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K. Kollmar-Paulenz

Imagining a “Buddhist Government” (mo. *törö šasin*) in seventeenth century Mongolia

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The early seventeenth century saw the consolidation of Buddhism in the Mongolian regions, instigated some decades earlier by Altan Qa an of the Tümeds and other Mongolian leaders. Mongolian chronicles of the seventeenth century describe the impact the new socio-religious dominance of the Tibetan Buddhist *dGe lugs pa*-school had in the field of Mongolian politics. They also mirror the deep influence the Tibetan concept of *chos srid zung 'brel*, the “conjunction of religion/ religious law and government”, had on Mongolian conceptualizations of secular and religious power. This paper addresses the shifts in political concepts of secular and religious rule by undertaking a close reading of two important historical sources of the time, the *Erdeni tunumal neretü sudur* (around 1607) and the *Erdeni-yin tobči* (1662). I argue that the *Erdeni tunumal* still adheres to a concept of political rule in which the secular ruler has pre-eminence against his religious counterpart. A close reading of the *Erdeni-yin tobči* reveals that this balance of power shifted in the latter part of the seventeenth century with the establishment of the institution of the Dalai Lamas, which led to an increasing influence of Tibetan politico-religious thought on the Mongolian configuration of *törö šasin*.

Key words: Buddhism, Mongolian regions, *dGe lugs pa*, Dalai Lamas, political concepts.

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Introduction

Today the *qoyar yosun* are so much part of the Mongolian intellectual landscape that Mongolian Studies scholars are not always aware that they are not a Mongolian concept, but were originally imported from Tibet. I noticed that when a couple of years ago I proof-read the article of one of my colleagues and realized that she presented the concept of *qoyar yosun* as originally Mongolian. When I asked her where she got this idea from she explained that modern Mongolian writers present it thus and she has never doubted this representation. She was astonished that the concept is a Tibetan one. Thus, the *qoyar yosun* in Mongolian Studies are often analysed without taking into account its Tibetan origin and meanings. As a result, the changes and new interpretations of the concept are not taken into account. In my contribution I will not deal with the indigenous Mongolian notions of power which have already been analysed by various colleagues [Skrynnikova, 2009. P. 454–462]. Instead, my focus will be on the adaptation and possible transformation of the Tibetan concept of *lugs gnyis*, the “two/twin orders”, to the Mongolian context. To this aim, I will undertake a close reading of the *Erdeni tunumal neretü sudur* [Jorung -a, 1984] and the *Erdeni-yin*

tobči [Haenisch, 1955], two important historical sources of the seventeenth century, the period when the concept of *qoyar yosun* became the predominant model of political thought in Mongolia. I have chosen these two chronicles which were written within a time-span of not more than fifty-five years for the following reason: The *Erdeni tunumal* is the only available Mongolian historical chronicle (or, to be more precise, biography) which is untouched by the towering presence of Tibetan history writing through the lens of the historical writings of the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) [Schaeffer, 2005]. Therefore it presents to us the state of affairs before the *dGe lugs pa* discourse of the Tibeto-Mongolian religious and political relations became predominant. The *Erdeni-yin tobči*, on the other hand, is one of the earliest chronicles in which the influence of the Fifth Dalai Lama is already prominent. A comparison of how the “Buddhist government” was portrayed in these two texts enables us to follow the shift in Mongolian political understanding which occurred with the ever increasing influence of Buddhism on Mongolian political thought.

In the following I will first provide a short introduction to the Tibetan concept of *lugs gnyis* respectively *chos srid zung 'brel*, the “conjunction of religion and

government” in Tibetan political philosophy. This is followed by a close reading of the *Erdeni tunumal* and the *Erdeni-yin tobči* with regard to the *qoyar yosun*. Finally, I will compare my findings and draw a short conclusion.

1) The Tibetan Concept of *chos srid zung 'brel*, the “Conjunction of Religion and Government”

Since at least the time of the Sa skya pandita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182–1251) in Tibet the relation between the religious and the secular has been perceived in the relationship between a lay donor-ruler (Tib. *yon bdag*) and his religious donee-counsellor respectively “preceptor-officiant”, as David Seyfort Ruegg¹ has more recently called the *mchod gnas* [Seyfort-Ruegg, 2004. P. 9]². The origin of this dual political system is to be found in Indian Buddhist society and its socio-religious concept of alms-giving (Tib. *sbyin pa*; Skt. *dāna*) which is established in the relation between an alms-giver (Tib. *sbyin bdag*; Skt. *dānapati*), usually a lay householder, and a religious person (Tib. *rab byung*; Skt. *pravrajita*), usually a monk (Tib. *dge slong*; Skt. *bhikṣu*) worthy of being honoured (Tib. *mchod gnas [su gyur pa]*; Skt. *dakṣiṇīya*). The donor in this relation is usually a layman or laywoman who supplies the monk with material gifts, i. e. alms. The monk himself is the giver of *dharma* (Tib. *chos kyi sbyin pa*; Skt. *dharmadāna*). As such, he is also the source of merit (Tib. *bsod nams*; Skt. *punya*) for the lay-people because they receive as a return-gift not the *dharma* but merit. This is the level of small-scale Buddhist society from which the model of *yon mchod* derives. In the ritual context of Vajrayāna Buddhism (and that is the context relevant for the Tibet-Mongolia interface) the gift (or alms) is realized in the ritual fee, Tib. *dbang yon*, which the lama (Tib. *bla ma*, Skt. *guru*) receives from the neophyte at the time of the Vajrayāna consecration (Tib. *dbang bskur*; Skt. *abhiṣeka*). It is important to note that the relation between the *sbyin bdag* and the *mchod gnas* in Buddhist religious ritual is always a personal one.

In Tibet, the ideal conceptualization of Buddhist society in the *yon bdag* — *mchod gnas* relationship has been transferred to the religious-political realm of the state. Here the donor, honorifically called *yon bdag* (Skt. *dakṣiṇā-pati*), is a royal lay house-holder, and the *mchod gnas* functions as his spiritual counsellor/preceptor and as *guru*. This mutual relationship is coined in the copulative compound *yon mchod* and *mchod yon*, “[relationship of] *mchod gnas* and *yon bdag*”. The terms have a twofold meaning: (1) they designate the two components in the relation between the religious and the secular, and

(2) they denote this relationship itself. Again, also on this level the relationship between donee and donor is primarily a religious and personal one and not “an official and [...] institutionalized one” [Seyfort-Ruegg, 1997. P. 868].

One further aspect important for the correct understanding of the Tibetan conceptualization of Buddhist Government is the role of the *dharmarāja*, the “king by or of the *dharma*”. Since at least the thirteenth century³ on the state level the Tibetan *yon mchod* concept was exclusively realised in the relationship between a lama on the one side and a ruler who was a *dharmarāja*, a protector and promoter of Buddhism, on the other side.

In the Tibetan language a couple of expressions are used to express the *yon mchod* relation. This vocabulary can be ambivalent as to the actual concrete circumstances of the individual participants of the relationship. The close relation between the religious and the secular is usually rendered by the expression *chos srid zung 'brel*, “conjunction of religion and government”. Other frequently used terms are *lugs zung / lugs gnyis*, “two/twin orders” and *tshul gnyis*, “two/twin systems”. Also, the terms *gtsug lag gnyis*, “two/twin sciences” and *khirms (chen po) gnyis*, “two/twin (great) rules” are used. The “twin great rule”, *khirms chen po gnyis*, includes the supreme rule of the *dharma* (*chos khirms*) and the mundane rule of the king (*rgyal [po 'i] khirms*). The rule of the *dharma* is traditionally compared with a soft silken knot, and the rule of the king is compared with the heavy golden Yugaṃdhara, literally the “Yoke-bearer”, one of the seven great mountains-chains in Buddhist cosmology that surround Mount Sumeru in concentric circles [Ishihama, 2004. P. 18]. The traditional Tibetan comparison was taken over by Mongolian authors, as we will see later. The term *khirms chen po gnyis* is of particular importance. Possibly, the Mongolian term *qoyar yeke törö* is a translation of this Tibetan term. *Qoyar yeke törö* has been translated differently by different scholars of Mongolian studies, and the translations were sometimes loaded with meanings going back to pre-Buddhist times.

In the Tibetan concept of Buddhist Government the precise nature of the relation between the religious and the secular remains open to speculation. Who is superior, the donor to the preceptor-officiant, or vice-versa, or are the two equal? Both have indeed very often been considered to be equal. They are, in the words of Tibetan authors, “conjoined” (*zung 'brel*) “like the sun and the moon” (*nyi zla ltar*). Yet, it all depends on the context. Thus, in a political context the lay donor may be considered predominant, while in a specifically religious context the lama is considered the superior one. In Tibetan and Mongolian sources the fluid hierarchical natu-

¹ In this short summary of the Tibetan *yon mchod* concept I follow [Seyfort-Ruegg, 1995 and 1997].

² In one of his earlier writings Seyfort-Ruegg has translated *mchod gnas* as «reverend donee» [Seyfort-Ruegg, 1997. P. 857]. The literal translation is «recipient (worthy) of honor(s)/ ritual fees» [Seyfort-Ruegg, 1997. P. 858]. The exact manner of translating the two terms *yon bdag* — *mchod gnas* very much depends on the context.

³ Interestingly, the terms *yon bdag/ mchod gnas* are missing in the *Mahāvīyutpatti*, see [Ishihama and Fukuda, 1989], and compare [Seyfort-Ruegg, 1995. P. 30]. We have early precedents in the relationship between the rulers of Mi nyag and Tibetan lamas, see [Seyfort-Ruegg, 1997. P. 859].

re of the relationship is described in a highly symbolical manner, for example as a quarrel over the right seating order.

2) The Religious-Secular Divide: European and Tibetan Considerations

The discussion about the relationship of the religious and the secular requires a short reflection about, firstly, my use of the English term “secular” in the Tibeto-Mongolian cultural context, and secondly, the nature of the secular in historical Tibetan and Mongolian societies. With regard to the first issue, my use of the term does not imply an anti-religious stance as is often the case in today’s scholarly debates about the secular [Taylor, 2007]⁴. Further, as Talal Asad asserted more than a decade ago, “we need to attend more closely to the historical grammar of concepts and not to what we take as signs of an essential phenomenon” [Asad, 2003. P. 189]. Thus, addressing formations of the secular in non-European societies requires that we pay attention to unfamiliar configurations of the secular (taken as a historical category) and rethink the divide between the religious and the secular. The two spheres need not necessarily be neatly separated, but are often entangled, as is the case in the concept of Buddhist government as explicated in Tibetan and Mongolian writings. In the following, I use the concept of the secular as “an analytical term for the culturally, symbolically, and institutionally anchored forms of distinction between religious and non-religious spheres and material spaces” [Burchardt, Wohlrab-Sahar and Middell, 2015. P. 6]. Secondly, contrary to the common perception of Tibet and Tibetan culture being deeply steeped in religion, Tibetan historical cultures have developed indigenous secular formations that were institutionalized in the ten “worldly sciences” of higher monastic education. The “five major sciences” (Tib. *rig gnas che ba lnga*)⁵ include (1) “interior knowledge” (Skt. *adhyātmavidyā*; Tib. *nang rig pa*; Mo. *doto adu uqa an*), (2) “logic and epistemology” (Skt. *hetuvidyā*; Tib. *gtan tshigs rig pa*; Mo. *učir silta an-u uqa an*), (3) “grammar” (Skt. *śabdavidyā*; Tib. *sgra rig pa*; Mo. *da un-u uqa an*), (4) “medicine” (Skt. *cikitsavidyā*, Tib. *gso ba rig pa*; Mo. *tejigeküi uqa an*), and (5) “arts and crafts” (Skt. *karmasthānavidyā*; Tib. *bzo rig pa*; Mo. *uralaqui uqa an*)⁶. These five knowledge formations have been codified since at least the fourth century C.E. when they were introduced by Asanga in his *Yogācārabhūmi* [Keown and Prebish, 2010. P. 65–66] as the non-Buddhist objects a *bodhisattva* needs to study. According to Tibetan Buddhist epistemology the “five major

sciences” include the *laukika*, mundane, as well as the *lokottara*, supra-mundane, domain: “Interior knowledge” that is defined as *dharma* belongs to the *lokottara* realm and is restricted to Buddhists whereas the four remaining knowledge cultures are common to Non-Buddhists and Buddhists alike. The five major sciences are complemented by the “five minor sciences” (Tib. *rig gnas chung ba lnga*)⁷. In Tibetan epistemological works the Buddhist and Non-Buddhist “objects of knowledge” are outlined along the binary model of *jig rten pa* (“mundane”) and *jig rten las `das pa* (“supra-mundane”) or *phyi pa* (“outer”) and *nang pa* (“inner”) respectively⁸. In Tibetan sources it is often asserted that the worldly sciences are necessary in the cultivation of a *bodhisattva*’s omniscience and therefore much to be promoted. In this vein, the Fifth Dalai Lama asserted that religion and worldly objects should be equally studied and treated in a balanced way [Townsend, 2016. P. 134–135]. His famous regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705) equally emphasized the importance of the worldly sciences, thus providing the ground for the study of medicine as a secular endeavour⁹.

Although mundane and religious knowledge formations are considered to be two distinct spheres, their separation is not always clear-cut. Thus, in the case of logic and epistemology some argue for its inclusion in the “interior” sciences [Dreyfus, 2003. P. 102]. The relationship between the religious and the secular spheres and the specific significance of the secular were controversially discussed among the religious and secular elites in early modern Tibet¹⁰. This applies not only to the knowledge formations discussed above, but also to the concept of Buddhist government which implies the conjunction of religion and politics. As Gayley and Willock [Gayley and Willock, 2016. P. 14] note, “[t]he early modern formulation of the secular can be traced to at least the seventeenth century with the Tibetan term *chösi* (*chos srid*) referring to two spheres, the spiritual and the temporal”. On the one hand, this model of political rule clearly defines a secular sphere, while on the other hand this secular realm is outlined (at least to a certain degree) by religious norms through the person of the ruler who has to adhere to a Buddhist code of behaviour in order to properly fulfil his role. However, although the religious

⁴ For a critique of the European master tale of the secular see [Asad, 2003] and [Roetz, 2013].

⁵ Translated literally as «objects of knowledge».

⁶ See, for example, the list provided by Klong rdol bla ma Ngag dbang blo bzang in *bZo dang gso ba/ skar rtsis rnams las byung ba’i ming gi grangs* (1963, 408). Klong rdol bla ma gives Tib. *tshad ma* for logic. A thorough description and analysis of the *rig gnas* presents [Seyfort-Ruegg, 1995. P. 93–147].

⁷ According to Klong rdol bla ma, *Rig gnas che ba sgra rig pa/ snyan ngag/ sdebs sbyor/ zlos gar/ mngon brjod/ brda’ gsar rnying gi khyad par rnams las byung ba’i ming ggrangs* [!] they are: *snyan ngag* (“poetics”), *sdeb sbyor* (“metrics”), *mngon brjod* (“lexicography”), *zlos gar* («theatre»), and *skar rtsis* («astrology and divination»).

⁸ Sometimes the two distinctions *thun mong pa* (“common”) and *thun mong ma yin pa* («uncommon») are employed.

⁹ The importance of the worldly/ secular sciences, however, was contested, and Georges Dreyfus (2003, 102) tells us that the secular sciences were (and still are) in fact often left out of the monastic curriculum.

¹⁰ For a detailed description of different positions in this dispute see [Townsend, 2016].

is dominant in the Tibetan configuration of the religious-secular divide, this does not deny the importance of the secular in the Tibetan cultural world. In the Tibetan context, the secular and the religious should be understood as two mutually defining and dependent categories. In our discussion of the notion of Buddhist government in seventeenth century Tibet and Mongolia we have to keep this particular understanding of the secular-religious divide in our mind.

3) Buddhist Government in the *Erdeni tunumal nere-tü sudur*

The biography of the Tumed-ruler Altan Qa an¹¹, written exclusively in verse around 1607 by an unknown author¹², has its literary models in the Mongolian epic and the Tibetan *rnam thar* alike [Kollmar-Paulenz, 2001. P. 33–49]. It draws on both indigenous and Tibetan-Buddhist interpretational models to narrate the life of its protagonist. This dual framework is already obvious in the introductory verses in which the author introduces Činggis Qan, drawing on indigenous (“born through the destiny of Heaven above”/ *deger-e tngri-yin jaya -a-bar törögsen*, 1v7/8) as well as Buddhist notions of power (“he spread the religion of the Buddha”/ *burqan-u sasin-i delgeregülügsen aji u*, 1v16/17). While the Buddhist framing is predominant, the ideal Buddhist rule is depicted in terms like *engke amu ulang, nuta, tübsin, jir a-lang* etc. that have a long history in Mongolian political thought and evoke indigenous notions of rulership. However, in the biography these terms are loaded with Buddhist meanings and it is difficult, if not downright impossible, to estimate their contemporary understanding. In my analysis of the representation of the “two orders” and the “donor-donee” relation in the biography, I will only randomly touch on the indigenous notions of rulership.

The following compounds with regard to the “two/twin orders” are used in the *Erdeni tunumal*:

qoyar jüil (4r15); *šasin törö* (2r17–18; 43r8); *törö sasin* (19v3; 43v7–8; 43v12; 50v12; 53v8); *sudur nom kiked törö yosun* (2r22–23); *yirtinčü-yin törö burqan-u šasin* (1v21–22; 2v19–20); *burqan-u sasin kiked yirtinčü-yin törö* (43v24–44r1); *yirtinčü nom qoyar-un törö-yi* (36v21–22); *nom-un sasin-i törö* (17r11).

The not commonly used *qoyar jüil* is the Mongolian equivalent of the Tibetan *tshul gnyis*, “two systems”. It occurs only once in the *Erdeni tunumal*, in connection to the ruler Altan Qa an, who “by means of the two systems brought the sentient beings under his rule” (*qoyar jüil-iyer jasa -tur oro ulu čü*) (4r15/16)). The verbal noun *oro ulu čü* is used in a similar way as the Tibetan *jug pa* in the phrase “to enter into the dharma” (*chos la jug pa*).

The most commonly used term for the two orders is *törö sasin*¹³ which occurs five times. It translates the Tibetan *chos srid*, but in reverse order, putting the secular first. The spectre of verbs in conjunction with *törö sasin* is not very large: often the verb *bari-* in combination with *tübsin-e* occurs, for example: *burqan-u sasin kiked yirtinčü-yin törö-yi tübsin-e bariju* (43v24–44r1), “he firmly set up the teaching of the Buddha and the rule of the world”; *sudur nom kiked törö yosun-i tübsin-e bari san* (2r22/23), “after he had firmly set up the religion (literally: the *sūtras* and the *dharma*) and the laws and customs”. *Tübsin* literally denotes “smooth, even”, and indeed this word contains much older ideas about the rule of the qan, already occurring in the thirteenth century. The ruler consolidates *törö*¹⁴, pacifies, makes it smooth (*tübsidke-*, 1v14: *törö yosun-i tübsidkečü*) and he spreads *sasin* (1v14: *burqan-u sasin delgeregülügsen*). Furthermore, we find *jilu ud-*, “to put in order”: *yirtinčü-yin törö burqan-u sasin-i jilu udu ad* (1v21/22), “after he had put in order the rule of the world and the religion of the Buddha”, or *sasin törö-yi jilu adun jasan yabun* (43r8/9), “he put in order and carried out the religious and the worldly rule”. The verb *to ol-* appears in combination with *tegsi* once more, “to establish harmoniously”: *yirtinčü nom qoyar-un törö-yi tegsi to olu ad* (36v21–22), “after he had harmoniously established the rule of the world and the *dharma*”. The secular and religious rule is harmonious (*tegsi*), and the twin orders should be strong and firm. The latter idea is expressed in its negation *yirtinčü-yin törö burqan-u sasin ese to tajü* (2v19/20), “worldly rule and the religion of the Buddha did not stay firm”. The stable, firm and harmonious Buddhist government is established (*bayi ulu san*) and carried out (*jasan*) by the Buddhist ruler (*degedüs-ün bayi ulu san törö sasin-i jasan jokiyar jasa ad* (50v12–13)), “After he had put in order and carried out the worldly rule, established by the exalted ones, and the religion”, “because it is difficult that the harmoniously established worldly rule and the religion are without leader” (*tegsi bayi ulu san törö sasin ezen ügei sa uqu berke-yin tulada* (43v14/15)). Stable and harmonious social conditions are the foundation that allows the individual to follow the *dharma* and eventually obtain Buddhahood, the ultimate Mahāyāna-Buddhist soteriological goal. The interrelationship of the secular and the religious is further stressed in the phrase “they entered into worldly rule and religion” (*törö sasin-dur oro ad* (43v8)), translating and at the same time expanding the well-known Tibetan trope “to enter the *dharma*” to include the secular.

Sasin törö, the same compound as *törö sasin* but in reverse order, is used only two times throughout the text, in connection with the verbs *tedkülče-*, “to support to-

¹¹ I use the xeroxcopy of the manuscript preserved at the Inner Mongolian Academy of Social Sciences.

¹² A number of translations into Japanese, German, and English exist of this biography: [Morikawa, 1987; Yoshida et al., 1998; Kollmar-Paulenz, 2001; Elverskog, 2003].

¹³ Throughout the manuscript written without points to the right.

¹⁴ For an analysis of the concept of *törö* see [Skrynnikova, 2009]. My translation and understanding of *törö* in a Buddhist context at times differs from Skrynnikova’s.

gether” and *jilu adun jasa-*, “to carry out by putting in order”.

The anonymous author of the *Erdeni tunumal* must have been an educated person because he makes use of the popular comparison of the two orders to a silk knot (*abiy-a-tu degedü nom-un törö-yi kiib janggiy-a metü bol aju* (29r16–17) (“like a knot in a silk scarf”), and *degedü nom-un jasa -yi kib-ün janggiy-a metü üiledügsen-dür* (36r8–9)). The Japanese scholar Yumiko Ishihama has drawn attention to this comparison, locating the phrase in Tibetan treasure texts, notably the *Mani bka’ bum* and the *Padma bka’ thang*. Both texts have been translated repeatedly into Mongolian. From this fact she has drawn the conclusion that the Mongolian configuration of the *qoyar yosun* as presented in the *Ča an teüke* was influenced by Tibetan treasure texts [Ishihama, 2004. P. 20]¹⁵. Ishihama’s hypothesis may well be valid for the *Erdeni-yin tobči* which, however, does not contain the comparison.

Although in the *Erdeni tunumal* the two aspects of Buddhist government, the secular and the religious, are considered to be equal, the wording allows us to speculate that in this reciprocal relationship the ruler is still superior. In the *Erdeni tunumal* the power relation is in favour of the secular, but bolstered by the religious. This particular constellation derives from Altan Qa an being imagined as a *bodhisattva*. Here the *Erdeni tunumal* follows exactly the Tibetan script. Already in one of the opening verses of the rhyme chronicle Altan Qa an is called *qubil an*, “emanation body”, and later on he is openly addressed as *bodhisattva* who has deigned to take birth among the Mongols to lead his people on the path to liberation:

“[...] when the teaching of the Buddha has been in decline he appeared full of compassion and has taken birth among the Mongols as *bodhisattva* Altan Qa an, benefitting them.” (*burqan-u sasin čölüvidegsen tere učir-tur nigülesküi-ber irejü. Bodisung altan qa an mong ol ulus-tur tusalan töröl olju* [...] (44r4–7)).

Addressing Altan Qa an as *bodhisattva*, the author of his biography transforms his mundane military endeavours into soteriologically relevant deeds. One of the most prominent tasks of a *bodhisattva* is to establish peace and justice in the world, here stressed by the key terms “peace and tranquillity” (*engke amu ulang*). This is also the mission of the Mongolian ruler of older times (notably in the thirteenth century). Yet both pursue this goal for different reasons: While in the indigenous concept of rulership the ruler’s charisma shows in his ability to maintain law and order in his realm, the Buddhist

ruler has to maintain law and order so that his subjects are able to lead a moral life and strife for a better rebirth in the next. Here the wording which evokes older notions of good government eases the transformation from indigenous to Buddhist government.

In the *Erdeni tunumal* the secular ruler as *bodhisattva* is simultaneously a *dharmarāja*, a “king of the *dharma*”, and a *cakravartin* (Mo. *kürdün-i ergigülügči qa an*), a “wheel-turning ruler”, the worldly equivalent to the Buddha. The notion of the *cakravartin* goes back to the early Buddhist concept of the Buddha as a “wheel-turning king” who possesses the thirty-two great and eighty small body marks of a fully accomplished *mahāpuruṣa*, a “great man”. The appellation *dharmarāja* in the *Erdeni tunumal* even becomes part of his name, *altan nom-un qa an* (29r10/11; 29v16/17; 31r14; 31r21/22; 32v1/2; 33r8; 35v18/19; 36v9; 16v19–20; 38v11; 39r16). *Dharmarāja* is the title most often mentioned in the entire biography. His rule must be in accordance with Buddhist notions what it takes to be a good ruler. These notions consist of the ten virtues (Tib. *dge ba bcu*), rendered in Mongolian “the ten white virtues”, *arban buyantu nom*. They are: (1) not killing, (2) not stealing, (3) not indulging in sexual misconduct, (4) not lying, (5) not slandering, (6) not using harsh words, (7) not indulging in idle gossip, (8) not being covetous, (9) not harming others, (10) not holding wrong views [Tsepak Rigzin, 1986. P. 54]¹⁶. Altan Qa an is for the first time addressed as *dharmarāja* when he sets in motion the persecution of the indigenous religious specialists, the male and female shamans. Although not explicitly spelt out, the ruler here acts in accordance with the ten virtues (notably the tenth virtue). As *dharmarāja* and *cakravartin* he is characterized as *yeke jir alang-tu kücütü cakravarti altan qa an* (31r8/9), “great, joyous, powerful *cakravartin* Altan Qa an”. In this phrase, the adjective *jir alang-tu* is used as a synonym for *amu ulang*, “tranquillity” and evokes the already mentioned most important task of the Buddhist ruler within the context of the two orders, namely to provide tranquillity which in this context conveys the religious notion of blissfulness (Tib. *bde ba*, Skt. *sukha*). Both *amu ulang* and *jir alang* are but two aspects of (religious) bliss. As *cakravartin* and *dharmarāja* the ruler establishes the religious and the secular rule and lets the people rejoice in peace and quiet (*engke amu ulang*): “[...] in general the very powerful *cakravartin dharmarāja* Altan Qa an established the two rules, the worldly and the religious, and let everybody rejoice in peace and quiet” (*yeke kücütü cakravarti nom-un altan qa an. Yerü yirtinčü nom qoyar-un törö-yi tegsi to olu ad yerü qotala bügüde-yi engke nuta jir a ulu ad* (36v21–22)). These are the conditions under which his subjects are able to follow the *dharma*. As *dharmarāja*, Altan Qa an has to make sure that the *dharma* is spread. This goal is accomplished by establishing temples and monasteries, as the Dalai Lama advises him to do: “the *cakravartin* Qa an should set out in the Mongolian lands and erect

¹⁵ The argument, however, is problematic. It presupposes that the author respectively compiler of the *Ča an teüke*, the famous Qutu tai Sečen Qung Tayiji (1540–1587, for these dates see [Haenisch, 1955], 70v14 and 82v11–13), could read Tibetan. At the time of the compilation of the *Ča an teüke*, in the latter half of the sixteenth century, neither the *Mani bka’ bum* nor the *Padma bka’ thang* had yet been translated into the Mongolian language.

¹⁶ sub voce *dge ba bcu*.

temples and monasteries, so that the *dharma* will be spread harmoniously” (*cakravarti qa an mong ol-un ajar-a ögede bolju: tegsi sasin-i delgeregülkü tula süm-e keyid bayi uldqui* (34r21–24)).

To denote the mundane sphere, very often the term *yirtinčü* is applied. *Yirtinčü* conveys a specific Buddhist meaning in the context of the *qoyar yosun*. Therefore, in the *Erdeni tunumal* we have to contextualize the term in the Buddhist context in which it actually occurs. It translates the Tibetan *jig rten*, skt. *loka*. Already in the *Ja’ sa mu tig ma*, the famous “pearl decree” of Qubilai Qa an to `Phags pa bla ma from the year 1264, the term *jig rten* specifies the realm of the world: *jig rten `di’i phun sum tshogs pa jim gir rgyal po’i khrims lugs bzhin spyad na `byung yang* [Schuh, 1977. P. 118], “If one acts according to the law of Činggis Qan, the most excellent of this world...” We also find the compounds *bla ma’i bya ba*, activity/duty of the lama”, *chos kyi bya ba*, “activity of the dharma”, and *jig rten gyi bya ba*, “activity of the world”, *khrims kyi bya ba*, “activity of worldly law”, very early on in Tibetan chronicles, for example in the *Deb ther sngon po* of the late fifteenth century [‘Gos lo tsa ba gZhon nu dpal, 1984. P. 268]. Thus, in a Buddhist context *yirtinčü* denotes the worldly, mundane order, *laukika* in contrast to *lokottara* (albeit, as already explained, not in the mutually exclusive meaning of the modern European notion of the secular-religious divide).

These findings are further confirmed when we look at the use of the term *törö* if it stands alone. As stand-alone the term is most often used to denote secular rule, more specifically different concrete political settings like the Chinese-Mongolian political relationship, for example in the verse reporting the Chinese-Mongolian peace treaty of 1570: *yeke törö to ta a san* (16r21); *ča ajilaju kitad mongol-un törö* (16v14) (here addressing the implementation of law in the process of the peace treaty); *dayibing yeke törö to ta san* (16v23/24); *kitad mong ol-un yeke törö-yi to taju* (16v19/20). The construction of the narrative further stresses the secular interpretation of the term: three verses create a juxtaposition between the secular and the religious: the first verse (125, 16v19–24) reports the Chinese-Mongolian peace treaty, the second verse (126, 16v25–17r6) summarizes Altan Qa an’s secular deeds (like military campaigns) up to 1570, and the third verse (127, 17r6–11) turns to the religious, in that the ruler starts to think about what is missing in his life: *tengsel ügei nom-un sasin-i törö-yi sanaju бүр-үн*” (17r10–11), “he recollected the matchless religious and secular rule”.

The permeability of the two orders, the secular and the religious, is most obvious in the notion of the ruler as *bodhisattva*. The *cakravartin* and *dharma* still remains a lay, secular person. He belongs to the secular, *laukika* realm, integrating the religious in the ethical-religious norms he is to follow and implement for the common good of society. The ruler as *bodhisattva*, however, belongs to the religious, *lokottara* realm, although as a worldly ruler he also integrates *laukika*-aspects

in his person [Seyfort-Ruegg, 1995. P. 10]. In such a constellation the power to rule which on the secular level is based on military strength, is legitimised by the ruler’s supra-mundane qualities, or to put it differently, the authority of the secular power lies in its religious legitimisation.

As already noted, in Buddhist society, the two orders are realised in the personal relationship between a lay-donor and a monk respectively a lama. In the *Erdeni tunumal* this social order is repeatedly addressed, for example in verse 166 (the first occurrence), where (for Tibet) the multitude of donors is mentioned: *töbed-ün yeke ba -a öglige-yin ejed* (22r6–7). The author makes it very clear that on the social level the relationship between the secular and the religious is realised in individual and reciprocal encounters. Therefore the verb *učiraldu-*, “to meet each other”, is constantly used in this context¹⁷. Apart from *učiraldu-* also *uljaldu-* is used: *takil-un oron öglige-yin ejen bayasqulang-iyar a uljalduju* (41v8–10), “preceptor and donor [here Dügüreg Qa an] met each other joyously”.

I put particular emphasis on the issue of the personal relation because in Mongolian Studies (and partly also in Tibetan Studies), the *yon mchod* relationship is often understood as an institutionalized relationship between the representative of the state and the representative of a particular Buddhist school [Sagaster, 1976. P. 33]¹⁸. But this is not correct: on the social level the relationship remains an individual one¹⁹. The lay-donor may establish *yon mchod* relations with different lamas of different Buddhist schools; the *Erdeni tunumal* provides many examples in this regard²⁰. Within the framework of succession by rebirth (the *sprul sku* system) the relationship can also be expanded to include successive rebirths of both protagonists.

4) Buddhist Government in the *Erdeni-yin tobči*

This chronicle is perhaps the most widely read historical work in the Mongolian regions. Numerous copies are known, and the work also received the rare honour to be put into print by order of the Qing emperor Qianlong (reigned 1736–1795) [Kollmar-Paulenz, 2018. P. 139], and was even translated into Manchu and Chinese. The chronicle was written some fifty years after the *Erdeni tunumal*; in this short span of time not only the political

¹⁷ *Uridu töröl tutum-dur qa an bida qoya ula. Učiraju takil-un oron öglige-yin ejen bolulčaju* (22v20–22); *učiralduju jegün eteged burqan-u sasin-dur bi takil-un oron bolju. Ülemji yeke qa an öglige-yin ejen bolju ergümjilen kündüleju* (25v4–8); *öglige-yin ejen takil-un oron qoyar učiraldubai* (28r3–4); *uridu buyan irügerün kücün-iyer ur umal naran metü sasin-i delgeregülkü-yin tula. üčireldüju takil-un oron öglige-yin ejen bolulčaju* (30v19–22).

¹⁸ However, several scholars have stressed the personal nature of the relationship, compare [Seyfort-Ruegg, 1997. P. 857–858; Kollmar-Paulenz, 2001. P. 135].

¹⁹ The matter is slightly different if the *yon mchod* model is applied to two states, like Tibet and China, but this is a different matter and does not concern us here.

²⁰ Compare Kollmar-Paulenz, 2001. P. 134–139.

circumstances in the Mongolian regions had significantly changed, but also the religious situation. The *dGe lugs pa* monastic institutions thrived, and in the whole of Buddhist Inner Asia the institution of the Dalai Lamas had been firmly established and yielded significant symbolic power in the political arena. The buddhisisation of society and culture can be seen in the very composition of the *Erdeni-yin tobči*: its author, the Ordos noble Sa ang Sečen (born 1604), integrates Mongolian history into the wider framework of Buddhist history, by genealogically aligning Činggis Qan and the *altan uru*, the “golden lineage”, to the rulers of Tibet and ultimately to the Indian Shākya-rulers from whom the Buddha was born. Compared to the *Erdeni tunumal*, the *Erdeni-yin tobči* shows some differences in the way of framing the narrative of Buddhist Government. One at first sight minor difference to the *Erdeni tunumal* can be noted on the lexical level: the compound *törö sasin* is not found in the *Erdeni-yin tobči*. Instead, Sa ang Sečen exclusively uses the compound *sasin törö*, following the Tibetan model of *chos srid* and stressing the prevalence of the religious against the secular (74r24, 86v12, 93r23, 94r30)²¹. Although *sasin* takes first place, Sa ang Sečen asserts that the two laws (*qoyar jasa*) were “equally/at an equal measure established” (*tegside bayi ulu san*). The concrete arrangement of the religious and secular rule is described in the same terms as in the *Erdeni tunumal*: the religious and secular rule are established (*sa-sin törö-yi bayi ulbasu* (74r24)) or “equally established” (*qoyar yosun-i tegsi-de yabu ulu ad* (46r16–17); *sasin törö qoyar-i tegside bayi ulu ad* (94r30)). With regard to *sasin* most often the verbs *bari-* (to build, construct, set up, establish) and *tedkü-* (to support, protect) are used, for example: *burqan-u sasin-i ülemji yekede tedkün* (95v28–30); *ila u san-u sasin-i tedkün* (93r24–25).

Whereas the religion is supported (*tedkün*), the worldly power is smoothed (*tübsidken*): “He supported the religion of the Buddha in great measure, and greatly smoothed and established the rule of the holy ones” (*burqan-u sasin-i ülemji yekede tedkün. bo das-un törö-yi asuru tübsidken bayi ulju* (95v28–30)). Further, the two orders are nourished (*tejige-*): *narmai yeke ulus-i sasin törö ber tejigebesü* (93r23).

The two orders are mostly addressed as *qoyar törö* (*qoyar törö-yi tübsin-e bayi ulčuqui* (77v12–13); *qoyar törö-yi erten-ü yosu ar bayi ulu ad* (81v14–15); *qoyar törö ber [qotola] amitan-i ülemji jir alang-tan bol a -san ači u* (76v28–29)). The term *qoyar törö* does not occur in the *Erdeni tunumal*. More rarely, the *Erdeni-yin tobči* uses *qoyar jasa*: *Qoyar jasa -i tegside bayi ulun* (45r28). Both terms attest the strong Tibetan influence, providing precise translations of the Tibetan *khirms po gnyis* and *khirms chen po gnyis* respectively.

²¹ I use the Urga-manuscript of the chronicle, see [Hae-nisch, 1955]. The compound *sasin törö* also prevails in the earlier *Ča an teüke*, which not once writes *törö sasin*, at least not the manuscript copy I consulted.

The concrete realisation of the *qoyar yosun* in the donor-donee relationship is rarely mentioned, and here only the donee, the religious part: *saskiya manzu gosaya radna kitu kemekü lama-yi*²². *takil-un oron bol an. uridus-un yosu ar. qoyar jasa -i tegside bayi ulun*. (45r27–29). The predominance of the religious may be a result of the influence of the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho on the work of Sa ang Sečen. For the Fifth Dalai Lama, the symbiosis of secular and religious power is realised in the person of the lama, not in the person of the ruler. Also, the primacy of the religious over the secular is emphasized in the rewriting and reinterpretation of the Mongolian past, addressing past rulers as *bodhisattvas*-in-disguise by the term *bo das*, “the holy ones”: *bo das-un törö*. The term occurs three times: *bo das-un törö-yi asuru tübsidken bayi ulju* (95v28–30); *burqan-u sasin bo das-un törö-ber qotala-yi jir a-ulu san-i* (96v22); *bo das-un törö bülüge* (99r3)²³. The *Erdeni tunumal* does not use this term, yet a variation of the phrase occurs as *degedüs-ün bayi ulu san törö sasin-i jasan jokiyar jasa ad* (50v9–14).

In the *Erdeni-yin tobči* the narrative itself reveals the concrete influence of the Tibetan-language biography of the Third Dalai Lama bSod nams rgya mtsho (1543–1588), written by the great Fifth in 1646²⁴. The sequence of events, including the journey of the Third Dalai Lama from Tibet and his adventures on his way, closely follows his Tibetan biography. Moreover, the Tibetan biography provides a lengthy report about an alleged speech of the Qutu tai Sečen qung tayiji. The *Erdeni-yin tobči* is the only Mongolian chronicle which contains this speech, [Kollmar-Paulenz, 2001. P. 125–129]²⁵. With the narrative tool of the speech the author stresses the primacy of the religious over the secular. In contrast to the author of the *Erdeni tunumal* who mentions the “white virtues” only fleetingly (29v4–5), Sa ang Sečen comments at length on the ten virtues as the normative code of ethics for the ruler to adhere to (77v6/7).

5) Comparison and Conclusion

The short analysis of Buddhist government in the two chronicles has brought to light that the *Erdeni tunumal* has not yet fully endorsed the Buddhist reinterpretation of Mongolian history. Although the biography already employs the concept of Buddhist government, the twin orders not yet build a stable theory of state, in which each element has its fixed place. The functions of the dual poles of the concept, the donor and the donee, vary according to their respective socio-political context and are highly individualised. The relationship between the ruler and the lama is presented as a personal religious re-

²² The text notes the individual *Sa skya pa* lamas who were donees.

²³ For a different interpretation of the term *bo das* see [Skrynnikova, 2009. P. 453].

²⁴ Sa ang Sečen does not mention this work among the sources he used.

²⁵ The content of the speech differs in both sources.

relationship between a devout Buddhist lay-man/ ruler-as-*bodhisattva/ dharmarāja* and his spiritual teacher. Contrary to later sources, among them the *Erdeni-yin tobči* (76r4–5), the *Erdeni tunumal* does not present Altan Qa an as the rebirth of Qubilai Qa an. Instead, it simply draws a parallel between the meeting of Qubilai and `Phags pa and the meeting of Altan Qa an and the Third Dalai Lama (31v12–16). Yet, the *Erdeni tunumal* is the only Mongolian chronicle of the seventeenth century which stresses the bestowal of the *Hevajra abhiṣeka* to Altan Qa an²⁶. In Tibetan historiographical writings of the *Sa skya* school this *abhiṣeka* occupies an important place for the legitimization of *Sa skya* pa political power in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In the biography of the Third Dalai Lama, the Fifth Dalai Lama obviously tries to draw a line from the *Sa skya pa* to his own school, the *dGe lugs pa*, presenting the *dGe lugs pa* as the legitimate successors of the *Sa skya pa*. While the Fifth Dalai Lama probably followed a sectarian agenda, there is no hint of the anonymous Mongolian author of the *Erdeni tunumal* doing the same. Yet we have to concede that the *Erdeni tunumal* is the first historical source in the Tibeto-Mongolian cultural world which draws a direct line from the *Sa skya pa* to the *dGe lugs pa*, using the *Hevajra abhiṣeka* as connecting link and legitimising means. Still, the religious part in the *yon mchod* relationship as presented in the *Erdeni tunumal* does not yield any real political power. The relationship is absent of political connotations. This absence is further stressed by the lack of ritualised elements which the *Erdeni-yin tobči* employs to stage the relationship between Altan Qa an and bSod nams rgya mtsho, most obviously in the symbolism of the white clothing of the protagonists²⁷. The *Erdeni tunumal* still adheres to a concept of political rule in which the secular ruler has pre-eminence against his religious counterpart. This balance of power, however, was soon to change, as the case of the *Erdeni-yin tobči* demonstrates.

More than fifty years after the composition of the *Erdeni tunumal* the discourse about worldly and religious power has changed. The *Erdeni-yin tobči* follows the Tibetan narrative of the Tibeto-Mongolian relations in the framing of the *chos srid zung `brel*-relation which was developed in Tibetan historiography since the early sixteenth century²⁸. Particularly through the reception of the writings of the Fifth Dalai Lama, this interpretative model deeply influenced and shaped the Mongols' cultural memory of their past. The new view on the past correlated with the social and political changes that took place in Mongolia and Tibet in the seventeenth century. In Mongolia, the *dGe lugs pa* school had quickly gained ground and established its power, and very soon the

Buddhist *sangha* was acknowledged as a legal body on a par with Mongolian nobility. In Tibet itself the institution of the Dalai Lamas was established. The rule of the great Fifth Dalai Lama had a deep impact on Buddhist Inner Asia, and immense political importance was attributed to his bestowal of titles to Mongolian rulers and noblemen [Ishihama, 1992]. This political and economic power shift in favour of the religious or, to put it differently, Buddhist government put into work, is seen in the narrative devices of the *Erdeni-yin tobči*. Narrations like the detailed report of the legal regulations issued jointly by Altan Qa an and the Third Dalai Lama²⁹, or the specific terminology framing the interplay of the religious and the secular attest to that.

Although we note the direct influence of the writings of the Fifth Dalai Lama, his influence is surely not the only source for the adjustment of the *qoyar yosun* in the *Erdeni-yin tobči*. Historical works are the result of and at the same time discursively shape the social and political culture of which they are a product, and this culture had significantly changed in the fifty odd years that separate both texts. Therefore, Sa ang Sečen's narrative representation should rather be considered the product of the changed socio-religious and political conditions of his own time. On the discourse level, since the middle of the seventeenth century Mongolian history had become an integral part of a general Buddhist history, and thus political power was finally and thoroughly religionised, at least discursively. Already Yumiko Ishihama has noted that the concept of Buddhist Government was well established in seventeenth century Inner Asia as a concept valid to the Qing, the Mongols and Tibetans alike, although the precise implications of the concept were open to negotiation among these three political players [Ishihama, 2004].

Yet, in Mongolia and Tibet alike, people were well aware that the relation of the religious and the secular in the concept of "Buddhist government" touches on the very nature of the religious that is in potential danger of being politicized. This intrinsic tension has led to criticism mostly from the religious side. Therefore it is apt to conclude this short presentation about Buddhist government in historical Mongolia with a quotation from the much later *Hor chos `byung*, the "History of Buddhism in Mongolia", written by `Jigs med rig pa'i rdo rje in 1819 [Bira, 1970. P. 50–55]. The short passage takes us back to the thirteenth century when according to Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhist tradition the system of the two orders was for the first time implemented in Mongolia, with `Phags pa bla ma and Qubilai Qa an as the religious and secular partners in the *yon mchod* relationship. In this short passage the young scholar bCom ldan rig ral criticizes `Phags pa bla ma harshly for his religio-political position. He says:

²⁶ The bestowal of this *abhiṣeka* is also told in the later (1646) Tibetan biography of the Third Dalai Lama, written by the Fifth, see [Ngag dbang blo bzang, 1982. P. 98v5–99r1].

²⁷ Compare [Kollmar-Paulenz, 2001. P. 145].

²⁸ See, for example, the *Deb ther dmar po gсар ma* [Tucci, 1971].

²⁹ They are not mentioned in the *Erdeni tunumal*.

“The Teaching of the Buddha is obscured by a cloud of obedience to [imperial] commands, the well-being and happiness of beings falls into the hands of the ruler,

and the religious of this degenerate age adopts the behaviour of an official: it is known that he who is ignorant of these three things is no Noble³⁰ (*phags pa*)”³¹.

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³⁰ A pun on ‘Phags pa’s name.

³¹ *Sangs rgyas bstan pa bka’i phyag sprin gyis bsgrigs / sems can bde skyid mi dpon lag tu shor / snyigs dus dge sbyong dpon po’i brtul zhugs `dzin // `di gsum ma rtogs `phags pa min par gsol //*, quoted after [Seyfort-Ruegg, 1997. P. 863].

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