinese) inscription of 1638 at Mukden, furnish data regarding the Buddhist principles of organization that contributed to the theoretical development of the Manchu polity. For analyses of these texts, see Oshibuchi, Hajime, "Ryōyō Rama-fun Hibun no Kaisetsu," Naitō Hakase Kanreki Shukuga Shinagakū Ronšō, edited by Haneda Tōru, Kyoto 1926, 327-371. See also Oshibuchi's corrections published in "Ryōyō Rama-fun Hibun no Kaisetsu Hosei," Shirin 22, 1937, 724-729 and Manshū Hiki Kō, Tokyo 1943.

8. The Mongols, especially the Cahars, wielded considerable control over western Manchuria in the 1570's. See Erdeni-yin tobči, p. 200/9-18. Given Cahar domination of the region for nearly half a century, and Legdan Qağan's patronage of Šar pa Qutuğtu, the presence of Sa skyā pa missionaries in his Manchurian dependencies does not strike me as an unreasonable assumption.

9. The Sino-Manchu Inscription of 1630 commemorates the foundation in 1621 of the La-ma Yüan, a patrimony granted the Olug Darhan Nangso Lama. However, it also refers to the fact that he had initiated the emperor. Presumably, this rite took place during an earlier visit that occurred at an undetermined date. The lama's obituary in the Chiu Man-chou tang [Early Manchu Archives, hereafter CMCTT], 1-10, Taipei 1970, v. 2, pp. 1091-1093, dated May 2, 1622 but referring to October 6, 1621, refers to two trips he made to the capital. The same source attests to the fact that Nurhaci promised to build a stupa for the lama's remains.

For present purposes, I regard the most important information found in the 1630 La-ma Yüan stele to be lines 4-5 of the Chinese text, which run:


The monument, to my way of thinking, represents as clear an expression of the reality of the lama-patron relationship as one is ever likely to find in a Buddhist document meant for secular purposes. Despite his zeal to build a state, Nurhaci took care to exempt clerical property and personelle from taxes and corvée. This arrangement, demonstrated further by the lama's Manchu title darhan (<Mong. darqan "tax-free"), had its roots in medieval Mongol-Sa skyā pa practices.

The emperor's initiation into the Tibetan rite drew on a long line of Tibet-Mongol historical antecedents. For theoretical reasons, I wish to draw attention to the existence of the concept associated with conversion to Tantric Buddhism, the formal relationship between the convert and his religious master, the so-called mchod von "lama-patron" relationship. The establishment of a religious bond called for the faithful's compliance with two obligations: 1) the religious subordination of the initiate to his teacher, and 2) the neophyte's liability for his teacher's material well-being. Nurhaci undoubtedly complied with the second of these two ties. For remarks concerning various aspects of the lama-patron relationship, see Zahiruddin Ahmad, Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century, Roma 1970, pp. 95-97; D.L. Snellgrove, Buddhist Himalaya, Oxford 1957, p. 196. Concerning the notion of royal consecration, cf. the latter's article "The Notion of Divine Kingship in Tantric Buddhism," in The Sacral Kingship, Leiden 1959, pp. 204-218; also see Stephan Beyer, The Cult of Tārā, Berkeley 1973, pp. 67-68.

10. The text of the 1658 inscription at La-ma Yüan and the Manchu annals serve to establish the fact that the court provided an estate for the Olug Darhan Nangso Lama. Moreover, analysis of the form olug and the translations of it in the collateral Mongol (yeeke), Manchu (amba), and Chinese (ta) epigraphical sources (cf. notes 7 and 9) as "great" serve to identify the word as the Manchu transcription of the Turkic form(s) olug ~ulug. (Cf. Gerard Clauson, An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-
Thirteenth Century Turkish. Oxford 1972, p. 139, ūluğ “‘greatness’ both physical and in [an] abstract moral sense; ‘seniority’ and the like.” The presence of this epithet among the lama’s titles taken in conjunction with his designation in the annals as a Tanggyüt (or a Tibetan, according to the Chinese text of the 1630 inscription) indicate Amdo or the Tibetanized Uighur communities of Western Kansu as his place of origin and point toward his possible Turpic ancestry. Given the significant body of evidence that Uighur Buddhism had received heavy doses of Tantric influences since Yüan times, I do not find the likelihood of an Uighur lama preaching Tibetan Buddhism problematical. In fact, one encounters the term ūluğ qualifying the names and titles of a number of Sa skya pa dignitaries during the Yüan period. For attestations in the literary sources, see George Kara and Peter Zieme, Fragmenta tantrischer Werke in uighurischer Übersetzung, Berlin 1976, pp. 76 and 110: “Ulug Šisrap (Tib. Ṣes rab) baxši.” As a point of departure for the Uighur translation literature of Tibetan Buddhism, see their editions of the Lam zab mo bla ma’i rnal ’byor in Die uighurischen Übersetzungen des Guruyogas “Ziwer Weg” von Sa-skya Pandita und der Manjushrānasamānta, Berlin 1977, and Ein uighurisches Totenbuch. Nāropas Lehre in Uighurischer Übersetzung von vier tibetischen Traktaten nach der Sammelhandschrift aus Dunhuang British Museum Or. 8212 (109), Budapest 1978. See also, Kara’s “Uiguro-Tibetica,” in Proceedings of the Csoma de Körös Memorial Symposium held at Mátrefüred, Hungary 24-30 September 1976, edited by Louis Ligeti, Budapest 1978, 161-167, especially p. 162.

The Manchu form nangso is a transcription of the Mongol loanword nangso (Tib. nain so). According to Giuseppe Tucci, Tibetan Painted Scrolls, 3 vols., Roma 1949, v. 1, p. 35, it represents an abbreviation of the compound form nain so chen mo, a title characteristic of the Mongol-Sa skya pa alliance of the Yüan period. In an edict of Gyantse, cited by Tucci, the highest official of the medieval state was the nain so:

{[This] dignity, in its administrative organization, was certainly modelled on the Sa skya pa’s organization of the state: the Gyantse princes for several generations had held the office of Nañ c’en, i.e. Nañ so c’en mo [the Grand Nañ so] at the Sa skya pa court. But from the Dalai Lama’s biographies we see that this office was also found in other states [1949, i. 43], and in fact continued ancient traditions. The Nañ so presided over the administration of justice [Gyantse genealogies, p. 34], and was sort of Prime Minister; the King’s or the abbot’s orders were made executive by this official, who naturally was also their first counselor. . . . Round the sovereigns, whether they were the Sa skya pa abbots or the P’ag mo gru pa’s or the lords of the Gyantse (and in lesser measure, round all the families with any territorial jurisdiction), a petty court was gathered, headed by these Nañ so . . . .

These attributes roughly characterize the office of those dignitaries who bore the title nangso at the various Mongol courts in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century and relate equally well to the nangso residents at the courts of Nurhaci and Abahai. Hypothetically, the use of the Uighur-Sa skya pa elements olug and nangso in the compound clerical title of Nurhaci’s chaplain permits one to pose the question whether the lama the Manchus officially credited with initiating the emperor was a Sa skya pa missionary. The career of the Olug, a contemporary of the Sa skya pa Shār pa Qutu’gyū, provides complementary material for the study of missionary activities during this epoch. The sect’s preeminence at the Cahar court since 1617 and its proselytizing efforts in the east (cf. notes 8, 12 and 14) are further cases in point. In my opinion, the Olug Darhan Nangso Lama’s work in Manchuria should be seen within the larger framework of the Sa skya pa missionary history of the early seventeenth century. This makes sense inasmuch as no contemporary Manchu evidence has emerged concerning a sustained Dge lugs pa mission farther eastward than Western Manchuria prior to the activities of Neyici Toyn (who went to Mukden twice between 1629 and 1644). Alternately, Tibeto-Mongol documentary and literary evidence contains no reference to Manchu-Dge lugs pa contacts prior to the 1637 embassy of the Ilagūsān Qutu’gyū to Mukden (see n. 4). Further descriptions of cultic activities presented in this paper make it clear that elements of Sa skya pa organization (rather than Dge lugs pa features) were increasingly favored at Mukden in the 1630s and 1640s. As a result, the immediate precondition for Manchu acceptance of the introduction of the Sa skya pa tradition, I suggest, is best explained by ascribing the Olug to the sect’s lineage.

Another interesting facet of what appears to be Sa skya pa intellectual and literary influence on the Manchu elite is the reference in Manchu sources dated 1636 to the Subbasaiti bithe (i.e., the Subhāṣītaratnavindhi of Sa skya Pandita), see MWLT, vol. VII, p. 1523.

11. Judging from the facts that the lama had catechized the emperor and received state support in return, it seems indisputable that Tantric Buddhism had gained Nurhaci’s trust. This interpretation is further strengthened by the inscription (Manchu line 1/ Chinese line 1) that identifies the Olug Darhan Nangso as the Lama of the Ayisin/Ta Chin Nation, a title reminiscent of the status of state Buddhism during the period of the medieval Mongol-Sa skya pa alliance and indicative of the fact that national as well as personal religious relations were thought to be at stake in furnishing support for Tibetan Buddhism. Correspondingly, given the information surveyed here, it becomes possible to establish a connection between imperial consecration, patronage and Nurhaci’s dynastic ambitions. For further information regarding this type of connection, cf. notes 13–14, 15–19, 21–23, 25, and 28.

12. The establishment of the Lien-hua Su (supposedly a reconsecrated temple dating from Tang times) coincided with Sa skya pa missionary activities that took place under the direction of Shār pa Qutu’gyū (see the Tibeto-Mongol inscription of 1626, Pozdnejev, v. 2, p. 255, cf. notes 8 and
During the reigns of the first two Manchu emperors, the temple remained dependent on imperial generosity, first securing an estate, the Lama Yüan, and then the produce and labor from a peasant hamlet for its support. Subsequently, Abahai’s commitment to the material support his father had promised the Buddhist community at La-ma Yüan, the details of which were formalized during his own reign, brought him into contact with the successor of the Olug, Bagha ba (< Tib. 'Phags pa) Lama.

While no direct evidence points to a role for the Olug at the enthronement of Nurhaci, definitive elements of a Buddhist policy can be detected in the emperor’s conduct in the years following his induction (see notes 9, 11 and 14). As described in the documentary sources, the Manchu lords raised Nurhaci as emperor, Han (i.e., Khan), in 1616, after which Manchu sources refer to him by the title Genggiyin Han. Comparative study of Tibet-Mongol imperial tradition furnishes instructive material regarding the Manchu title genggiyin and leads me to suggest that it can be explained in terms of the theoretical requirements of Buddhist initiation. The vocable genggiyin “clear, bright!” should be compared with the Mongol forms gegen. gegen “clarte, eclat . . . titre d’un saint personage (khoutouktou),” Kowalewski, Dictionnaire mongol-russe-français, Kazan 1844-1849, p. 2495. Precedents for the Buddhist usage of the title Gegen Qaγan, the agnomen of the Yüan emperor and patron of Tibetan Buddhism, *Siddhipala, as well as the sixteenth century Tümed ruler and Dge lungs pa patron, Altan Gegen Hakan (=Qaγan), occur in the Horchos byun of *Jig med rig pa’i rdo rje. (G. Huth, Geschichte des Buddhismus in der Mongolei, Strassburg 1892-1896, 2 vols, v. 1, pp. 36 and 57.) The Mongol form gegen by its definition and application has a distinctive Buddhist connotation as a mtskan “ordination name.” One need only note that such titles were conveyed at the time of imperial investiture to see that they have religio-dynastic connotations. The Horchos byun, v. 1, p. 24 lines 9-11, relates the ascendancy of *Siddhipala in the following terms: (9) . . . de’i sras suddhepal chu yos (10) lo ba dgush lo bcu dgur thou rgyal sar’ khod pa la gegan rgyal po’i (11) mtskan ba’i sras. His (i.e. Buyantu Qagan’s) son, Siddhipala, born the Water-Hare year (1302), was established on the throne at the age of nineteen, and given the mtskan (ordination name) Gegan Rgyal po [i.e., ‘King Gegen,’ or ‘Gegen Khan.’] For further examples of imperial ordination names, e.g., the Qagan’s Buyantu and Külüg, bestowed at the time when Mongol sovereigns took power, cf. Huth, v. 1, p. 24. (Also see Louis Ligeti, “Notes sur le colophon du ‘Yitikän Sudur,’” in Asiatica edited by Johannes Schubert, Leipzig 1954, 397-404, pp. 401-403 for the reconstruction of the name *Siddhipala.) For the definition of mtskan, see Das, Tibetan-English Dictionary, Delhi 1970 reprint, p. 1036, “resp. for ming ‘name,’ esp. the new name which everyone receives that takes orders.” The fact that during the Yüan dynasty ordination names were bestowed at the time of imperial investiture indicates Tibetan Budhists had more than an advisory role in imperial politics, their ceremonial ratification being a necessary component of the induction rite. In the case of Nurhaci, it may serve to explain why—because of his initiation—the first Manchu emperor felt compelled to promote the Olug Darhan Nangso Lama to an important benefice just outside his capital. Beyond the suggestion that the Manchu form genggiyin mirrors Nurhaci’s Buddhist ordination recorded in the 1630 Sino-Manchu inscription, perhaps the best measure of Mongol (as well as Buddhist) influence on the Manchu institution of emperor is the preeminent place Mongol titles held in the pre- and early dynastic Manchu scheme of things. See notes 20, 24 and 25 for additional references.

On the basis of the material discussed so far (cf. n. 11), the existence of the lama-patron relationship at court indicates Nurhaci attached a higher importance to this act than a mere demonstration of imperial largesse. Reference to contemporary comparative material, i.e., the Tibet-Mongol inscription of 1626 at the Çağan Suburgan, site of Legdan Qaγan’s capital and the spiritual center of the Sa skya pa-Mongol renaissance, provides some instructive material for interpreting the Sino-Manchu sources and showing Nurhaci’s motivation for becoming a Buddhist. According to the Mongol version of the 1626 inscription, an imperial patron could have compelling reasons for subsidizing a stupa’s construction and adornment (Pozdniev, v. 2, p. 257/5):

dörrben dib-i ergışği cagavardi gagan bolan burqan-u şasin-i barıqi oglige-yin ejen-i basa basa bolqu bolzugai; May he again and again become the ruler of the four continents, the cakravartin and the adherent of Buddhism, the donor (dınapati) . . .

The pertinent idea appearing in these lines demonstrates that contemporary Tibet-Mongol canonical writers believed patronage, appropriately conducted, benefitted the imperial donor in postulating an assertion for dominion, setting him within the heritage of princely believers stretching back to Aśoka, and, whatever his pedigree, theoretically furnishing him with claims of authenticity to govern as a world ruler, a cakravartin. In the case of Nurhaci, it sanctified the Manchu ruler’s dignity, raising him near the level of his Mongol rivals, and gave him the ideological basis for consolidating his realm. This charismatic power based on traditional Tibet-Mongol prototypes, needless to say, would have been impossible without the presence of the Tibetan Buddhist establishment at his court.

The Çağan Suburgan inscription further attests to the central place of the idea of conquest and dominion and its religious sanction in contemporary Tibet-Mongol political thought (Pozdniev, v. 2, pp. 254/24-255/25); [the text within brackets was restored by Pozdniev on the basis of the parallel Tibetan text]
15. The exchange of honors and titles between rulers and their chaplains as cakravartins and lords of religion reflects a distinctive feature of the claim of dynastic right. Without going into the details that the subject deserves, note the example of the consecration of Qubilai in 1264, at which time he granted Phags pa Lama the title Nom-un qaghan. "Dharma-king," in return for the designation Minggan alant kurdin-i ergilgiçü cagravard seçen qaghan "Cakravartin who turns 1000 golden wheels, Seçen Qaghan" [Erdeni-yin tobič, pp. 116/18 and 118/7-8]. To this can be added the exchange of titles between the Tumed lord, Altan Qaghan and the Dge lugs pa lificacion Bsd namgs Rgya-mtsho in 1578: minggan alant kurdin-i ergilgiçi cagravard seçen qaghan and vačir-a dhara dalai lam-a, "Cakravartin who turns 1000 Golden wheels, Seçen Qaghan," and the "Vajradhara Dalai Lama" [Erdeni-yin tobič, p. 263/1-5, whence stems the title Dalai Lama. Furthermore, in 1614, the Öords prince Ñus-ug-tu Jinong granted Mayidari Qutqutu the title Yekede Asaraqi nom-un qaghan, "Rgya chen Byam pa Dharma-king," receiving in return the title Altan kurdin-i ergilgiçi cagravard seçen jinong qaghan "Cakravartin who turns the golden wheel, Seçen Jinong and Qaghan" [Erdeni-yin tobič, p. 264/7-12]. For additional instances of this custom, cf. notes 9 and 11. In conjunction with the Buddhist renaissance, the institution of cakravartin monarchy diffused among the various Mongol khanates (e.g., Tumet, Öords, Cahan) during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. The theoretical organization of these theologically-inspired domains in terms other than thelama-patron relation between sovereign and chaplain, however, remains undefined.

One encounters evidence that the Manchus followed a similar course of action when in the late 1640s they renewed an invitation to the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama to come to Peking. According to the 1651 inscription of the Sara süm-e at Peking (Manchu inscription, line 5): lama-de nonom han-i gebu bu, "[The Shun-chih Emperor] granted the title of Dharma-king to the [Dalai] Lama." For the transcription of the text, see Franke, "Die dreisprachige Grundungsinnschrift des Gelben Tempels zu Peking aus dem Jahre 1651," ZDMG 114, 1964, 391-412, p. 392. See n. 29 below for addi-
Regarding the identification of Mahâkâla as the tutelary genius of the Sa skya pa, see Mireille Helffer, "Traditions musicales des Sa-skya-pa relatives au culte de Mgon-po," JA 264, 1976, 357-404, pp. 360, n. 13, and 376, n. 87. Heissig, "Lamaist Suppression of Shamanism," p. 499 has interpreted Mongol data surrounding this event. For further references to Mahâkâla worship, see notes 15, 20-22, 26 and 36.

20. The entry in the CMCT, v. 10, p. 4605/2-8, dated February 12, 1636, records that Abahai, his brother Dayisan, and their Mongol ally, the Koric Prince Jasag-tu Dugereng participated in a mandala ceremony at which they venerated the image of Mahâkâla Buddha. The relevant portion of the text, line 8, reads: fuchi juleri jafai han: amba beyile: jasag-tu diigereng-be gayiiuyunggeri niiyakurafi: uyunggeri hengkilehe: "... offering [ritual objects] before [the image of Mahâkâla] Buddha, the Emperor led the Grand Prince [Dayisan] and Jasag-tu dûgereng to bow and prostrate themselves nine times." Regarding the identification of the Amba Beyile Dayisan, cf. Hummel, Eminent Chinese, pp. 1 and 214. The Manchus and their Koric allies took the Mahâkâla consecration of 1264 (in which 'Phags pa Lama had initiated Qubilai as a cakrawartin) as the prestigious antecedent for this rite. For further comments, cf. Walther Heissig, Altan kürdün minggan geseesütii bicig, eine Mongolische Chronik von Siregetü Gusi Dharma (1739), Kopenhagen 1958, III 6/8-6v/4. Also see n. 15 above concerning the exchange of titles between Qubilai and 'Phags pa Lama. In addition, see notes 18, 20 and 21.

21. As remarked in n. 20, the CMCT specifically refers to the veneration shown by members of the imperial household to the image of Mahâkâla which the Sa skya pa Lama, Mañjuśri Paṇḍita [=Mergen Lama], had brought to Mukden on February 2, 1635. A Chinese source, the Ta-ch'ing li ch'ao shih-lu Vol. 4, ch'ian 43, 10a-b, records that Abahai led a grand procession of Manchu and Mongol dignitaries to the Mahâkâla sanctuary on September 19, 1638. According to Oshibuchi, Biligitu Nangso Lama conducted the emperor to the Buddha image where they led the assembly to perform the kowtow ceremony. Cf. Oshibuchi, Manshâ kiki kô, p. 154. Herbert Franke notes that “rites connected with Hevajra and Mahâkâla had been customary for the enthronements of the Yuan emperors.” See his article “Tibetans in Yuan China,” in China under Mongol Rule, edited by John D. Langlois, Jr., Princeton 1981, 296-328, p. 308. Regarding the actual ceremony of investiture, cf. Franke, Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Chinas unter der Mongolenherrschaft. Das Shan-chu hsin-hua des Yang Yü, Wiesbaden 1956, pp. 30-31. With respect to the manifestations and iconography of Mahâkâla, see Shinô Mochizuki, Bukkan yô daijiten, Tokyo 1960-1963, v. 4, pp. 3216-3218; B. Bhattacharyya, Indian Buddhist Iconography, Calcutta 1958, pp. 344-348.

Farquhar, in his article “The Origins of the Manchu’s Mongolian Policy,” in The Chinese World Order (edited by John K. Fairbank, Cambridge 1970, 198-205), p. 199, observes that the early Manchu emperors appear to have derived their titles from prestigious Mongol prototypes. For example, in 1607, Nurhaci received his title Kandulan Han (<Mong. Kûnden Qagân, ‘Respected Emperor’) from the Kalka prince Enggeder. Nor was this an isolated case. Abahai, the name by which Nurhaci’s successor is popularly known, is a form unattested in Manchu sources. The word, in fact, is a loanword from Mongol Abagai “nom respectueux donné aux aines par l’âge ou la parenté: titre des fils cadets d’un monarque ou prince héréditaire” (Kowalewski, p. 41) and thus accords perfectly with his Manchu title Hung Taiji (<Ch. Huang Tai-tzu) as it appears in the Sino-Manchu sources. Perhaps most significantly, when Abahai received the homage of the forty-nine Mongol belles in 1636, it was they who bestowed upon him the Manchu title Gosin onco kîvaliyan endurtingge han and its Mongol prototype Aşıkda orisîyeçî dagedi erdemtî naviramataqû boğda qagan as emperor of the Dayicing, and not the Manchu or Chinese officials. For further remarks on the forty-nine lords of the sixteen Mongol tribes who proclaimed Abahai emperor, see Louis Ligeti, “Deux tablettes des T’ai-tsong des Ts’ing.” AOH 8, 1958, 201-239, pp. 213 and 235, n. 57. 22.

Everyone who has treated the question agrees that the Manchu word dayicing and the Mongol loan word dayicing convey the Chinese dynastic title Ta-ch’ing (normally pronounced Tai-ch’ing in the seventeenth century; moreover, despite modern usage it should be noted that during the life of the dynasty, the title was apparently never used without the first part, Tai-/Ta-). Given the context of the Mahâkâla consecration (see notes 19-20) and associated Buddhist ceremonies that had preceded the inauguration of the dynasty on May 14, 1636, I wish to draw attention to the transcription of another Mongol form with the identical orthography dayicing. Close analysis confirms the foreignness of the word which does not come from a Mongol root, does not conform to the language’s principles of word formation and is unattested in Middle Mongol linguistic monuments. However, evidence exists that the Chinese word may have entered Mongol from a Tibetan intermediary attested in the mid-fifteenth century materials edited by Tatsuo Nishida, Seibankan yakugo no kenkyû [=The Tibetan-Chinese Vocabulary of the Hsi-Fan Kuan I-yû] Kyoto 1970: Document II, Chinese Text, p. 124 Ta-ch’ing fa wang / Tibetan text, p. 124 Daizhî huo wành “Dharma-king of the Great Vehicle.” The bilingual petition shows the scribe rendered the Chinese compound ta-ch’ing (or tai-ch’eng) “great vehicle,” a calque of the Sanskrit term Mahâyâna, by the Tibetan phonetic transcription dai-chin, a form neither Jâsche nor Das registers. (Cf. Ernest J. Eitel, Handbooks of Chinese Buddhism, Amsterdam 1970 reprint of the 1904 edition, p. 90, Mahâyâna (=ta-ch’eng) “lit. great conveyance... A later form of Buddhist dogma, one of the three phases of its development (v. triyâna), corresponding to the third degree of sainthood, the state of a Bodhisattva, who being able to transport himself to Nirvana, may be com-
Panṣṭita [=Mergen Lama], who in 1635 had brought with him to Mukden the image of Mahākāla and the Kanjur.


25. Johannes Schubert, “Die viersprachige Inschrift des buddhistischen Klosters Fa lun su zu in Mukden,” Artibus Asiae 5, 1930-1935, pp. 71-75; 251-255. My transcription is based on the Mongolian text of the foundation inscription of 1645 for the Dur kyi ‘khor lo’i lha khaṇ (Ch. Fa-lun su), plate 3, p. 74:

1) dorun-a tu tala dur eṣergülegq-i daraqyai-yin tulada baygülüsgan: teyiyn büged geygülüsgi-yin süm-e [lines 7-8] “The [Rnam par snan ba’i lha khaṇ] Temple of Vairocana which we have established in the eastern quarter in order to subdue the resistors . . . ” 2) emiin-e tū tala dur g胺qg amitan-i ènğke amuŋulang bolgaju: tariya togoʃu qaraŋqai-yin tulada baygülüsgan: yeke nigestküi-yin süm-e [lines 8-9] “The [Thugs rje chen po’i lha khaṇ] Temple of Mahākaraṇa which we have established in the southern quarter in order to purposely watch over crops thereby putting all living beings at ease . . . ” 3) orin-e tū tala dur amin nasu urtudqai-yin tulada baygülüsgan: nasu ęqalaši-ujęi-yin süm-e [line 10] “The [Thbe dpag med mgon gyi lha khaṇ] Temple of Amitāyus which we have established in the western quarter in order to prolong life . . . ” 4) umar-a tū tala dur qan oruŋ-e oqogata orusqulugi-yin tulada baygülüsgan: ęq-un kūrdun süm-e [lines 11-12] “The [Dus kyi ‘khor lo’i lha khaṇ] Temple of Kālacakra which we have established in the northern quarter in order to command the realm . . . ”

For the medieval rites of Mahākāla worship and Mongol emperorship, cf. n. 20.

26. This testament of Buddhist faith, an expression of belief corroborated by the inventory of architectural monuments, set the pre-dynastic Manchu capital together with the residence of the Manchu cakravartin firmly within the Buddhist cultural tradition. Moreover, the meticulous application of the lama-patron relation since at least 1621 shows, in effect, that Tibetan Buddhism played a major role in the exaltation of the early Manchu sovereigns, their consolidation of the state according to religious principles established during the Yuan dynasty, and their conscious succession to the legacy of the medieval Mongol Empire. I cannot here demonstrate the filiation of ideas needed to prove Manchu reliance on Mongol-Sa skya pa patterns of state. It must suffice to say that Manchu acceptance of these ideas, which bound medieval Mongol Buddhism with the religious revival of the Buddhist Renaissance of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, is clearly not gratuitous, and goes a long way to explain why the Manchus had a vested interest in the promotion of the doctrine. For a preliminary assessment of the Manchu monarchy’s continuation of the Mongol-Sa skya pa conception of religio-political organization, see my dissertation, “The Man-
chu Imperial Cult of the Early Ch'ing dynasty: Texts and Studies on the Tantric Sanctuary of Mahakāla at Mukden.” Bloomington 1980.
27. I.e., the Sa skya pa lamas, Maňjušri Pañḍita and Biligü Nangso Lama, and the Dge lugs pa envoy at Mukden, the Ilaṅguṣan Qutçuğtu.
28. Robert B. Oxnam. Ruling from Horseback, Manchu Politics in the Oboi Regency, 1661-1669, Chicago 1975, pp. 47-49, has characterized the years 1651-1653—the time of the Dalai Lama’s mission to Peking—as a “period of intense factional rivalry” and “among the fiercest and most complex in the early Ch’ing.” The death of Dorgon late in 1650 allowed his cousin, Jirgalang, to move against the Dorgon faction and other groups seeking to dismember imperial power. By mid-1652, he had overcome these centrifugal elements and succeeded in transforming the Shun-chih Emperor’s nominal rule to one of actual control over the government.
29. In January 1653 the Dalai Lama arrived at Peking, the Panchen Lama having declined repeated invitations because of his advanced age. For the two generations preceding formal Manchu-Dge lugs pa relations, the throne had shown keen interest in Tibetan Buddhism and had made it a key part of the religious and cultural life of the court. This fact together with subsequent actions taken by the throne run counter to the received interpretation that the Manchus had invited the Dge lugs pa to Peking to present tribute. According to Saṅgā Ṣeṣen [Erdeni-yin tobüi, p. 296/12-15], the emperor on this occasion substantiated the “rule of the saints” by supporting Tibetan Buddhism and venerating the Dge lugs pa prelates as his religious masters:

(12) . . . ilaṅguṣan čiđaṭčiŋ-u (13) erketü-yin şasın-i ülemji teldükin: ilaṅguṣan-u kőbe gió qamųj-i medegči-yi orui-yin (14) čimeq bolqan tabişlu: amit-an ıqeg boğda bançı̄q erdeni-yi ečin-e ece lam-a bariğad: (15) burqan-u şasın-i ülemji-de teldükin boşdas-un torő-yi asuru tüşüdiken bayişüliqu:

[The Shun-chih Emperor] abundantly supported the Jina’s religion of the powerful saints and venerated the son of the Jina, the Omniscent [Dalai Lama], as the ornament of his sinciput. He cherished the Lama in the absence of the Refuge of Sentient Beings, the Boğda Panchen Erdeni, giving protection to the Superior of the Buddhist religion [i.e. the Dalai Lama], and firmly established, to a high degree, the rule of the saints.

The account of the emperor’s recognition of the Dge lugs pa hierarchs and doctrine calls to mind not only the formal features of the regimes of his predecessors and their Sa skya chaplains but the whole tradition of Tibet-Mongol acknowledgements between state and faith up to that time (see n. 15). The titles the parties exchanged as a result of this mission suggest a set of conditions consistent with the tradition of mutual recognition. The Dalai Lama received the title Rdo rje ‘thar (“Vajradhara”) and the Shun-chih Emperor took the title Gnam gyi lha ’jam dbyangs goin ma bdag po chen po (“God of the Sky, Great Mañjughoṣa-Emperor and Great Being”). (See Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa, Tibet, A Political History, New Haven 1967, p.

116: cf Farquhar, “Emperor as Bodhisattva,” p. 20, n. 49; Huth, Geschichte des Buddhismus, p. 268.) The point is, of course, that the establishment of this personal religious bond followed a definite cultural model and institutional structure that had come directly from Sa skya pa inspiration. When the pre-dynastic pattern of crown and clergy relations is compared with the Dge lugs pa exaltation of the role of the emperor and his chaplain over other segments of society, they are seen to resemble each other closely. This state of affairs takes on added significance since it coincides exactly with Jirgalang’s centralization of authority within imperial hands. At the same time, the reasons for Jirgalang’s substitution of a Dge lugs pa ratification of his house’s dynastic right in place of the Sa skya pa legitimation remains unclear. The sectarian realignment coincides with his attempt to dissociate the ruler from the aristocratic factionalism of the day. The Sa skya pa, as they had toward the end of the Yuan, may have become embroiled in partisan causes bringing discredit to themselves and ultimately forcing the throne to reject them. This view, however, remains speculative pending further research into the question of the earliest period of Manchu-Dge lugs pa relations.

30. For a brief discussion of a fairly widespread Chinese Buddhist sect that traces its origins to the Tibetan Tantric Buddhism of the Sa skya pa introduced during the Yuan and, as we have seen, perpetuated in Dge lugs pa form by the Ch’ing, see Christopher I. Beckwith, “A Hitherto Unnoticed Yuan-Period Collection Attributed to ‘Phagspa” in L. Ligeti (edited), Tibetan and Buddhist Studies Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Alexander Csoma de Köröös, v. 1, Budapest, 1984, pp. 10-11.

31. The Manchus attempted to set the institutionalization of the relationship between the K’ang-hsi Emperor and the first Lān skya Qutçuğtu in an appropriate historical context when they established the Qutçuğtu’s see at Dolon Nor. The foundation charter of 1714 records the submission of the Kalka Mongols to the emperor in 1691 in the following terms (Pozdnyeyev, Mongolia, v. 2. p. 188/5-8):

   tayitsu tryitsung boğda kelekü tobüi-yi barji örüsiley erke yin kürdün-i orjiqulugan-iyar mongol ulus-un olan ayimag-ud ulam jerge ber ünen sanaj-a ber dağan örübei

   Because Tai-tsu and Tai-tsung, cherishing the relations which the [Buddhist] saints expressed, turned the wheel of compassion and power, many tribes of the Mongol nation gradually and earnestly offered their submission.

Viewed against the background of pre- and early Ch’ing dynastic devotion, such tributes to imperial advocacy of Buddhist ideals of state and faith correctly relate the evolution of this tendency to the reigns of the founding sovereigns. Statements of this sort often appeared in foundation charters. Albeit formulaic, they obviously had historical validity.
32. Kämpfe, p. 35.
33. Ibid. p. 34. I have paraphrased the Mongol text (60a/11-23):


34. Regarding this initiation, see n. 38.
35. The biographer asserts that the Lčăn skya Qutuγtu recalled this event when he wrote the biography of Phags Pa Lama. For additional remarks cf. Kämpfe, p. 35. Also see n. 28 above.
36. Ibid. p. 52. I have paraphrased the Mongol text 169v/10-27:

(10) ene (11) bojda ejen-ten jërë burqan-u (12) şasın kiged ilangjiy-a sira (13) malag-a yín didim-i (14) bariği yin öni-yin (15) yosun-ı deger-e efe tegeşesi (16) arbilajğuluğad: nom-un (17) oglige-yın yاغün (17) egüden-i (18) gekeşi: ene bojda fu (19) şasın-u yeke ejen mën-u (20) ucır-iyar ulisi-ügü (21) qayira bar blam-a bolğan (22) barışan anu tére metiu bui (23) tende enu ku bojda ejen-ten (24) toyi-dün dürü yosun-i (25) barışan gağiqamsiğ jirgü-tü (26) über-ün körüğ nigen-i (27) qaayarlağan-ı ene bojda bar zung te (1) zi-yin dugang dur jàlju ergün kündüel-i jokiyabai.

For remarks regarding the ideological significance of such effigies, see Farquhar, "Emperor as Bodhisattva," pp. 5-6.
37. The Emperor's mother, Empress Hsiao-sheng (1693-1777), was herself a member of a Manchu consort clan and not of Mongol origin. Cf. Hummel, Eminent Chinese, p. 369. The fact that her funeral was presided over by Tibetan clergy led by the most prominent lama resident in China would seem to indicate that Tibetan Buddhism was an integral matter of faith in Manchu ruling circles independent of the requirements of showing toleration of the beliefs of the Manchu's Mongol allies. For further remarks, cf. Kämpfe, p. 48.
38. For details concerning the initiations for the chosen divinities (i.e. yi dam) Mahakala and Cakrasamvara, cf. Beyer, Tārā, p. 401.
39. Kämpfe, p. 51. Regarding the precedent for this act, cf. n. 29 above.