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Front cover:

“Khusraw watching Shīrīn combing her hair after bathing”, miniature from the manuscript *Farhād wa Shīrīn* by Kamāl al-Dīn Bāfiq Waḥshī and Muḥammad Shafī‘ al-Shīrāzī Wiṣāl in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, call number A 910. Copied by Muḥammad Ismā‘īl al-Anjawī al-Shīrāzī in Rabī‘ I 1284. July 1867, fol. 51b, 6.4×4.2 cm.

Back cover:

- Plate 1.** ‘*Unwān* and page decoration, a Qājār style, the same manuscript, fols. 1b–2a, 14.3×8.8 cm.
Plate 2. “Farhād in the castle of Shīrīn”, miniature, the same manuscript, fol. 48b, 4.9×3.2 cm.
Plate 3. “Shīrīn sees Farhād while coming to see the works at Mount Bīsūtūn”, miniature, the same manuscript, fol. 65b, 4.8×5.1 cm.

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A WORK ON THE HISTORY OF BUDDHISM IN MONGOLIA

The library of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies contains a typewritten manuscript in Russian (call number VII M 7 ж/эрд) entitled "What is the Cause of the Religions Professed by Mongol Tribes?". The author is Erdenipel (Tib. E-rte-ni-'phel), the translators into Russian Rinčen (Tib. Rin-chen) and Sambu (Tib. Bzang-po). The manuscript consists of 200 pages. The author, *gabju* (Tib. dka'-bcu) Erdenipel (1877—1960), was one of the most educated people in Mongolia and the first abbot of the Gandan Monastery (Tib. dGa'-ldan) in Ulan-Bator after the resumption of religious services there in 1944. He appears to have written his work in the 1930s, when he was compelled to leave the monastery because of the political persecution of Buddhist monks by the authorities in Mongolia. He may have undertaken his work at the behest of the Mongolian Scholarly Committee. Anyway, such a practice existed between the 1920s and 1930s. We know that the Scholarly Committee on several occasions commissioned works on the history of Mongolia by some learned *lamas* of name or secular writers. In discussing the construction of Erdeni Juu, Erdenipel remarks: "One can suggest that Erdeni Juu, from the day of its creation by Abatai Khan up to the 28th year of the Mongolian People's Republic, has been in existence as such for 353 years" (p. 156). He apparently takes here not the date of the Mongolian People's Republic's promulgation, 1924, but the date of Mongolia's attainment of independence in 1911, used in the past as a reference point for dates. This would mean that the work was finished in 1939, which correlates with the figure of 353 years that passed since the foundation of Erdeni Juu in 1586.

The reasons for the work's translation and its appearance in Moscow are enigmatic. The translation was made at the beginning of the 1940s, and we can name at least one of the translators. Judging by the spelling of his name and numerous remarks in the text, he was the well-known Mongolian scholar, Academician B. Rinčen. We know that B. Rinčen was employed as a translator of texts into Russian during his *gaol* in the early 1940s (he was charged with espionage for Japan). As for the second translator, Sambu by name, his identity can only be guessed at. The translation may have been sent to Moscow as material for a single-volume history of the Mongolian People's Republic under preparation at that time in the USSR. But this is

a mere suggestion, as the manuscript contains no information on this account and I was also unable to find any data in other sources. The translation abounds in stylistic flaws and misprints; it also lacks an introduction and commentary. The Mongolian original has not yet been found, but we can have a good idea of it, since the Russian translation has preserved many features of the lost work. It is compiled in the genre of traditional Mongolian historiography, the so-called "histories of religion": the work includes the history of Mongolia from the most ancient times, the account of the ancient beliefs of the Mongols, of the spread of Buddhism in Mongolia, and the description of events linked with the inclusion of Mongolia into the Qing empire (17th century). The account breaks off in the second half of the seventeenth century, which leads us to conclude that this may be a first volume.

The manuscript is divided into 14 chapters. The division is conditional, and chapters often lack numbers, giving titles solely:

chapter 1. What is the final reason for the religions professed by the Mongol tribes? (p. 1);

chapter 2. On the Shamanist faith of the Mongols' ancient ancestors (p. 3);

chapter 3. The teaching of Śākyamuni and the spread of his Church in Mongolia (p. 15);

chapter 4. The acceptance of Śākyamuni's religion by the Eastern Mongols and its fall in Western and Eastern Mongolia (p. 38);

chapter 5. On religious matters among the ancient Mongols, beginning with the times of Genghis Khan up to the spread of the yellow religion (p. 49);

[chapter 6]. The era of the three khans after Genghis Khan (p. 66);

[chapter 7]. The age of Khubilai Sečen Qayan (p. 78);

chapter 8. On the ten emperors of the Yuan dynasty after Khubilai (p. 88);

[chapter 9]. The era of the sixteen minor khans after Togon Temur (p. 95);

[chapter 10]. Ways the yellow religion spread in Mongolia and a general picture of its deep ties with the power of the Manchu (p. 104);

[chapter 11]. How the yellow religion became widespread in Mongolia. About how the yellow religion became widespread in Mongolia and came to have strong ties with the power of the Manchu;

[chapter 12]. The beginning of tumultuous times in Mongolia (p. 176);

[chapter 13]. The first cunning tricks employed by Tibetan *lamas* in order to subjugate all Mongols without exception to the yellow teaching and unite them (p. 188);

[chapter 14]. The first attempts by the Manchu to colonize fully all Mongols by using religion as a weapon (p. 198).

In the first part, which treats the ancient period and includes the book's first four chapters, Erdenipel employs materialist — more exactly, vulgar materialist — criteria to explain the emergence of religious beliefs as a result of ancient man's fear of nature's mysterious powers. "The roots of all religions lie in the imagination of timid, soft-hearted men", he writes (p. 2). He further details the origins of the Mongols, rejecting Chinese, Indian, and Turkic roots and insisting on origins in the Moghuls or Tajiks, i.e. on Persian roots. Erdenipel bases this idea on Tibetan records of the Khors, whom he considers a branch of the Moghuls, on accounts of Chinese and Tibetan travellers, and also on ancient Mongolian tales of the migration of the Mongols from West to East. Erdenipel thus posits a Western origin for Mongol Shamanism. He cites the pre-Buddhist Bon faith of the Tibetans as a possible source for ancient Mongol beliefs. Interestingly, this hypothesis matches the modern ideas of B. I. Kuznetsov and L. N. Gumilev, who locate the origins both of Bon and Mongol Shamanism in Persian Mazdakism. Erdenipel then moves to an account of the spread of Buddhism among the Mongols.

Erdenipel also recounts the information in Chinese chronicles on the spread of Buddhism in the Lao state. He derives the Khitans from a people of Mongol origin. Despite the fact that the Khitans were familiar with the Buddha's teaching, "the religion of Śākyamuni (in text, Shigimuni — *A. Ts.*) fell into deep decline in Mongolia during the heyday of the Khitan state", he writes (p. 45).

In the section devoted to Genghis Khan (chapter 5), Erdenipel once again returns to the historical traditions of the Mongols and provides a brief biography of Genghis Khan according to Mongol chronicles. Erdenipel also retells the well-known myth of Genghis Khan's establishment of relations of a khan-almogiver and *lama*-teacher with the Sakyapa (Tib. Sa-skyapa) *lama*. He is inclined to believe that the correspondence between the Mongol khan and head of the Sakyapa monastery actually existed, but suggests that Genghis wrote to Sakyapa-pandita Gungjalčan (Tib. Sa-skyapa-paṇḍita Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan), not to Sakyapa Gungga Ningbu, the founder of the monastery, as the majority of Mongol chronicles indicate.

Erdenipel includes a note on the invitation by Ugedei of the Tibetan *lama* Gungtangba (Tib. Gung-thang-pa) and his preference for Tibetan Buddhism over Islam and Christianity. The author analyses the contradictory information in Chinese chronicles, some of which indicate Ugedei as the person who invited Sakyapa-pandita, while others name Godan, the heir to the throne.

Erdenipel follows wholly the tradition in the section that deals with the rule of the Yuan khans. Faithful to the conventions of Mongolian religious history writing, as well

as Mongolian chronicles, he cites a traditional set of episodes usually limited to the tale of the Yuan khans' adoption of Buddhism and their relations with their spiritual teachers. But he has important things to say about the stay of Pagba Lama (Tib. 'Phags-pa bla-ma) in Khubilai's headquarters.

In discussing the period after the fall of the Yuan dynasty up to Batu Möngke Dayan Khan, Erdenipel adheres to Mongolian chronicles, describing the long wars between the Eastern Mongols and the Oirats. He notes in passim that the Mongol khans returned to their old rites of venerating the Eternal Heavens, and began to worship the spirit of Genghis Khan. Erdenipel mentions an episode with Batu Khan who required the Russian prince Mikhail to venerate the spirit of Genghis Khan: Mikhail's refusal cost him his life.

In his work, the author also focuses on the spread of the "yellow religion" in Mongolia. He outlines the history of Buddhism in Tibet, providing exceptional detail on the teaching of Tsongkhapa (Tib. Tsong-kha-pa). For this he employs information extracted from Tibetan sources, describing the emergence of the institution of reincarnation in the sect of the Black Hat Karmapas (Tib. Karma-pa) and the borrowing of this institution by the Yellow Hat ones.

Information from sources on the formation of the seven *khoshuns* (*qosiyun*) of Khalkha also attracts Erdenipel's attention. He asserts in his work that Khalkha emerged as a separate *tümen* long before the state of Batu Möngke Dayan Khan, and that the Khalkhas were the descendants of the Khitans. The author then recounts the tale of Altan Khan of Tümed's elevation and his adoption of the Buddhism faith from the third Dalai Lama; in this account the author provides many interesting details. He notes in particular that Altan Khan and Sečen Khungtaiji of Ordos in fact came into contact with Buddhism much earlier, during their campaigns against Amdo, stating that at this time the Mongols received not only the Gelugpa hierarchs, but also representatives of Sakyapas and Kargyudpas (Tib. bKa'-gyud-pa).

The work also contains some curious accounts. To support the fact that the Mongols became Buddhists in the sixteenth century, Erdenipel writes that "the Tibetans were lovers of tea from ancient times. The Buddhist religion, which spread among the Tibetans, lovers of tea, was inseparable from tea-drinking. Tea was not consumed in Mongolia before the second half of the sixteenth century. Hence, when in 1577, or the fifth year of the Ming Shen-Zong reign, in the ninth moon, the Shanxi bailiff Ju-shi-shi-cheng reported that Gu-yuan-su-jun-fu Altan-khan had sent a Mongolian letter with a request to begin trading tea, the Chinese were surprised: why should the Mongols, who had never drunk tea, suddenly request it? What could this mean?" (p. 25). On the basis of this speculation, the author comes to the conclusion that Buddhism spread in Mongolia beginning in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Erdenipel holds that Ming China aided the Mongol adoption of Buddhism, striving to pacify her militant and troublesome neighbours. To support this contention, he provides many quotations from Chinese works. Hence, as Erdenipel believes, long before the Manchu dynasty, usually credited with a policy of supporting the spread of Buddhism in Mongolia, this idea was made real by the authorities Ming China.

The narrative continues with the adoption of Buddhism by the Khalkhas. Erdenipel carefully analyses the date of

the meeting between the Dalai Lama and Abatai Khan. We know that the sources give either 1577 or 1586. Erdenipel prefers the latter date, underlining that the Khalkhas had been acquainted with Buddhism earlier and that Abatai Khan and his younger brother converted to Buddhism during their campaign against the Ölöt tribes, who came to profess Buddhism much earlier than the Eastern Mongols. Another interesting account concerns the Dalai Lama's dispatch of the Sakyapa *lama* to Khalkha to consecrate the Erdeni Juu monastery. After operating a great deal of information, Erdenipel concludes that the Dalai Lama "felt that Sakyapa law was no worse than the law of the yellow faith and was good as well... The Erdeni Juu monastery at first apparently copied the Sakyapa one almost in all, holding in the main to its dogmas and injunctions" (p. 154).

Erdenipel then narrates the initial period of translating religious works into Mongolian, the war between the Khalkhas and the Ölöts, the elevation of Gushri Khan of the Khoshuts, the religious war in Tibet, Sain Noyon Khan's journey to Lhasa, the entrance of Western Mongolian forces into Tibet to support the Yellow Hat faction at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the election of the fifth Dalai Lama, Taranatha's intrigues against the Yellow Hat faction. In short, he focuses on Tibetan-Mongolian relations.

The last part of the work deals with the beginning of the Manchu era. Erdenipel shows how the Manchu con-

quest of the Mongols was eased by the latters' internal religious conflicts.

When compiling his work, Erdenipel seemingly made use of a large body of material, part of which has remained unknown up to the present, gathering it from numerous Mongolian chronicles, Tibetan historical works and Chinese chronicles. More often than not he does not indicate his sources, although there are exceptions. In particular, he cites the "Golden History" (*Altan tobči*), apparently by Lubsang Danzan, the "Yellow History" (*Sira tuγujī*), "Crystal Rosary" (*Bolor erike*) by Rashi Pungtsag, "Crystal Mirror" (*Bolor toli*) by Jamba Dorji, numerous Tibetan sources, for example, the *Deb-ther rgya-mtsho*, which he calls the *Debter-ün dalai*, and Chinese chronicles such as *Meng gu you mu ji*. Judging by the information he recounts, he also worked with Sagan Sečen's *Iledkel śastir*, Tibetan *'khungs-rabs*, *dkar-chags*, official correspondence, diaries, etc.

One gains a sense of the author's distant familiarity with European works and methods of historical inquiry. This combination of a profound knowledge of sources and traditional lore, with an attempt at the latest approaches' use, renders his work of interest both for historians and historiographers. Erdenipel may not set out to analyse events, but he does attempt to explain them, and this compels him to seek in the historical sources he knew new information, as well as to introduce into circulation unknown or forgotten works and sources peripheral to Mongolian history.