

Our Great Qing: The Mongols, Buddhism, and the State in Late Imperial China. By Johan Elverskog. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006. Pp. xvii + 242. \$52.00.

This study concerns an intellectual history of Inner Mongolian self-representations, making it clear how the Mongols, especially those in Inner Mongolia, actually accepted, rejected, reinterpreted, deflected, or renegotiated these new narratives and rituals of political authority and state power that were assiduously broadcasted by the Qing court. In short, this study aims to provide the picture not from the centre, but from the periphery. Therefore the several means used by the centre or Qing such as marriage alliances, economic and social institutions, the Bureau of Colonial Affairs (*Lifan Yuan*), legal systems and brute military force to secure continued Mongol loyalty are beyond the focus of this book. Elverskog collects every Mongol historical text related to the state-view or historical view and compares these to each other, arguing that there is a change of perspective in the periods before and after the Qing dynasty's rule commenced.

Considering that existing studies are apt to emphasize the view from the centre, the author's standpoint might be welcomed. But we can find some problems in his approach as expressed in the introduction.

Even if some change of perspective is found in the historical sources, this change could be induced by a lot of probable factors such as the time when the author lived, the district where he lived, his degree of literacy, his own or his tribe's standpoint and the influence of the domestic and foreign texts that the author used as a model, etc. It is not probable that only one factor made the Mongol perspective in the texts change. But Elverskog decidedly attributes the cause of the change of perspective among Mongol sources to the introduction of Qing rule, without analyzing the texts themselves. That is to say, the major weakness of this study is "the absence of textual critical methods."

Moreover, any avid reader who goes through this study will easily see the flood of Mongol nationalism despite Elverskog's claim of being free from Mongol nationalist historiography. In the references, there are few Tibetan and Chinese sources, even though the Mongols were greatly influenced by both states. When we see that some parts of the Mongol chronicles, which depict the history of India and Tibet and the Tibet-Mongol related events, are word for word translations of correspondent parts of Tibetan chronicles,¹ it is clear that the author's indifference to the Tibet-Mongol cultural intercourse is fatal.

In the same context, it is problematic for this study not to use the Tibetan works written by well-educated Mongol Lamas. As is well known, the Tibetan language was used by Mongol monks like Latin (in Europe), and a lot of Mongol monks wrote their religious and historical works in Tibetan. As these Tibetan works were published by woodblock and read by many peoples, these probably helped many readers to forge a certain ethnic and historical view. Many of the Mongol chronicles and historical documents Elverskog uses in this study were originally hand-written manuscripts to which only a few people had access. Thus, it could be concluded that it is difficult for us to

¹ Ishihama Yumiko 石濱裕美子, *Tukan issai shugi mongoru no sho* トウカン一切宗義モンゴルの章 (Tokyo: Toyo bunko 東洋文庫, 1986), pp. 21–25, 147–59.

regard the views which these Mongol manuscripts reveal as the representative thought of all classes of the Mongols. There is no reason to ignore these Tibetan texts written by Mongol monks in investigating Mongol self-representation.

The subconscious Mongol nationalism in this study could be seen, in particular, in the author's assiduous claim to transcend the idea of *qoyar yosu* model which was formed with Tibetan Buddhism's influence on Mongol society. The above mentioned problems are repeatedly encountered in this study, so we will try to examine them in detail as follows.

The first three chapters deal with the development or progression from independent minor *ulus* (communities) like the Khorchins to the Mongols of the Qing. Chapter One, "The Mongols on the Eve of Conquest," concerns the Mongol conceptualizations of community. Elverskog largely claims the following: In the *ulus/törü* system the various pre-existing *ulus* (meaning "communities") constituted *törü* (meaning "states"), which fundamentally defined Mongol communal boundaries and political authority. As the *ulus/törü* theory fundamentally justified the reality of a separate and distinct community, during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the Inner Mongol communities such as Khorchin *ulus*, Kharachin *ulus*, Tümed *ulus* and so on had come to reject the authority of the Chinggisid heir and become independent. But with the rise of the Qing, these fragmentary independent *ulus* were integrated into one entity, the "Mongol *ulus*" under the authority of the Qing. In other words, the Qing "created" the reunified Mongol *ulus*.

It is well known that Inner Asian nomadic peoples such as the Xiongnu, Turks and Mongols moved in tribe or family units in times of peace, but once an outstanding leader like Chinggis Khan arose, these fragmentary units were incorporated into one trans-tribal militant nomadic empire. But as its unity was very fragile, the empire was apt to dissolve into its former minor units. That is why nomadic empires can rapidly expand and disappear. At a glance, this widespread phenomenon of the nomadic peoples is very similar to Elverskog's description of the *ulus/törü* system. However, when someone coins a new word, calling it some kind of "theory" or "system," he is required to reveal its unique nature as different from others and its structure as appropriate to calling it a system. But unfortunately, we cannot find any detailed and clear explanation about the reality of the *ulus/törü* system. It goes without saying that an easy modelling or schematization with vague evidence will not contribute to the academic community. Furthermore, we cannot find any strong presence of the *ulus/törü* system in the contemporary works. Instead, we can find a lot of examples of *qoyar yosu* or the Two Laws (see below) in the Mongol sources written in the seventeenth century. Despite this, Elverskog underestimates this *törü-shasin* concept and insists on sticking to the *ulus/törü* system. This is partly because he seems to have a vague understanding of the meaning of *qoyar yosu*. We will point out this problem later.

Chapter Two, "The Mongols and Political Authority," concerns Mongol conceptualizations of political authority. Here Elverskog stresses the need to move beyond the confines of the *qoyar yosu* model and instead presents a dual system of legitimacy: Buddhism (Dharma) and the will of God (Heaven). In the latter case, God's blessing was conferred and confirmed through the cult of Chinggis Khan. Here one question arises. Is there any difference between the dual system of the Dharma and Heaven and the well-known *qoyar yosu* concept? Could the Dharma and Heaven be understood within the

framework of *qoyar yosu* or *törü shasin*? To answer this question, we should first try to clarify the meaning of the *qoyar yosu* concept. *Qoyar yosu*, in Tibetan *lugs gnyis* or *lugs zung*, means the Two Laws, which can be dissolved into the two contrasting concepts within the “*törü shasin*,” which means “state and religion,” “secular and sacred,” “king and monk,” and so on. Even though Elverskog seems to confine the meaning of *qoyar yosu* to a Lamaist-Caesaropapist, *qoyar yosu* or *törü shasin* is the general term to show, by contrast, something inside and outside of *samsāra*. As the Dharma is one outside *samsāra* and the Heaven is the other inside the *samsāra*, the Dharma and Heaven could be understood within the framework of *qoyar yosu* concept.

Elverskog says that “the very term *qoyar yosu* is not even standardized in pre-Qing Mongolian sources” (p. 43) and that “The *White History*, a manual of proper imperial rule ... is thus divided into two sections. The first section is a description of the requirements for the performance of the rituals toward Chinggis Khan, and the second outlines the ideal model of Buddhist rule” (p. 54). Here he clearly regards the theme of the *White History*, written in pre-Qing times, as not containing references to *qoyar yosu*, but rather to his dual system of legitimacy. However, looking at the very initial phrase of the *White History* he quotes, we can confirm that this work’s theme revolves around that of the *qoyar yosu*, as follows:

The true Buddhist law of the lama who is the origin of sacred doctrine, the lord of religion, cannot be loosened like a silk knot and the heavy law of the Khagan, who is the authority of the great state, the king of this world, cannot be destroyed like Mt. Yoke, one of the Seven Golden Mountains. This book, named *The White History of the Doctrine of the Ten Virtuous Deeds*, is a handbook to actualize these Two Laws (*qoyar yosu*) ...

This phrase consists of two couplets, namely:

the lama
the Khagan

who is the origin of sacred doctrine,
who is the authority of the great state,

the lord of religion
the king of this world

.....
the true Buddhist law
the heavy Khagan’s law

cannot be loosened
cannot be destroyed

like a silk knot
like Mt. Yoke, one of the Seven Golden Mountains

These two couplets clearly reveal the *qoyar yosu* or Two Laws concept; as the underlined phrase indicates, it was central to this text. Moreover the latter couplet is the word for

word translation of the couplets cited in both the *Ma-ni-bka'-bum*, a famous biography of Srong-btsan-sgam-po, and the *Padma-bka'-thang*, a famous hagiography of Padma-sambhava, which were translated from Tibetan into Mongolian in the initial stages of Mongol contact with Tibet.² That is, even in pre-Qing sources, there was a strong presence of the *qoyar yosu* concept. Moreover, this *qoyar yosu* concept formed the common base of Qing-Mongol diplomacy during Kangxi era. Thus there are a lot of examples of the term *törü shasin* in historical documents written in the Kangxi era.³ In short, the *qoyar yosu* concept prevailed in Qing-Mongol relationship both before and during Qing rule. Therefore, it does not stand to reason to underestimate the role of this *qoyar yosu* concept in the seventeenth century.

Next, Elverskog regards Heaven as one of two authorities over the Mongols. He patiently enumerates examples of the word heaven (*tengri*) from Mongol sources in a chronological order. But in the first place, what is Heaven or God? According to the Confucian doctrine, Heaven (*tian*) is the source of authority that could confer kingship on the Chinese emperor. And according to the Buddhist doctrine, *tian* means gods, from local spirits to the Indian famous god Indra, who could consecrate a normal man as a sacred king or *Cakravartin*. And what about the Mongol Heaven? Can we state flatly that Heaven during the Qing period was not seen as one of the local spirits within the Buddhist pantheon, but was instead a hundred percent purely Mongol concept of Heaven? We can await a more detailed definition of the Mongol concept of Heaven.

Chapter Three, "Qing Ornamentalism and the Cult of Chinggis Khan," is concerned with how the power of the Tibetan hierarchs (dharma) and the Chinggis Khan cult (heaven) was displaced within the framework of Qing "ornamentalism." Ornamentalism is the newly minted term by David Cannadine who argues that British rule actually remapped their subjects in Canada, Australia and New Zealand etc. into their own class hierarchy through the bestowal of titles, awards and baubles. But is there any necessity of quoting the British rule that has nothing to do with Qing-Mongol relation here? In investigating the Qing's title bestowal to Mongols, is it proper to comment on the Han-Chinese tradition rather than the British rule?

John King Fairbank, who was inspired by Kurihara Tomonobu's 栗原朋信 *Shin Kan shi no kenkyu* 秦漢史の研究, claimed in his *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* that Qing's world view and diplomacy was basically influenced by the Han-Chinese tributary system, which had originated in the Han dynasty. As the tributary system was an ideal one, even if some titles were conferred from the centre to the periphery,

² Ishihama Yumiko, "The Notion of 'Buddhist Government' (*chos srid*) Shared by Tibet, Mongol and Manchu in the Early 17th Century," in *The Relationship between Religion and State (chos srid zung 'brel) in Traditional Tibet*, ed. Christoph Cüppers (Lumbini, Nepal: International Research Institute, 2004), pp. 15-31.

³ Ishihama Yumiko, "The Conceptual Framework of the dGa'-ldan's War Based on the *beye dailame wargi amargi babe necihiyeme toktobuha bodogon i bithe*, 'Buddhist Government' in the Tibet-Mongol and Manchu Relationship," in *Tibet and Her Neighbours: A History*, ed. Alex McKay (London: Edition Hansjörg Mayer, 2003), pp. 157-65.

its effectiveness depended on the situation. Therefore if we want to confirm when and how someone's identity changed, we must inquire into their background in individual cases.

Yet Elverskog says that it took nearly a century of Manchu rule for the policy of ornamentalism to succeed and that this delay was caused because another source of authority, Dalai Lama, continued to bestow titles. In every respect, this comment is out of focus. Most of the subjects on whom Dalai Lama conferred titles were not the Inner Mongol peoples Elverskog focused on, but instead were Oyirad, especially the Qinghai Qoshuuds.⁴ Therefore, he should find other reasons to explain this delay. Moreover, on the identity of the Inner-Mongol peoples before and after their affiliation to the Eight Banners, Kusunoki Yoshimichi 楠木賢道 and Oka Hiroki 岡洋樹 have made useful comments in their work based on Mongol documents.⁵ Generally speaking, Japanese studies on East Asian history are often ignored by foreign researchers, so more efficient use of Japanese works should be encouraged.

Chapter Four, "The Poetics, Rituals and Language of Being Mongol, Buddhist and Qing," concerns how the rituals and narratives of Mongol Buddhist identity were also being transformed to coincide with the Buddhist Qing's mythic structures of legitimacy. Comparing the pre-Qing historical sources which begin with Chinggis Khan with the Qing period historical sources which begin with Mahāsaṃmata in India, Elverskog claims that after the introduction of Qing rule Chinggis Khan came to be seen as one of the many rulers within the mythic cycles of Buddhist world history and this helped the Mongols to forge a unified sense of the Mongols conceived of as simply one part of the Buddhist Qing. But this claim is unacceptable. For the attribution of Chinggis Khan's ancestor to the Tibetan and Indian royal family is the repetition of the claim of the Tibetan chronicles. According to Tibetan chronicles, the first Tibetan king gNya'-khri-btsan-po was a refugee from India and a member of the Indian royal house. It is clear that respect for the birthplace of Buddhism made the Tibetans connect their royal family's lineage to the Indian royal house. Likewise, according to the Mongol chronicles written after the seventeenth century, one of Tibetan king's descendants from Tibet became Börte-Cino, a famous ancestor of Chinggis Khan. The structures of these two chronicles are completely the same. As for the Mongol chronicles, the respect for Tibetan culture made the Mongols connect their royal family to the Tibetan royal family. Therefore, this change from Chinggis Khan to Mahāsaṃmata should be explained not by the introduction of Qing's rule, but by the deeper contact with Tibetan Buddhist culture.

⁴ Ishihama Yumiko, "A Study of the Seals and Titles Conferred by the Dalai Lamas," in *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*, ed. Ihara Shoren 伊原照蓮 and Yamaguchi Zuiho 山口瑞鳳 (Narita 成田市: Naritasan Shinsoji 成田山新勝寺, 1992), pp. 501–14.

⁵ Kusunoki Yoshimichi, "Sincho no hakki ni kumikomareta jarud bu mongol zoku 清朝の八旗に組み込まれたジャールト部モンゴル族," in *Sizen ningen bunka: chiiki tougou to minzoku tougou 自然・人間・文化——地域統合と民族統合* (Tsukuba 筑波: Tsukuba University, 2001), pp. 29–39; Oka Hiroki, *Shindai mongoru meiki seido no kenkyu 清代モンゴル盟旗制度の研究* (Tokyo: Toho shoten 東方書店, 2007), pp. 227–68.

What about Elverskog's claim that this change forged a unified sense of the Mongols being conceived of as simply one part of the Buddhist Qing? If his logic is right, when Mahāsaṃmata appeared in the Tibetan chronicles, Tibet must have forged a unified sense of Tibet. But in fact, the opposite is true. Most of the famous Tibetan chronicles were written in the long chaotic times before the rise of the fifth Dalai Lama, so the presence of Mahāsaṃmata in the narrative could not create a united Tibet. Moreover, here is an interesting story. In the late eighteenth century, the Panchen Lama Blo-bzang-dpal-ldan-ye-shes (1738–1780) wrote a reincarnation list for the Qianlong Emperor. There we can find three state's kings, such as the Indian king Prasenajit who lived at the same time as the Buddha Shākyamuni; Mu-ne-btsan-po, a king of ancient Tibet; and Khubilai-Khan.⁶ At this point, four states, namely the Indian, the Tibetan, the Mongolian and the Manchu, were spiritually connected in one line. From these three myths, we become aware that this genealogical continuity is one way to explain the Tibetan Buddhist world. At this ideal level, the secular Qing state's rule is beyond consideration. The reason is that there were many Tibetan Buddhists, like the Buriyad and the Torghuts living by the Caspian Sea outside the Mongol empire. If Elverskog had better understanding of the Tibetan chronicles, he would not relate the Mongol genealogy which begins with Mahāsaṃmata to the introduction of Qing rule.

Chapter Five concerns "The Buddhist Qing and Mongol Localization in the Nineteenth Century." Here we can agree with Elverskog's notion that Qing rule promoted the cohesiveness of local groups and prepared them for an independent Mongolia because the Qing bureaucratic system and judicature were recycled in Independent Outer Mongolia.⁷ In this regard, however, we must again argue that another factor in promoting the cohesiveness of local authority was Tibetan Buddhism. Most Mongol towns begin with a Tibetan Buddhist monastery. For example, Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Outer Mongolia, originated from a Tibetan Buddhist monastery named Ganden which was erected in 1654 by the Tibetan craftsmen brought by the First rJe-btsun-dam-pa.

In any case, throughout the course of this review, I have attempted to demonstrate two things. One is that the best historical study comes from an exhaustive textual critique and from the accumulation of minor case studies evidenced by historical sources. The other is that even if we investigate the periphery from the periphery, we should never exclude foreign factors in order to present the right comments because there is no one hundred percent pure culture independent of foreign influence in the world. This is especially so when we discuss Mongol culture from the late sixteenth century to the boyda Khan regime; we cannot underestimate the influence of Tibetan Buddhist culture.

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⁶ Vladimir L. Uspensky, "The Previous Incarnations of the Qianlong Emperor according to the Panchen Lama Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes," in *Tibet, Past and Present*, ed. Henk Blezer (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 215–28.

⁷ Hagihara Mamoru 萩原守, *Shindai mongoru no saiban to saiban bunsho* 清代モンゴルの裁判と裁判文書 (Tokyo: Sobunsha 創文社, 2006), pp. 14–17, 179–86.