

SUMMARY OF THE PHD THESIS

TULKU RECOGNITION IN MONGOLIA AS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE LINEAGE OF THE KHALKHA DZAYA PANDITA

Jalsraijamts Ganbaatar

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Introduction

The activities of the leading reincarnation lineage of the Mongols, the Bogd Jevtsündamba Khutugtu¹ (Tib. *Rje btsun dam pa*, Mong. *Ĵibĵundamba*) also known as Bogd Gegeen (Mong. *Bogda gegeen*), the 13 Mongolian Khutugtus with seals acknowledged by the Manchu emperors (Khal. *Khalkhiin 13 tamgatai khutagt*, Mong. *Qalq-a-yin 13 tamay-a-tai qutuytu*), the 7 Khutugtus with ecclesiastical estates nominated by the Bogd Jevtsündamba Khutugtus (Khal. *Ikh shaviin doloon khutagt*, Mong. *yeke šabi-yin doloan qutuytu*),² and other great and small incarnated lamas or “tulkus” (Tib. *sprul sku*, Khal. *khutagt khuvilgaan*, Mong. *qutuytu qubilyan*), great thinkers, scholar lamas, great Vajrayana meditation practitioners emerged in the history of Mongolian Buddhism, whose lives and activities have become a significant topic of research by not only Mongolian but international researchers. One of the major components of Tibetan and Mongolian Vajrayana Buddhism is the reincarnation system or “tulku institution,” dating back to the 13th century. In today's world of open society and free-thinking, there is an increasing need to study and review the origins of Buddhist tulkus, their biographies, recognition rules, customs and practices, their literary works, sutras, and records, monasteries, ecclesiastical estates, disciples, treasuries, financial offices, and monastic schools. The research of the tulku institution brings new results in Mongolian, Tibetan, and Buddhist Studies, historiography, theology, palaeography, philology, and anthropology. In current Mongolian society, the citizens have enjoyed the choice or freedom of belief since the early 1990s. Construction and renovation of temples, monasteries, and places of worship have become more popular. While the public approach to learning more about centuries-old traditional worship of Buddhism has been growing,³ the tulku recognition practice that was halted for over 70 years

¹ For the Cyrillic transcription of modern Mongolian terms see Appendix 1.

² These special groups will be introduced later.

³ Янжинсүрэн, С., *Зава Дамдин гавжийн шастир дахь гүн ухааны үзэл* [Philosophical Views in the Chronicle of Zava Damdin]. Улаанбаатар 2002, х. 4. (Докторын диссертац, Монгол улсын их сургууль.)

has started to revive officially and informally since the 1990s, and to date, more than 20 tulkus have been recognized anew. (The number of reincarnation lineages reached 118⁴ before the 1930s.) The number of lamas has been increasing significantly. There are more than 2,500 monks in over 120 monasteries in Mongolia, and it is estimated that more than 120 novices are studying in the Buddhist University named after Öndör Gegeen Zanabazar.⁵ In the given circumstances and increasing interest, a need emerges from analyzing the tulkus and their roles in the Vajrayana cultural area of Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism.

Topic of the PhD Thesis

Tulku is a charisma or a potential way to properly combine the Buddhist values and independence of the Mongols with the world of multi-religious ideologies. In order to meet the requirements of the old and current society and the diverse mentality, the study of the concept of Mongolian tulkus on the basis of reliable sources, records, and accounts is set as a facing scientific and cognitive objective.

In the dissertation I attempted to analyze the history of tulku recognition system in Mongolia as a historical study starting from the 13th century and ending in these days. During centuries different political periods gave a framework to the tulku system, such as the Manchu Qing dynasty, the sovereignty of the Bogd Khan, then socialism and finally democracy. This monograph is conducted solely on the example of a prominent monk of the Gelukpa Stream, thus will cover the average features of the recognition of chief tulkus of Gelukpa Stream in Mongolia.

In this dissertation, we will discuss the examples of the Dzaya Pandita Luvsanprinlei (Tib. *Dza ya paṅ di ta Blo bzang 'phrin las*, Mong. *Ĵay-a bandida Lubsangperinglei*, 1642–1715), also known as Dzaya Gegeen, a great tulku of the Gelukpa (Tib. *dge lugs pa*) Stream in Mongolia and his subsequent seven reincarnations known as the lineage of Dzaya Gegeen, to answer questions such as who a tulku is, whether the concept of tulku exists in Buddhist culture other than Tibetan and Mongolian, whether it is in the Buddha's own teaching, what are the terms of tulku and tulku recognition system, who were recognized as tulkus in Mongolia during history, when and for what reasons, if the reincarnation lineage system is a religious, a state or

⁴ Позднеев, А. М., *Очерки быта буддийских монастырей и буддийского духовенства в Монголии в связи с отношением к сего последнего к народу*. Санкт-Петербург 1987, с. 238.

⁵ Цэдэндамба, С., *Төр сүм хийдийн харилцаа, орчин үе* [Contemporary Relations of State and Church]. Улаанбаатар 1999, х. 36.

economic structure, and how this system was reintroduced to current Mongolian society. The study of the biography and pieces of work of Dzaya Pandita Luvsanprinlei began shortly after his passing away (1715) by his disciples in the early 18th century, which has already surpassed the scope of Mongolian scholars, and are studied by lamas and the scholars in the fields of Tibetan and Mongolian studies in Mongolia,⁶ France, Monaco, Hungary, China, Russia, Japan, England, Germany, the USA, etc.

Research Methods, Main Sources

The research was based on secondary sources including Mongolian and international publications, primary sources such as archival, monastic and library documents, as well as fieldwork to collect oral history and record interviews.

As for written sources, which we used in the PhD thesis, related to the biography of Dzaya Pandita and his lineage, his biography written by a close disciple, Ganjuurva mergen nomun khan Luvsantsültem (Mong. Ganjuurba mergen nom-un qan Lubsangcültem, Tib. Bka' 'gyur pa Blo bzang tshul khriims)⁷ in Tibetan “Tsegjad” (Tib. *tshig brgyad*) or versified style, is a detailed biography with 44 chapters entitled *Biography of the Master of Mandala Ocean, the Vajra holder Dzaya Pandita Luvsanprinlei [which is like] the Lord of the Wish-fulfilling Trees* (Tib. *Dkyil 'khor rgya mtsho'i mnga' bdag rdo rje 'chang dza ya paṅ di ta blo bzang 'phrin las dpal bzang po'i rnam thar dpag bsam yongs 'du'i dbang bo zhes bya ba zhugs so*). This biography briefly introduces Dzaya Pandita's previous incarnations born in India and Tibet, then describes his biography from birth to death, confirming that it was written after 1715. Comparing this biography and the autobiography “*The Lamp which Completely Clarifies the Manner in which he Himself [Dzaya Pandita] Lived his Life in Saṃsāra*” (Tib. *Shakya btsun blo bzang 'phrin las kyi ngag rnam phyogs su bsgrigs pa las rang gi 'khor bar sbyod pa'i tshul shin du gsal ba'i sgron me bzhugs so*)⁸ written by Dzaya Pandita, there is a significant

⁶ Дашбадрах, Д., *Монголын хутагтуудын намтарын ойллого (XVII–XX)* [Insight into the Biography of Mongolian Saints (17th–20th Century)]. Улаанбаатар 2004, х. 64–65.

⁷ Bka' 'gyur ba mer gen no mon han Blo bzang tshul khriims rgya mtsho, *Dkyil 'khor rgya mtsho'i mnga' bdag rdo rje 'chang Dzaya Paṅ di ta Blo bzang 'phrin las dpal bzang po'i rnam thar dpag bsam yongs 'du'i dbang bo zhes bya ba zhugs so* [Biography of the Master of Mandala Ocean, the Vajra Holder Dzaya Pandita Luvsanprinlei (which is like) the Lord of the Wish-fulfilling Trees]. Collected works of Bka' 'gyur ba Blo bzang tshul khriims, Vol. ca, ff. 53a–144a, 144 pages. Tianjin, mid-1990s.

⁸ Dzaya Paṅ di ta Blo bzang 'phrin las, *Shakya btsun blo bzang 'phrin las kyi // ngag rnam phyogs su bsgrigs pa las / rang gi 'khor bar sbyod pa'i tshul / shin du gsal ba'i sgron me bzhugs so* / [The Lamp which Completely

difference. Ganjuurva's biography details the life story of Dzaya Pandita's birth, his growing up, his education in Tibet, his return to Mongolia, and his visit to many provinces in Inner Mongolia, Beijing, Höhhot, Dolon Nuur, and Mt. Wutai, and his life until his death. In his autobiography, Dzaya Pandita wrote about his studies in a monastic school in Tibet for 19 years until his return to Mongolia in 1680. The famous Mongolian scholar, L. Khürelbaatar conducted a detailed study on the autobiography of Dzaya Pandita, which was published in his book *The White Garuda of Heaven*.⁹ I concern, Dzaya Pandita Luvsanprinlei's biography, Dzaya Pandita's biography written by Ganjuurva Nomun Khan, a versified short autobiography “The Lamp which Completely Clarifies the Manner in which he Himself [Dzaya Pandita] Lived his Life in *Saṃsāra*” by Dzaya Pandita, and the short biography of Dzaya Pandita as significant and authentic sources related to the life and activity of Dzaya Pandita Luvsanprinlei. Another piece of work, *Origin and Biography of Erdene Dzaya Pandita Khutugtu Jambatseren of Sain Noyon Khan Province*¹⁰ written in 1917 about his subsequent reincarnations is also an important source in the study of this reincarnation lineage. In addition to these works, the works by Dharmatāla,¹¹ Sh. Soninbayar,¹² Sh. Bira,¹³ L. Khürelbaatar,¹⁴ J. Boldbaatar,¹⁵ D.

Clarifies the Manner in which he himself [Dzaya Pandita] lived his life in Samsara, from the Compilation of the Words of the Shakya Monk Luvsanprinlei]. Collected works of Dzaya Paṅ di ta Blo bzang 'phrin las, Vol. *kha*, 33 pages. Beijing blockprint, 17th century.

⁹ Хүрэлбаатар, Л., *Огторгуйн цагаан гарьд I* [The White Garuda of the Space I]. Улаанбаатар 1996.

¹⁰ *Sayin noyan qan ayimay-un Erdeni Jāy-a Bandita qutuγtu-yin qubilγan λambačereng-ün uy eke 1917 on-du bičigdegsen* [Origin and Biography of Jambatseren, Reincarnation of Erdene Dzaya Pandita of Sain Noyon Khan Province, written in 1917]. Монгол улсын түүхийн төв архив, ХА-171, Д-1, ХН-1, Б-1.

¹¹ Dharmatāla, *Rosary of White Lotuses, Being the Clear Account of How the Precious Teaching of Buddha Appeared and Spread in the Great Hor Country*. Otto Harrassowitz Wiesbaden 1987.

¹² Сонинбаяр, Ш., Зая бандида Лувсанпэрэнлэй туурвисан гүн дэлгэр агуу их дээдийн номыг сонсосны тэмдэглэл тодорхой толь хэмээх номын тухай [About the Clear Mirror]. In: Ганхуяг, Г.– Дондов, Э. (эмх.), *Зая бандида Лувсанпэрэнлэй мэндэлсний 360 жилийн ойд зүриулсан эрдэм шинжилгээний бага хурлын эмхэтгэл*. Улаанбаатар 2002, х. 15–20.

¹³ Бира, С., Зая бандида Лувсанпэрэнлэй бол Монголын түүх шашин соёлын нэрт зүтгэлтэн мөн [Zaya Pandita Luvsanprinlei is a Well-known Scholar of Mongolian History, Religion, and Culture]. In: Ганхуяг, Г. (эмх.), *Зая бандида Лувсанпэрэнлэй мэндэлсний 360 жилийн ойд зориулсан эрдэм шинжилгээний бага хурлийн эмхэтгэл*. Улаанбаатар 2002, х. 20–25.

¹⁴ Хүрэлбаатар, Л., *Огторгуйн цагаан гарди I*. Улаанбаатар 1996.

¹⁵ Болдбаатар, Ж., *Халхын тамгатай хутугтууд* [Khalkha Khutugtus with Seals]. Улаанбаатар 2016.

Dashbadrakh,¹⁶ V. P. Vasiliev,¹⁷ A. I. Vostrikov,¹⁸ Lokesh Chandra,¹⁹ Agata Bareja-Starzyńska,²⁰ Isabelle Charleux,²¹ Krisztina Teleki,²² and others demonstrate a wide range of studies related to Dzaya Pandita, such as his biography and monastery, the biography and activities of his further incarnations, and the study of religious rituals written by them. Studies on the biography of Dzaya Pandita and his four-volume work *A Clear Mirror: A Records of Teachings Received* (Tib. *Thob yig gsal ba'i me long*) were conducted by P. Nyam-Ochir and Sangseraima Ujeed.

Chapters

My PhD thesis includes the following chapters:

Chapter 1 narrates the history of the origin of the “tulku” and the historical process of the development of the tulku lineage system.

Chapter 2 narrates the seven incarnations of Dzaya Pandita recognized in the Khalkha area of Mongolia, the state policy of the Manchu Qing Dynasty on controlling and restricting the Dzaya Gegeens with the uses of honorary titles, seals, and privileges, and the recognition of the Dzaya Gegeen incarnations by the Tibetan superior tulkus such as the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama.

Chapter 3 describes the situation of the tulkus after 1990 and the newly recognized tulkus, the responsibilities and future trends of the modern tulkus, the policy of Gandantegchenlin Monastery (Tib. *Dga' ldan theg chen gling*, Khal. *Tögs bayasgalant ikh*

¹⁶ Дашбадрах, Д., *Монголын хутагтуудын намтрын ойллого (XVII–XX)*,

¹⁷ Васильев, М. П., *О некоторых книгах, относящихся к истории буддизма, в библиотеке Казанского университета*. Ученые записки Академии наук, Санкт-Петербург 1855, с. 7–8.

¹⁸ Востриков, А.И., *Тибетская историческая литература*. Москва 1962, с. 118–120.

¹⁹ Lokesh, Ch., *Works of Zaya Paṅ di ta Blo bzang 'phrin las*. Śata-Piṭaka Series Vol 6. New Delhi 1964, pp. 278–281.

²⁰ Bareja-Starzyńska, A., The Reincarnation Lineage of Zaya Gegeen. In: Charleux, I. (ed.), *History, Architecture and Restoration of Zaya Gegeenii Khüree Monastery in Mongolia*. Monaco 2016, pp. 43–54.

²¹ Charleux, I., Zayiin Khüree from the 17th to the Early 20th Century: The Foundation of an Academic Monastery in Mongolia. In: Charleux, I. (ed.), *History, Architecture and Restoration of Zaya Gegeenii Khüree Monastery in Mongolia*. Monaco 2016, pp. 55–102.

²² Teleki, K., Present-Day Buddhist Monasteries and Sacred Sites in and Around Tsetserleg City. In: Charleux, I. (ed.), *History, Architecture and Restoration of Zaya Gegeenii Khüree Monastery in Mongolia*. Monaco 2016. pp. 135–148.

khölgöniin khiid, island of the joyful Mahāyāna)²³ the Centre of Mongolian Buddhists on the tulkus, and the current tulku recognition practices and customs.

Chapter 4 discusses post-socialist Mongolian Buddhism, how an ordinary herder was recognized as the Seventh Dzaya Gegeen in 1999, how his monastic education, religious career, and death ritual happened. Also, some facts are mentioned about the Eighth Dzaya Gegeen to be recognized anew based on research papers and oral sources, including interviews made with the Seventh Dzaya Gegeen, his monk disciples, and followers during fieldwork.

In the end of the dissertation, I attempt to analyze “the historical tradition of tulku recognition” in Mongolia from the point of view of historical study based on a detailed study of the “tulku lineage system” that dates to the 13th century.

This monograph is conducted solely on the example of the Khalkha Dzaya Pandita, thus will cover the chief tulkus of the Gelukpa Stream in Tibet and Mongolia, and also the first tulkus of the Karmapa tradition in correlation to the origin of the tulku recognition system, while no other tulkus from other Buddhist Streams will be included in the discussion.

Conclusion, Present-day Situation

Since 1990, Mongolian society changed, and with the re-emergence of Buddhism, the tulku recognition tradition has re-emerged. In the newly established society, they approached the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Bogd in recognizing the tulkus in accordance with the old tradition. However, the Tenth Panchen Lama was not accepted by the Mongols, so the Mongols adhered to the Dalai Lama and the Ninth Bogd in recognizing the tulkus. Other lamas, including Gurudeva Rinpoche, also began to recognize the incarnations. A kind of reformation emerged in the tulku lineage system, where based on the official letter sent from the local followers, the local council and/or the local monastery related to the tulku, the Gandantegchenling monastery passes on the names of the children's potential to be the reincarnation to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, who in accordance with the tulku recognition tradition, selects and certifies the boy as the reincarnation after a specific religious investigation and related rituals. Although tulkus are identified in accordance with their internal religious traditions, the state has become involved in recognizing influential reincarnations. For example, the Mongolian government, the Ninth Bogd, and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama signed a tripartite agreement on identifying the Tenth

²³ Name of the main monastic complex in Ulaanbaatar (also called as Baruun khüree in the old times) which partly survived the purges and was reopened in 1944. Also, the name of its main assembly hall (Tsogchin dugan), built in 1838. In the future, Gandantegchenlin Monastery will be written.

Bogd Jevtsündamba Khutugtu, which became the first case since 1990 that the Mongolian government has signed a tripartite agreement with tulkus. Nowadays, the tulku recognition practice has a new tradition of recognizing the reincarnations within a broader scope covering more principles, the tulku status, laws, power and authorization, and legal documents than the previous tulku recognition practice. In short, the state will focus on preparing for a new phase of relations with the tulkus, the new leadership in Buddhism, the tulkus, while the religion will work within the legal framework, which is the basic social relationship, to thrive the forgotten tulku system in the last century. The new situation of the tulku in modern times is a group of topics that requires further study. As Buddha said,

Monks and learned ones,
Just as gold is burnt, cut, and rubbed,
Examine my words carefully and
Do not accept them simply out of respect.

Following the teachings of the Buddha, who commanded the importance of studying any book, I tried to analyze the topic “Tulku recognition tradition and reformation in Mongolia” to the best of my capability.

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