The Oirad of the Early 17th Century: Statehood and Political Ideology

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The Oirad of the Early 17th Century: Statehood and Political Ideology

A Dissertation Presented

By

RICHARD P. TAUPIER

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

September 2014

History
The Oirad of the Early 17th Century: Statehood and Political Ideology

A Dissertation Presented

By

RICHARD P. TAUPIER

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my Dorbot friend Andre Boskhomdzhiiev and his parents Taiysa and Chimid from Kalmykia who survived Siberian exile to remain dedicated to their Dorbod heritage in the face of constant discrimination.

It is likewise dedicated to Andre Badmaev in Kalmykia and Ch. Dalai from Mongolia, Dorbod and Zakhchin scholars respectively, who dedicated their lives to the history of the Oirad and Zaya Pandita and who have been exceedingly kind in sharing their knowledge and good wishes in this endeavor; and to Geshe Ngawang Wangyal, the last great Kalmyk Geshe from Drepung Gomang in Lhasa, who came to America and taught many fortunate American students.

It is dedicated no less to my wife and sons who have always been supportive and made me feel that time spent on this effort was well invested.

And last but certainly not least to my root lama Tara Tulku who was as the sun and the moon to me and to whom I shall always remain grateful.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor Audrey Altstadt for her patience in waiting for a historian to emerge from the ashes of previous academic incarnations and for her kind and gentle persuasion in moving me in that direction. I also wish to thank Johan Elverskog for his scholarship, encouragement and suggestions in helping me to understand the field and become capable of making a contribution, and to all the members of my committee who have encouraged an academic rogue to learn a few new things and share them with others.

I would like to thank the University of Massachusetts Amherst and the Department of History for making it possible for me to pursue this degree and to make a contribution to the history of Buddhist Central Asia and the Oirad people who have been so instrumental in helping me to become the person that I am.

I must also acknowledge Lkham Purevjav who spent a semester in Amherst helping me work through the translation of the Great Code of the Forty and Four.
The early 17th century Oirad ulus represents a major turning point in the politics that dominated Central Asian during the second millennia. The Oirad rose among nomadic and settled states to take control of the Central Asian steppes and play an instrumental role as the modern world was taking shape. Following several major studies of the 17th century Oirad over the past twenty years some fundamental issues remain unresolved. One key issue is the political status of the early 17th century Oirad. Confusions arise from conflicting sources and the absence of Oirat primary texts as well as from narratives influenced by the 19th century paradigm of primitive, kinship-based societies and the so-called pre-state polities into which they were organized. This fresh examination of the Oirad reframes the context in which the Oirad polity is discussed and looks to two 17th century Oirat texts to clarify the nature of the Oirad polity and the way in which
the Oirad themselves viewed the state in which they lived. It concludes with a very different narrative of the early 17th century Oirad as a group heavily invested in building alliances and creating a new Buddhist state through a decentralized process of state building. That process resulted in the formation of a 17th century Oirad State with right and left wings that in 1640 co-created the Mongol-Oirat Great State that was unlike anything to come before it. It was a state without central authority other than the rule of law, founded not by conquest but by the mutual agreement of sovereign nobles. Some of those nobles came from aristocratic lineages that pre-dated Chinggis Khan and survived more than five hundred years of Chinggisid primacy to once again stand on equal ground.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Goals, Problems and Significance

The early 17th century Oirad Ulus\(^1\) represents a major turning point in the evolving cultural and political patterns that dominated the Central Asian steppes from the 3rd century BCE Hsiung-nu Empire to 17th century Oiratia. The Oirad were soon to enter the final major conflict between early modern states with increasingly well-defined geo-political boundaries, expanding urban/agrarian settlements and centralized autocratic authority, and nomadic states typified by shifting frontier zones, fluid membership, distributed authority, and nomadic socio-economic patterns lacking fixed geographic limits. It was also the last Central Asian polity built on Buddhist ideological principles concerning spiritual and secular authority.

The Dörbön Oirad were important players in the political development of Central Asia in the 2nd millennium of the Common Era. During both the 15th and the 17th centuries they claimed center stage in the competition among nomadic and settled states for control of the Central Asian steppes. In the 17th century they controlled an area as large as any of the four Chinggisid khanates following the death of Chinggis Khan and played an instrumental role in Central Asia over a

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\(^1\) Oirad is the plural form of Oirat. Throughout this document Oirat words ending in the letter d generally indicate the plural form. Members of the Oirat Khoshut Ulus are collectively referred to as Khoshud rather than Khoshuts. An ulus is a nomadic polity. The term has been variously translated as tribe, state, nation and community but there is no direct equivalent in English. I favor the term polity as it also denotes a political community of varying size depending on the context.
six-century period as the modern world was taking shape. Peter Perdue wrote that the late 17th century Zunghar Oirad nearly succeeded in halting the advance of the Manchus into Central Asia and establishing their own empire between those of the Manchu Qing and Russia Empires.  

While there have been several major studies of the 17th century Oirad over the past twenty years, significant details within the narratives arising from those studies contradict one another, and some fundamental issues remain unresolved. One of those fundamental issues is the actual nature of the early 17th century Oirat state, to which little attention has been paid. This lack of clarity arises in part from the use of disparate sources and conflicting narratives in Russian, Manchu and Chinese, and the lack of use of Oirat primary texts, even though the existence and value of many Oirat sources are now widely known. Most 20th and 21st century descriptions of the Oirad are also heavily influenced by 19th century paradigms of primitive, kinship-based societies and the so-called pre-state or non-state polities into which they were organized. The use of those paradigms obscures rather than reveals information about the nature of the Oirat polity and,


4 This is true of Khodarkovsky 1992, Bergholz 1993, and Perdue 2005. Sneath (2007) not only avoids this type of characterizations but also offers a detailed argument as to why such constructions are misleading. This is not to imply that any of these works are not valuable contributions to the history of the Oirad.
as observed by one historian, caused western historiography to deem “the history of the steppe peoples to be of no visible significance”.

The goal of this dissertation is to clarify the nature of the Oirat state and the elements of state building they employed, and, as the anthropologist David Sneath recently wrote, break away from the misleading dichotomy of state and non-state polities applied to Central Asian steppe societies. It is only then possible to establish a more accurate understanding of the Oirad in the early 17th century. Certainly the characteristics of that Oirat polity differed from other more prominent Eurasian states of the time, such as the nascent Russian and Manchu empires. However, the Oirad shared numerous characteristics with the Northern Yuan Mongols (1368 – 1691) and the early European nation-states at the time of the Holy Roman Empire (1438 – 1740).

Arriving at a new understanding of the nature of the early 17th century Oirad is valuable for several reasons. First, it demonstrates that there were viable configurations of state power in Central Asia that were not highly centralized and clearly bounded, but in which the instruments of governance were broadly distributed. This new understanding confronts a lingering social evolutionist perspective that imagines a largely linear progression toward the development of

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7 I might refer to these as state-like structures but to do so succumbs to the dichotomy in which polities without highly centralized authority were frequently viewed as not actual states.

modern states. It contradicts the assumption implicit in that lingering perspective that pre-modern, state-like configurations of power were inherently inferior to the configurations of power embodied in modern states. Indeed, this new examination of the early 17th century Oirad will support the conclusion that some elements of Oirad statecraft, such as the rule of law and decision by national assembly, presaged valued institutions in modern democratic states.

This dissertation analyzes the early 17th century Oirad from several perspectives and asserts that state building was never simply a process of centralizing political power under a single ruler, but the result of a much wider range of political activities. In doing so it demonstrates that the Oirad engaged in state assemblies, negotiated pacts of mutual non-aggression, fielded a unified army of 48,000 warriors, adopted and promulgated a state religion, built cities, supported a leader recognized as Religious King and Defender of Dharma, organized into left and right wings, entered into a joint treaty that protected the sovereign status of its constituent polities, ensured the uniform administration of laws, and sponsored creation of a new script for writing the Oirat language and translating Buddhist scriptures. In sum, it becomes impossible to imagine these activities in the absence of a state-like structure.

Thus, while descriptions of the Oirad and other nomadic steppe polities as tribal confederations that failed to rise to the level of statehood has been the dominant
historical perspective on the early Oirad,\textsuperscript{9} this dissertation takes a different approach. It views confederated structures as an alternative method for the configuration of state authority and means of governance and employs a Foucauldian view that sets aside abstract theories of state and looks at the actual practices of governance and instruments of power as ways to understand the nature of the political enterprise.\textsuperscript{10} This is not to say that this research employs poststructuralism as an analytical method but rather that it shares Foucault’s approach to problematizing “the state” as a means of debate and discussion.\textsuperscript{11} While Foucault is often perceived as having commented only on conceptualizations of statehood only within a European context, this is not the first research project to view Foucault’s work as relevant to the study of Asian history and culture.\textsuperscript{12}

In order to achieve this new understanding two things are necessary. The first will be to examine and summarize the constructed paradigm of primitive societies and state – non-state dichotomies and the ways in which anthropologists have sought to discredit them in the past thirty years. Kuper wrote in 1988 that, “The theory of primitive society is about something that does not and never has


\textsuperscript{11} Melossi, “Michel Foucault and the Obsolescent State”, in Michel Foucault and Power Today, Oxford: Lexington Books. 2006. P. 10

In 2007, Cambridge University anthropologist David Sneath argued that Central Asian nomads were never in recorded history organized in kinship-based societies but rather through aristocratic power and state-like processes of administration. Clearly some historians share this perspective, for in a 2006 review of Perdue’s seminal work on the Qing - Zunghar struggle for dominance in Central Asia, the noted historian of Mongolia, Christopher Atwood, wrote that Perdue, with his descriptions of Oirat units as tribes or clans had placed the Zunghars “within the increasingly discredited scheme of tribal society as an evolutionary stage before states.”

Yet the debate seemed far from over. In response to Sneath, noted Turkic history specialist Peter Golden asserted in 2009 that clans and tribes remain the essential building blocks of early steppe polities, at least during the pre-Chinggisid period. In support of his position he references the 2004 translation of the Secret History of the Mongols by Igor de Rachewiltz, and Wheeler Thackston’s 1998 translation of Rashid ad-Din’s Universal History, as well as Rashid ad-Din himself, who Golden argued was exceptionally well informed. On the other hand, in a 2011 philological analysis of medieval Mongol political terminology, the Mongolian social anthropologist, Lhamsuren, argued that the

primitivist perspective frequently colors even modern translations of basic terms for state, nation, and people.\textsuperscript{17} The term ulus, for example, becomes not nation, state or polity, but rather tribe. Thus the dilemma appears to be that while the majority of anthropologists have abandoned theories of primitive society as useful tools, historians of nomadic steppe societies are still seeking new frameworks within which to locate the subjects of their studies.

Secondly, this dissertation draws on new information from translation\textsuperscript{18} and analysis of two primary Oirat texts not previously translated into English. These translations create the opportunity to learn not just what Russians, Manchus, Chinese, and Tibetans thought and wrote about the Oirad, but what the Oirad them selves thought, and about accomplishments and perspectives that were important to them. In so doing we can better visualize the Oirad from the inside rather than rely on impressions from surrounding states with which Oiratia was often at odds. The result will be a new narrative of Oirad history in which the Oirad are located at the center as intelligent agents who worked to apply the tools of Central Asian statecraft to create an important state. This approach is consistent with that of the historian Johan Elverskog who employed translation of

\textsuperscript{17} Lhamsuren, M. Where Did the Mongol Empire Come From: Medieval Mongol Ideas of People, State and Empire, in \textit{Inner Asia}, vol. 13, no. 2, Global Oriental. 2011

\textsuperscript{18} Much credit is due to a Kalmyk colleague, A Boskomdziev, without whose help in 2008 and 2009 I could not have read \textit{Seren Gerel} and to both A. Boskomdziev and L. Purevjav from Mongolia who read and translated the \textit{Mongol-Oirat Great Code} with me under a fellowship grant from the American Center for Mongolian Studies.
the *Jeweled Translucent Sutra* in establishing a new understanding of the Northern Mongol state in the second half of the 16th century.\textsuperscript{19}

The first of the translated texts is the circa 1692 biography of the Oirat Buddhist Lama Zaya Pandita, called *Seren Gerel* (Moon Light), written by his close disciple, Radnabhadra. It has been cited as the single most important source on 17th century Oirat history in key studies of the Oirad.\textsuperscript{20} Unlike the biographies of many important Buddhist figures, it does not employ a hagiography style. The focus is on where and among whom Zaya Pandita taught, the historical events in which he participated, and, most importantly, the conflicts among Oirat leaders during his lifetime. The author wrote that it was a compilation of stories as told by participants and his own first hand observations of the events he describes.

The second text is known as the *Mongol-Oirat Code of 1640*, or more literally the *Great Code of the Forty and Four*. This Great Code is the documentation of the agreement through which the independent Oirad and Khalkha Mongols of the mid 17th century formed a new Great State to counter Manchu incorporation of other Mongol nations into the Qing Empire declared in 1636, four years earlier. The phrasing of the Code’s preamble and the list of participants reveals a great deal about the goals of the agreement and the ideological context in which it was constructed. It shows, at least for a time, that the Oirad and Mongols were not caught up in the centralizing mission of some charismatic new leader, but instead


intent upon living within a peaceful state in which authority was distributed across multiple aristocratic lineages.

These two translations are important contributions to understanding the Oirad of the 17th century. They create the opportunity to better identify the individual actors and to discern from their actions the nature of their relationships and what they hoped to accomplish. In the case of the Seren Gerel we even find direct quotes attributed by eye-witness observers to various members of the Oirat nobility that offer important clues as to what they thought about various matters and indeed what actually mattered to them. But the events and interactions described in the Seren Gerel can only be understood on the basis of a solid understanding of Eurasian and especially Buddhist culture and values. Thus a third important element of this study is an in depth appreciation of Eurasian nomadic history and the manner in which many of those societies came to internalize a Buddhist worldview. This approach benefitted a great deal from Mathew Kapstein’s Assimilation of Tibetan Buddhism and Ruth Dunnell’s Great State of High and White.

The Structure of this Dissertation
The second chapter in this dissertation is a review and summary of what has been written by historians over the past 150 years about Oirat history from the early 12th to the mid 17th centuries. It draws from a wide range of secondary sources from the mid 19th century through 2012. The first part of that summary discusses Oirad political entities as the outcome of aristocratic state building efforts rather than the evolution of clans into tribal and supra-tribal organizations.
The second part concerns the Oirad of the early 13th to the late 16th century. Its purpose is to summarize what is known about early Oirad history as a means to clarify the diverse origins of the 17th century Dörbön Oirad.

The second part of the summary focuses on what has been previously written about the Oirad of the early 17th century. It reveals significant gaps and conflicting narratives arising from different sources and different historiographic approaches. It will also be apparent that, as suggested by Khodarkovsky, the so-called pre-state Oirad of early 17th century were not a major concern to historians who primarily focused on the centralization of authority leading to formation of the Zunghar, Khoshud and Kalmyk khanates, successors to what this project views as a larger and more unified Oirat polity.

Chapter three departs from the largely chronological structure of chapter two and examines the thematic terms and issues that are central to this research. As indicated earlier in this introduction the first issue will be the misrepresentation of steppe nomadic polities as kinship-based groups. Re-examination of this old paradigm opens Oirat society and political structure to new interpretations. The second and closely related issue concerns the dichotomy of state and non-state societies as applied to Central Asian steppe cultures. I argue that a new perspective on the political nature of steppe states creates the opportunity to view the early 17th century Oirad in a more transparent way, defining rather than assuming what is intended when we designate something as a state. The third

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issue is the ideologies of political authority extant in Central Asia in the early 17th century. These were combinations of mythical, genealogical and religious claims by which rulers and states established political legitimacy in the minds of subjects and with neighboring rulers and states. An understanding of these ideologies and how they were communicated offers new insights into Oirat state building efforts.

In the first half of the 17th century Central Asia experienced the rapid expansion of Russian and Manchu territories, the creation of the Manchu Qing Dynasty, and Muscovite Russian expansion into western Siberia. To the south, Tibet experienced the quelling of regional, sectarian violence and centralization of political and religious power under the Dalai Lama. The Eastern Mongols, a principal foil to earlier Oirat expansion, were becoming incorporated within the Manchu state, so that by 1640 only the Khalkha Mongols remained independent. All of these geo-political developments influenced and were in turn influenced by the Oirad. Chapter four briefly summarizes those developments and interactions as the context within which the 17th century Oirat state took shape.

Chapter five is a contextualization of Seren Gerel and the Mongol-Oirat Great Code. The Mongol-Oirat Great Code is the earlier of the two documents, but in as much as it was written in 1640, some eight years prior to the creation of the Clear Script by Zaya Pandita, the original version would have been in the traditional Mongol script. It is also true that much of the body of the Great Code was taken from previous Mongol codes, in particular the Great Code of Altan Khan, written in 1578, shortly after the historically important meeting of the
Tumed and Ordos Mongols with the Third Dalai Lama, viewed as initiating the so-called second conversion of the Mongols to Buddhism.

Figure 1
Reflections on Zaya Pandita
Painting by Yadam Suren in the Study of Zakhchin Historian Ch. Dalai

Photographed by R. Taupier during an afternoon with the Oirat Zakhchin scholar Ch. Dalai who was a specialist in the history of Zaya Pandita and the Oirad and translated the Seren Gerel into modern Mongolian. Yadam Suren was the founder of the Mongol Zurig School of painting and a personal friend of Ch. Dalai.
The date of the completion of the biography of Zaya Pandita, *Seren Gerel*, is still not known with certainty. Based on the events described in that document it can be dated to circa 1692, thirty years after the death of the famed Pandita and shortly after the first Zunghar Khan, Galdan Boshugtu, fought the Manchus under the Kangxi Emperor. It is possible that the body of *Seren Gerel* as it concerns the life of Zaya Pandita was completed shortly after his passing in 1662. If that is true, the last sixteen to twenty pages (folios 35A to 44B, depending on the version used), concerned with post 1670 events beginning eight years after the death of Zaya Pandita, are an historical addendum that chronicle the rise of Galdan Boshugtu, his consolidation of the Oirad in Zungharia, and the conflicts with the Khalkha Mongols that led to war with the Manchus. While the translations of both texts are part of this dissertation, it does not include the last ten folios of *Seren Gerel* as that section covers a period of time after the passing of Zaya Pandita and outside of the period of analysis addressed in this project.

Chapter six examines the content of the two primary documents in order to establish a clear understanding of the nature of the early 17th century Oirat Ulus, based on four research questions that emerge from the central goal of this research. 1) What were the relationships among Oirat leaders and the divisions and extent of the Oirad domain? 2) What was the nature of conflicts and alliances among the Oirad? 3) What activities are described or implied to indicate Oirat state-building efforts? 4) What explicit or implicit ideological perspectives do the texts reveal? The chapter is organized by analyzing each question in turn.
The seventh chapter of this work summarizes and integrates the analysis of Seren Gerel and the Mongol-Oirat Great Code, using that summary to create a new narrative of the 17th century Oirat state. It returns to the initial hypothesis of this research, that the early 17th century was a critical period in Oirad state building efforts and the later Zunghar, Khoshud and Kalmyk states were successors to a larger and more unified Oirat domain.

Chapters eight and nine are the translations of the *Great Code of the Forty and Four* and the *Seren Gerel*, respectively. They are organized by page and sentence according to the texts from which they were translated. They are only partially annotated and full annotation is left for the future.
CHAPTER II
OIRAD ORIGINS AND HISTORY

Who were the Early 17th Century Oirad?
The Oirad of the early 17th century were a far more diverse group than the Oirad first identified in the 13th century Secret History of the Mongols and the 14th century Universal History of Rashid al-Din (1247-1318). The Oirad named in those sources (known later as Khoid) were joined over the next the four centuries by other uluses that had one principal, common characteristic. It was that they were Mongolic speaking pastoral nomads who were ruled not by the descendants of Chinggis Khan but by other aristocratic lineages.

![Map of Mongol Empire in 1207](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mongol_Empire_1207.png)

Figure 2
Locations of Oirat and Other Mongol & Turkic Uluses in 1207

23 Map source - [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mongol_Empire_1207.png](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mongol_Empire_1207.png) - used without modification from cited source under license agreement provided therein.
While the Oirad were known frequently over their history as the Dörbön Oirad (Four Oirats) that designation implied different meanings over time. The Oirad of the 17th century were identified through the term the forty and four, allegedly meaning the forty tumen24 of the Mongols and the four tumen of the Oirad.25 It is widely thought that the term Dörbön Oirad in the early 17th century applied to the Khoid, Torghud, Dorbod, and Khoshud uluses, though there is no consensus on those four specific groups.26 The term was often not literally intended. Dörbön Oirad referred collectively to the Western Mongols outside of the great Mongol ulus controlled by the descendants of Chinggis Khan.

Rashid al-Din wrote that the Oirad, led by the royal shaman Qutuqa Beki, fought in a military alliance with the Merkids and Naimans under Jamugha, loosing in the 1201 battle that elevated Temujin (the future Chinggis Khan) as the leader of the Mongols. It is generally thought that the Oirat name came from the Mongol root word "oi", meaning forest. The Oirad named by Rashid al-Din were originally

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24 Nominally a military unit of ten thousand but in actuality the group could be smaller. On average each warrior represented a five person nuclear household of so that an army of ten thousand could be understood to represent a total population of fifty thousand people.


from the upper Yenisei River valley, west of Lake Baikal.\textsuperscript{27} Atwood placed them in modern Tuva and Khovsgol, along the Shishigt River circa 1200.\textsuperscript{28}

Of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century Oirad only the Khoid leaders claimed descent from Qutuqa Beki and the original Oirad. Though Qutuqa Beki and his people returned to the forest regions after their 1201 defeat, they surrendered within a few years to Chinggis Khan. The descendants of Chinggis intermarried with noble women of the Oirat ulus, an honor bestowed on them after they fought under Chinggis’s son Jochi in 1207 to subdue the other forest people of the northern regions.

Qutuqa Beki’s two principal sons received a daughter of Chinggis and a daughter of Jochi in marriage, cementing their political ties through noble marriage alliances. As a consequence, this pre-Chinggisid aristocratic Oirat household was allowed to maintain leadership over the early Oirat people even though Chinggis had reorganized the main body of the Mongols into the decimal system in part to diminish traditional loyalties. As favored marriage allies, every branch of the Chinggisid line was given Oirat women in marriage and male descendants of Qutuqa Beki maintained privileged political status as noble-sons-in-law.\textsuperscript{29}

The second 17\textsuperscript{th} century Oirat ulus, the Torghud, considered themselves to be descendants of the Kereyid Ulus, who were in turn a branch of the Tatars,


\textsuperscript{29} Ibid, p. 419
recognized in Chinese records as a distinct people in the early 10th century.\textsuperscript{30} Prior to Chinggis Khan they were known as a wealthy and politically advanced polity ruled by a noble family that in the early 11th century adopted the Nestorian Christian faith.\textsuperscript{31} Their khans ruled from a palatial golden tent guarded by a thousand-man day guard. They negotiated diplomatic ties with the Qara-Khitai and Tanguts, belying characterizations as a primitive pre-state tribal society.

The Kereyid were immensely important in the rise of Chinggis Khan. The Kereyid Togril Khan, given the title of Ong Khan in 1196 by the Jin Dynasty, was an ally of Chinggis’s father, Yisugei Baatar, and the first to support the young Temujin as khan of the Mongols. However Togril’s son turned on Chinggis and defeated him in a battle in early 1203. Within months Chinggis regained the advantage, destroyed the Kereyid and scattered its leaders. The Kereyid princesses were distributed among Chenggis’s Borjigid clan, and continued to exert powerful influences. But the male line disappeared except for the leaders of the Kereyid Khan’s day guard from whom the Torghud (meaning day guards)\textsuperscript{32} ruling family claimed descent. Elverskog named the Kereyid remnants as one of four Oirat groups on the Mongolian plateau at the fall of Yuan Dynasty in 1368.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid, p. 295
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid, p. 296
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid, p. 296
The third 17th century Oirat group, the Dorbod, was ruled by the Choros lineage that linked its origins to the Uighurs through a shared ancestral legend.34 The Uighurs built an empire on the Mongolian plateau from 744 to 840, but their roots went back to a sixth century Turkic confederation from southern Siberia, of which the Uighurs were the ruling clan. The imperial Uighurs were avid city builders, close allies to the Chinese Tang Dynasty, and enemies of the Tibetan Empire. Reliance on trade linked them to the Sogdians of Iranian ancestry from whom they learned the Sogdian/Syriac/Aramaic alphabet they adopted as their own use.

In 1211 the Uighurs became the first settled people to surrender to Chinggis Khan. They remained a numerous people and sent some 10,000 warriors to aid the Mongols against Khorzam in 1219 and the Tanguts in 1226.35 Their favored status allowed them to preserve the royal lineage of the Uighur iduq-quts.36 After the Mongol civil war of 1260 to 1264 the iduq-qut Qochqar was a staunch supporter of Qubilai Khan. The main body of the Uighurs dwelt in the oasis cities of Uighuristan under the control of the Chaghatayids circa 1300.37

What are lacking are historical or genealogical records that specifically link the Uighur rulers to the 14th century Choros leaders of a nomadic ulus. The

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34 Atwood, Christopher. P. Encyclopedia of Mongolian and the Mongol Empire. New York: Facts on File. 2004. p. 420. Okada and Miyawaki (200x, p. 8) wrote however that the Choros leaders were descended from the Naimans, one of the Mongols groups conquered by Chinggis Khan. This project however takes Atwood’s observations of their origins as more authoritative.


36 Meaning holy ones.

37 Ibid, p. 564
aristocratic Choros (Uighur for Wolf) lineage gave rise to Elbeg (r. 1394–1399), Mahmud (d. 1412), Toghoon (d. 1438) and Esen (r. 1438-1454), the leaders of an Oirat Empire to the west of the Mongolian plateau. The body of the Dorbod Ulus consisted of as many as 40 to 60 lineages (yasu, or bones). Dorbod commoners may have consisted of various Mongol groups drawn to Choros leadership with the dissolution of the Chaghatayid Khanate in 1335.

Of the 17th century Dörbön Oirad, only the Khoshud, under the Galwas aristocracy, who claimed descent from Chinggis’s brother Jochi Qasar, shared a patrilineal link to the Golden Lineage. Descriptions of the Mongol realms after the death of Chinggis often overlook the appanages of Chinggis’s family other than his sons. Yet the Secret History shows that Chinggis apportioned pasturelands and thousands of people to his mother and his younger brothers. While Chinggis’s younger brother Temuge was initially favored with a larger appanage, Qasar’s line gained favored status in the Mongol Civil War (1260-1264) when his son Yesungge proved to be a staunch supporter of Qubilai.

Until the mid 15th century, when the Choros Khan Esen drove them out of Mongolia, the Khoshud remained among the Chinggisid Mongols. Only in the mid to late 16th century did they become linked to the Oirad, and in the early 17th

38 Ibid, p. 420


40 Jackson, 2000, p. 33
century formed alliances with Oirat leaders. The Galwas led Khoshud were a numerous people when they joined the Oirad. In the early 17th century Oirat wars with the Khalkha Altyn Khan it was the Khoshud who sent the greatest number of warriors and the Khoshud leader Baibaghas Khan who led the army.

From these short summaries of the origins of the Dörböm Oirad of the 17th century it is apparent that each of the Oirat polities was led by a powerful noble lineage that traced its roots back hundreds of years, the Choros to the 6th century, the Torghud to the 10th, the Khoids to the 12th, and the Khoshud to the early 13th. Moreover, they were each politically and culturally sophisticated. They had all participated in previous state building efforts and the memories of those efforts formed a strong part of their heritage.

A Brief Summary of the Oirad from the 13th to 17th Centuries

At the time of Chinggis’s death in 1227 the Oirad were concentrated at the strategic juncture of the four appanages given to his sons, Jochi, Chagatai, Ogodei, and Tolui.41 In the Mongol civil war of 1260 to 1264, between Tolui’s sons, Khubilai Khan and Ariq-Boke, Oirad were known to constitute a significant portion of Ariq-Boke’s army, concentrated as they were within his territories. After Ariq-Boke’s defeat some Oirad entered Khubilai’s service. There is clear evidence that Oirad played important roles in each Mongol successor state.

When the Mongols were defeated by Ming forces in 1368 and fled north of the Great Wall, they found the Oirad in control of the Mongolian plateau. The Oirat groups at that time have been identified as the original Oirad, the Naiman, Kereyid, and Barghud uluses.\(^{42}\) The Oirad were described in 1388 Ming records as opponents of the last Yuan Emperor. In 1399 an Oirat military leader killed a successor to the Khan of the Northern Yuan, and were soon characterized by the Mongols as foreign enemies.\(^{43}\) By the end of the 14\(^{th}\) century the Choros led Oirad were concentrated in the Eastern Chagatai Khanate.

In the early 15\(^{th}\) century the Ming Emperor Yongle allied with leaders of three Oirat uluses in an effort to further weaken the Mongols.\(^{44}\) Following Yongle’s death in 1424 Oirad and Ming conflicts increased over Ming refusal to adequately compensate Oirat trade and tribute missions.\(^{45}\) Esen captured the Ming Zhentong Emperor, who in a 1449 exposed himself and his troops to harsh steppe conditions that exhausted supplies.\(^{46}\) With further victories over the Mongols, Esen declared himself Khan in 1453. That claim was rejected by some of his own leaders who considered the male descendants of Chinggis as the only


\(^{44}\) Ibid, p. 56


legitimate heirs to that title. Esen was assassinated in 1455 and the Oirad withdrew to the Orkhon River valley on the Mongolian plateau.\textsuperscript{47}

It does not appear that all the Oirad of the 15\textsuperscript{th} centuries were under Choros control. Chinese records show that in the early 15\textsuperscript{th} century the Ming established alliances with three Oirat leaders, suggesting the Choros did not speak for a unified polity. After the death of Esen Khan and dispersal of the Oirad, the Mongols began to experience renewed growth under Dayan Khan, whose 1470 enthronement to led a dramatic reversal of Chinggisid fortunes.\textsuperscript{48}

Between 1552 and 1628 some of Dyan’s heirs, including Altan Khan and Sechen Khung-Taiji as well as others from Inner and Khalkha Mongolia, repeatedly attacked and pillaged the Oirad in the Irtysh, Barkol and Altai Regions.\textsuperscript{49} The Oirad lost Kharakhorim in 1552 and were pushed west to the Tarbaghatai region, reportedly leading to a reorganization of the Oirat confederation\textsuperscript{50} which began to coalesce between the Tian Shan and Altai Mountains in what eventually became known as the Zunghar Basin. There is also evidence that the Torghud were along the Irtysh River and the Khoid were still north of the Altai Mountains.\textsuperscript{51}

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\textsuperscript{48} Elverskog, Johan C. \textit{Our Great Qing: The Mongols, Buddhism and the State in Late Imperial China}. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. 2006. p. xv. There is considerable uncertainty about the date of his death.


\textsuperscript{51} Bregel, Yuri.
\end{flushright}
common enemy harassing them at that point was the Khalkha Altyn Khan\textsuperscript{52} on their eastern flank. Altyn Khan’s continued pressure against the Oirad was an important factor in causing them to form the alliances that gave rise to coordinated Oirat action.

**Characterizations of the Early 17\textsuperscript{th} Century Oirat Polity**

The secondary sources on early 17\textsuperscript{th} century Oirat history present accounts that are often in conflict. A careful study of those sources reveals gaps and a need to resolve conflicting narratives through fresh examination of primary sources. Three book-length studies, by Khodarkovsky in 1992, Bergholz in 1993, and Perdue in 2005, provide invaluable information but look at the early 17\textsuperscript{th} century primarily as a precursor of things to come. Thus they pass quickly over a number of important events in the early development of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century Oirad. So while we know a fair amount about what happened in the later 17\textsuperscript{th} century history of the Oirad, we know a great deal less about why those things happened.

In *China Marches West* Perdue is primarily concerned with the seventy-year conflict (1688-1757) between the Zunghar Oirad and the Manchu Qing Dynasty. The focus here are developments that led to the creation of the late 17\textsuperscript{th} century Oirat Zunghar Empire, what we might call the Empire of the Oirat Left Wing. Perdue concentrates on the Choros leaders prior to the Zunghar Empire, beginning with Khara-Khula (d.1634), his son Baatur Hung Taiji (r.1634-1653),

\textsuperscript{52} Altyn Khan, a Khalkha leader of the late 16\textsuperscript{th} and early 17\textsuperscript{th} century, should not be confused with the Tumed leader Altan Khan of the mid 16\textsuperscript{th} century. To help avoid this confusion I have used the Russian spelling of Altyn’s name by which he is identified by Perdue.

Perdue credits the Khoshud Baibaghas Khan with being the leader of the Oirat confederation circa 1616 and asserts that Baibaghas was descended from the (Khoid) khans of the 12th century Oirats.\footnote{Perdue, Peter. China Marches West: the Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia. New York: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 2005. p. 102. This dissertation has already shown that the Khoshud leaders were descendants of the Galwas clan founded by Chinggis Khan’s younger brother.} He also notes that in one of the Oirad wars with the Altyn Khan (1567–1627)\footnote{This is not the Tumed Altan Khan of the 16th century, though the two are often confused.}, whom Miyawaki identifies as Sholoi Ubashi Khongtaiji of the Khalkha right wing,\footnote{Miyawaki, Junko. “History of the Dzungars,” in History of the Civilizations of Central Asia, Vo. 5. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.} Baibaghas assembled a combined Oirat army of 48,000 warriors of which 30,000 were Khoshud. Perdue makes multiple references to Baibaghas Khan and his younger brother Gushii Khan, who assumed the title of Khan following the death of Baibaghas in 1630. Baibaghas’s son Ochirtu took the title of Sechen Khan some years after the death of his uncle, Gushii Khan, in 1655.\footnote{Atwood, Christopher. P. Encyclopedia of Mongolian and the Mongol Empire. New York: Facts on File. 2004. p. 211} And, while Galdan was given his title by the Fifth Dalai Lama, Baibaghas appears\footnote{Titles such as Khan were often applied in retrospect to glorify the early patriarchs of a lineage.} to have held the title of Khan two decades prior to Oirat interactions with the Tibetan Gelukpa hierarchy.
China Marches West mentions, but does not concern itself with, the implications of the circa 1616 Oirat decision to adopt Buddhism as a state religion and to have each noble family send one son to be a monk, even though the adoption of a religion is a significant step in state building. Nor does it discuss the significance of the 1648 creation of the Oirat script by Zaya Pandita. When Gushii Khan led many of his Khoshud followers to Kokonor in 1639 - 1640, it is treated not as an expansion of the Oirat state but as an exit from that state.

Bergholz’s The Partition of the Steppe predates Perdue’s work by a dozen years. Even a quick reading will reveal many points of conflict with China Marches West. While Perdue relied heavily on Chinese and Manchu sources Bergholz was almost entirely reliant on Russian sources. Bergholz credits Khara-Khula with creation of a Zunghar state circa 1608\(^{59}\) and with organizing and leading the resistance against the Khalkha Altyn Khan. He wrote, “Khara-Khula, in his long struggle with the Altan-khan forged his people into a single khanate.”\(^{60}\) He does not mention Baibaghas Khan whose Khoshud followers comprised from one half to two-thirds of the Oirat armies that confronted Altyn Khan and who Perdue credits with being at least the titular leader of the Oirad during that period.

Bergholz wrote of Khara Khula’s son Baatur Hung Taiji that because the Fifth Dalai Lama gave Baatur Hung Taiji the title of “Yerdyen”\(^{61}\) it was tantamount to


\(^{60}\) Ibid. p. 47

\(^{61}\) This is a Russian version of the Mongolian title Erdeni, meaning precious.
appointing him as “the legitimate overlord of all the Oirats.” He also characterizes the relationship between Baatur Hung Taiji and Gushii Khan as adversarial and declares that Baatur forced Gushii Khan to flee Zungharia and set up his own khanate in Kokonor. He goes on to describe the great Mongol-Oirat assembly of 1640 as occurring in Tarbagatai, on the western edge of the Zunghar valley. Moreover he states that, “This kuriltai ensured the dignity of Baatur as the great khan of the Oirats” and formally heralded the founding of the Zunghar Khanate. He gives as his source for this the work of the earlier Russian historian Zlatkin (1964) and the Mongolian Chimitdorzhiev (1979).

Bergholz is not alone in this perspective on the Mongol-Oirat assembly. It seems pervasive in Russian interpretations of the circumstances and outcomes of the 1640 Assembly (Bartold 1962, Chimitdorzhiev 1979, Zlatkin 1964). Given that this description is repeated in the recent work of the Russian Kalmyk historian Baatr Kitinov (2010) it seems that it has not yet fallen from favor among Russians. However, it is in contrast to Oirat sources used in this research project.

The Partition of the Steppe also credits Baatur Hung Taiji with the Oirad conversion to Buddhism in conjunction with the 1640 assembly, a position also in contrast with other sources. Perdue, for example, discusses the 1616 decision

62 Ibid, p. 47
63 Ibid, p. 49
64 Okada and Miyawaki also see this characterization of the 1640 Assembly as mistaken and adversely influencing all later Russian and Soviet scholarship on the Oirat and Zunghars.
65 Ibid, p. 52
of Baibaghas Khan to send his adopted son Zaya Pandita to become a monk in Tibet. Baibaghas is also credited with having initiated the decision at a 1616 Oirat assembly for each noble family to send one son to become a monk.

In Where Two Worlds Met Khodarkovsky (1992) discusses the general Oirad Ulus briefly. His chief concern is largely with the Torghud and Dorbod who migrated from the Zunghar region to the Volga steppes circa 1630 to form the Kalmyk state, often treated as a third 17th century Oirat Khanate. He notes that in the late 16th century the Oirad were pushed west by the aggression of Altyn Khan at the same time that Muscovite adventurers (primarily Cossacks) were moving east into Siberia and establishing fortresses of Tobolsk, Omsk and Tomsk. For Khodarkovsky the principal Oirat leader of interest was the Torghud noble Kho-Urluk who led the migration to the Russian steppes. Kho-Urluk had in 1608 entered a marriage alliance with the Dorbod leader Dalai Taiji and Khodarkovsky notes that with the support of Kho-Urluk that Dalai Taiji emerged as the strongest of the Dorbod rulers, based on the assessment of Russian diplomats.

Where Two Worlds Met also discusses developments of Oirat alliance that are not noted in other works. Khodarkovsky wrote that in the 1620’s other “Jungar tayishis” joined the Dorbod – Torghud alliance led by Dalai Taiji and that a few short years later the alliance was joined by “Gushri tayishi” of the Khoshud.

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68 Ibid, p. 79
reports also on a conflict among the “Jungar tayishis” which Dalai Taiji tried to mediate, without success. The apparent instigator in that conflict was Choukur, identified by Perdue as a brother of the Khoshud princes Baibaghas and Gushii.

But whereas Perdue indicates that Baibaghas was the loser in that conflict Khodarkovsky identifies Choukur as the one who was driven away and later suffered a crushing defeat in 1630 at the hands of Dalai Taiji and Gushii in the Yayik River area. Khodarkovsky is silent on the 1620s war with the Khalkha Altyn Khan in which Dalai Taiji, Kho-Urulk and Baibaghas played pivotal roles.

Khodarkovsky also reports that shortly after the Assembly of 1640 Kho-Urulk sought to bring an increasing number of Dorbod households under his control leading to conflicts with other Dorbod and Khoshud leaders from the Ili and Irtysk River valleys. There is some confusion about those leaders however, making it difficult to assess the nature of the conflict. It is known that when Kho-Urulk started his western migration that he had scarcely more than 4,000 households. But by the mid 1640s Khodarkovsky observes that number had swelled to 22,000. It is most likely that these tents were from small uluses led by lesser nobles who wished to move away from the crowded Zunghar and Ili River regions to the less crowded Russian steppes where the Nogays were easier to push aside.

The 2010 publication by Baatr Kitinov, The Spread of Buddhism Among Western Mongolian Tribes Between the 13th and 18th Centuries, is concerned primarily with the Oirat assimilation of Buddhism. He brings to this work an impressive

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range of Oirat and Tibetan primary sources and an equally impressive set of secondary sources, authored mainly by Russian and Mongolian scholars. His approach is consistent with that of earlier Russian historians who championed the Choros leaders and Baatur Hung Taiji in particular. Yet he notes the Mongolian Academician Bira’s opinion that the life of the Khoshud Gushii Khan has been understudied and underappreciated relative to the Oirat state.\(^70\)

He provides a brief discussion of the ethnic background of the Oirad between the 15\(^{th}\) and 17\(^{th}\) centuries, which he admits is still controversial.\(^71\) He conveys a series of admittedly contradictory views from such historians as Howorth (1876), Pelliot (1960), Sanchirov (1977) and Zlatkin (1964) but does not offer any clarifications. To the generally accepted list of Oirat uluses he adds the Zunghars and Choros but it is not clear how they mesh with other ulus designations.

In 2007, Sneath, in *The Headless State*, sought to restart discussions of the nature of the Oirad and other nomadic states. He did so through a critique of the anthropological framework within which such polities are frequently presented, as primitive societies and pre-state tribal configurations. The early 17\(^{th}\) century Oirad and the Mongol-Oirat Code of 1640 represented to Sneath the quintessential example of the distributed, aristocratic-assembled state structures that he saw as the fundamental basis of nomadic steppe polities. Thus while he offered a new lens through which to examine Oirad and other nomadic Eurasian polities he did

\(^{70}\) Kitinov, Baatr U. *The Spread of Buddhism among Western Mongolian Tribes Between the 13\(^{th}\) and 18\(^{th}\) Centuries*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press. 2010. p. 185

\(^{71}\) Ibid, p. 150
not comment on the specifics of Oirat political associations or the make-up or evolution of the Oirat confederation.

From Howorth in 1876 through Kitinov in 2010 there has been too little clarification of the historical development of the Oirad from the 13th to the 17th century. That is not to say that there have been no additional pieces added to this historical puzzle, but rather that as new pieces are identified they are not matched with the other pieces and, more often than not, add to the confusion. As a result, short historical sections on the Oirad incorporated into larger works with other primary themes frequently paint a misleading picture, selecting a few points from secondary sources often at odds with other sources.

A twenty-page section on the Oirad in the 1970 translation of The Empires of the Steppes by the French historian Rene Grousset, describes the Oirad as the “real danger threatening the Manchu Chinese Empire”.

He notes that in the late 16th century the Khalkha Altyn Khan had pushed the Oirad to the west into the area of Tarbagatai. In this account Grousset wrote, “The princes of the Choros, the Dorbot, and the Khoit belonged to the same family.” He noted that the dominant tribe was that of the Choros, later known by the name of Olot.

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72 The original French text was published in 1941.


74 Ibid, p. 520

75 Ibid, p. 520
According to Grousset, it was “Boibeghus Ba’atur” who about 1620 converted to the “Lamaism of the Tibetan Yellow Church” and it was his enthusiasm that led to the conversion of Khara Kula, Dalai Taiji and Kho-Urluk. As with other historians, Grousset credits the Choros leaders as giving rise to the Zunghar Khanate. And, as with other historians, he is vague about the origin of the “Jungar” designation, suggesting that it might have applied to all the Oirat tribes though it was later restricted to the dominant Choros. While Grousset does not discuss the joint actions of the Oirat rulers he does make note of the fact that in the 1640s “Ba’atur-khongtaiji” defeated the Kirghiz-Kazakhs of the Great Horde with the help of the Khoshud chiefs “Uchritu and Ablai.”

Rossabi’s (1975) brief comments on the Oirats in China and Inner Asia credits “Kharakhula” with moving to “overwhelm his rivals among the Western Mongols” in the first two decades of the 17th century. He states that Khara Khula had received a royal title from the Dalai Lama but does not cite a source for this information. Rossabi describes other Oirat groups as fearing for their very survival and fleeing the Zunghar region to avoid Khara Khula’s centralizing mission. In this respect his understanding of the period mirrors that of others who have described it as a period during which multiple rivals contested control of the

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76 Ibid, p. 523
77 Ibid, p. 520
78 Ibid, p. 526
80 Ibid, p. 113
Oirad rather than a period in which multiple leaders built alliances.⁸¹ It may be that this perspective emerges from the assumption that Oirat and Mongol leaders were perpetually involved in centralizing missions. In contrast, Di Cosmo (2006) points out that, “The tension between centripetal and centrifugal forces represents the very essence of Inner Asian politics.”⁸²

Rossabi’s short summary of the 1640 Mongol-Oirat assembly strongly suggests that it was an effort to agree on one leader around whom they could all rally. He characterizes the resulting agreement on the independence of each ruling noble as “not being taken seriously”.⁸³ In a recent paper Munkh-Erdene Lhamsuren reached the opposite conclusion, that the 1640 Mongol-Oirat assembly solidified mutual recognition of the sovereignty of the participating nobles and their respective uluses.

Barfield (1989) provided a synopsis of early 17th century Oirat history⁸⁴ based primarily upon the earlier work of the French historian Courant,⁸⁵ who relied mostly on Chinese records, and the Russian author Zlatkin (1964).⁸⁶ He wrote

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⁸¹ See Bawden for example who in 1968 in The Modern History of Mongolia (p. 50 -51) gives and even shorter but remarkably similar description of the early 17th century Oirad. In that he wrote that Kharakhula probably lived until 1665 and was the father of Galdan, not his grandfather.


⁸⁵ Courant, M. L’Asie central aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles; Empire kalmouk ou empire manchou? Paris: Librairie A. Pichard and fils. 1912

⁸⁶ Zlatkin, I. Istoria Dzhungarskogo khanstva 1635 – 1758. Moscow: Nauka. 1964
that an Oirat civil war occurred in 1625 but does not provide details about which groups were involved in the conflict. He states only that Khara Khula reorganized the confederation after the war was concluded. The implication is that this civil war drove the Torghuds to the west and the Khoshud east and south into Kokonor. The result, according to Barfield, was that the Choros took control of the Dorbod and Khoid people and fashioned a new Zunghar confederation. Based on Zlatkin, Barfield wrote that Baatur Hongtaiji organized the 1640 Assembly in Zungharia and established Zunghar primacy in Inner Asia.

Miyawaki (2004) also discusses an Oirat war in 1625 but characterizes it as a conflict over inheritance between the Khoshud princes (brothers) Chokur and Baibaghias, the same conflict mentioned briefly by Khodarkovsky. Baibaghias is widely reported by Perdue and others as having died in 1630 and being succeeded by his brother Gushii who left for the Kokonor region circa 1637. Miyawaki states that Gushii succeeded his elder brother Baibaghias as “chief of the Khoshot tribe.”87 88 But confusions about the early 17th century Oirad still abound and one recent scholar89 described Khara Khula as Choros and four pages later both Khara Khula and his son Baatur Hung Taiji as Khoshud.

87 Miyawaki, 2004, p. 146
88 The two principal sons of Baibaghias, Ochirtu and Abalai, remained with their respective appanages in the Zunghar Valley for the remainder of their lives without conflict with their Choros ruled Dorbod allies until 1676.
A Summary and Short Critique

This research project supports a number of conclusions that are in contrast to many of the secondary sources discussed in this chapter. Unlike narratives that characterize the Choros leaders Khara-Khula and his son Baatur Hung Taiji as being in conflict with other Oirat leaders and seeking to centralize them under their authority, both leaders instead built strong alliances with other Oirat leaders. Those alliances allowed them to defeat the Khalkha Altyn Khan to the east and the Kazakhs to the west and established conditions in which the allied Oirad were too strong to be attacked by outsiders. The 17th century intra-Oirad conflicts prior to the rise of Galdan Boshugtu in the 1670s were mostly conflicts of succession within the noble families that led the various Oirat uluses and into which some other ruling aristocratic houses were sometimes drawn.

This characterization of the early 17th century as a period of Oirat alliances rather than conflicts is supported, in part, by primary sources showing that the Choros Baatur Hung Taiji led the left wing of an Oirat army under the Khoshud Gushii Khan that waged war in Kokonor against the enemies of the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1637. Both these senior leaders received important titles from the Fifth Dalai Lama as a consequence, and Baatur Hung Taiji returned to Oiratia with Gushii Khan’s daughter as his wife, signaling a strong intent by the two leaders to maintain close relations.

Nor did all the Khoshud Oirad leave the Zunghar region. Baibaghas’s sons Ochirtu and Ablai remained peacefully with their appanages around the Ili River.
and the Tarbagatai Mountains after some 100,000 Khoshud migrated to Kokonor circa 1639 to 1641. They also remained closely tied to the Khoshud in Tibet, such that, with the passing of Gushii Khan, his nephew, Ochirtu Taiji, later assumed the title of Sechen Khan even while he remained in close proximity to the ulus of Baatur Hung Taiji. And in 1640, between the Oirat victories in Tibet, Baatur Hung Taiji, Gushii Khan and Ochirtu Taiji, and some eleven other Oirat leaders, joined in the Mongol-Oirat Assembly, signing the accord recognizing the sovereignty of uluses under the participating Mongol and Oirat nobles.

The Russian historical narratives that describe Khara-Khula as the creator of the Zunghar ulus in the first decade of the 17th century, or Baatur Hung Taiji as the convener of a 1640 Assembly in Tarbagatai and the Khan of the Oirad and founder of the Zunghar Khanate, are not consistent with primary sources. Examination of original Oirat sources shows that the assembly was convened by the Khalkha Jasagtu Khan, held in his territory on the Mongolian plateau, and recognized Baatur Hung Taiji as one of many political leaders within a great, unified Mongol-Oirat Ulus. This research supports Miyawaki’s position that an independent Zunghar Khanate did not arise until 1676. It is most likely that the terms Zunghar and Zungharia arose only after 1637 following organization of the Oirat army that went to Tibet. Both the 1889 *Rosary of White Lotuses* by Dharmatala90 and the 1786 *Annals of Kokonor* by Sumpa Hambo Yeshe Paljor91

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specifically credit Baatur Hung Taiji and Gushii Khan as the founders of the Left and Right Oirad.

Figure 3
Gushii Khan and Regent of Fifth Dalai Lama
Fresco from the Potala Palace in Lhasa

Keeping the lineages of the various Oirat leaders clear helps to reduce confusion about the nature of intra-Oirad conflicts. As shown in the first part of this chapter, Khara-Khula and his son Baatur Hung Taiji were of the Choros lineage that ruled much of the Dorbod Ulus. Khoid leaders are rarely mentioned and appear to have become largely subservient to the Choros though still sovereign by tradition.

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and under the 1640 Great Code. The Khoshud rulers Baibaghas and Gushii, and Baibaghas’s sons Ochirtu and Ablai were of the Galwas lineage. The Khoshud appear to have been more numerous than the Choros led Dorbod, and the Galwas lineage, descended from Chinggis’s brother Qasar, enjoyed greater prestige due to that heritage. Because of their stronger Chinggisid link, the Galwas were the first of the Oirad to use the title Khan rather than Taiji. They did so not to claim authority over other Oirad but to maintain parity with Eastern Mongols leaders who, beginning with the Tumed Altan Khan in the 16th century, began to use the title Khan to assert sovereign status for the uluses they ruled.93

In the 1630s the Torghud leader, Kho-Urluk, led most of the Torghud on a great migration to the Volga steppes. While Barfield and Rossabi treat this migration as an escape from Khara Khula, other evidence supports the view that Kho-Urluk’s primary goal was to avoid conflict and preserve the peace agreed to in an Oirat assembly circa 1616. The position that Khara Khula was the antagonist in an aggressive centralizing mission led to conclusions about the motives behind migrations of some Oirat groups that are not supported by empirical evidence. An examination of the existing empirical evidence suggests that those migrations were not exits from the central Oirat domain by rather expansions of that domain.

It may be however that the most significant omission in all of the descriptions of the early 17th century Oirat state is an explanation of the rise of the term Zunghar. There is no disagreement on its meaning, for it is universally understood to mean

the left wing or side of a nomadic army or state. Zungharia means literally the place of the left wing. The implication of course is that it was one half of a larger geo-political entity that would have consisted of left and right wings. But no historian to date seems to have considered it important enough to search for the other half of that geo-political entity, the right side or wing.

As this dissertation will show, the key to that unresolved dilemma is found in the Seren Gerel, the biography of Zaya Pandita, in which the term Baroun Tala is used extensively to describe the Khoshud domain in Tibet, for which Gushii Khan was the Religious King and Defender of Buddhism. Baroun Tala means the Right Side and stood in contrast to Zungharia, the place of the Left Side. Sumpa Hambo Yeshe Paljor (1786) refers to the Khoshud in Kokonor as the Barun Gar (Right Wing) of the Oirad domain. Expanding this perspective leads to the observation that the Galwas led Khoshuds and Choros led Dorbods were the two most powerful members of the early 17th century Oirad confederation and until the 1670s led a largely bicameral state that stretched from the Volga steppes in northwest central Asia to the Tibet/Nepal border in the southern Himalayan. The Khoids were predominantly Choros/Dorbod clients while Torghud participation in the state was buffered by the long distance to their new homelands on the Volga.
CHAPTER III

NOMADIC SOCIETIES, STATES AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

A Critique of the Primitive Nomadic Social Paradigm

Descriptions of primitive societies as consisting of clans, tribes and tribal confederations have their roots in the social evolutionist movement of the mid 19th century. Inspired largely by interpretations of Darwin’s 1859 theory of evolution, they were initially based on the work of Maine (1861), McLennan (1876), Morgan (1877), and a mix of other anthropologists, lawyers and sociologists who theorized that all past and present societies could be rank-ordered on some manner of evolutionary scale. In 1988 Kuper summarized these representations of primitive society in the last decade of the 19th century when nearly all specialists who concerned themselves with the subject agreed on a set of fundamental propositions; 1) that primitive societies were ordered on the basis of kinship, 2) that kinship organization was based on descent groups, 3) that descent groups were exagamous but related through marriage exchanges, 4) that evidence of the primitive organization of society was preserved in ceremonies and terminology, and 5) that private property eventually led to territorial states and the decline of descent group dominance.94

In *The Invention of Primitive Society*, Kuper also wrote that, “The theory of primitive society is about something which does not and never has existed.” 95 Unfortunately, this belief in a primitive social model persisted, as it lent itself well to a existing and emerging political and ideological systems. Colonialism and communism were both justified in part as promoting social change and the transition of primitive societies into states that embodied a higher stage of social evolution. In the absence of political need theories of primitive societies might have died a more timely death. But, as demonstrated by the work of Lawrence Krader (1963) a century after the initial work of Maine and Morgan, anthropologists were still writing elaborate descriptions of primitive societies based on descent groups, clans and tribes. And while Kuper’s 1988 work signaled a major critique and reexamination of this thinking within the anthropological community, narratives of Turkic, Mongolian and Eurasian history in general remained within this primitive paradigm, representing and discussing nomadic polities, excepting those that achieved the status of empires, as non-state societies consisting of kinship based tribes and tribal confederations.

Peter Golden, a historian of Turkic history, was not alone in trying to get around this problem when in 1992 he offered an elaborate redefinition of the term tribe, stating that a satisfactory definition remained elusive. He wrote that family and clan remained the basic underpinnings of early Turkic societies even as he went on to describe a process by which nomadic groups broke apart and reformed so that the original clan family was virtually untraceable and only the group leader

95 Ibid, p. 8
really mattered.\textsuperscript{96} But attempts at redefinition failed to avoid the clear implication that a tribal society was representative of a stage of social evolution prior to the formation of states. One of the consequences of this imagined primitiveness is that nomadic societies were seen as achieving legitimate state status only as a result of contact from more politically sophisticated peripheral states.\textsuperscript{97}

The anthropologist David Sneath (2007) addressed this issue at some length in, The Headless State: Aristocratic Orders, Kinship Society, and Misrepresentations of Nomadic Inner Asia. Sneath maintained that inner Asian nomadic societies were mislabeled as tribal based on a set of assumptions, largely unexamined, about the allegedly primitive structure of their communities. As Sneath summarized, “Nonstate society was pictured in terms of kinship organization, made up of clans that united to form tribes and tribal confederations.”\textsuperscript{98}

Atwood (2006) summarized the nature of the Oirat state as a “confederated pattern of several ruling lineages competing for domination, and linked by marriage alliances.”\textsuperscript{99} In that same paper Atwood wrote that while the term tribe is traditionally used to describe the component parts of the Oirat confederacy it

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\textsuperscript{98} Sneath, David. The Headless State. New York: Columbia University Press. 2007. p. 2
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must be understood that these so-called tribes were non-consanguine and that lack of kinship was an essential element of their marriage or affinity based coherence. In other words, they were not tribes in the normal sense at all. Nor were confederated political structures or the organization of the political divisions within that greater structure based on any sort of egalitarianism.

Atwood wrote in 2004 that only the smallest units of Oirat society were based on common ancestry. But Sneath calls even that consanguinealty into question when he discusses a term frequently translated as clan (oboq) as used in the 13th century Secret History of the Mongols. He points out that the Secret History discusses oboq not as a kinship unit but as a unit created by a noble and acquiring a name based on the ruling noble or other common characteristic. If even an oboq consisted of members of multiple families, it is more true that an ulus such as the Dorbod, Khoshud, etc. consisted of many different yasun (bones), meaning patrilineages. The members of a particular patrilineage were at times concentrated within specific oboqs, but with the passage of time they were more likely to be widely scattered among many aimaqs and uluses.

Yasun were divided into white and black bones lineages. Only descendants of a small number of white bone lineages could rule and they comprised the

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102 An aimaq is broadly defined as an administrative division of a larger polity. Aimaqs have no standard size and the term is sometimes used interchangeable with ulus. In modern Mongolia the term aimaq means a territorial province or state within the greater Mongol nation.
aristocratic families from which the rulers of the various uluses and aimaqs came. The male members of those white bone families were known as noyons, best translated as nobles. Oirat (and Mongol) law specified and protected the rights of the nobility, and all commoners were organized into uluses and aimaqs, large and small, under the leadership of greater or lesser nobles.

Commoners, while freemen in many respects, were restricted in their movements and often prohibited altogether from moving between uluses. During wars and other periods of upheaval, movements of commoner households and even those of lesser nobles were made more easily. A noble who was defeated in battle might have his entire ulus incorporated into another ulus or divided among several. Commoners and lesser nobles sometimes left the realm of a weakened great noble to seek protection in another ulus where they felt more secure and could participate in the success of a new leader. Commoner households could be given away to another noble and under law constituted units that could be paid as fines. The Great Code of 1640 demonstrates that a major area of conflict was the unauthorized movement of individuals from the realm of one noble to another and it proscribed penalties to nobles for not returning fugitive households.

Among the white bone, aristocratic households, noble sons and brothers inherited the rights to leadership over the ulus of a deceased father or older brother. However, an ulus was often divided among two or more sons or brothers with one being appointed, selected or acknowledged as the senior leader. Wars
of succession were common, unless one of the heirs was clearly more powerful and the lesser heirs had to content themselves with ruling whatever appanage was given to them. Sometimes it was a temporary and an elder uncle ruled for a brief period before leadership reverted to the oldest or more powerful of the original ruler's sons. Sometimes the sons of one father by multiple wives contested leadership, or two or more sons who felt disenfranchized would ban together to seize the inheritance of another brother or uncle who was originally favored. In looking at the Oirad of the early 17th century we see that, other than the wars with the Khalkha Altyk Khan, nearly every other war of that period was in fact a war of succession into which other parties were sometimes drawn.

Thus what we find upon examination of the Oirat polity is not units built upon common kinship and organized into larger political groups but rather units of disparate origins established under the leadership of noble families. Over time those units dissolved or divided as a result of war, succession or other perhaps ecological upheavals that caused long distance migrations. They were also reconstituted or consolidated into new units that over time took on new names and newly constructed identities.

But the one constant feature is that steppe commoners throughout recorded history were subservient to aristocratic families to whom they owed fealty, service (especially military) and a share of production. Those aristocratic families composed a substrata of power underlying the formation of states and
An aristocratic family that ruled or gained prominence during one imperial enterprise often reappeared in one or more subsequent state-building enterprises. What we observe in relation to the Oirad are aristocratic lineages from the pre or early Chinggisid period reappearing as the leaders of new polities that sometimes contested Chinggisid supremacy and by the mid 17th century established a parity with the Mongol groups ruled by Chinggisid nobles.

Definitions of State and Nation Relative to Nomadic Steppe Societies

There is no scholarly agreement on the definition of state, a term applied to many different political entities. It is a term often used without indication of what is specifically intended or an examination of the assumptions underlying its use. While entities described as states have similar characteristics there are many differences as well. Some definitions are inherently ideologically and have been used to justify wide ranges of political strategy, action, and inaction. As expressed earlier in this study, some historiographic approaches dismissed so-called stateless societies as of "no visible significance".

The most prevalent definition of a state is largely attributable to Max Weber, though it is regarded as emerging from observations of early modern European states. Elements inherent in that definition are compulsory inclusion, central


authority, territoriality, and a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. But while Weber’s model may be a common default, other definitions are more inclusive. States are viewed historically as political organizations with an administrative bureaucracy, a common legal code, a military structure, and often an officially sanctioned religion. The strength and centrality of those institutions varies widely. At the other extreme, Foucault described states as mythologized abstractions, the value of which is more limited than we think.

A nation is a different conceptual designation applied to groups of people who share a combination of language, culture, ethnicity, or descent. Nations are not about political structure, but in combination with a specific territorial administration give rise to the relatively modern concept of nation-states. Nation-states represent a specific, modern sub-set of states. Benedict Anderson wrote that nation-states are socially constructed, abstract concepts. He defined them as groups of people sharing a combination of cultural and ethnic heritage and exercising territorial sovereignty. But the definition is inherently problematic, as ethnic identity itself is often imagined and constructed by the very states purported to encompass such ethnic concentrations. Geertz offered a


simplified definition of a nation or country as a bounded geographic area inhabited by people with a continuity of cultural practices.\textsuperscript{109}

While those definitions tend to conflate the concepts of nation and state, Elverskog (2003) offered a different perspective on nations and states in his analysis of the politics of the late 16\textsuperscript{th} century Mongols in the \textit{Jeweled Translucent Sutra}. Atwood had previously asserted that the Mongol term ulus could best be interpreted as nation. Elverskog discussed how the pre-Qing Mongols understood nation (ulus) and state (toro) to be distinct. Thus, while the nations of China or Tibet could be subsumed under the Great Mongol State they were not destroyed and reemerged with the decline of the Yuan Dynasty, free to establish independence or join with other entities.

In \textit{Our Great Qing} however, Elverskog moved away from ulus as nation, recognizing that term as problematic for a number of reasons, and preferring instead to translate ulus as community. I view ulus translated as community as too apolitical and prefer the term polity. Polity shares with ulus flexibility in scale. Like ulus it can refer to an entire nation, a unit within a nation, a state or even a unit of local government. Ulus can also be translated in ways that are relative to the context in which it is used, sometimes referring an entity that resembles a nation-state and sometimes to a much smaller or less homogeneous political community. The difficulty is that there is no exact English equivalent for ulus and the term is often best left to stand on its own.

\textsuperscript{109} Geertz, Clifford. \textit{After the Fact: Two Countries, Four Decades, One Anthropologist}. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 1995. p. 21-41
What we can say about the Oirad in general is that both ethnicity and culture there were broadly shared elements within the greater community. Culturally they were among those who lived in felt tents and ranged widely in order to maintain livestock, temporarily encompassed within the steppe-based empire of Chinggis Khan. They spoke Mongolian, though the dialect varied from that of the Chinggisid Mongols and even among different Oirat groups. They were largely shamanistic until the early 17th century when they began to collectively embrace Buddhism. Thus Oirad culture served as a basis for political cohesion.

By the early 17th century families of the same patrilineal descent were widely scattered among the Oirad. Each of the four primary groups consisted of many shared patrilineages though the bones that constituted the commoners among the uluses came from many disparate sources including those of Mongol, Turkic and Siberian origin. For that reason defining an Oirat ulus as a nation might be problematic. Yet most of those patrilineal origins were quite distant by the 17th century and when coupled with a history of extensive intermarriage not likely to be a strong source of identity that overrode several centuries of association with a specific Oirat group. It is likely that Oirat commoners shared a stronger sense of corporate identity than say the members of the early Kingdom of France, ruled by the house of Bourbon but consisting of Gauls, Franks, Normans and others who did not even speak a common language.

Issues of territoriality have long proven to be stumbling blocks where nomadic polities are concerned. For a nomadic ulus territoriality was of secondary concern. While a nomadic polity could persevere, territory could shift with long-range
migrations to avoid conflicts, or take advantage of better pastures, better climate conditions or improved access to markets and trade routes. What was more sacrosanct for nomadic states was compulsory membership, for their strength depended first on maintaining and expanding population and only secondarily on securing and defending specific pastures on which that expanding population could thrive. A nomadic state could pick up and relocate to another region without loss of leadership or systems of governance. Among the many examples from which we can draw are the nomadic Khitan to the north of China and the later Khara Khitai to the west.

Sovereignty is another important but sometimes-overlooked element of nomadic statehood. Its definition is also contested and is often made in reference to a specific territory. Thus it may be considered less applicable to nomadic states whose borders were not fixed and for whom homelands shifted over time. But after the fall of the Yuan Dynasty and other Chinggisid khanates the Oirad were independent uluses, answering not to any external authority but to authorities internal to the polities they established. Those polities were recognized by other sovereign states with which they shared treaties and other diplomatic relationships. It can be argued that the early 17th century Oirad met three of four elements of sovereignty as identified in Biersteker and Weber's 1996 State Sovereignty as a Social Construct,110 and that they met the fourth element of territorial sovereignty in a manner particular to nomadism.

If we compare 17th century Central Asian and European statecraft we can look to the Treaty of Westphalia as a key document in establishing the modern understanding of state sovereignty as well as giving birth to the European system of nation-states. Croxton wrote in 2013 that in the modern era the idea of sovereignty is so fundamental that it constitutes one of the first written principles of the United Nations Charter. But Croxton notes also in his 2013 study that no one could claim to understand 17th century Europe who has not studied the Treaty of Westphalia, and conversely, that no one can claim to understand that Treaty who has not studied the values and ideas of 17th century Europe. The 1640 Mongol Oirat Great Code was equally fundamental to 17th century Central Asia, that it could not be understood without understanding the 17th century Oirad and Mongols, and that the 1640 Code could not be understood without knowing the history and values of steppe societies.

Indeed, many of the observations that Croxton made relative to the Westphalian system could have just as readily been made about the political system encoded in the 1640 Code. Two such observations are especially relevant. The first, in reference to the highly fragmented German state, was that the German people still held a rather definite idea of a German nation to which they all belonged. In a like manner, though the early 17th century Oirad state was fragmented, the Oirad perceived themselves as part of a larger system or nation, distinct from the other nations by which they were surrounded. The second observation that seems especially relevant was that the idea of a cohesive national society was

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111 Croxton, Derek. Westphalia: The Last Christian Peace. 2013 p. 6
countered by the equally powerful idea that the king owned the state, an observation that could certainly be made relative to the Oirad, as their states were clearly the enterprises of aristocratic households.

The parallels between the 1640 Code and the 1648 Westphalian Treaty are numerous and they reference states and political innovations that share many similarities. The Mongolian anthropologist Lhamsuren highlighted those similarities in a 2010 article, though most of the observations were made relative to Mongolian political status rather than that of the Oirad. His comparisons are mostly of the Mongols and the Holy Roman Empire and the way in which the Mongols codified for the first time the sovereignty of those descendants of Chinggis Khan who ruled portions of the greater Mongol Ulus. But the Oirad might be compared instead to those parties to the Treaty of Westphalia that were not part of the Holy Roman Empire but rather comprised the nascent European states that sought to establish a balance of power with that Empire through participation in the Treaty. The Oirat uluses were comparable to the states of France, Sweden, Spain and the Netherlands whose kings were related by marriage or kinship but who ruled sovereign polities.

The purpose of this discussion is not simply to compare or equate these two important treaties but rather to demonstrate that Christian Europe and Buddhist Central Asia both enjoyed sophisticated political systems, one was not inherently

112 Ibid, p. 12

more advanced or more primitive. The techniques of statecraft were not highly dissimilar nor were the outcomes less important. Just as The Treaty of Westphalia came to be regarded as the portal through which Europe passed from the Middle Ages into Modernity, the Mongol-Oirat Code of 1640 must be regarded as an equally important rite of passage and an indication that a range of greater and lesser states sought to have their sovereignty formally recognized and protected by their participation in the 1640 Assembly.

Central Asian Ideologies of Statehood and Political Authority

A Important issue in this study is how Central Asian rulers and states established political legitimacy in the early 17th century in the eyes of their subjects and neighboring rulers and states. Anne Broadbridge (2008) framed this issue succinctly when she wrote, “An ideology of kingship is the set of ideas by which a ruler defines himself as a sovereign ... and (which) helped them both assert the legality and legitimacy of their reigns … frequently in opposition to the claims of others.” In Central Asia of the second millennium, all claims to political legitimacy had a basis in some combination of mythical, genealogical or religious ideas. Elverskog (2010) discussed six major factors that shaped post-Mongol Inner Asian history, including the Chinggisid principal and its confluences and conflicts with both Buddhist and Islamic imperial ideologies. But it is

necessary to add to that list of influences those that were indigenous to steppe culture from the very beginning of recorded history and laid the foundation for 13th century Chinggisid imperial ideology.

The cultural belief that the Eternal Blue Sky choose a ruling lineage appeared among the third century BCE Hsiung-nu. Di Cosmo (2002) stated that leaders from among the aristocracy were protected or appointed by Heaven,117 and he describes the selection of a “supra-tribal” leader as a sacral investiture followed by a new ideology requiring subordination to the imperial clan as well as the khan. The 6th century Turk Empire “was organized as an imperial confederacy” with the highest imperial rank being that of the khaghan.118 Following the Hsiung-nu tradition, only members of the Turkic A-shih-na clan of the first Khaghan, T’u-men, held the right of succession.

The success of Chenggis Khan could be described as the model for steppe imperial ideology that broke the mold. The rise of Chenggis Khan and his Golden Borjigid clan in creation of the largest land empire in history, placed the Chinggisid paradigm of imperial ideology at the center of Eurasian politics for the next six centuries. Only Islam, Buddhism and to a lesser extent Christianity were alternative sources of political legitimacy that could contest or supplement Chinggisid legitimacy among Eurasian states.


Amitai-Preiss described the traditional Mongol view as a “heaven-given mandate to conquer the world and to place it under the rule of the descendants of Chinggis Khan”. With the 1260 advent of the four-year Mongol civil war when two of Chenggis’s grandsons vied for imperial succession, successor states, largely independent of central Mongol rule, began to arise.

Among successor states (initially the four Khanates), only those of Chenggisid descent were viewed as legitimate rulers. But the Chenggisid imperial principal survived well beyond the period of the conjoined Mongol Empire. Descendants of Jochi and his son Batu ruled all the khanates that arose in the wake of Jochi’s Golden Horde, such as the Kipchaq, Kazan, Crimean and Astrakhan. The rulers of the 15th and 16th century Uzbek and Kazakh khanates claimed decent from Jochi. Edward Keenan, who focused on Muscovite Russia as a successor state of the Mongol Empire, argued that even with the decline of Mongol control after the breakup of the Golden Horde in the mid 15th century, association with Chenggisid charismatic power still carried great political weight.

When the Chaghatayid Khanate split into two states in the 14th century, Timur, who ruled one of those states, was cautious in asserting any claims to khan-ship, ruling only as Amir (based on Islamic imperial ideology) or a Noble Son-in-Law.

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following his marriage to a Chaghatayid princess. The Eastern Chagatai Khanate, the second of the two states, was also ruled by descendants of Chagatai, as were its two successor states, the khanates of Kashgar and Turfan. With the decline of the Il-Khanate in Persia, the Chenggisid imperial prerogative was replaced with a revived Islamic imperial legitimacy. The earlier Chenggisid Khans had already begun to adopt Islam decades earlier to improve their legitimacy in the eyes of the Muslim subjects they ruled. As the Mongols of the Yuan Dynasty were driven north of the Great Wall and fell upon hard times, rulers still found it necessary to base their claims on Chenggisid descent.

Even as the Oirat nobles and uluses surpassed the Mongols in strength and stability they could never claim the right to rule the Mongols as a whole, having descended from noble families other than the Borjigid clan. Esen, as successful in his conquests as Timur the Lame, tried to take the title of Khan in ruling both Oirat and Mongol subjects. He sought to bolster his legitimacy with first Islamic and later Buddhist ideological claims, but neither proved sufficient to his needs. Eventually his own generals rebelled and conspired in his assassination.

An equally important source of political legitimacy in Central Asia was Buddhist imperial ideology, as ancient as Hsiung-nu imperial ideology. Its historical roots were in the Indian sub-continent at the time of the Asokan-Mauryan Empire (322 to 185 BCE), where it first manifested as the Chakravartin principal. A Chakravartin is a king or emperor who turns the wheel of the Dharma (Truth or

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Law). Various rulers throughout Asian history were declared by their followers to be Chakravartins, either while alive or after, as a means of legitimating their rule and actions in creating or maintaining peace within the empire.

The role of Chakravartin was assumed by or ascribed to numerous later rulers including many in the 7th to 10th century Chinese Tang Dynasty, the 11th to 13th century Tangut Empire, the 13th to 14th century Yuan Dynasty and the 17th to 20th century Qing Dynasty, to name a few. Pamela Crossley (1999) wrote that Buddhism, through the Chakravartin ideology, provided rulers (and states by extension) with a divine mission.122

A somewhat related Buddhist (and Hindu) concept is that of a Dharma Raja, a King of Dharma. Its origins are less clear. In the Buddhist Lotus Sutra the term is applied to the historical Buddha Shakyamuni, who was a master or king of Dharma. It also has the connotation of a ruler, for a Buddha presides over a Pure Land from which he descends periodically. Tibetan Buddhists translated Dharma Raja as Chogyal, which came to be applied to high-level Buddhist teachers, as well as heads of state perceived as divine. The Dharma Raja designation was further associated with the term Dharma Pala (Dharma Protector), a wrathful manifestation of a Buddha or Bodhisattva, whose purpose was to protect the Dharma and its dissemination. The Dharma Raja title was often used with the Chakravartin designation, as an embellishment. As Buddhist ideology became increasingly important in Central Asia, rulers were sometimes declared

simultaneously to be Dharma Rajas, Chakravartins and Bodhisattvas. Dharma Raja was an important title for the 17th century Oirad, as Gushii Khan was declared by the Fifth Dalai Lama to be a Dharma Raja after he vanquished all the opponents of the Gelukpa lineage in Tibet.

Bodhisattvas can be described as Buddhas in the making, reborn again and again to benefit beings on the path to enlightenment. The celestial Bodhisattvas such as Avalokiteshvara (compassion), Manjushri (wisdom), and Vajrapani (divine power) manifested themselves as spiritual teachers, kings and emperors who ruled with the motivation to lead their subjects toward enlightenment.

Islam represented an indirect, but perhaps powerful, influence on the political ideologies of the 17th century Oirats, for by that time Central Asia had become largely bifurcated into a western Turkic speaking Muslim population and an eastern Mongolic speaking Buddhist population. Nonetheless, Mongols came into contact with Islamic ideas early in the 13th century Mongol Empire and briefly ruled over substantial Muslim populations, in response to which they began to adopt elements of Islamic imperial ideology.

Unlike the historical Buddha, Muhammad, the 7th century founder of Islam, was not only a spiritual prophet but also a political leader in later life. Hence the bicameral roles of spiritual and secular leadership inherent in the Buddhist Chakravartin theory were absent in early Muslim ideology. The immediate successors to Muhammad, the four Rightly Guided Caliphs (632–661), were also spiritual and secular leaders. With the passing of the four Al-Rashidun Caliphs,
leadership of the small Muslim world went to Muawiyya, the first self-appointed Caliph and founder of the eighty-eight year Umayyad Caliphate in which Islamic political and spiritual authority became hereditary. The Abbasid Caliphate that followed was founded by a descendant of an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad and also embodied the combination of both religious and secular authority.

Five hundred and eight years into the Abbasid dynasty the Mongols charged into the Islamic realm from the East and shook the political system established in the wake of Muhammad to the very foundation, destroying Bagdad, the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate, and killing the last Abbasid Caliph (1258). Broadbridge (2006) observed that, “older, primarily Islamic models of legitimacy almost disappeared from view.” It was only when Mongol rulers themselves began to convert to Islam that elements of Islamic political legitimacy began to resurface. By the early 14th century the Ilkhanid Mongols were skilled in linking and projecting combined Chinggisid and Islamic ideologies. They retained Islamic advisors, protected the faithful, and demonstrated their righteousness as keepers of Islamic law.

As observed earlier in this study, the early 15th century Oirat ruler Mahmud, his son Toghon (d. 1440), and his grandson Esen began to appeal to a limited extent to Islamic ideology to bolster their weak Chinggisid claim. But as Elverskog (2010) noted, economic forces caused the Oirad to move beyond the Islamic sphere and back to the east where Islamic political ideology held little sway. As a

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consequence Esen is thought to be the first of the Oirad to try to seek legitimacy on Buddhist imperial terms,¹²⁴ though his assassination suggests limited success.

While the 13th century eastern Mongols under Khubilai Khan had engaged extensively with Buddhist imperial ideology and the dual but equal roles of the secular Emperor and the spiritual Preceptor, Esen may have been the first in the greater Mongol post-Yuan community to revive Buddhist political theory. The 16th century Mongols under the leadership of Altan Khan and his cousin Sechen Khung-Taïji led the first widespread popular Mongol conversion to Buddhism, followed within three or four decades by the Oirat leaders. But the 1642 enthronement of the Fifth Dalai Lama as both spiritual and secular ruler of Tibet, by the Oirat Gushii Khan, shows a distinctly Islamic influence, when for the first time within the Tibetan Buddhist cultural realm a single figure was invested with both ultimate religious and secular authority over Tibet.¹²⁵

While much of the literature on 14th to 17th century Central Asian history focuses on armed conflicts and conquests (Grousset 1970, Bergholz, 1993, Perdue 2005), states never emerged as a simple process of armed conquest. Conquest represented only part of the process. Of equal importance were the ideological battles as rulers sought acquiescence of those they ruled and recognition of those states by which they wished their sovereignty to be acknowledged.


¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 221
A 2006 paper by Nicola Di Cosmo focused on the ideological competition between the emerging Manchu Empire and the last direct Chenggisid heir who sought to recentralize authority among the six divisions of the early 17th century Mongols. From that example he draws conclusions that are especially relevant to this study. First, ideological arguments are essentially hollow if not accepted and validated through recognition by the leaders and the people over whom one would rule. In other words, divinely granted charisma requires social validation to be effective. Second, the ideological must be balanced with the political, through flexible tools of diplomacy and policy that recognize the economic and social forces at play. Indeed, effective use of ideological and political tools supplants or minimizes the need for conquest.

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Ibid, p. 255
CHAPTER IV

GEO-POLITICS OF 16th AND 17th CENTURY CENTRAL ASIA: MONGOLS, MING, MANCHUS, RUSSIANS AND TIBETANS

The geopolitical landscape of Central Asia was shifting dramatically in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Developments within the states by whom the Oirad were surrounded presented numerous challenges and opportunities. The Eastern Mongol leaders were engaged in decentralization in the late 16th century and by the mid 17th century five of the six Mongols divisions had joined with the Manchu enterprise by force or choice. The Tibetans of the 16th century were in the throes of intense regional and sectarian violence such that the Gelukpa Buddhist order turned to Khoshud Oirat in the early 17th century to intervene on their behalf against the Chakhar and Tsogtu Mongols in Kokonor and the Karmapa Tsangpas of Southern Tibet and the Bonpo Khampas of Eastern Tibet.

By 1618 the Jurchen leader Nurhaci had consolidated the eight Jurchen polities under his leadership and his successor, Hung Taiji (Crown Prince), constructed a new Manchu identity and declared a new Qing Dynasty in 1636. The Muscovite Russians began their eastward expansion into Siberia following the 1552 and 1556 conquests of Kazan and Astrakhan and had by 1608 established diplomatic contacts with the Oirad. By the 1630s nearly one-fourth of the Oirat federation (primarily Torghud) had migrated to the Volga steppes. The Chinese Ming had entered an isolationist phase and withdrawn from Central Asian geopolitics as
much as possible. But continued decline and decay of their administration led essentially to a collapse from within in 1644.

**The Mongols in the Late 16\textsuperscript{th} and Early 17\textsuperscript{th} Century**

The Eastern Mongols of the late 16\textsuperscript{th} and early 17\textsuperscript{th} centuries were evolving under several powerful influences that included Tibetan Buddhism, a return to stability that aided the process of political decentralization, the isolationism and gradual decline of the Chinese Ming Dynasty, and the rise of a new steppe power on their Eastern flank, the Manchus.

As Di Cosmo so aptly stated, the tension between centripetal and centrifugal forces (centralization and decentralization) represented the essence of Inner Asian politics.\textsuperscript{128} The Mongols experienced recentralization of political authority in the early 16\textsuperscript{th} century when the Great Khan Dayan (1464-1517)\textsuperscript{129} formalized the division of the six Mongol tumens into Left and Right wings. Dayan himself ruled the Chakhar tumen and the Left Wing. After defeating the rebellious Right Wing (1510) that killed his second son, Dayan appointed his fourth son (Barsubolad) as Jinong of the Right Wing. In reunifying the Mongols he was able to expel the Oirad who had contested control of the steppes for most of the 15\textsuperscript{th} century.

But in placing his sons in control of the divisions of the newly reconstructed Northern Yuan Empire, the foundation for decentralization was laid. While it was


\textsuperscript{129} There is considerable uncertainty about the year of his death.
intended by Dayan that the Khan of the Chakhar Tumen would rule as Great Khan, less senior leaders of the other five tumen grew equally powerful and as a consequence unwilling to bow the authority of a central ruler. It was with the second generation of Dayan’s heirs that a decentralized political structure began to take definite shape. Bawden wrote that by the mid 16th century the Dayanid system had already devolved to the extent that the Mongol princes held firm power over regional divisions.\textsuperscript{130} While all six Mongol divisions were outside of the Great Wall, the three divisions of the Left Wing were to the north and the three division on the Right were to the west of the Great Wall.

Among those three western divisions the leader of the Tumed Mongols, Altan Khan, grew especially strong through conquests over the Oirad and other Mongol enemies in the mid 16th century. Altan (1507-1582) led successful raids on Ming territory (1529 and 1530) as the military leader of the Ordos and Tumed forces. In 1550 Altan held Beijing at his mercy. He was not interested in ending Ming rule but in forcing them to reopen trade from which the Mongols gained grain, tea, silver and silks that could be used to reward the loyalty of other Mongol leaders. The 1550 victory resulted in a two year reopening of trade markets before Ming distrust of the Mongols caused them to be shut down yet again.\textsuperscript{131} In 1571 the Ming negotiated a peace treaty with Altan, granting him the honorific title of Rightful Prince. New trade markets were established in four border areas. The


Khan of the Chakhar Mongols protested this newly elevated status to the Ming, for this title recognized Altan as the more powerful and de facto Mongol ruler.

While it has been suggested that Altan’s goal was to become the Great Khan, Elverskog (2003) has presented a cogent argument that his real goal was to establish the Tumed as a sovereign nation and to legitimate his status as Khan of that nation only. Altan was merely the second son of the fourth son of Dayan and would normally have lived his life as a lesser prince in charge of a relatively small division. But he deftly parlayed military success and Ming recognition into Mongol leadership, though his status as Khan still lacked legitimacy. In the 1570s, Altan turned to Tibetan Buddhism as an additional source of legitimacy.

His nephew and ally, Sechen Khung-Taiji from the Ordos Mongols, influenced him to adopt Buddhism as a religion and invite the famed Tibetan spiritual leader, Sonam Gyatso, to Kokonor. At that well-documented meeting in 1578 Sonam Gyatso was given the Mongolian title of Dalai Lama by Altan who in turn was recognized as a Khan and Chakravartin. His new status as a Buddhist monarch offered an additional source of legitimacy in a language with which Central Asians were familiar. The leaders of other Mongol divisions soon adopted this ideological strategy. The Khalkha leader Abatai Khan meet with the Dalai Lama in Altan’s capital city of Hohhot in 1582 and gained recognition as Khan and Buddhist monarch for leading his people to embrace the Buddha Dharma.

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132 Ibid, p. 13-14
While ideological legitimation was clearly an important goal in the conversion to Buddhism, the conversion proved to be transformative in many other ways. Coercion was certainly involved, as shamanic rites, ancestral dolls and blood offerings were all banned. But as Elverskog points out, the 20 to 25 years prior to the conversion were difficult ones for the Mongols who had been subject to famines, epidemics and warfare. As a result the Mongols quickly became devoted to a Buddhist religion that offered them as individuals and as nations new opportunities and aspirations.

One of the major consequences of the decentralization of political authority and the legitimation of sovereign regional rulers was that the rising Manchu Qing, in its efforts to gain Central Asian supremacy, was free to deal sequentially with less powerful nations and khans. When the last of the Chakhar Great Khans, Ligdan, tried forcibly to reunite the Mongols in the 1620s and 30s, all the divisions to the west and some from the north chose instead to ally with the Manchus. The Manchus promised that the newly allied Mongol leaders could maintain independence while linking their states to the Manchu Empire. A combined Manchu/Mongol army drove Ligdan out of the Chakhar region in 1634 and into exile in Kokonor where he died. By the time of the 1640 Mongol-Oirat Assembly only the Khalkha Mongols remained independent of Manchu control.

**Tibetan Fragmentation, Reunification and Spiritual Authority**

Much like the Mongols, central political authority existed in Tibet for relatively short periods during its long history from the advent of the Tibetan Empire (618-

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133 Ibid, p. 13
841) until its complete loss of independence in 1959. Indeed, though Tibet is often spoken of as if it were a unified state, for many periods it was broken into multiple regions under independent rulers. What really mattered though to surrounding countries was that Tibet was seen as a seat of great spiritual power and center of great learning. It was with this spiritual authority and the centers of learning that rulers throughout Central Asia sought to associate.

With the end of the Tibetan Empire in 842 Tibet was not reunited until shortly before the Yuan Dynasty, after more than 400 years. A grandson of Chinggis invested the Tibetan cleric Sakya Pandita in 1247 with authority over the Thirteen Tibetan Myriarchies under local aristocratic households. Control over Tibet continued under Khubilai Khan and the Tibetan Sakyas who Khubilai invested with authority over Tibet in 1254. In the late Yuan Dynasty (1350) internal control of Tibet shifted to another religious group, the Pakmodrupa, a sub-group within the larger Kagyu lineage.

During the 15th and 16th centuries it was the rise of a new order of Buddhism in Tibet that led eventually to new institutions of central political control. The followers of the famous Buddhist monk, scholar and reformer, Je Tsongkhapa (1357-1419), achieved widespread notoriety and support. Those followers, known first as Gandenpa after Tsongkhapa’s Ganden Monastery (founded 1409),

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135 Ibid, p. 65
136 Shakabpa refers to the Sakya-Phagpa and Jangchug Gyaltsen administrations as the first two religious hegemonies in Tibet. They might therefore be seen as the precursors to the Dalai Lama administrations introduced in 1642.
were later known as the Gelukpa (virtuous ones), and enjoyed the early patronage of the Pakmodrupa in central Tibet. One of Tsongkhapa’s five chief disciples, Gendun Drupa (1391-1474), later recognized as the first Dalai Lama, enjoyed great popularity and was the first of the Gelukpa luminaries whose reincarnation was formally recognized. During his successor’s life sectarian tensions between U and Tsang and the Karma Kagyu and Gelukpa rose to the extent that the lives of monks of either group were at risk. Into these circumstances that Gendun Gyatso’s successor, Sonam Gyatso was born in 1543. He proved to be such an adept learner and teacher by his mid twenties\(^{137}\) that his fame spread even to the Mongols, thousands of kilometers away.

That fame was dangerous in the toxic sectarian conditions of the time and support of Gelukpa institutions waned. So when Sonam received a second invitation to teach Altan Khan’s Mongols in the Kokonor region he could not refuse. Hence the famous meeting ensued in which Altan and Sonam exchanged honorific titles, Altan gained enhanced legitimacy as a Buddhist monarch and his people a new purpose in life. The newly named Dalai Lama gained a great patron and protector. Sonam Gyatso taught in Kokonor for two years and traveled extensively in Eastern Tibet. He never returned to Central Tibet and died in 1588, six years after his great patron, Altan.

His next incarnation, Yonten Gyatso, appeared in 1589 as a grandson of Altan Khan. He arrived in Tibet in 1602 to begin formal monastic training but died in

1617, at the age of 28, under suspicious circumstances.\(^{138}\) Because he had arrived in Tibet with an armed Mongolian escort, his stay was peaceful, as Tibetan regional leaders would not risk Mongolian wrath. But, with his passing, conditions deteriorated and the Gelukpas held a tenuous position.

Gelukpa persecution reached its peak in 1618 when the hills around Lhasa were littered with dead Geluk monks, killed by the forces of Karma Phuntsok Namgyal, a powerful Rinpungpa leader from Shigatse in Tsang.\(^{139}\) While sectarian violence died down following Phuntsok Namgyal’s death, in 1634, first the Chakhar Mongols and then a Khalkha Mongol group, both exiled to Kokonor, posed new threats. That threat materialized in 1634 as a Khalkha Tsogtu\(^{140}\) army of 10,000 headed toward central Tibet intent on Gelukpa destruction.

When the Oirats began their adoption of Buddhism in 1616 they were specific in their commitment to the Geluk tradition. In 1634, hundreds of young Oirat nobles were studying in Gelukpa monasteries, a very tangible element of Oirat Buddhist aspirations. Thus when Sonam Chophel, the regent of the young Fifth Dalai Lama, approached the Oirats with a request to intercept the Tsogtu army, he found willing recruits. Gushii Khan, accepted the mission, led a small force to

\(^{138}\) Dalai Lamas who died young were often rumored to have succumbed to poisoning, the preferred Tibetan method of dispatching with unpopular or contested luminaries. However, given the living conditions in Tibet and the rather primitive nature of medical science disease was just as if not more likely to be the root cause.

\(^{139}\) Dhondup, K. The Water Horse and Other Years: A History of 17\(^{th}\) and 18\(^{th}\) Century Tibet. Dharamsala, India: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. 1984. p. 12 – 13

\(^{140}\) Dhondup spells this name as Chogthu. Kapstein spells it as Tsoktu. Atwood uses Tsogtu and writes that Tsogtu Taiji, a Khalkha prince, was a supporter of Ligdan Khan as the rightful Khan of all the Mongols. He was driven out of Khalkha territory and into Kokonor shortly after Ligdan in 1634 and assumed leadership of Chakhar and Khalkha Mongols in Kokonor after Ligdan’s death.
central Tibet, and convinced the leader of the invading army, Arsalang, not only to desist in his attack but also to become a supporter of the Dalai Lama. In 1637 Gushii Khan attacked and defeated the Tsogtu Mongols in Kokonor. Arsalang’s small army north of Lhasa settled there and integrated into the local economy.\footnote{Ibid, p. 18}

Figure 4

Oirat Buddhist Thangka circa 1650 - Gelukpa Refuge Tree\footnote{From author’s personal collection: this painting was a gift from a Kalmyk Dorbot family who believed that it had been in the family since the time of their migration from the Zunghar region in the mid 17th century. The central figure is that of Tsongkhapa, founder of the Gelukpa lineage.}
But the defeat of the Tsogtu Mongols was not sufficient to bring peace to Tibet. The Karmapa ruler of Tsang and the Bonpo ruler of Beri in Kham were both intent on destroying the Gelukpas. Gushii mounted an army in 1639 and traveled to Kham where he waged war for nearly a year before capturing and killing the ruler of Beri in 1640. In 1641 he brought his army to Tsang to lay siege to the stronghold of the Desi Tsangpa. With the aid of a Tibetan army under Sonam Chophel he was eventually defeated. In the following year of 1642 Gushii invited the Dalai Lama to Shigatse in Tsang and there proclaimed him secular and spiritual ruler of Tibet, hence establishing a new central government of Tibet that would remain in effect for more than 300 years. Tibet under the Great Fifth Dalai Lama Tibet enjoyed a golden age of building and cultural accomplishments.

**The Rise of the Manchu Qing**

The Jurchens of northeast Asia, who became known in the early 17th century as Manchus, were the remnants of the earlier Jin Dynasty (1115-1234) that conquered the Khitan Liao and succumbed to the Mongol Empire under Ogedei. They had a mixed pastoral and agricultural economy, relying also on hunting and fishing. Hunting in particular kept them well versed in the martial skills at which they excelled. In the mid 16th century they were organized in eight principal

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143 Ibid, p. 23

144 While the Manchus began to appoint ambassadors (Amban) who served as the Emperor’s representatives in Tibet in 1720, they were never officially in charge of the political administration of Tibet. Their job was to see that the Dalai Lama and his Regents understood and adhered to the Emperor’s wishes but it was understood that as long as they did so there would be no direct interference.
Li (2000) wrote that these eight groups were organized into two confederations that cut across tribal and clan lines.

They paid tribute to the Ming Dynasty, were forced to serve as guards for the Court, and subject to Ming reprisals for acts deemed rebellious or independent. In the late 16th century the skillful leader, Nurhaci (1559-1626) began a program of Jurchen consolidation, completed in 1618. Even before that time Nurhaci recognized the need for a new military and political structure. A nascent Banner system began to take shape in 1601 with companies of 300 warriors, battalions of five companies, and banners of ten battalions.

Eventually each banner at full strength held a total of 15,000 fighting men, each with three horses, a compound-recurve bow, and various weapons for close combat. The initial four Banners were expanded to eight and with the completion of Jurchen consolidation Nurhaci went to war against the Chinese in Liaodong.

Nurhaci began also to form alliances with his Mongol neighbors. For Nurhaci and his son Hong Taiji (1592-1643) to succeed in their imperial ambitions they had to neutralize the Mongols and enlist them as a fighting force. In 1593 the Khorchin Mongols entered into a pact of non-aggression with Nurhaci. There were marriage exchanges and alliances between the Jurchens and Khorchin and

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145 These were the Ula, Yehe, Hada, Jianzhou, Warka, Hurha, Hoifa, and Haixi.


Khalkha Mongol groups. Nurhaci wed a Chinggisid princess, his second wife, and fathered Hong Taiji, his eventual heir. As half Manchu and half Chinggisid, Hong Taiji appealed to his ancestry to help legitimate his leadership over the Mongols.

The pact with the Khorchin also bought with it an obligation to protect them from attacks by the Chakhar Mongols who resented Khorchin alliances with a non-Chenggisid ruler.148 When the Chakhar Khan, Ligdan, began a militant campaign in the 1620s to force recognition of his authority by the other Mongol uluses, Hong Taiji seized the opportunity to lead a campaign against Ligdan. With the participation of Khorchin, Khalkha and other Mongol groups he forced Ligdan into exile in Kokonor in 1634 and took control of his remaining people.

After Ligdan died his seal as heir of Chenggis Khan was brought to Hong Taiji in Mukden. The last living Great Khan was dead and the symbols of his office fell into Hong Taiji’s hands as he began to assert the right of leadership over the Mongol nations. Even if they were slow to recognize this status, it meant that the uluses were free to function without concern for a more senior line of leadership.

Hong Taiji also took possession of Ligdan’s statue of the wrathful Buddhist deity Mahakala that had been made for Khubilai Khan. This statue represented the symbolic center of a Mahakala Cult149 and had been handed down through generations of Chinggisid Khans. It represented the role of Mongolian leaders as

149 Ibid. p. 119
protectors of the Buddha’s law, which gave them tremendous symbolic significance in Central Asia. By 1640 the Manchus owned all the symbols of Ligdan’s office, had defeated or brought five of the six Mongol nations under their rule, and stood poised on China’s northern border waiting for the Ming to falter.

By the mid 17th century the Manchus were fully reconciled with the Mongols and pre-occupied with the waning Ming power while the Oirad were expanding into the Volga steppes and Tibet. Following the Manchu occupation of Beijing in 1644 and the incorporation of the vast Tibetan territories in 1641 by the Oirad these two expanding states could not ignore each other. In 1653 Gushii Khan received official recognition from the Qing and the right to offer tribute. Ochirtu Taiji (of the Khoshud in the Zunghar area) was also accepted as a tributary about that time, according to Perdue. But with the Manchus in control of Northern China and firm alliances with the Mongols it was perhaps inevitable that the Oirad and the Manchus would clash in the second half of the 17th century.

Russia’s Siberian Expansion and the Late Ming Dynasty
Neither the Muscovite Russians nor the Chinese Ming were as central to the concern of Oirat leaders as the Mongols, Manchus or Tibetans. But as early as 1608 the Russian court established diplomatic contact with the Torghud leader Kho-Urluk. Those contacts expanded as the main body of the Torghud and some lesser Dorbod divisions migrated toward the Volga steppes, an area that Muscovy then lacked the military power to control. Moscovy, under Ivan IV,
began in the mid 16th century to achieve some modest but important military gains in Eurasia and soon after to explore the taiga regions east of the Urals and into Siberia. But growing Ming isolationism and withdrawal from steppe affairs allowed Central Asian geopolitics to evolve without the heavy hand of the Middle Kingdom. So while isolationism may have been the preferred stance of the Ming, Russia began to look east and mount exploratory missions, though Cossack groups funded by wealthy Russian merchants conducted that exploration.

Some historians have described Muscovite Russia as a successor state to the Mongol Empire. By the late 15th century Muscovy managed to throw off the so-called Mongol yoke and its strength relative to the other Russian principalities continued to grow. In 1547 Ivan IV, known as the Terrible, was crowned as Tsar of all Russia. By 1556 both the Kazan and Astrakhan Khanates had fallen to the Muscovites. It was not that Muscovy was especially powerful but rather that the Golden Horde had been shattered into small pieces by Tamerlane at the end of the 14th century and the power of the smaller Turkic khanates continued to wane.

Ivan IV and others began to look toward Siberia as a relatively easy source of riches that Russia needed to support the armies that kept its European enemies, such as Poland, at bay. In 1582 the Siberian Khan Kuchum was defeated by a band of Cossacks and Siberia was opened to Russian exploitation. With that victory Muscovite Russia managed to conquer and incorporate the territory and people of three of the four rival Golden Horde successor states by the end of the 16th century. But its control of those regions was weak, especially the steppe territories for which large troops of light cavalry were required to maintain control.
In the late 16th century Russia experienced a dynastic change that could have derailed its Siberian expansion entirely. With the death of Ivan IV’s son Feodor, in 1589, the House of Rurik, that had ruled Russia since mid 12th century, came to an end. The noble families of Godunov and Romanov vied for the Tsardom, with Boris Godunov taking the throne from 1599 until only 1605. Russia entered the Time of Troubles during which several Rurik imposters vied for control. By 1612 the imposters had been expelled and the Russian nobles finally chose a reluctant sixteen-year-old Michal Romanov as their new Tsar, ushering in the Romanov Dynasty that would rule until 1917.

While the Siberian expansion was somewhat neglected during the Time of Trouble, both Godunov and the Romanovs needed and encouraged the pursuit of the “soft gold” of Siberian furs. The Russian approach to Siberia has been called conquest by contract,151 as Cossacks mounted the expeditions and rich merchants bore the expenses on the promise of riches from the fur trade and the favor of Moscow. They set up a series of forts across Siberia at Tyumen and Tobolsk (1586), Tara (1594), and Tomsk (1604), reaching the Yenisei River by 1605. They reached the Amur River Valley (in Manchuria) circa 1640, where they first encountered the Manchus. By 1649 they were on the shores of the Pacific. Though Muscovite Russia had learned steppe warfare from the Mongols, in its eastward expansion it’s weakness required it stay within the taiga to the north of the steppes to avoid steppe battles in which their small numbers of armed Cossacks could be overwhelmed by mounted forces.

Both the Oirat Khara-Khula and the Khalkha Altyн Khan approached the Mongols in the 1620s seeking alliances. While the Russians were receptive to both leaders they remained unwilling to trade guns, fearing to arm nomadic groups that could turn on them. The Russians were mostly interested in whether the Oirad or the Mongols could provide them with diplomatic contacts with China or with access to Chinese trade. The Oirad in the Zunghar region became known to the Russians as Black Kalmyks, as opposed to the White Kalmyks who migrated to the Volga steppes and with whom the Russians were more familiar.

Relationships between the Russians and the Manchus in the Amur River Valley were poor. Russia viewed the valley as a potential source of food grains that could support its Siberian fortresses, which needed to sustain themselves independently of support from Moscow. The Manchus viewed the Amur River valley as their place of origin and were unwilling to allow another imperial force to occupy their ancestral lands. A Manchu force attempted to drive them out in 1652 but was not at first successful. In 1658 they returned in force, killed the Russian soldiers and settlers and destroyed their fortifications. The Russians soon gave up on the Amur Valley and renounced interest via the treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689.

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid
CHAPTER V

CONTEXT OF SEREN GEREL AND THE GREAT CODE OF THE FORTY AND FOUR

The Mongol - Oirat Code of 1640

The opening page of the 1640 Great Code invokes the blessings of the celestial Buddha who is the essence of Buddhist teachings, the historical Buddha Shakyamuni, the founder of the Gelukpa order of Tibetan Buddhism, and the Dalai and Panchen Lamas, and acknowledges their representatives, who were present at the Assembly. It is only on the second page, after a list of the twenty-eight nobles in attendance, that the phrase from which the document derives its title occurs. “These great nobles of both the Forty and Four started to write the Great Code.” Thus the document was known first as the Great Code of the Forty and Four. But how is it that the Forty and Four were understood to mean the Mongols and the Oirat? What meaning lived in those numeric designations? Did they signal that those present represented forty Mongol and four Oirat tumens, as is often assumed?¹⁵³

The reality is that the Mongol leaders present at the Assembly represented only one-sixth of the much larger Eastern Mongolian community, perhaps some 60,000 to 70,000 warriors and a total population of some 300,000 to 350,000 (out of perhaps two million). And the Oirats present represented far more than 40,000

¹⁵³ Lhamsuren, 2010, p. 285 notes that the 17th century Mongol chronicles did in fact give the population of the Eastern Mongols as consisting of 400,000 warriors and their families. With an average household of five, that would suggest a total population of about 2 million.
warriors. Gushii Nomiyin Khan of the Khoshud is said to have had some 100,000 households alone under his rule in Kokonor.\textsuperscript{154} One estimate places the total number of households in the Zunghar region at 200,000 after the Khoshud migration, suggesting a total Zunghar population of some 1,000,000.\textsuperscript{155} While the Four may have referred to the Oirat Khoshud, Torghud, Dorbod and Khoid polities of the time, the Khalkha Mongols of the time were known as the Seven Khoshoun.\textsuperscript{156} Why was it not the Seven and the Four?

The Forty and Four cannot be read as a literal but rather a symbolic designation, intended to signal that the gathering was of those who led the Yeke Ulus (Great Polity) of the Mongols and the Oirad created by Chenggis Khan in the early 13\textsuperscript{th} century, more than 400 years earlier.\textsuperscript{157} By naming the Assembly as a gathering of the Forty and Four at least two points of important ideological significance were being announced, not only to those assembled but also to the Manchus and Mongols who had joined in a new state under Manchu leadership.

The first point was to demonstrate that contrary to the efforts of the Manchu Hung Taiji in creating a new Great State, including five Mongol uluses, the Assembly of 1640 was the (only) legitimate gathering of the Yeke Ulus founded


\textsuperscript{155} Ibid, p. 108

\textsuperscript{156} Seren Gerel, Appendix B, is but one of many primary and secondary sources to use this designation.

\textsuperscript{157} Though it has been suggested that the Forty and Four refers to the Mongols at the time of Chinggis Khan, with forty Mongol and four Oirat tumens, a review of primary sources does not substantiate this claim. As Lhamsuren observed the Secret History seems to indicate a total of 95,000 warriors when on page xx of the Onon translation it indicates that Chinggis appointed 95 leaders of one thousand, for a total of slightly less than five tumen.
by Chinggis Khan, invoking the heritage and prestige of the Great Mongol Ulus and by association the blessings of the Eternal Blue Sky. The second was to reinforce that only the direct male descendants of Chinggis Khan could lead in the formation of a Mongol State. Even as the Manchu Hung Taiji constructed an ideological argument that he was the new heir to Chinggis Khan, a key purpose of the Assembly was to demonstrate that the new Manchu State was not a legitimate successor to the Mongol Great State.

1640 was four years after the Manchu Hung Taiji declared the creation of the Qing Dynasty and a Manchu identity for its founders. Prior to 1636 there were no Manchu people, so how could the leader of a newly minted ethnic identity claim to rule Chinggisid Mongols? What is implied in the wording of the Great Code of 1640 is that, with the death of Ligdan Khan in 1634, it was the independent Khalkha Mongols and the Oirad who were the heirs to the Great Mongol State, since they had not subjected themselves to foreign leadership. The assertion was irrespective of Hung Taiji’s acquisition of Ligdan’s symbols of office, his mother’s Chinggisid heritage, or any other symbolic claims. The Chinggisid principal must still be honored and the Great State that Chinggis founded was being reaffirmed under Khalkha leadership.

The 1640 Great Code was a reuniting of the Forty and Four, after the earlier Mongol and Oirat wars and the more recent conflicts between the Oirad and the Khalkhas that ended in 1629. In spite of the modern (primarily Russian) 

159 See Lhamsuren, 2010, for a more complete presentation of this issue.
assertions that the 1640 Assembly occurred in Tarbagatai under the Choros leader Baatur Hong Taiji, evidence from original sources shows that the meeting took place on Khalkha territory under the Jasagtu Khan. But if so, why did the Oirad attend? What did they need, and why was it to their advantage to join in such an alliance?

Miyawaki (2008), Lhamsuren (2010) and others have observed that the Jasagtu Khan needed to form a new Mongol State yet was in no position to claim sole ownership. Thus the only recourse was to build a new Great State based on the sovereignty of its constituent elements and their rulers. For the Khalkhas this constituted further devolution of Chinggisid authority, and for the Jasagtu Khan, bare recognition as a first among equals in calling the Assembly. Yet that admission was less of a defeat than an acceptance of Manchu claims.

For the Four Oirad it was an important step forward. It constituted formal recognition that the non-Chinggisid leaders of the Oirat uluses were the equals of the Chinggisid descendants who ruled the Khalkha uluses. Oirat leaders would no longer bear a stigma of illegitimacy in the eyes of the Mongols and other Chinggisid lineages. Nor does it seem coincidental that there were roughly equal numbers of Khalkha and Oirat leaders present, signaling that regardless of their designation as the Forty and Four there was parity between the Chinggisids and the non Chinggisids in the new Mongol Great State. The mutual defense articles

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160 On folios 4A and 4B in Seren Gerel the author wrote that in the year of the Dragon Jasagtu Khan invited Zaya Pandita to come to Khalkha Mongolia, which he did the following year (1640). "At that time there was a great assembly of the Seven Khoshoun Mongols and the Four Oirad: there was the Mongol Jasagtu Khan, two Oirat Taiji, and others."
in the Code against outside aggressors and the articles that assured that internal aggression would be punished would have been of great value as well, benefitting Khalkha and Oirat alike.

What was unique about the Great Code of 1640 was surely not the bulk of its contents, for as Lhamsuren and others have observed, much of the content of the code was based upon earlier Mongol codes such as those fashioned and promulgated by Altan Khan in 1578.\textsuperscript{161} It uniqueness is in the recognition of the sovereign status of the polities lead by Mongol and Oirat nobles alike.

The version of the text translated for this study, one of several known extant texts, is considered the most complete and original. There are five known manuscripts of the 1640 Great Code, all in Oirat Todo Bechig (Clear Script). The originals of four of those manuscripts are in the archives of the Library of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg Russia. The two versions in the National Library of Mongolia are copies of two of the versions from St. Petersburg. The fifth suspected original is in Xinjiang China, but it may also be a copy obtained from St. Petersburg.\textsuperscript{162}

In 1889 the Russian scholar Golstunski compared and commented on the variations among the manuscripts in the archives of the Library of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg. The Russian publication containing his work is also available in St. Petersburg and in Elista, in the Russian Republic of Kalmykia. A


\textsuperscript{162} Research on the manuscripts was conducted in Ulaan Baatar Mongolia where I met with Dr. Sukhbaatar, President of Tod Nomin Gerel (Clear Light Books), the publisher of the Bibliotheca Oiratica, and a member of the Institute of History within the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, and with the Mongolian Academician, Dr. Tsoloo, who confirmed Sukhbaatar's information.
limited edition reprint of the Golstunski text was published in Russia circa 2009 and contained a copy of the text he considered most complete and original. Both Sneath (2007) and Lhamsuren (2010) translated small sections from that reprint in their respective works. It is the Golstunski text that is translated here. The Clear Script text in the Golstunski publication is twenty-eight pages, but the final seven pages are new articles added by the Kalmyks to the 1640 Code in 1678.

Unlike Seren Gerel, the Great Code of the Forty and Four was not first written in Oirat Clear Script, as it was penned in 1640, eight years before creation of the Clear Script. The Golstunski publication has the text in both Clear Script and Russian Cyrillic. A version of the text in Latin script was prepared for this project.

**Seren Gerel, the Biography of Zaya Pandita**

The biography of Zaya Pandita, Seren Gerel (Moon Light), is a very different text compared to the Great Code of the Forty and Four. Unlike the Great Code this text was an original Clear Script composition. It is widely considered to be the oldest existing original text in Clear Script, rather than a translation of a document from Tibetan or old Mongol script. However, Tod Nomin Gerel (Clear Light of Dharma), a non-profit Oirat organization in modern Mongolia, has recently made available a large number of scanned Oirat manuscripts through collaboration with the American Center for Mongolian Studies. Among those texts may well be some that are older, original compositions.

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163 I met with both David Sneath (Cambridge University) and Munkh-Erdene Lhamsuren (National University of Mongolia) in Mongolia in June 2011 to confirm that the Golstunski version was the most authoritative.
Like *The Great Code of the Forty and Four*, this document also acquired its name from a line in the text, which in this case appears on the 7th page (folio 4A). A high lama of Drepung Gomang monastic college in Tibet had heard a story about Zaya Pandita’s humility in addition to his extensive learning, and declared, “Though there are many stars in the sky, the moonlight is brighter than all the stars.” Indeed Zaya Pandita must have been somewhat of a surprise to the Tibetans, who were not above a fair degree of cultural elitism. Tibetans referred to Mongols as Hor-po, but they called the Oirats, Sog-po, often understood as meaning northern barbarians.164

Zaya Pandita is believed to have received the name by which he became famous, not from the Tibetans or Oirad, but rather the Khalkha Jasagtu Khan, who is said to have first used that title after Zaya (Brilliant or Bright) had taught among the Khalkha people for two years and was about the return to the Oirad.165 Like all the Oirad who took Buddhist monastic vows in the early 17th century, Zaya Pandita was a noble, born to a white bone lineage and adopted in his teens by the Khoshud Baibaghas Khan.

There are two theories about the reasons for the adoption that are not necessarily contradictory. The first is that Baibaghas, who initiated the effort of each noble family to send one son to become a monk, chose to prepare both his elder sons to accept inheritance of his Khoshud Ulus rather than have them study in Tibet. In adopting Zaya, another young noble of promising intellect, he

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164 This was confirmed in conversations with a Kalmyk colleague and Dr. Robert Thurman, the noted Tibetan Buddhist scholar from Columbia University.

165 See chapter IX, folio 4B.
had a surrogate son to give to the Dharma in keeping with his Buddhist initiative.

The only portion of Seren Gerel that deals with this issue is on folio 2B.

(S3) Baibaghas Baatar Noyon said, (to Zaya Pandita) “become a monk instead of my son”, and so at the age of 17 he took his vows; he took his novice vows from Manjushri Khutugtu.

The second theory is that Zaya Pandita’s father had died, and Baibaghas adopted him according the custom that when an important noble died a male relative or senior noble married the widow and took responsibility for the children.

In any case, Zaya succeeded in his mission beyond anyone’s expectations, for in the year in which he took his Geshe exams in Tibet he was declared Lhasa’s Rabjampa, the best of all scholars in that year. He was held in such esteem that in 1638 he served as one of ten official monks in the ordination of the twenty year-old Fifth Dalai Lama. Later that year, after twenty-two years of study, he left Tibet to return to Oiratia at the urging of the Dalai and Panchen Lamas who asked him, to live among “those who speak Mongol, to translate holy books and bring benefit to religion and living beings”.167

Ten years later, with the sponsorship of Ochirtu Taiji and Ablai Baatar, the sons of Baibaghas, Zaya Pandita created the Clear Script. It came to serve as the official script of the Oirats and allowed more accurate translations of Buddhist texts in a form that better captured the sounds and nuances of the Oirat

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166 Seren Gerel implies that this was ten years after his arrival in Tibet which would have made it 1628. Ten years would have been a very short period of study in the 17th century for a Geshe degree especially given that Zaya Pandita would have arrived in Tibet without speaking or reading Tibetan.

167 Chapter IX, folio 3A
language than the older Mongol script with too few vowels and consonants and no long vowels. Perhaps it was also intended to facilitate a new joint Oirat/Mongol cultural identity in the wake of the 1640 Great Code, but there is no direct evidence of this.

The approach Zaya Pandita employed was similar to that used by the Manchus under Hung Taiji, sixteen years early. Though Nurhaci had commissioned the adaption of the old Mongol script for the writing of Jurchen in 1599, it proved to be ineffective in many respects and the new script could not be vocalized in Jurchen. In 1632 Hung Taiji commissioned the creation of new orthographic elements, a system of circles and dots to “represent the actual sounds and mechanisms of the language that would soon come to be known as Manchu”.  

If Zaya Pandita was imitating the Manchus in this effort it would have been another important signal, for the creation of the Todo script must also be interpreted as an element of Oirat state building. Myangad Erdemt (2008) provided a detailed analysis of sponsors of the Todo script based on multiple primary and secondary sources. Erdemt describes the positions of five different historians on this issue and the primary sources they used. He relied as well on a poem by Zaya Pandita about the Todo script in which Zaya Pandita praises both Ablai Baatar and Ochirtu Taiji, as enabling the creation of the script. Thus, while Gushii Khan ruled Tibet as Religious King and Defender of Buddhism

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on the Right Wing of the Oirat state, Ablai Baatar and Ochirtu Taiji engaged in state building activities in the Zunghar region.\textsuperscript{170} It was followed by an aggressive translation project, funded by Ochirtu, Ablai and other Oirat nobles.

The whole of \textit{Seren Gerel} is remarkable in the extent to which it presents the Oirad as deeply immersed in a Buddhist worldview, eager to hear Buddhist teachings, take religious vows, and make extensive offering, less than twenty-five years after the Oirad undertook the adoption of Buddhism as a state religion. Indeed the creation of the Clear Script took place a mere six years after Gushii Khan defeated the final enemies of the Gelukpas in Tibet. This image of a people already deeply committed to Buddhism supports the 2010 work of Baatr Kitinov showing that the Oirad began to develop an affinity for Buddhism as early as the 13\textsuperscript{th} century through contact with the Tanguts and their Tibetan teachers shortly after the conquest of the Tangut Empire by Chinggis Khan.

As with the Great Code, there are several extant manuscripts of \textit{Seren Gerel}. Badmaev (1968) translated a version into Russian, Miyawaki (1986) into Japanese, and Dalai (1997) and Norbu (1999) into modern Mongolian. Until this project it had not been translated into English. Both Mongol and Oirat versions of the text are extant, with a Mongol version being published by the Academician Rinchen in Mongolia in 1959. An Oirat version of the text was discovered in Khovd Aimag in Mongolia and given to the Mongolian Scholar Tsoloo in 1963. That text was found to have some errors and omissions. Another version of the

\textsuperscript{170} I have addressed this issue of the Clear Script as an element of state building at some length in a chapter entitled “The Western Mongolian Clear Script and the Making of the Oirat Buddhist State” in a book to be published by Oxford University Press in 2014.
text was discovered in the archives in St. Petersburg Russia by the Russian scholar Goltunski and transliterated into Russian Cyrillic in 1880.\textsuperscript{171}

The versions of the text used in this project were first the 1963 text given to Tsoloo, secondly the text discovered by Goltunski in 1880 and republished by Badmaev in 1968, and finally a version of the text from 2008 in Volume IX of the Bibliotheca Oiratica, published by Tod Nomin Gerel. The Badmaev text with 42 folios and the Bibliotheca Oiratica text with 44 folios appear to be hand written copies of the same original but with different page breaks. The 2008 TNG publication includes an indexed Latin transcription of the Clear Script version and it is that transcription to which the translation in Chapter IX is indexed. While I have confidence in the accuracy of the translations, neither of the two translations is yet fully annotated and equal to NEH standards for scholarly translations.\textsuperscript{172}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{171} Much of this history was learned through correspondence with the Russian Kalmyk historian Andre Badmaev over the past five years and in conversation with the Mongolian scholar and translator Ch. Dalai in 2009. Okada and Miyawaki (2008) also give some history of the Mongol and Oirat texts in Mongolia.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{172} The Great Code of the Forty and Four is the more polished of the two, as it was translated independently by each of three team members and the final translation discussed and agreed upon. A second more polished English version was prepared and read back to the team to confirm that the language used was consistent with the meaning. The Seren Gerel was translated some four years earlier when my ability with the Oirat language and script was quite limited. I worked to verify and polish the translation over the past four years but place names in particular remain problematic. My first goal after this project is to refine and annotate a scholarly translation.}
CHAPTER VI

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF SEREN GEREL AND THE MONGOL-OIRAT

GREAT CODE OF 1640

As noted in the introduction to this dissertation, this sixth chapter is organized around four questions intended to facilitate a better understanding of the nature of the Oirad polity in the early 17th century. Observations about alliances and conflicts among the Oirats, for example, help to determine whether Oirat leaders were engaged in campaigns of consolidation and centralization of authority as elements of state formation. An examination of specific intra-Oirat conflicts in the early 17th century will show that none of them was about consolidation. They were conflicts of succession between brothers and uncles or limited conflicts over pastures when the Khalkha Altyn Khan and the Kazaks pressured the Oirats into the relatively small area of the Ili and upper Irtysh River valleys to the northwest of the Zunghar Basin.173

Relationships among Oirat leaders and Extent of the Oirat Domain

In reading the Great Code of the Forty and Four (GCFF) and the list of nobles attending the 1640 Assembly, there appear to be at least fourteen Oirats. It is not clear however if those are the same fourteen identified by Lhamsuren.174 Of


174 Lhamsuren (2010) gives the number as fourteen Oirats but does not name them. The list appears to name 29 rather than 28 nobles, the number 28 given by Lhamsuren as well. Spellings also varied a great deal from one primary document to the next. In the GCFF Kho-Urulk is identified simply as Orlug. Names are also not separated by commas and so with names of multiple words it can be hard to determine if one or more persons are being indicated.
those, this project has identified all fourteen with a high degree of certainty based on the *Seren Gerel* (SG) and the aid of secondary sources. They include a Torghut delegation of four, a Khoshud delegation of three, a Dorbod/Zunghar delegation of four, and three Dorbod nobles who had left the Zunghar Basin along side of Kho-Urluk’s Torghut ulus to move to the central Russian steppes.


These great nobles of both the Forty and Four started to write the Great Code.

The Torghut delegation consisted of four nobles, the senior being Kho-Urluk (the GCFF names him as simply Orlug). His two oldest sons, Shukur Daiching and Yeldeng, accompanied him. The fourth Torghut noble was Mergen Noyon who unlike Kho-Urluk had remained in Zungharia with his ulus rather than migrate via the Irtysh River toward the Russian Siberian steppes.

Those who can be clearly identified as Khoshud number three; Gushii Khan who had been recently involved in a war in the Khams region of southeastern Tibet, Ochirtu (Taiji) who came from the Tarbagatai region to the west of Zungharia, and Kondolong Ubashi, a brother of Gushii Khan who came from Kokonor which

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the main body of the Khoshut ulus had recently occupied. He is sometimes confused with the Dorbod Kondolong Ubashi.

The identifiable Zunghar Dorbod delegation of four consisted of Baatur Hung Taiji, the senior son of Khara-Khula (who had passed away circa 1634), his son Tsetsen Taiji (Cecen Taiji in the GCFF), and Baatur’s younger brothers, Chouker and Mergen Daiching. Of the three non Zunghar Dorbods, Dayicin Khoshuucci and Tenger Toyon were the sons of Dorbod Dalai Tayishi (a key ally of the Torghut Kho-Urluk) who had passed away in 1637. Buu Yeldeng was the brother of the deceased Dalai Tayishi. Thus those Dorbods were nomadizing in the same general area of the Russian steppe as the Torghud and were not from among the Dorbod from Zungharia.

Of the remaining nobles at the Assembly, at least some others may have been Oirat and not Khalkha, contrary to the position of Lhamsuren that of the 28 nobles in attendance their were 14 Khalkha and 14 Oirat nobles. But this project has not focused on the identity of the Khalkha nobles other than the Jasagtu and Tusheetu Khans.

Based on those in attendance, the Oirat realms included the new Khoshud domain in Kokonor (and soon all of Tibet), the Dorbod (and Khoid) dominated Zunghar basin (with the Altai Mountains to the northeast, the Tian Shans to the south and the Tarbagatais to the west), the Khoshud domains on the Ili River south of the Atalaw and Borohoro mountains and the southern slopes of the Tarbagatai mountains, much of the Irtysh River valley north of the Zunghar basin.
flowing into and out of Lake Zaysan, and areas of the Russian steppes where the majority of the Torghud under Kho-Urluk and the lesser Dorbod under Dalai Tayishi’s heirs roamed (see Map II, page 127).

Thus the new State they were establishing (and the GCFF clearly states their intent in this regard) included the Khalkha territories of modern Mongolia and all these named Oirat realms, including by the end of 1641 all of Tibet.176

GCFF P2 S2 (If) anyone breaks this legal state of the Great Aimag Ulus by killing and destroying (among) the unified Mongols and Oirats, then punish (him) by banishment.

S3 Everything that was not his own should be taken and half given to those who (were attacked but) not killed.

While historians can debate whether the Great Code was a charter for a new state or merely a treaty of alliance, the language of the GCFF is clear that the intent was a unified, legal state. But it is likewise important to note, based on the studies of Atwood, Elverskog and Lhamsuren, (see chapter II) that joining state (toro) for the Mongols and Oirats did not meaning the dissolution of the constituent uluses. The sovereign status of those constituent nations177 is implicit rather than explicit in the language of the GCFF. By joining this new State each noble was to be protected by law from attacks on his ulus by another.

176 There can be no doubt based on multiple primary and secondary sources that even the Tibetans considered Gushii Khan as the Khan of Tibet.

Based on the SG (the GCFF is silent on this) it is also possible interpret the number of sovereign Oirat uluses in 1640, though the lines between uluses are not always clear. It is important to recall that ruling an ulus was a corporate family enterprise. Yet, from the SG and other sources it is possible to identify six largely distinct polities, one more than existed circa 1600. Two can be identified from the SG as Khoshud uluses: a large ulus under Gushii in Kokonor and Tibet, and a somewhat smaller ulus under Ochirtu and Ablai west of the Zunghar basin. This smaller ulus was created in 1639 when Gushii left the Ili region in the control of his nephews. The extent of coordination between them is unclear.

There was one major Torghut ulus under Kho-Urluk and his sons on the Russian steppes. Closely allied to Kho-Urluk was a Dorbod ulus on the northern Irtyskh and Russian steppes under the two sons and younger brother of Dalai Taiji.

There was a single Zunghar ulus in Zungharia under Baatur Hung Taiji, as the son and two younger brothers attending the 1640 Assembly did not represent sovereign groups. There was also had a small client Torghud ulus within the larger Zunghar Ulus. Based on the SG, a Khoid ulus also nomadized in Zungharia in the 1640s and 50s (though I have identified no Khoids at the Assembly) and it is counted here as the sixth.

Even with this differentiation of six principal polities it is important to keep in mind that the situation remained quite fluid. Maps constructed by Okada-Miyawaki and Ch. Dalai based on their translations of the Seren Gerel show multiple locations
for the encampments of the senior Oirat nobles between 1640 and 1670. Nor is it clear to what extent senior nobles moved independently of their uluses.

It is also possible to clarify the sometime overlapping and sometime conflated terms Dorbod/Choros/Zunghar. The greater Dorbod ulus was under the leadership of the Choros aristocracy. Khara-Kula and Dalai Taiji were both Choros nobles, but it is not clear how closely they were related. Both ruled independent Dorbod uluses. So the use of the term Choros ulus can lead to confusion, as in the early 17th century there were at least two distinct Choros led polities. The Zunghar designation, as it originated in 1637, referred specifically to the Dorbods under Baatur Hung Taiji and client Torghut and Khoid uluses in the Zunghar Basin.

As far as further divisions within the Oirat realms, the GCFF makes no references. The SG uses the term Zunghar, though only six times. Each use warrants comment. The first appearance of Zunghar comes on Folio 6B.

(S2) When three uncles of Kondolong Ubashi attacked from the rear and thought they were winning, the Zunghar Danjin attacked them from the rear; the Khoshud Danjin also came in a frontal attack and forced Kondolong Ubashi back; thus both the Danjin’s names became famous.

In this case use of the term does little more than verify that while most nobles were recognized as Khoshud, Torghud, etc., some were specifically named as Zunghars at the time of the SG. This is confirmed in the second appearance of the term on Folio 7B.

(S12) He (Zaya) spent the summer (of 1647) with Zunghar Baatur Hung Taiji.
The third appearance of the term is even more definitive in showing that during Zaya Pandita’s life the Zunghars were recognized as a distinct ulus, on par with the older Dorbod, Khoshud, etc. for on folio 9A of the SG it states the following.

(S5) In summary, from the Year of the Tiger (1638) to the year of the Tiger (1662) while among the Khoshud, Torghud, Dorbod, Zunghar, Khoid and others of the Dörbön Oirat, he (Zaya Pandita) translated sutras, shastras, and primary teaching texts.

Here the use of the term in others is interesting, as it seems to indicate that the five named uluses did not include all the Oirat people.

The next use of the term occurs on folio 18B and is somewhat puzzling:

(S10) Before we arrived, in the summer of the Year of the Chicken (1658), the Zunghars split into warring factions, east (zoun) and west (baroun).

(S11) Ablai defended the east and Sechen Khan defended the west.

And on folio 19B the following is written:

(S8) That winter of the Year of the Pig (1659) Choukur, Sengge, Sechen Baatur and others won over the easterners (zunghars).

(S10) The summer after (1660) Sechen Khan and others of the Khoshud and Zunghar arranged a big council meeting at the place called Tarakhai Khara Khojir.

Ablai and Sechen Khan (the former Ochirtu Taiji) were the two principal sons of the Khoshud Baibaghas Khan. There are no other passages in which they are named as Zunghars; they are always listed as Khoshud. On its own this section might be interpreted to indicate that all Oirad in the greater Zunghar region (they were actually from the Ili River and Tarbagatai regions) were viewed as Zunghars.

But why would Ablai and Sechen Khan have led a civil war among Zunghars
when Baatur Hung Taiji was the leader of the Zunghars? The resolution comes on the next folio, for after indicating that it was the western group under Sechen Khan who won over the eastern group the text clarifies that it was a war between Sechen Khan and his brother Ablai of the Khoshud and their respective allies.

Information from other sources confirms that this was a war of succession between the two powerful Khoshud princes in which their respective allies lined up behind them. They did therefore cause the Oirat uluses in the greater Zunghar region to divide into warring camps.

After considering the information in the GCFF and the SG related to the Zunghar designation, it is appropriate to consider whether there is information on the other half of the Oirat polity. It is important to recall that throughout much of recorded history nomadic steppe polities and armies were divided into left (east) and right (west) branches. The SG uses the term Baroun Tala (Right Side) twenty-nine times in reference to Tibet, implying through that term that the Khoshud domain in Tibet was viewed as the right wing of the Oirat Ulus, in contrast to the Zungharia, the place of the left wing. One possible translation of the term Baroun Tala is western plain, but that meaning is clearly not intended here. Several examples will help to illustrate. The first passage is in reference to the 1650-1651 trip that Zaya Pandita organized to Tibet to visit the Dalai and Panchen Lamas and various monasteries.

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178 Many nomadic steppe states were to the north or northwest of China and thus facing their principal enemy to the south. Di Cosmo provides information on the bicameral structure relative to the circa 150 BCE Hsiung-nu. With the Mongols of the mid 16th century, with whom the Oirad were very familiar, they also employed this bicameral structure with the Left wing to the north of China under the Chakhar Khan and the Right wing under a Viceroy to the northwest of China in the Ordos region.
F4A (S3) Later when (Zaya) Khutugtu was going to Baroun Tala he asked Ngakpa Nomiyin Khan about those words. “Did you tell (others) that you said korsum to me? Why were you telling this (to everyone)?” When it was clear that Nomiyin Khan was mistaken they stopped on the way and held another debate.

This second passage describes the preparation made by a senior noble planning a pilgrimage to Tibet.

F7B (S2) Targyun Erdeni Hung Taiji was ready to go to Baroun Tala and he gathered a lot of livestock; the buffalos and cows he sent to Kitad (China) and he made an offering of 6000 sheep to the Khutugtu (Zaya Pandita).

The third section concerns a pilgrimage planned by the Khoshut Sechen Khan who wished to sell a large herd of cows and yaks to China in order to obtain the silver and silk that he would need to bring as offerings.

F8A (S7) When he (the Khan) returned to his headquarters he called all the division leaders and treasurers together and said, “I am going to go to Baroun Tala so let us gather ten thousand horses and send (them) to Kitad (for sale).

This fourth passage describes the plans of Sechen Khan to make another pilgrimage to Tibet in honor of his mother who had recently passed away.

F15B (S4) When Sechen Khan, in memory of his mother and consideration of her kindness, decided to go to Baroun Tala, Khutugtu, Ablai and others, tried to reason with him, saying, “For a great noble like you, to go without offerings is wrong.”

The fifth passage is part of a conversation between Sechen Khan and Zaya Pandita in which Sechen Khan summarizes the life choices made by Zaya that allowed him to become a great lama.
“Instead of staying as a child you went to Baroun Tala to become a novice and you studied great knowledge there.”

This last selection concerns the announcement of Zaya Pandita that he was old and in failing health and he wished to return to Tibet to die.

When Khutugtu Gegeen came to the River Biji he told the Khan and other great patrons and Achitu Corgi and other great lamas and his community of monks and all the other subjects of the Oirat khans, “I am going to Baroun Tala.”

Thus it is clear that in all these conversations the term Baroun Tala refers not to a specific place in the direction of or in Tibet, but rather to Tibet as a whole. Moreover Tibet and Kokonor (Tibetan Amdo) were not to the west of the Zunghar region. Kokonor was to the southeast and Tibet was due south across the Tarim Basin from Zungharia. Yet without some supporting evidence, the connection between Baroun Tala and the Right Wing of the Oirat domain is merely implied.

A substantial element of corroborating evidence comes from the 1889 Rosary of White Lotuses by the Inner Mongol Dharmatala, a text in the Hors Chos Jung genre (Mongolian Dharma History). In that text Dharmatala specifically credits Gushii Khan as the founder of the Oirat Right Wing and Baatur Hung Taiji as founder of the Left Wing. Though the date of this composition is late for our purposes, Dharma histories are known to rely heavily on earlier Chos Jung texts. Dharmatala cites as one his two primary sources the earlier work of the well-
known Upper Mongol scholar Sumpa Hambo Yeshe Paljor, written in 1777. Efforts to view the Tibetan text of Sumpa Hambo have not yet been successful. However, in another work by Sumpa Hambo, the Annals of Kokonor, he specifically refers to the Khoshud domain in Tibet not as Baroun Tala but rather as Barun Gar, the Right Side of the Oirad domain, leaving no doubt that the Oirad view of their realm included both left and right sides.

Conflicts and Alliances among Oirats Leaders
The Seren Gerel provides descriptions of four Oirat conflicts observed and sometime mediated by Zaya Pandita or the SG author Radnabhadra prior to 1670. The first of these begins of folio 6A and it is reasonably easy to decipher the nature of the conflict and the antagonists.

F6A (S5) In the spring of the Year of the Dog (1646) Kondolong Ubashi went to war against two Dorbod Taiji; he (Kondolong Ubashi) came to the places called Koku Usun and Khara Tala.

It is clear from passages on folios 6B and 7A that it is a Dorbod Kondolong Ubashi, not the Khoshud Kondolong Ubashi listed in the GCFF. One of the Dorbod princes is identified on folio 6B as Baatur Hung Taiji but the other is not specifically named. Kondolong Ubashi was the uncle of the two Dorbod princes. The text notes that the Kalmyk Torghut Daiching observed this conflict on his

182 The text is described in Martin’s Tibetan Histories as virtually illegible.
way to Tibet. From another passage on 6B it is clear that the Khoshud Ochirtu Taiji was an ally of the Dorbod Baatur Hung Taiji and offered to fight as his ally.

(S4) When the kin of the Dorbod Kondolong Ubashi lost this battle, Ochirtu Taiji said to Baatur Hung Taiji, my mother forbid me to fight but because I agree with (my) father I will fight.

(S5) Baatur Hung Taiji answered, you Khoshud will defend your Khoshud, but because my brother Dorbot came to kill me, give me the Dorbod.

Thus Baatur Hung Taiji appears to decline that help, indicating that since it was his brother Dorbot who attacked him, the Khoshud should stay out of it. At the end of folio 6B Baatur refuses to let the offending Dorbot escape, saying that, “I will not leave the Dorbod.” Both the Khoshud princes, Ochirtu and Ablai, acted as mediators in the conflict, but without apparent success. Kondolong Ubashi escaped over the mountains to his homeland but lost many of his people, horses and livestock to disease and starvation along the way. So little of Kondolong Ubashi’s ulus survived that they were neither a threat nor worth the effort to Baatur Hung Taiji to pursue them further. But given the description of the conflict it is clear that it was among two brothers and an uncle over control of all or some portion of the Dorbot ulus.

The second conflict cited in the SG is given only a single passage on folio 7A.

(S11) At that time (the Kalmyk Prince) Ghaldamba went (in war) against Torghud Daiching and he completed his business (by winning). The Year of the Dog (1646) was over and the Year of the Pig started.
This also was an intra ulus conflict among the Torghud and appears not to have involved anyone from outside of that ulus.

The third conflict is a bit more complex. In 1647 Baatur Hung Taiji sought to enlist the participation of the Khoshud Sechen Khan in a war against a Turkic group known as the Black Hats. Baatur’s oldest son, Sengge, was also involved in the conflict on his father’s side. A plan by Doyolong Sereng to raid the homeland of Baatur Hung Taiji was uncovered shortly after Baatur had left to campaign against the Black Hats. He turned back in time to quickly surround Doyolong Sereng’s army. According to the text on folio 7B, Zaya Pandita and the Khoshud brothers Ochirtu and Ablai went to negotiate a peace agreement. While the ulus of Doyolong Sereng is not identified it appears by the nature of the conflict that it was a lesser noble who tried to take advantage of Baatur Hung Taiji, raiding his homeland after he had left for war. Again, the textual evidence suggests a relatively minor conflict in which the potentially significant antagonists such as Baatur Hung Taiji and Ochirtu Sechen Khan acted as allies.

The last of the conflicts described in the SG is the longest lasting and most complex. It is one introduced earlier in this chapter from folio 18B.

(S10) Before we arrived, in the summer of the Year of the Roster (1658), the zunghars split into warring factions, east (zoun) and west (baroun).

(S11) Ablai defended the east and Sechen Khan defended the west.

And as indicated above in this same chapter, it was a war between the Khoshud princes Ablai Baatur and his brother Sechen Khan. In folio 19B the text indicates
that a western alliance of Sechen Khan, Sengge (the Choros/Dorbod son of Baatur Hung Taiji), and Chouker (Sengge’s uncle), prevailed in a battle over an eastern alliance under Ablai. In 1660 Zaya Pandita tried to negotiate a peace between them but Ablai did not accept the terms Sechen Khan offered. According to folio 20A they met again in a 1661 battle on the Emil River, each with 30,000 men.

(S11) On the third day of the first decade of the first month of the summer of the Year of the Cow (1661) they took positions facing each other on the bank of the Emil (Saddle) River.

(S14) When Sengge and Khoid Solton Tayishi joined (Sechen) Khan, his numbers were greater.

(S15) At the beginning of the first battle the sons of Dorbod Kuundolong Ubasha said let us go to the place called Buleni Chon.

In this case we can observe that Sechen Khan’s allies included Sengge and the Khoid Solton Tayishi. Ablai’s allies included the sons of the Dorbod Kondolong Ubashi from the Irtysh River Valley. The text also indicates that Sengge, allied with Sechen Khan, had a number of cannon, which he placed in battle. Ablai’s forces apparently suffered great harm, as he soon moved up the Emil River to seek refuge within a temple compound. His allies, “the people of Kondolong Ubashi” split with Ablai to move down the Emil River. The siege of Ablai’s temple compound lasted nearly a month until Sechen Khan’s stepmother emerged from the compound to negotiate a peace as described on folio 21B.

(S1) With these words the stepmother of the Khan called Sayikhan Zui Khatun came out from the Temple and talked to him.
The (Sechen) Khan accepted her words and said, “Ablai made unjust actions toward me though I didn't do him harm, but I will follow your words and will make peace.”

Even then, after the loss of many men on both sides and the capture of many of Ablai’s people and spoils of war, Sechen Khan, in a debate with his nobles about Ablai’s fate, decided to return everything and set him free as shown on folios 21B and 22A.

When the Khan consulted with his nobles some said, “He should be held in confinement.”

Folio 22A

Some of them said; “Give him back part of his people.”

Some of them said, “He should be sent to another country.”

Many opinions were given.

A man called Malai Khashakha said, “Who do you think this is, this is Ablai, it would be just to kill him, but if he is not killed you should give him all his people. “You should do one of these two.”

When he said this Ghalbamba said, “My thoughts are the same.”

“I think you are both right,” said the Khan and he returned everything, even the least, to Ablai.

This was the last of the Oirat conflicts during the life of Zaya Pandita. As shown, each conflict was a war of succession, though often involving outside allies. None of the great nobles, Baatur Hung Taiji, Sechen Khan, Sengge, Kho-Urluk, or Gushii Khan engaged in wars of Oirat consolidation during this period.
Oirat State-building Efforts

There can be no doubt that the very creation of the Great Code of the Forty and Four was itself an act of state building. But it seems appropriate to ask, whose state and under what leadership? If we take the GCFF at face value, these questions are clearly answered on the second page.

(S1) These great nobles of both the Forty and Four started to write the Great Code.

Thus it was a Great State of Mongol and Oirat uluses, under the collective leadership of the great nobles. It was therefore, as Sneath posited, a headless state, created not through the centralization of authority but rather through the joint action of the aristocratic rulers of multiple sovereign states; six independent Oirat uluses and the seven Khoshun of the Khalkhas.

Nor can their intent be disputed, for on that second page it also states:

(S2) (If) anyone breaks this legal state of the Great Aimag Ulus by killing and destroying (among) the unified Mongols and Oirats, then punish (him) by banishment.

They were creating a unified Mongol/Oirat state and any ruler who dared to wage war within that state was to be expelled and his people and herds confiscated.

The debate about whether states can exist absent central authority is one that distracts from consideration of other elements of state building inherent in both the GCFF and the SG. If we consider the core functions of states identified in the second chapter of this dissertation we observe the existence of common laws, an administrative bureaucracy, a military, and a state sanctioned religion.
As obvious as it may seem, the GCFF is itself that set of common laws that the great nobles, by their participation in the Assembly, agreed to enforce. Nearly all the laws to which they agreed had long been observed among the Mongols and Oirad, as the 1640 Code largely repeated, with some changes, earlier law codes that had evolved from the time of Chinggis Khan. They had been most recently embodied in the Great Code of Altan Khan following the 1578 formal reception of the Third Dalai Lama and the conversion to Buddhism. We should note that in Altan Khan’s efforts to establish sovereignty of his Tumed Mongol state he too engaged in adopting a state religion and updating a set of common laws.

A second marker of states, the sanctioning of an official religion, is also enacted in the language of the GCFF. The entire first page of the GCFF makes it clear that the Great State they were creating was a Buddhist state, formed with the blessings of the Celestial Buddhas, the historic Buddha Shakyamuni, the Tibetan Tsongkhapa, and the Dalai and Panchen Lamas.

(S1) May all be peaceful and bountiful.

(S2) (We) prostrate to Ochir Dhara Lama\textsuperscript{184} who has manifest the three bodies (of a Buddha and) who has adorned himself with a great collection of blessings for all sentient beings (through) the two great oceanic accumulations (of merit and wisdom) and the teaching of emptiness.

(S3) Oh Shakyamuni, foremost guide of all beings, please bestow mercifully upon us those warm rays from above that (dispel) our lack of faith.

\textsuperscript{184} It is not immediately clear to whom this refers. Given its first place in the text it is probably the celestial Buddha Vajra Dhara who is the essence of all teachers and the source of all esoteric (Tantric) teachings. Though it says Lama it is thought not to be in reference to a specific living Buddhist teacher.
(S4)  (We) prostrate to the feet of the supreme Holy Tsongkhapa who, as the successor of the Holy Lord of Religion (Buddha), explained the Wheel of the Dharma.

(S5)  (We) pray to the two Holies, the Dalai Lama, the savior who became the adornment of the top-most realm of sacred snows, and the precious Panchen who embodies the yellow visage of the Buddha Amitabha for the sake of sentient beings.

(S6)  (We bow to) the Holy, renowned Inzan Hutagt Rinpoche, (who) bestows complete benefit on all sentient beings through the Bodhi Mind (that is) equally (composed) of great compassion and the essence of voidness, (and) is not separate from all the Conquers.

(S7)  (We are here) in the presence of the three enlightened Khutugtus, Amoghasiddhi Manjushri, Aksobyha Manjushri and the so-called Inzan Rinpoche (who are) the fathers of religion.

The initial adoption of Buddhism occurred earlier for both the Mongols and Oirats. The Khalkha Mongols had initiated the process circa 1582 when the Khalkha Khan, Abatai, went to the city of Altan Khan, Kokoqota, in Inner Mongolia, to meet the Dalai Lama and initiate conversion of the Khalkhas. Perdue, among others, observed that at an Oirat assembly circa 1616 Baibaghgas Khan of the Khoshud led the conversion of the Oirad. That event is highlighted in the SG where on folio 2B it states:

(S2)  The father of Sechen Khan, Noyon Baibaghgas Baatar, initiated the effort by the nobles of the Four Oirad when he said “let us each give one son to become a monk”, and they all did so.
(S3)  Baibaghas Baatar Noyon said, (to Zaya Pandita) “become a monk instead of my son”, and so at the age of 17 he took his vows; he took his novice vows from Manjushri Khutugtu.

The GCFF also specified legal penalties for those who destroyed the good works of the lamas and insulted or otherwise harmed them, a further state protection of the Buddhist religion. On page three of the GCFF it states:

(S4)  (If) anyone kills and robs and destroys the good work of the lamas made for the benefit of religion, take one hundred armor breastplates, one hundred camels and one thousand horses; in only some cases take everything.

The penalties for merely insulting religious persons of different levels are listed on page five of the GCFF and cover insults to senior teachers, to regular monks and nuns, and to those persons holding lay religious vows. Somewhat later in the GFCC (pages 18 and 19) eight penalties were listed for those who practice shamanism or invite those who do. Folio 11B for example states:

(S5)  Anybody seeing someone worship an onghu¹⁸⁵ should burn that onghu and take one horse and sheep. Anyone who invites a Bo (male shaman) or Udaya (female) to make a shamanistic ceremony, take the horse of the inviter and surround that male or female shaman with the smoke of burnt dog shit.

But the overtly religious character of the Oirat uluses is demonstrated in the SG in other ways. One is the proliferation of Buddhist names such as Ochirtu (Vajra), Sechen (Wise) Ubashi (Vow-holding layman), and Nomiyin (of the Dharma). The Oirat nobles also began to act as great patrons of the Dharma. The SG contains many observations of frequently large donations such as that on folio 6A.

¹⁸⁵ A shamanic ancestral doll to which blood offerings were made on a daily basis
Altogether, a total of ten thousand horses were offered to the treasury, one thousand horses to Pyaqqmzodpa Corji; (to) each of (Zaya Pandita's) assistants five hundred or more horses were given, each educated novice received one hundred or more horses, other non-educated novices got sixty or more, new novices each received twenty or more horses, (and) each typical servant received ten or more horses; although I was not there, when I later asked people they said that this was true.

And because of the generous support of the Oirat nobles, when Zaya Pandita returned to Tibet in 1651 be brought with him 110,000 tael of silver, most accumulated by the sale of horses and livestock to the Chinese, as on folio 13B.

The sum of the funds of the Khutugtu amounted to one hundred ten thousand (taels) in silver.

To the monks of the (Dalai) Lama Gegeen they offered fifty thousand (taels).

From the sum of fifty thousand (taels), they gave half to build a statue and the other half to build a golden roof at Drepung (monastery).

Fifty thousand (taels) they offered for the places of holy teaching that enlightened people.

But perhaps the crowning Buddhist ideological achievement was the 1638 naming of Gushii Khan by the 5th Dalai Lama as Religious King (Dharma Raja) and Defender of Buddhism. Just as the Oirad (in the GCFF and the SG) held the Great Bogdo (Holy) Dalai and Panchen Lamas in high esteem, they also saw Gushii Khan as a Bogdo. On folio 2A of the SG is the following passage:

(Included) is the first stage of his becoming a novice monk, moving to Tibet, residing and studying there, reaching the end of his studies, receiving his
name and becoming a lama, receiving the favor and blessing of the three Bogdos\textsuperscript{186}

On folio 4B there is another passage referring to the three Bogdos.

(S3) Jasagtu Khan asked (Zaya Pandita) “live with us for two or three years;” (Zaya Pandita) answered, because the three great Bogdos\textsuperscript{187} ordered Ochir Dhara Khutugtu to go to Seven Khoshoun and me to the Four Oirad, so I am going back to them without delay.

Gushii Khan is mentioned one other time in the SG on folio 12B, when Zaya Pandita was traveling in the southern region of Tsang of Tibet. It shows that Gushii was a frequent companion of the great Lamas and enjoyed high status.

(S11) The Dalai Lama Gegeen, Gushi Nomiyin Khan, and Yeke Depa\textsuperscript{188} had gone to Checheq Taladu, were coming back and resting at noon at Khara Khotodu when they (Zaya’s group) met them and bowed and prayed to them.

Yet an official religion is only one classical feature of early states. Among the other features are administrative bureaucracies. The GFCC identifies three important ones. The first was the postal relay system, used for important matters of state or religion. Page five of the GCFF is the first to mention this system.

(S1) To those officials with or without authority give relay (transportation by horse or cart); clearly distinguish the messengers of state and religious affairs.

\textsuperscript{186} Bogdos means Holy Ones. In this case it refers to the Dalai and Panchen Lamas and the Khoshud leader, Nomin Gushii Khan.

\textsuperscript{187} It is probable that the three great Bogdos refers to the Dalai and Panchen Lamas as well as the Khoshud Dharma King Gushii Khan.

\textsuperscript{188} This is the title of the Dalai Lama’s Regent Desi Sonam Chophel, the same Regent who went to Gushii Khan in 1634 and asked for him to come to the aid of the Dalai Lama and the Gelukpas.
(S2) (If) a great noble or a noble wife becomes ill or if a great enemy attacks 
give (transportation) to a messenger who is appointed for this purpose; if someone does not give (transportation) take nine nines of (the offended person’s) choosing.

Page six provides details about the penalties associated with mistreating messengers and not providing meals or a place to stay for relay messengers.

S7 (If someone) beats a messenger, take nine; (if the messenger) is pulled (from his horse), take five; (if those) are not given, take them forcibly.

S10 (For) a messenger on a long trip, he should have meals at noon and before (evening) camp; (if) the messenger eats extra (meals), take his horse.

S12 (If) someone does not give an over-night stay, take a three-year-old cow.

The second bureaucratic system was concerned with the administration of justice, though again, this system is implicit rather than explicit in the language of the GCFF. Legal officials are first introduced on page three.

(S14) (If) noble sons-in-law or (any of) the four (types) of officials holding positions break (this code); take (from him) two camel-headed-nines.

Atwood indicates that all judicial officials were drawn from the ranks of noble-sons-in-law, those who had married the daughters of greater and lesser nobles. He also indicates that all four types of officials had judicial responsibilities. The GCFF does not give details of their responsibilities, but the penalties to which they could be subject if they committed certain crimes such as stealing livestock or failing to return runaways are included.

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Page six of the GCFF indicates that such officials were expected to hand out punishments, such as beatings.

(S1) (If) a beating is according to an order of an appointed noble, a son-in-law, a minister, a minor noble, a minor commander, or a troop commander, there will be no trouble.

Indeed, much of the GCFF is a list of penalties for all types of legal infractions such as stealing, setting fires, insulting nobles and monks, improper collection of debts, sexual misconduct, and failure to assist those in trouble. There are also sections concerning rules of evidence such as those found on page twelve, and in the case of the first article shown below, penalties for retaliating without following proper procedure.

(S9) (If) someone raids (the thieves) without telling the noble, the messenger of the noble and provisions (owed to the noble) must be double in compensation.

(S10) There must be three approaches to the trail (of the thieves).

(S11) (If) there is an investigation of the trail (left by thieves) (you) must go with good witnesses to the final end (of the trail).

(S12) (If) there are no good witnesses make a choice (to continue or not).

(S13) (If) the trails leads to a small community, the head (person of that community) must take an oath; if this is not the case (where the head person takes an oath), then separate the people of the community who did the stealing and punish according to law.

(S14) The elder of the community must testify before the best people of the district; the best people of the district must give (testimony) before the noble.
But regardless of the proscribed nature of crimes and penalties, the GCFF provides extensive evidence of laws and penalties for breaking those laws. What are also endemic in the GCFF are penalties based on the ability of the offender to pay. A rich person or official was required to compensate the victim at a much higher level than a person of modest or low means. The first example is in the case of a family that reneged on a marriage agreement and the second is a case in which a rabid dog kills another person or livestock owned by others.

(S18) (From) a (marriage) proposal household in which the daughter was already promised and given to another, take from a wealthy (person) five nines headed by a camel, from (a person of) middle wealth take three nines headed by a camel, (and) from the lowest, take one nine headed by a camel.

(S8) (If) some (livestock) dies from the bite of a mad (rabid) dog, take one from five; if a person dies, take one nine from one (who is) wealthy, seven from one of middle (wealth) and from the lowest take five.

Even the penalties directed at nobles varied with the status of the noble as on page three in the case of a noble failing to come at the threat of war.

(S1) (When) an enemy of the Mongols and Oirad comes, give that information.

(S2) (If those) on the frontier hear (that) news and do not come (then) take from (those who are) great nobles one hundred armor breastplates, one hundred camels and one hundred horses.

(S3) From minor nobles who do not come take ten armor breastplates, ten camels, and one hundred horses.

The system and level of taxation is not addressed at length in the GCFF but pages seven and nine show that taxation was common in at least a couple of
different ways. The first, as shown on page seven of the Code has to do with penalties resulting from failing to provide to the ruling nobles those provisions that were due to them.

(S1)  (If) someone suddenly disrupts provisions\(^{190}\) (due) to a great noble take nine nines.

(S2)  (If) someone suddenly disrupts provisions to an appointed official or son-in-law take nine.

(S3)  (If) someone disrupts provisions to a minor noble or son-in-law take a horse.

(S4)  (If) someone takes advantage and wrongly consumes provisions take a horse.

Page nine in the GCFF indicates that a different sort of tax was also legally enforced. The sons within each division of forty households were responsible for equipping new households each year at their expense. They were also responsible for equipping young warriors with chain mail.

(S1)  Ten sons from forty (households) should join together to give one ger.

(S3)  (If) the household is not arranged and nothing is given then according to code, take two camels, five horses and ten sheep.

(S4)  Every year from each of forty (households, there) should (be) made two coats of mail; if they do not make it, then according to code, take a horse and camel.

\(^{190}\) Meaning a feudal tithe or in-kind tax.
Other penalties in the GCFF could also be viewed as forms of taxation such as situations in which a person was killed by friendly fire during an attack or injured during a hunt.

S6  (If) during an attack a friendly person is killed by mistake, a witness should say if that was true, and take one nine; if that witness says (it was) wrong, take three nines.

S7  During hunting, if someone is killed by accident, half punishment will be taken; take (the fine) according to (previous) example.

S8  (If any of) the six organs are injured, take five nines with berke; if thumb or index finger are lost, take two nines and a five; if the middle finger is lost, take nine, if the nameless finger is lost, take five; if the little finger is lost, take three; If (the finger) is recovered take nine with berke; if there is little (injury), take five; if garments are torn, take a horse.

There are two other state-building activities to which the SG alludes, other than bureaucratic systems. One of these is concerned with the building of cities, an important activity in state building among steppe polities, and one of which Perdue makes note of relative to the Zunghar Dorbod.191 Cities among steppe states, as observed by Charleux (2006), often began as temples or treasuries and storehouses for the spoils of war belonging to ruling nobles.192 From there they sometimes grew into centers of trade and though there were few actual buildings they were often walled compounds within which people could seek refuge in times of need. Charleux is not the only one to observe that for steppe


192 Charleux, Isabelle. “The Khan’s City: Kokoqota (Hohhot) and the Role of a Capital City in Mongolian State Formation” in Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth-Twentieth Centuries. Bellingham: East-Asian Studies. 2006. p. 175 to 206
states cities were a symbolic means of legitimation and a statement of domination over a particular region, even though they did not often serve as centers of state administration.\footnote{Charleux, Isabelle. “The Khan’s City: Kokoqota (Hohhot) and the Role of a Capital City in Mongolian State Formation” in Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth-Twentieth Centuries. Bellingham: East-Asian Studies. 2006. p. 182} The first two short references in SG occur on folios 5A and 8B.

(S4) In the Year of the Monkey (1644) he spent the summertime at the invitation of Ochirtu Taiji; then Darkhan T sorji invited him to come to Erchishi Sum\footnote{This is the name of a Buddhist temple compound.} on the Irtysh (River).

(S2) Over the winter he stayed below Boro Tala Temple in Khara Buta.

The third temple city to which the SG refers belonged to Ablai and was large enough that when Ablai was under siege by the army of Sechen Khan his people were able to seek refuge within. That temple is first named on folio 18B but the details of Sechen Khan’s siege of the compound are on folio 21A.

(S7) From there (Zaya Pandita) went to Ablai’s temple (in Ili) and was invited by Ubashi Hung Taiji, Dorji Taiji, Erke Dayiching, Mongku and others.

(S11) Ablai went quickly inside his temple compound.

(S12) He was under siege for a half to a full month; many livestock died.

In addition to the three temple compounds identified in the SG Perdue wrote about a city constructed by Baatur Hung Taiji in the vicinity of the Irtysh River as well as four other towns built in the next few years.\footnote{Purdue, 2005, p. 106. Purdue cites Zlatkin as his source for this information but though it is clear that Baatur was building cities and encouraging agriculture in their vicinity I find it hard to believe that it was not closer to the Zunghar basin where he had his base of power. At least one} And as Charleux also
observed of steppe cities, Baatur did not live in the city but only visited from time to time. Baatur and others not only brought in foreign craftsmen to construct their cities but farmers to live there and grow grains on nearby lands.

The last of the state building initiatives observed on the basis of the SG is the creation of the Clear Script by Zaya Pandita, as initially discussed in chapter five of this dissertation. Given the casual reference to the development of the script in the SG it would be easy to overlook its significance. On Folio 7B it merely states:

(S13) That year he (Zaya Pandita) stayed for the winter with Ablai Taiji at the place called Chuyi.

(S14) In the winter of the Year of the Mouse (1648) he created the clear letters (todo bechig).

But the creation of the Clear Script needs to be viewed in a broader context. In addition to Kapstein’s position, that the creation of a script was a core element of an emerging civilization, Dunnell (1999) wrote that the invention of a script was an act of state creation and a creation of the state that asserted cultural claims and advanced dynastic legitimacy.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, the Khoshud sponsors of the script must have been aware of the recent (1632) sponsorship by the Manchu Hung Taiji of improvements to the old Mongol script, described by Crossley as a

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system of circles and dots to “represent the actual sounds and mechanisms of the language that would soon come to be known as Machu”.  

In this context it is difficult to view the Clear script as a marginal element of Oirat state building. The manner in which these state building efforts were distributed among the Oirat uluses caused them to be overlooked. The Great Code that required enforcement of common laws, the administration of justice, the building of cities, the adoption of Buddhism, and the creation of a new state script were not top-down efforts directed by a central authority but rather than actions of a distributed network of nobles engaged in collaborative state formation.

Though the Clear Script was sponsored and created under Khoshud initiative it spread quickly among the Oirats to the extent that, even with the collapse of the Zunghar Empire in the 1750s, the Clear script remained a key means through which the Manchus communicated with their steppe subjects. It was but one of a number of important, sophisticated, cultural developments of the early 17th century from which all later Oirat states benefitted.

**Ideological Perspectives**

This project has discussed Buddhist ideological issues at some length, showing the overtly Buddhist nature of the Great State established by the 1640 Great Code, the earlier adoption of Buddhism by both Khalkha and Oirat Mongol leaders as a means of legitimation, the high regard in which the Dalai and Panchen Lamas of Tibet were held, and the status of Gushii Khan as a Dharma

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Raja. Those ideological perspectives are explicit in the GCFF but implicit in the SG. And, as noted earlier, the extent to which the SG projects a thoroughly Buddhist worldview is remarkable for a people who were alleged to have first adopted Buddhism less than 80 years prior to the completion of the SG.

One element of the Buddhist ideological worldview that has not yet been discussed here, but that is apparent in the SG, is the importance of translation of Buddhist texts. It was historically an important part of state adoption of Buddhism, the conversion of some or the entire Buddhist canon into a language and script that internalize it a national treasure. The 11th century Tangut Empire provides an excellent historical example in this respect.

The Tangut graphic script was created between 1032 and 1038 in the build-up to the Empire’s formal declaration in 1038. During that same period the first Tangut imperial ruler, Yuanhao, twice requested copies of the Chinese Tripitaka from the Song Dynasty. After the texts were obtained in 1035 Emperor Yuanhao immediately sponsored the translation of the entire canon into Tangut, an effort that lasted sixty years. The Tanguts wished to not merely possess the Buddhist Tripitaka as a royal treasure, but to make it accessible within a new Tangut cultural identity. The Oirats of the early 17th century were similarly constructing a cultural identity, asserting key values, defining new relationships, invoking heritage and building new cultural boundaries in charting a plan for the future.

The eastern Mongols had also sponsored translation of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon, with one version completed circa 1607. But as with most state building
activities among the Oirad, sponsorship of translations was a distributed effort. The SG identifies translation efforts in passages such as that from folio 4B.

(S6) Jasagtu Khan was very glad and praised (him by saying), “some lamas like you ask for livestock and possessions; I admire your requests”, and (he) ordered that all should be given nutritious food three times daily and offered thirty carts and praised his title as Rabjampa Zaya Pandita; (he) asked him to translate Pachos and ordered a scribe called Nangso to follow him.

And from 22B -

(S11) That spring Sengge offered a horse and silk scarf and sent an ambassador (to Zaya Pandita) asking him to translate the history of Shevang Gyalmo Padma Sambhava.

(S12) Khutugtu answered, “I have translated Bodhi Mor and Pachoi for learning methods.

(S13) For learning and practicing the history of Bogdos I translated Burhani Tougi (History of Shakyamuni), Buchoi, Milayin Tougi (History of Milarepa) and many others.

(S14) For the purpose of practice I translated volumes of Gunriq Sedpaq Nighuusa, Yamandaga, Dörbön Doqshid (Four Wrathful Protectors) and many other texts.

(S15) For how the Kalpa began and how the Buddha came and started his teaching, to learn these I translated Nomiyin Gharulgha (Guide to the Teaching), Chukhula Kereqtu, Ugeyin Sang (Treasury of Words) and many others.

The list of all texts translated by Zaya Pandita (183) and his disciples (34) are contained on folios 9A to 11A and 11A to 11B.
Buddhism thus began in the early 17th century to be an important strategy for Oirad legitimation of political authority, just as it had become in the late 16th century for the eastern Mongols. There can be no doubt that Oirat rulers found in Buddhism a political ideology by which to supplement their weak Chinggisid ties, though by the early 17th century there were few Oirat rulers who did not share matrilineal ties to the Borjigid clan. They were in that respect equal to the Manchu Hung Taiji in sharing that matrilineal bond. As the Manchus began in the 1630s to claim ideological authority to rule over the eastern Mongols the Oirad gained greater confidence in their status as well. It would have played into Khalkhha thinking about joining with the Oirad as co-equals.

While Buddhism was clearly a strong ideological force in the GCFF and the SG, the GCFF invokes the Chinggisid principle with far less clarity. Except for the earlier discussion of the Forty and Four, invoking the entire Mongol Empire, there are no direct references. But what is infused throughout the entire GCFF is the idea that a limited number of noble lineages held the right of rule over Oirat commoners. In this respect the Oirad demonstrated a pre-Chinggisid ideological principle, that there were aristocratic lineages from before the time of the Mongol Empire also recognized as noble white bone lineages from which rulers arose with legitimate and recognizable claims to political authority.

Indeed, in looking at the early history of the Oirad and the Khoid, Choros, and Kereyid nobles who ruled them, it was only the Galwas nobles of the Khoshud ulus who did not rule other polities before the time of Chinggis Khan. The idea that Chinggis Khan and his heirs completely eliminated rival claims to legitimate
political authority is not supported by this project. The Oirat uluses that broke free before or after the fall of the Yuan Dynasty are the proof of those exceptions. During the 15th through the early 17th century those uluses rose at various times to contest Chinggisid Mongol supremacy. Command over their subject people was no less rigorous than the Chinggisids.

With the exception of Buddhist monks, who began in the 17th century to enjoy greater freedom of travel and association, there were no free roaming Oirad. They were not free to move from one ulus to another and they were not free to wander about unassigned within one of the uluses. The importance of this issue is emphasized by its early inclusion in the GCFF. Thus we see on page two, just after the penalties for breaking the Great State, clauses that address ownership of commoners by the Khalkha and Oirat rulers.

(S5) (Any) Barghud, Baatud or Khoid who were with the Mongols between the Fire Snake Year and the Earth Dragon Year should stay with the Mongols (and) those (who were) with the Oirad should stay with the Oirad.

(S6) Except for those years all other persons should be returned without trouble.

(S7) (If) anyone does not return some person, then two camels and twenty horses should be taken and the person should still be given back.

(S8) (If) anyone escapes from the Oirad, they should be returned to the Oirad.

Additional penalties are listed on page three, demonstrating that this is indeed a serious matter.
(S5) (If) some runaways (go) from one to another (ulus) take half of them and return the others.

(S6) If someone is killed (however), keep those (runaways).

(S8) From those nobles (ruling) many people who do not give back (runaways), there should be taken one hundred armor breastplates, one hundred camels, (and) one hundred horses; also take the second half (of the runaways).

(S10) No person is beyond this code.

There were also servants (see page 11, S4) and slaves among the Oirad, with servants generally being commoners from poor households not contributing goods or services to the nobles in other ways. Slaves were on the lowest rung of the social ladder and the penalties for raping a slave were small, as on page 13, while their trustworthiness as witnesses in crimes was suspect, as on page 17.

S4 (If) someone is taken as a servant without permission of the noble and that person was valuable and died, gather (and give) a nine headed by berke.

(S24) (If) that woman (who was raped) was a slave take one horse.

(S14) A slave woman cannot be counted as a witness; but if she brings bones and meat (evidence) then it should count.

The SG provides further evidence of virtual ownership of all people and assets within the ulus through passages that show that people could be given to the monks as novices and lay servants. On folio 15A it states:

(S1) In memory of his mother he (Sechen Khan) gathered one hundred boys; fifty boys were offered to the Khutugtu to make them novices; others were offered to Acitu Corji and other lamas.
He made offerings to twelve hundred monks, including one hundred Burud boys and one hundred local boys, in total two hundred novices, his mother’s herd of eight thousand sheep, and twenty thousand other livestock.

In other words, excepting some restraints based on social status, a noble had absolute authority over his subjects. This is also reflected in some of the articles of the GCFF in which specified numbers of commoner households were demanded as penalties for certain crimes, as on page three.

(If) a great noble escapes far away from the enemy by himself there should be taken one hundred armor breast-plates, one hundred camels, fifty households of people, (and) one thousand horses.

(If) a noble of the level of Dayicin and Chouker escapes far from the enemy take (from him) fifty armor breastplates, fifty camels, twenty-five households of people, and five hundred horses.

In conclusion, issues of political ideological are not always announced. Some, such as explicit statements indicating Buddhism as a state religion, are clearly articulated. Other ideological values are communicated through actions. Rulers and states that patronize Buddhist institutions and translation projects invoke a sacred purpose that justifies state existence and motives. But some ideological principles are so imbedded that they no longer attract attention. But they are the most fundamental, for without those cultural, ideological foundations the entire fabric from which the state was built would cease to exist.
CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND OBSERVATIONS ON THE 17th CENTURY OIRAT STATE

The Political Structure of the 17th Century Oirad

By the beginning of the 17th century the Oirat uluses were in most respects similar to the Mongol uluses of the same time. However, the Oirad arrived at those similarities in ways that were quite different from the Mongols. Like the six Mongol tumen, each Oirat ulus was a sophisticated political entity, and translation of ulus as nation at that time has considerable justification.198 While the Dörbön Oirad circa 1600 consisted of five sovereign Oirat polities199 there were divisions within them that enjoyed some measure of independence. But lack of loyalty on behalf of lesser nobles often led to armed conflict. Senior nobles had to enforce their authority when necessary.

The Oirad were not composed of neatly bound, centralized polities. Leadership was a corporate family enterprise. Brothers, uncles, sons and sometimes wives of senior nobles within an ulus were all entitled to households, livestock and pastures that answered directly to them. The largest division was under the senior noble. Lesser nobles enjoyed some independence in leading internal subdivisions. It was the senior nobles however who forged external alliances and kept their houses in order, as much as possible. Those alliances bound the

198 However, ulus and nation are not entirely equivalent. See Elverskog for elaboration.

199 Because the Dorbod had been divided by the Choros aristocracy into two independent uluses it is appropriate to speak of five sovereign polities among the Oirad at this time.
Dörbön Oirad into an increasingly closer confederacy in the first decades of the
1600s.

Territorial segregation within the Oirad confederacy was also not a major concern. Maps constructed for both Ch. Dalai and Okada-Miyawaki based on the Seren Gerel show extensive mixing of lesser groups among the major uluses that appear to be far more substantial than mere seasonal migrations. Even if they were in large part due to seasonal migrations the mingling of herding groups speaks in large measure to the essentially peaceful relationships among them.

The Dorbot Ulus at that time was unlike the other three in that it was clearly divided between the Choros Dalai Taiji to the north, along the Irtsh River, and the Choros Khara Khula to the south, in the Zunghar basin. The familial relationship between the two leaders is unclear and historical evidence of when the division within the Dorbod occurred has not been uncovered in the course of this research. But the independent actions of the two leaders and the uluses they ruled demonstrated strong separation. Khara Khula passed control of what became known as the Zunghar ulus to his son Baatur Hung Taiji in 1634 and with Baatur's passing in 1653 leadership went to his oldest son, Sengge. Sengge's leadership ended in 1670 when he was killed by his half brothers, the sons of his father's second wife.

Dalai Taiji, ruler of the other Dorbot ulus, is described in several secondary sources as the most powerful Oirat leader in the early 1600s, but it is not clear from what primary source this inference is drawn. Khodarkovsky observed that in
1608 Dalai Taiji led 3000 households, a number that was smaller even than his close Torghut ally Kho-Urluk. Though Khodarkovsky soon after credits Dalai Taiji as leader of 15,000 tents in 1615, that number was still small in comparison with the Khoshut ulus or the Dorbod under Khara Khula. Dalai Taiji passed away in 1637 and the northern Dorbot ulus was distributed among his two sons, Dayicin Khoshuucci and Tenger Toyon, and his younger brother Buu Yeldeng. None of those three are known to have played important roles among the later Oirad. Rather it was the Dorbod Kondolong Ubashi and his sons who are named in many passages in the _Seren Gerel_ for their activities from 1640 to 1670.

Around 1610 ownership of the Khoshud ulus was distributed among five brothers. When the eldest died prior to 1620, Baibaghas became the senior noble, though Gushii shared authority with him. Even after Gushii became a highly respected military leader, he never contested the leadership of Baibaghas. His loyalty and patience eventually resulted in his gaining the title of Khan. In the final war with Altyn Khan in 1629, Gushii negotiated a peaceful end to the conflict, gaining great respect for his diplomatic skills. A younger brother Chouker was banished or died in a 1625 war of succession with Baibaghas. When Baibaghas Khan died in 1630, Gushii took the title of Khan, and though he led his ulus to Kokonor in the late 1630s, the sons of Baibaghas remained on the Ili River and as far north as the Tarbagatai Mountains. The elder of the two sons of Baibaghas was Ochirtu Taiji and the younger was Ablai Baatur. Even with the geographic

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200 It is my position that as Borjigid descendants of Qasar both Baibaghas and Gushii took the title of Khan not through external authority but in the same way as the Chinggisid rulers of the Mongol uluses were in the late 16th century in order to assert the sovereignty of their ulus.
distance between the Khoshud under Ochirtu near the Tarbagatais and Gushii in Kokonor, Ochirtu did not use the title of Khan until after Gushii’s passing in 1655. According to the Seren Gerel, Ochirtu was officially given the title of Sechen (Wise) Khan in a ceremony by the Fifth Dalai Lama circa 1668.

Little was written of the Khoids during this time. Purdue wrote that of a 1620 Oirad army of 48,000 there were but 4000 Khoid warriors. No identifiable Khoid were present at the 1640 Assembly. The Seren Gerel mentions them infrequently, except for Solton Tayishi and his father. But in several conflicts the Khoid are named as allies to the Zunghars and it is safe to conclude that while they existed as an independent ulus they were closely allied and subservient to the more powerful Choros Zunghar leaders in 1620 and thereafter.

The Torghut Kho-Urluk had only a small ulus of 4000 households circa 1608, according to Khodarkovsky. That number is confirmed by Perdue who listed the Torghud contingent in the 1620 Oirad army at only 2000 out of a total of 48,000. But mysteriously the number of households under Kho-Urluk rose to 50,000 by the mid 1630s. The History of the Kalmyk Khans indicates that among those 50,000 were substantial numbers of Dorbot and Khoshut households. Kho-Urluk also conquered a Tatar (Nogai) ulus that may have been counted among the 50,000. With Kho-Urluk’s passing in 1644, the ulus was distributed among his

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201 In confirmation of this information Purdue reported that an Oirad army assembled to fight Altyn Khan prior to 1620 consisted of 30,000 Khoshut soldiers under Baibaghas, 8000 Dorbod, 6000 Choros, 4000 Khoid and 2000 Torghud.

sons. Successional conflicts among the sons in the late 1640s and early 1650s resulted in concentration of authority under the eldest son, Shukur Daiching. Thus leadership within the Dörbön Oirad at this time remained distributed among the Galwas, Choros, Torghut and Khoid noble families. It is not clear to what extent the Oirad were ever centralized, even under Esen Khan. This is where they differed from the eastern Mongols who were politically centralized at various times and under the rule of a single noble lineage rather than several.

Though the Oirad of Esen’s time are often spoken about in secondary sources as a single entity, there is evidence from the time of Esen that the Ming had alliances with multiple Oirat leaders. Nor are there historical records that show Esen’s consolidation of the Oirad through conquest. The Oirat uluses may have simply allied themselves with Esen’s authority, a common element of steppe statecraft that avoided armed conflict and allowed weaker uluses to remerge as viable states should the greater state to which they joined weaken and fall apart.

Figure 5
Approximate Concentrations of Five Oirat Uluses Circa 1600

[Map showing approximate locations of Oirat Uluses]

203 The base map used here is from http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Asia_laea_relief_location_map.jpg
The Tumed and Ordos Mongols in the mid 16th century and the Khalkhas in the late 16th century pushed the Oirad out of Kokonor and off the Mongolian plateau, south and west of the Altai Mountains. The only safe haven for the Oirad became the basin between the Altai and Tian Shan mountains, the westward flowing Ili River valley, the Tarbagatai Mountain area, and the Irtysh River valley flowing northwest through Lake Zaysan toward the Siberian steppes. Being hemmed into this relatively small area, with Mongols to the east and Kazaks to the west, led to a concentration of Oirat strength, forcing them to either fight among themselves or build alliances.

Alliances and Conflicts
That concentration between the Altai and Tian Shan mountains and along the Ili and Irtysh rivers set the stage for the Oirad to rebuild and re-project power in multiple directions by the mid 17th century. There must surely have been conflicts over pastures as they crowded into such a relatively small region. They also used physical barriers to separate their homelands, with the Tarbagatai and Borohoro mountains and the Ili and Irtysh rivers serving in that respect. The Oirat nobles were too experienced to simply turn on each other and eviscerate the Oirad. Had that evisceration been incomplete, the Khalkhas and the Kazaks would have been quite willing to pick up the pieces. And so they began to do what most savvy political leaders would, they began to build multiple alliances.

Oirat ulus names are added by the author. The Seren Gerel describes extensive mingling of the groups, especially encampments of the senior nobles from 1640 to 1670. They seem to have nomadized in close proximity suggesting a significant level of coordination to avoid conflicts over grazing lands.
It is unfortunate that we do not have more information on the Oirat assemblies of 1616 to 1618; there are scant historical records.\textsuperscript{204} The fact that those assemblies occurred is important evidence that the Oirad were building alliances. There was also an acknowledged hierarchy of political authority within the Oirad, as someone with sufficient authority called those assemblies and induced Oirat leaders to attend. The Khoshut Baibaghas Noyon was the most likely convener, one of five powerful sons of Hanai Noyon and Ahai Hathun, referred to in various primary texts as the Five Tigers.\textsuperscript{205} Baibaghas, as leader of the largest Oirat ulus, commanded respect by virtue of his strength. Oirat nobles understood that allying with the strongest Oirat camp was an important strategy.

We know of two important results from those assemblies. First, as noted by Purdue, the Oirad agreed not to fight among them selves.\textsuperscript{206} Secondly, following the lead of Baibaghas, they agreed to adopt Buddhism as a state religion, and as stated in the Seren Gerel, for each Oirat noble to send one son to become a monk. Decisions to adopt a state religion are a demonstration of growing political maturity rather than a polity that is disorganized and at odds with itself. Oirat nobles had observed how the Mongols had used Buddhism as a source of political legitimacy and how Buddhism served as a source of cultural and political cohesion, even (or especially) in the absence of central political authority.


In addition to knowledge of Oirat assemblies of 1616 to 1618 there is other evidence of alliances among the early 17th century Oirad. Khodarkovsky noted a 1608 alliance between the Torghut noble Kho-Urluk and the Dorbod noble Dalai Taiji, with a total of 7000 households between them. They nomadized north of the Zunghar basin along the Irtysh River, independent of other Oirat nobles.\textsuperscript{207} That alliance included the marriage of Kho-Urluk’s sister to Dalai Taiji. Khodarkovsky reported that by 1615 some 15,000 Oirad were roaming further north in the region of the Russian towns of Tara and Omsk,\textsuperscript{208} but does not indicate how the increase occurred, except to say that new members were somehow affiliated with Dalai Taiji. Around 1620 Gushii Khan of the Khoshud also entered into the alliance with Kho-Urluk and Dalai Taiji.\textsuperscript{209}

Those alliances were important when in 1625 a significant conflict broke out, described as an Oirat civil war in some secondary sources.\textsuperscript{210} More accurately, it was conflict of succession between three of the Khoshut Five Tigers, with the second and third eldest brothers, Baibaghas and Gushii, in opposition to a younger brother, Chouker. Dalai Taiji tried to mediate but without apparent success. Chouker lost that fight and Baibaghas remained the senior leader.


\textsuperscript{208} Ibid, p. 78

\textsuperscript{209} Ibid. p. 79

among the Khoshud, and the most powerful among the Oirad. Miyawaki provides supporting evidence for his lead role, observing that in the unified Oirat army against Altyn Khan in 1628 it was Baibaghas who contributed and led 16,000 of the 36,000 warriors. The Choros Khara Khula led 6000 Dorbod warriors and another 14,000 were under three nobles, including Dalai Taiji.

While Perdue and Miyawaki credit Dalai Taiji and Khara Khula with leadership in trying to mediate the conflict between Baibaghas and Gushii with their brother Chouker, Khodarkovsky credits Kho-Urluk and Dalai Taiji with this role. Thus sources indicate that all three leaders sought to gain greater authority by serving as mediators. But all Oirat leaders knew that preserving the alliance was a key to survival. The alliances held together through the 1625 conflict of succession and in 1628-29 the combined Oirad army prevailed over Altyn Khan, gaining much needed breathing room. Sumpa Hambo and Dharmatala wrote that Gushii negotiated peace in 1629 as the Oirad and Khalkha armies faced one another and so avoided major bloodshed.

Alliances among Oirat nobles were achieving important results. But around 1630 a significant number of the Torghud under Kho-Urluk and a smaller number of

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211 Khodarkovsky, Michael. *Where Two Worlds Met*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press. 1992. On page 80 he wrote that in 1628 Chouker took off with his remaining ulus in the direction of the Emba and Yayik Rivers but was pursued by Dalai Taiji and Gushii Taiji and destroyed in 1630 because he had taken some of their people.


Dorbod began a long-range migration beyond the Ural Mountains to the Volga steppes. Perdue places the number of households at 50,000, and the Oirat text, the History of the Kalmyk Khans also places the number at 50,000. Khodarkovsky places that number at 22,000, a rather significant difference. In either case it is not clear how the number of households under Kho-Urlik expanded from the 4000 he was reported to have in 1608 to somewhere between 22,000 and 50,000 just twenty-two year later.

In the mid 1930s Kho-Urlik and Dalai Taiji were in conflict over that very issue. The Torghut noble had expanded the households under his authority at the expense Dalai Taiji and other nobles. The resulting conflict was not one of consolidation, but rather caused by Kho-Urlik’s alleged usurpation of non-Torghut households, a serious charge. Among the Oirat delegation to the Assembly of 1640 were Kho-Urlik and two of his sons, as well as the sons of Dalai Taiji. It appears passions had cooled somewhat in the intervening years.

The Torghud western migration has been described as the result of the Choros Khara Khula driving Kho-Urlik away from the Zunghar region. Perdue

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216 It is possible that the 22,000 were counted as Torghud households and the remainder was a mix of Dorbod, Khoshud and Tatar households that were known to be with him.

217 Khodarkovsky, Michael. Where Two Worlds Met. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press. 1992. He notes on page 82 that some of those households may have been Nogays who Kho-Urlik captured and absorbed.

describes the migration as “removing the major source of division within Zungharia.” But the History of the Kalmyk Khans states simply that Kho-Urluk, rather than see his subjects kill one another, chose to move to distant lands near foreigners with whom he could make war and take spoils. Avoidance of intra-Oirad conflict was consistent with the agreement by the Oirat assemblies of 1616 to 1618 not to fight one another. But there is evidence to suggest that Kho-Urluk became a sort of rogue leader who grew his ulus at the expense of others and then sought to escape confrontations over that strategy.

An important series of conflicts soon after 1640 may represent anomalies in the pattern of successional conflicts by which the Oirad were plagued. Unfortunately there are conflicting accounts of who was involved and why. There can be little doubt that small Oirat groups had elected to leave the greater Zunghar region and join Kho-Urluk in his westward migration. That angered other Oirat nobles who, under the terms of the 1640 Code, expected Kho-Urluk to return runaways. By pushing west Kho-Urluk took himself and his followers out of harms way, making it difficult for other Oirat leaders to retake escapees.

The conflicting account is around the role of one or more Kondolong Ubashis. According to Khodarkovsky, the Khoshut Kondolong Ubashi (named in the Code of 1640) appeared on the Siberian steppes near Kho-Urluk. He and some of Kho-Urluk’s people are alleged to have fought, but it is not clear why. In 1646 there

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were other conflicts with a Kondolong Ubashi, but the Seren Gerel made it clear (see chapter six) that this was a Dorbod Kondolong Ubashi and reinforced that identification in several passages. When Baatur Hung Taiji drove the Dorbod Kondolong Ubashi north, Kondolong moved toward the Siberian steppes.

Resolution of this confusion is in the Saran Gerel on folio 6B where the Torghut Daiching is said to have witnessed the conflict between Kondolong Ubashi and Baatur Hung Taiji. Though Khodarkovsky reads this as confirmation of a Khoshud/Dorbod conflict, the Seren Gerel is clear in identifying Kondolong Ubashi as Dorbot. In fact, the History of the Kalmyk Khans indicates that the Khoshud Kondolong Ubashi did not join the Kalmyks on the Volga until circa 1668. My conclusion is that the Khoshud Kondolong was not involved in the 1640’s conflicts. A misidentified Dorbot Kondolong Ubashi was responsible.

A significant threat to Oirad political stability came from the war of succession between the Khoshut Ochirtu Sechen Khan and his younger brother Ablai from 1658 to 1661, in which other leaders lined up behind one or the other brother. Sechen Khan had the Choros Zunghar leader Sengge and the Khoid Solton Tayishi as his allies, and Ablai had the sons of the Dorbod Kondolong Ubashi on his side. But after some maneuvering between the two sides it proved not much of a contest as Sechen Khan had the superior numbers. The actual cause of the conflict was not clear though it occurred soon after Sechen Khan returned from Baroun Tala. Ablai may have used his brother’s absence as an opportunity to grow his own strength, to which Sechen took exception. But the settlement of the conflict is also important. Though the Seren Gerel implies that Ablai was at fault
and Sechen had the right to seek his death, he did not, but instead chose to return Ablai’s people and livestock to him.

**Zunghar and Barun Ghar**

There has been a great deal of speculation in secondary sources about the rise of the Zunghars and when that political division was first established among the Oirad. Some secondary histories name Khara Khula circa 1608 as the founder of the Zunghars and credit him with efforts at Oirad consolidation. Others name his son Baatur Hung Taiji as the founder of the Zunghar Khanate in the 1630s. There is substantial evidence to contradict both of those assertions. No primary sources support the use of the term Zunghar at the time of Khara Khula. The first historical evidence of the terms Zunghar and Barun Ghar came in the wake of the 1637 military expedition to Tibet, led by the Khoshud Gushii Khan with the Choros Baatur Hung Taiji in command of the left wing. In 1638 Gushii and Baatur went together on pilgrimage to Lhasa. It was there that Gushii received from the Dalai Lama the title Religious King and Defender of Buddhism (Tenzing Choskye Gyalpo). Baatur received the title Erdini (Precious). Narratives that credit Khara Kula or Baatur Hung Taiji with establishing a Zunghar ulus prior to 1637 were constructed in retrospect. While it is appropriate to talk of a Zunghar Ulus after 1637 an independent Zunghar Khanate did not arise until the consolidation of the Oirad in the Zunghar region by Galdan Boshugtu in 1676.

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221 This is a Mongolian title and it is not clear exactly what it signified to Tibetan Buddhists, though it clearly had some significance to them.
With the Oirat conquest of the Kokonor region in 1637 and the articulation of an Oirad right wing under Gushii Khan, the term Zunghar gained specific meaning. From that point on, as described by Sumpa Hambo, the term Zunghar applied to that portion of the Oirad under Baatur Hung Taiji and his heirs. It held that designation in contrast to the Barun Ghar (Right Wing), and the place it occupied (Tibet) as Baroun Tala. Sumpa Hambo’s *Annals of Kokonor* (1786) is one of the earliest known texts to make information on formation of a Barun Ghar explicit. Gushii Khan’s heirs sponsored the Annals of Kokonor to record Gushii’s accomplishments and the lineage he founded. In that respect it served the same purpose as the earlier *Jewel Translucent Sutra* did for the Tumed Altan Khan. Prior information on the Barun Ghar was provided in Sumpa Hambo’s famous text of 1777, commonly known as *Pagsam Lojong*. It is these details that are repeated in the 1889 *Rosary of White Lotuses* that devotes 18 pages to the histories of the left and right “Oilods.” Those sources clarify the meaning of Baroun Tala in the Seren Gerel as the Oirad name used in reference to Tibet.

Khara Khula and Baatur Hung Taiji were powerful and consistent members of the Oirad alliance. It was the ulus they led that became known as the Zunghar Ulus after 1637. It thrived during the remainder of Baatur Hung Taiji’s life, but with his passing, ownership was divided between Sengge and his half brothers. That weakened the Zunghars to the extent that Dharmatala later wrote that with the death of Baatur Hung Taiji (in 1653), “there were no kings over the whole of Jongwar,” and that “Ochir Chechin”, the son of Baibaghas acted as leader of the

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country. The Zunghars might well have passed into history at that time were it not for the actions of Sengge’s full younger brother Galdan, who set aside his monk’s vows in Tibet and returned to the Zunghar region to avenge his brother’s death and reestablish Zunghar primacy in the region.

In the same way that Kho-Urluk’s westward migrations were characterized as an escape from the unification goal of Khara Khula, Gushii Khan’s exit from the Zunghar region to Kokonor has been characterized as an escape from Khara Khula’s son, Baatur Hung Taiji. Yet the strong evidence is to the contrary. Baatur and Gushii were not enemies but rather the two most powerful rulers among the Oirad who controlled the left and right wings of a strong Oirat confederacy. Gushii was the more powerful of the two, more senior and with greater Buddhist credentials. The major Khoshud migration to Kokonor in 1639–41 was an expansion of the Oirat state, even as it was an exit from the Zunghar region. The Oirat alliances formed in the early 1600s continued to result in benefits. It is appropriate to discuss the Oirad as a confederation at that time, one that was working very well. The History of the Kalmyk Khans discusses the creation of the Great Code of 1640 as great joyful work, naming Gushii Nomiyin Dharmatala, Damcho Gyatsho. Rosary of White Lotuses: Being the Clear Account of the Precious Teaching in the Great Hor Country. Translated by P. Klaffkowski. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz. 1987. P. 121-122

Ibid, p. 105

See Yang, 1969, (p. 36) as well as Dharmatala who both discuss Baatur Hung Taiji’s role in Gushii’s conquest of the Chogthu Mongols in Kokonor. Yang’s translation of Sumpa Hambo’s Annals of Kokonor credits Gushii Khan as giving Baatur the title of Erdini but it appears that was an effort to glorify the character of Gushii, as several other sources state that it was the 5th Dalai Lama who bestowed titles on many Oirat nobles in 1638 who had participated in the conquest.
Khan and Erdini Baatur Hung Taiji as leading the Oirad nobles, providing yet more evidence that the leaders shared a powerful alliance.

**The Code of 1640 and the Mongol-Oirat Great State**

While some historians have represented the Great Code of the Forty and Four as unimportant or insignificant, that is far from the truth. It was in fact a logical conclusion to forty years of Oirat alliance building and a remarkable achievement, regardless of how long or well it was later observed. The agreement marked the point when the Oirad moved from an alliance bound confederation into what must be described as an Oirad/Khalkha federation, a Great State built upon written articles of governance.

The Code was remarkable in several ways. First, it is the only time in Eurasian history where a Great State came together not as a result of conquest but rather as the result of the mutual agreement of sovereign rulers. That accomplishment had significant ideological value. The Manchus had already expounded the view in the 1630s that war and violence were the consequences of opposition to the Will of Heaven. That argument comprised a key element of the Manchu ideological case, that the Mongols should abandon Ligdan Khan, the last of the Chinggisid Great Khans, in favor of the Manchu Hung Taiji. Hung Taiji’s goal was to attract the Mongols through favorable alliances rather than coerce them.

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227 It has been argued that the Great Code was not broken until the Zunghar – Khalkha war of 1688 but it is not clear why the war between Galdan Boshugtu and Sechen Khan (Ochirtu Taiji) circa 1676 is not also considered a major breach of the Code. It may be that the 1688 conflict was between the Oirad and Khalkhas whereas the earlier one was internal to the Oirad.
through violence.\textsuperscript{228} So while Hung Taiji’s Chinggisid credentials were weak compared to Ligdan, the Manchu ideological argument and promise of peace proved more acceptable to many.\textsuperscript{229}

Another element of non-Chinggisid ideology comprises one more remarkable feature of the Great Code, for with the Great Code the Khalkhas accepted the Oirat nobles as their equals. It further weakened the hold that Chinggisid imperial ideology held over Eurasian political legitimacy.\textsuperscript{230} And, once again, as the Manchus had used it to their advantage, so could others. It would be easy to suggest that Khalkha acceptance of Oirad sovereignty was born merely of necessity, but the same could be said of most conflicts and alliances, they were born of necessity. In this case we find the union of two very different political powers, one under a single lineage based ruling class and the other under several lineages linked via marriage alliances and common cultural identity.\textsuperscript{231}

Rulership among Eurasian polities had most often been the project of a ruling house or lineage,\textsuperscript{232} with khans often no more than first among equals. But the

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\textsuperscript{229} Ligdan was also greatly disliked by most other Mongol leaders among whom he was known as the evil one.

\textsuperscript{230} Buddhism was the source of the first strategy that steppe rulers employed to supplement weak Chinggisid links.

\textsuperscript{231} Atwood, Christopher, P. “Titles, Appanages, Marriages, and Officials: A Comparison of Political Forms in the Zunghar and Thirteenth-Century Mongol Empires,” in \textit{Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth – Twentieth Centuries.} Bellingham, WA: University of Western Washington. 2006. P. 209

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Great State of the Forty and Four was entirely different in that it was a state with no designated leader and no process for selecting one. While in retrospect the lack of central authority could lead to the opinion that there was no state, that is clearly not what the Great Code said or the Oirad and Khalkha intended. It was a State not under a central authority but under the rule of law, a law that was to be collectively enforced by the noble households by which it was constituted. And for a while it worked. It served as a peace treaty between the Oirad and the Khalkha, but it was far more than that.

In the Seren Gerel there were no reported Mongol/Oirad conflicts until 1688. In that respect the Code had the intended result. The military conflicts prior to 1670 described in the Seren Gerel were conflicts of succession among brothers, uncles and nephews. They were not conflicts between uluses, which were forbidden under the terms of the 1640 Code and supposed to result in the breakup of the offending ulus and banishment of its leaders. 1676 is the date for the first likely infraction, as it was the year in which Galdan Khan of the Zunghars, after defeating his half brothers, and Sechen Khan of the Khoshud went to war.

Another primary foci of the 1640 Code was the limitation placed on unauthorized movement of commoners between uluses, a significant source of conflict. Runaways had to be returned and there were penalties if they were not. The primary exception was if those runaways killed subjects in a new territory to which they were escaping. The noble whose people were killed was entitled to keep the runaways as payment for damage they had done. With this codification of law, the potential for conflicts was reduced.
State Building and its Effects

Mathew Kapstein, relative to the 7th century Tibetan Empire, described three core cultural innovations of newly rising states as the creation of a script, the written codification of laws, and the introduction of state religion. Relative to the 17th century Oirad, the first of those to be implemented was the adoption of Buddhism in 1616. The formal acceptance of the *Great Code of the Forty and Four* in 1640 was the second of those important elements of state building. The third was the creation of the Clear Script by Zaya Pandita in 1648. The initiatives of 1616 and 1640 involved all members of the Oirad. The invention of the Clear Script occurred under Khoshut sponsorship but spread quickly throughout the Oirad.

Just as many earlier Central Asian states had turned to Buddhism for both its apotropaic and empowering effects in supporting political legitimacy, the Mongols in 1578 and Oirad in 1616 turned to Buddhism for those same reasons. Oirat nobles were already familiar with Buddhism and its ideological implications. As Kitinov observed, Oirat association with Buddhism began at least as early as their contact with the Tanguts after Chinggis Khan conquered the Tangut Empire. Esen Khan looked to Buddhism in the 15th century as a source of political legitimacy, as his Chaghatayid based ulus turned eastward from its western affiliation with Islam.  

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Oirat nobles had participated in the teachings of Sonam Gyatso hosted by Altan Khan in Kokonor from 1578 to 1580. Clearly some of those nobles were deeply affected, and the first Oirat noble to achieve a measure of Buddhist notoriety was not Zaya Pandita but the Torghut noble, Neichi Toin, who after raising a family renounced secular life circa 1585 to study Buddhism in Tibet and return in the late 1590s to teach not the Oirad but the eastern Mongols. Neichi Toin was also known as Ochir Dhara Khutugtu.

Unfortunately there are no known records of the number of young Oirat nobles sent to study in Tibet between the adoption of Buddhism in 1616 and 1634 when the regent of the young Fifth Dalai Lama approached the Oirad with a plea for military assistance. It was Gushii Khan who agreed to organize and lead an army to neutralize the Chogthu Mongols who were threatening to rid Lhasa of its Gelukpa monastics.

We cannot know if he was motivated by religious zeal or simply the desire to protect the young Oirat monks who were largely Gelukpa acolytes. But it presented the perfect opportunity to act in the capacity of a Dharma King and he responded with spectacular success. In 1638 this most senior Oirat leader was proclaimed by the 20 year-old Dalai Lama to be the Religious King and Defender of Religion. In 1640 and 1641 he eliminated the secular rulers of eastern and southern Tibet so that by 1642 Gushii was in a position to hand over the reins of

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235 Toin is from the Oirat Toyon, a name indicating a noyon who took monk’s vows.
Tibetan governance to the Dalai Lama even as Gushii continued to rule as Khoshud Khan and military regent of Tibet.

That development elevated Gushii and the Oirad to a new religious status that was more prestigious than that of either the Mongols or the Manchus. The Mongols who had allied with the rising Qing Dynasty had cut direct ties with Tibet as a source of ideological legitimacy. The Manchus were still just beginning to use Buddhism for ideological purposes. Thus within the Mongol/Manchu/Oirad continuum it was Gushii whose spiritual credentials were strongest. It propelled the Oirad to an exceptionally high status within Buddhist Central Asia. In the Fifth Dalai Lama’s *History of Tibet*, written in 1643, the final chapter is about Gushii’s accomplishments. The Dalai Lama wrote that on the twenty-fifth day of the second month of the Water Horse year (March 1642) “the kings and ministers of all Tibet lowered their proud faces and entered into the practice of earnestly seeking to bow to him respectfully…. he became king of the three parts of Tibet and set up the white umbrella of his laws on the peak of the world.”

Oirad support for religion grew quickly. Oirad nobles not only supported monks in Oiratia but also sent their sons to Tibet and went themselves on pilgrimages, on which they brought sizable offerings. In Buddhism significant offerings were expected from rich nobles. Failure to make suitable offerings was viewed as a lack of generosity and a source of bad fortune. When Zaya Pandita passed away in 1662 his khüree had grown to 750 monks and lay servants via such offerings.

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On his trip to Tibet in 1650-51 Zaya Pandita made offerings of 110,000 taels of silver, worth more than $3.5 million in modern currency. All those funds were from donations made by Oirad nobles to him between 1638 and 1650.

Nobles were also building temples and expanding them into small cities. The Seren Gerel and other sources speak of cities built by Baatur Hung Taiji, Ablai, Ochirtu, Dalai Taiji and Shukur Daiching. This list is not exhaustive and other temple complexes and cities were being built as well. It was an important sign that conditions were stable, and leaders were confident in control of their homelands. They were importing skilled craftsmen and their families from among the Chinese in areas like Kokonor, or Turkic workers from the Silk Road cities. They were in essence displaying the signs of well-established, stable polities.

Literacy also grew quickly. Young noble monks were returning from Tibet trained in Tibetan, the equivalent of Latin for Central Asian Buddhists. With the 1648 invention of the Clear Script, another important element of state building, Oirat monks and novices had another core cultural device that allowed communication of Buddhist concepts and cultural values to the Oirat laity. Nor did novices have to travel to Tibet for literacy skills, which they could acquire from Oirat teachers. Noble families supported monks to teach their children whether or not those children were destined to join the clergy. Religious texts became valued household treasures, seen as sources of protection and good fortune. Paintings, books, small statues and offerings became the foci of household altars and replaced earlier shamanic altars and ancestral dolls. Funeral sacrifices were
banned and people and animals that would have been offered (killed) during funeral rites were instead given to the Buddhist lamas.

The overall level of wealth among the Oirad was apparent through the large offerings nobles made to the new Oirat Buddhist clergy. Some offerings were quite staggering, one of 10,000 horses given by a single ulus to Zaya Pandita and his retinue. That kind of disposable wealth said a great deal about the political status of the Oirad in the wake of the 1640 Great Code. Some Oirat nobles were also entering diplomatic agreements with the Qing and the annual exchange of tribute. All of these cultural advances indicate the health, stability and political maturity of the Oirad during the middle of the 17th century. None were signs of political chaos and widespread warfare.

A Final Note
It should be no great surprise that the narrative of the Oirad of the early 17th century to emerge from this research is quite different from previous narratives. Both the theoretical framework and the primary sources differed significantly. But while a different picture may have come into focus it is important not to overreach. While we can observe that each of the Dörbön Oirad of the period were quite sophisticated political entities, there is little basis for claiming that in the early 17th century the Oirad were more than a confederacy of similarly sovereign states ruled by four aristocratic households. It is with the character of those states and the point toward which they were converging that this study differs. The convergence came with the 1640 formation of the Mongol-Oirat Great State.

237 See chapter IX, Folio xx.
In the effort to explain the rise of the Zunghar, Khoshud and Kalmyk khanates the importance of the *Great Code of the Forty and Four* has been largely overlooked. It was that point toward which early 17th century Oirad were moving. The Oirat khanates that later emerged did so as a result of the dissolution of the Great State. The Mongol-Oirat Great State encompassed all of modern Mongolia under the Khalkhas, the Zunghar region of modern Xinjiang, the Ili and Irtysh valleys in modern Kazakhstan, all of Tibet, and significant but shifting portions of the Volga/Caspian steppes (see Map III below). Between 1676 and 1691 the Great State split into four separate states that ceased to function under a common governance structure.

![Map of the Mongol-Oirat Great State](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Asia_laea_relief_location_map.jpg)

**Figure 6**
Extent of Mongol-Oirad Great State of 1640²³⁸

²³⁸ The based map used here is from [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Asia_laea_relief_location_map.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Asia_laea_relief_location_map.jpg)
In summary, the alliances, conflicts and peace accords among the Oirad and between the Oirad and the Khalkha led to the formation of a new and unprecedented political entity. Like many states it proved to be fragile. But unlike other states, its foundations were highly unusual. It was a government without central authority other than the rule of law. It was founded not by conquest but by the mutual agreement of a group of sovereign nobles. Some of those nobles came from aristocratic lineages that pre-dated Chinggis Khan and survived more than 500 years of Chinggisid primacy to once again stand on equal ground.
CHAPTER VIII
THE GREAT CODE OF THE FORTY AND FOUR
Translation by R. Taupier, A. Boskomdziev and L. Purevjav

This translation is indexed by page and sentence number as found in the 1889 Golstunsky publication of the Todo Bechig manuscript of the Great Code. The subject-object-verb structure requires the sequence of phrases to be rearranged for rendering into English. Sentences do not end within each page, so sentence numbers start with the first new sentence of each page.

Words (like this) do not appear in the text but are implied in the meaning of other words and written in the translation to make the meaning clear.

Page One

S1  May all be peaceful and bountiful.

S2  (We) prostrate to Ochir Dhara Lama\(^\text{239}\) who has manifest the three bodies (of a Buddha and) who has adorned himself with a great collection of blessings for all sentient beings (through) the two great oceanic accumulations (of merit and wisdom) and the teachings of emptiness.

S3  Oh Shakyamuni, foremost guide of all beings, please bestow mercifully upon us those warm rays from above that (dispel) our lack of faith.

\(^{239}\) It is not clear to whom this refers. Given its primary position in the text it is probably the celestial Buddha Vajra Dhara who is the essence of all teachers and the source of all esoteric (Tantric) teachings. Though it says Lama it is thought not to be in reference to a specific living person though Neichi Toin was known by the name Ochir Dhara Khutugtu.
(We) prostrate to the feet of the supreme Holy Tsongkhapa who, as the successor of the Holy Lord of Religion (Buddha), explained the Wheel of the Dharma.

(We) pray to the two Holies, the Dalai Lama, the savior who became the adornment of the top-most realm of sacred snows, and the precious Panchen who embodies the yellow visage of the Buddha Amitabha for the sake of sentient beings.

(We bow to) the Holy, renowned Inzan Hutagt Rinpoche, (who) bestows complete benefit on all sentient beings through the Bodhi Mind (that is) equally (composed) of great compassion and the essence of voidness, (and) is not separate from all the Conquers.

(We are here) in the presence of the three enlightened Khutugtus, Amoghasiddhi Manjushri, Aksobyha Manjushri and the so-called Inzan Rinpoche (who are) the fathers of religion.

On the fifth new good day of the middle month of the fall in the Hero Iron Dragon Year (1640) (the following gathered):

Page Two

Erdini Jasagtu Khan followed by Tusheetu Khan, Ubashi Dalai, Dalai Noyon, Dalai Khung, Khung Noyon, Cecen Noyon, Dayicin Khung Taiji, Yeldeng Noyon, Mergen Noyon, Erdini Khung Taiji, Dayibung Khung Taiji, Tenger Toyon, Ayushi Hatun Baatur, Erdini Baatur Khung Taiji, Kuundolong Ubashi, Gushi
Nomniyin Khan, Orlug, Shukur Daiching, Yeldeng, Dayicin Khoshuucci, Ochirtu Taiji, Mergen Dayicin, Chouker, Cecen Taiji, Medeeci Tayishi, Buu Yeldeng, Mergen Noyon, (and) Damarin.

These great nobles of both the Forty and Four started to write the Great Code.

S2 (If) anyone breaks this legal state of the Great Aimaq Ulus by killing and destroying (among) the unified Mongols and Oirad, then punish (him) by banishment.

S3 Everything that was not his own should be taken and half given to those who (were attacked but) not killed.

S4 (If) some small frontier group raids the Great Aimaq Ulus take (from them) one hundred armor breast-plates, one hundred camels, and one thousand horses, (and) make all that was taken to be returned and herds and provisions compensated; officials shall receive five berke\textsuperscript{241} compensation and non-official persons (one) berke.

S5 (Any) Bargyu, Baatud or Khoid who were with the Mongols between the Fire Snake Year and the Earth Dragon Year should stay with the Mongols, (and) those (who were) with the Oirad should stay with the Oirad.

S6 Except for those years all other persons must be returned without trouble.

\textsuperscript{240} There was considerable debate about how to best translate the word Aimaq in this context. It would most often be translated as an administrative division within a larger community (ulus) but here it clearly refers to the entire Great Ulus (yeke ulus) of the combined Forty and Four. One opinion was that it was intended to show common ancestry or kinship.

\textsuperscript{241} A berke is a generic bundle of goods that could include livestock but often refers to a single share of the spoils in a particular circumstance.
S7  (If) anyone does not return some person, then two camels and twenty horses should be taken and the person should still be given back.

S8  (If) anyone escapes from the Oirad, they should be returned to the Oirad.

Page Three

S1  (When) an enemy of the Mongols and Oirad comes, give that information.

S2  (If those) on the frontier hear (that) news and do not come (to the defense) take from (those who are) great nobles one hundred armor breastplates, one hundred camels and one hundred horses.

S3  From minor nobles who do not come take ten armor breastplates, ten camels, and one hundred horses.

S4  (If) anyone kills and robs and destroys the good work of the lamas made for the benefit of religion, take one hundred armor breastplates, one hundred camels and one thousand horses; in only some cases take everything.

S5  (If) some runaways (go) from one to another (ulus) take half of them and return the others.

S6  If someone is killed (however), keep those (runaways).

S7  The punishment for (taking) livestock is to (make them) give eight nines\textsuperscript{242} and to the witness give one nine.

\textsuperscript{242} A nine can be made up of different combinations of animals of specific ages such as one camel, one horse, one mare, one ox, one cow, one ram, one goat with kid and one sheep. Another possibility is one camel, four horses, three cows and one sheep.
From those nobles (ruling) many people who do not give back (runaways), there should be taken one hundred armor breastplates, one hundred camels, (and) one hundred horses; also take the second half (of the runaways).

(To those) lamas who hold many good people (give) five compensations. To minor (lamas) give two compensations, or one *berke*. From each ten people let them take one.

No person is beyond this code.

If a great noble breaks (this code) take (from him) ten camels and one hundred horses.

(If) a noble of the level\(^{243}\) of Mergen Dayicin and Chouker breaks (this code) take five camels and fifty horses.

(If) a lesser noble breaks (this code) take three camel-headed-nines.

(If) noble sons-in-law or (any of) the four (types) of officials holding positions break (this code) take (from him) two camel-headed-nines.

(If) an official minister of a sub-group breaks (this code), take a camel-headed-nine.

(If) a great noble escapes far away from the enemy by himself there should be taken one hundred armor breast-plates, one hundred camels, fifty households of people, (and) one thousand horses.

\(^{243}\) This designates lesser nobles who rule smaller uluses and hence are not rich enough to pay fines as great as those levied on great nobles.
S17  (If) a noble of the level of Dayicin and Chouker escapes (alone) far from
the enemy take (from him) fifty armor breastplates, fifty camels, twenty-five
households of people, and five hundred horses.

S18  From minor officials take ten armor breastplates, ten camels, ten
households of people and one hundred horses.

S19  From sons-in-law and from the four (types of) ruling officials (take) five
armor breastplates, five camels, five households of people and fifty horses.

S20  From officials of each sub-group take three berke, three households of
people, and thirty horses.

S21  The same as for sons-in-law and officials shall be (applied) to standard
bearers and heralds.

Page Four

S1  The code for various commanders (who run away) is the same for aimag
officials: make them strip their armor plates and wear a woman’s outer dress.

S2  From guards of the door take one nine together with one household of
people and one set of armor.

S3  From an armor-wearing warrior take one set of armor together with four
head of horses.

S4  From an iron helmet-wearing warrior take one set of armor and three
horses.
S5 From a warrior with armor jacket take two horses and a set of armor.

S6 From a person of low status, take one horse and one set of bow and arrows.

S7 From any person, who runs away, make him wear a woman’s outer dress.

S8 (If) some person helps a nobleman to escape from danger give him special privileges: if (they) leave (that noble) then take everything and kill (him).

S9 (If) someone rescues a noble son-in-law or official then reward (him) according to the previous code.

S10 (If someone is charged) with deserting or retreating, it must be witnessed.

S11 (If) someone knows about a great enemy and does not tell (others), all descendants (of that person) will be taken and killed.

S12 (If) someone sees people going to pillage and does not report (this) half of (his) livestock will be taken.

S13 (If) there is sudden danger, then all must gather around (the) noble.

S14 (If) someone heard (of this danger) and did not come, then it will be according to the previous code; let it be known if they were near or far from (their) homeland.

S15 (If) someone nearby sees that an enemy has attacked a household and taken horses and (does nothing) then half his livestock and wealth will be taken.
S16  (If) someone dies (in such circumstances) they will be replaced according to custom.

S17  (If) someone (nearby) did take action then he should be given one berke by the relatives.

S18  (If) someone saw and heard and did not pursue (the enemy) (if they are) wealthy take half, if they are middle take nine, and if (they are) low take five.

Page Five

S1  To officials with or without authority give relay (transportation by horse or cart); clearly distinguish between messengers of state and religious affairs.

S2  (If) a great noble or a noble wife becomes ill or a great enemy attacks, give (transportation) to a messenger who is appointed for this purpose; if someone does not give (transportation) take nine nines of (the offended person’s) choosing.

S3  (If) an insult (is made) to a Corji, take nine nines.

S4  (For) an insult (to) a lama teacher of nobles, five nines must be taken.

S5  (For) an insult to a monk, three nines must be taken; (If the monk) is struck, five nines must be taken.

S6  (For) insults to novices and nuns, five must be taken; (if they) are struck, nine must be taken.

244 This is the Oirat word for the Tibetan Tsorji, meaning the chief educational cleric of a monastery or temple.
S7  (If) a layman with (religious) vows or a laywoman with vows is insulted, take a horse; if they are struck, then take double.

S8  (If) a noble monk intentionally breaks his (holy) vows take half of his possessions and livestock.

S9  (For) an insult to a married novice, one horse must be taken; (if) he is struck, take double.

S10 (If someone) takes and rides a relay (horse) from a lama or a novice take one cow.

S11 (If) they ride a horse given as an (religious) offering, take one horse; (if) a relay attendant is caught giving (an offering horse), then (the fine) must be taken from him.

S12 (If) a messenger takes and rides an offering horse, he should be fined; (If) he did not know then make him take a formal oath (of innocence).

S13 (If) a great noble is insulted, all must be taken.

S14 (For) and insult (to) an appointed noble or son-in-law, take one nine; (if someone) strikes (them), five nines must be taken.

S15 (For) an insult (to) a minor noble (or) son-in-law, take five; (if he is) severely beaten by hand, take three nines; (for) a minor beating, take two nines.
S16  (If someone) insults a bodyguard or a troop commander, take a sheep and a horse; (if someone gives them) a great beating, take nine; for a minor beating, take five.

Page Six

S1  (If) a beating is according to an order of an appointed noble, a son-in-law, a minister, a minor noble, a minor commander, or a troop commander, there will be no trouble.

S2  (If) someone dies after (such) a beating (still) let there be no trouble.

S3  (If) any of these ministers beats someone based on pride, or beats (him) too much, take nine; (if) the beating was moderate, take five; (if) the beating was minor, take a horse.

S4  (If) someone is going about their rightful business and another (person) says this and that, calling (cursing) father and mother’s name, then take a horse.

S5  (If) a messenger has no proper mission, (he) should ride a horse from his (own) aimaq; (if he) rides a long distance, take a three-year-old cow.

S6  (If) a relay-attendant does not tell his lord (a horse was taken) on that very same day, take a sheep; (if he tells) after one night, take a three-year-old cow.

S7  (If someone) beats a messenger, take nine; (if the messenger) is pulled (from his horse), take five; (if those) are not given, take them forcibly.

245 Literally translated as a commander of fewer than 40 warriors.

246 Meaning that there is no offense.
S8  (If) someone beats a relay-attendant take a horse.

S9  (If) someone pretends falsely to be a messenger and takes food, take nine, or, beat (him) five times, or take five; (if) it (occurs only) once take five.

S10  (For) a messenger on a long trip, he should have meals at noon and before (evening) camp; (if) the messenger eats extra (meals), take his horse.

S11  (If) someone rides a horse until it is exhausted, and does not replace the horse, take a three-year-old cow.

S12  (If) someone does not give an over-night stay, take a three-year-old cow.

S13  (If) a woman without children does not give an over-night stay, take her outer dress; (if she gives) a reason, then make her give (formal) testimony.

S14  (If) there is a camp (area) restricted to nobles and a hunter breaks (into this area), take a nine headed by a camel; (if) he did it without knowing, there is no trouble.
S1  (If) someone suddenly disrupts provisions\(^{247}\) (due) to a great noble, take nine nines.

S2  (If) someone suddenly disrupts provisions to an appointed official or son-in-law, take nine.

S3  (If) someone disrupts provisions to a minor noble or son-in-law, take a horse.

S4  (If) someone takes advantage and wrongly consumes provisions, take a horse.

S5  (If) someone consumes in jest (the) noon and evening provisions, take a horse.

S6  (If) a subject person beats his teacher or his father or mother, take three nines; for a moderate beating take two nines; (for) a minor (beating) one nine must be taken.

S7  (Also, for) a severe beating, strike him thirty times; for a moderate beating, strike twenty times; for a minor beating, strike (him) ten (times).

S8  (If) a daughter-in law beats (her) mother-in-law or father-in-law take three nines; for a moderate beating take two nines, for a minor beating one nine must be taken.

\(^{247}\) Meaning a feudal tithe or in-kind tax.
S9  (Also, for) a great beating, strike (her) thirty times, for a moderate beating strike (her) twenty times, for a minor beating strike (her) ten times.

S10  (If) a father beats his son or daughter-in-law to teach a lesson, it is not bad; (if) he beat them wrongly, take nine; (from) one of middle (wealth) take five; (from) one of minor (wealth) take one horse.

S11  (If) in-laws beat a daughter-in-law (wrongly) take two nines; (from) one of middle (wealth), take one nine; (from) one of minor (wealth) a five must be taken.

S12  (If) a son kills his father or mother and (he) is seen, caught, and brought to a noble, that person (who caught him) can consume a nine starting with berke; everything shall be taken and destroyed (from that son).

S13  (If) a father kills a son everything except his life must be taken.

S14  (If) a person kills a slave take five nines.

S15  (If) a female slave is killed, three nines must be taken.

S16  (If someone) kills a lost female take five nines.

S17  (If) one (wife) kills another (wife) (punishment) must be given (as if it were) any other human being; in other words (her) ears must be cut off and (she must be) given to another person; the man (to whom she is given) must decide and choose (to) take (either) the female or livestock.

S18  A father (should) give an inheritance to (his) son according to custom; (if) the father becomes poor, take one from each five (animals he owns).
S19 When appointed nobles and sons-in-law propose (marriage for their son), then thirty berke, one hundred horses and four hundred sheep must be given.

S20 (For) minor nobles and sons-in-law, fifteen berke, fifty horses and one hundred sheep must be given.

S21 The dowry and goods should depend on the condition of the livestock and the least (to be given) should depend on the willingness of the two-households.

Page Eight

S1 (In return) for the daughter of a leader of forty²⁴⁸ (households or warriors), there must be given (as a bride gift) five camels, twenty five head of large livestock²⁴⁹, and forty sheep.

S2 The goods given for the dowry (should be) ten coats with collars, twenty (unsown) garments, a saddle, a bridle, a winter coat, along with a sleeveless robe and two horses.

S3 (If) a person²⁵⁰ is given with the dowry then give an extra camel; based on the condition of the (dowry) goods, give extra.

S4 (In return) for the daughter of a leader of twenty, give four camels, twenty head of big livestock and thirty sheep; also, give five coats with collars, five unsown garments, along with both a horse and a camel.

²⁴⁸ A commander or leader is the head of a group of households during normal times but also leads a troop of forty warriors during war.

²⁴⁹ This would be some combination of cattle, horses, and yaks, not sheep or goats.

²⁵⁰ Implying a slave or servant.
Depending on the condition of the goods, give extra.

(For) guards, the amount of livestock will be this; for a person of modest (wealth) three camels, fifteen head of large livestock and twenty sheep; the bride gift should be both a camel and a horse and four coats with collars and ten unsown garments; depending on the condition of the gifts, give extra.

(For) a person of lesser wealth, the livestock should be two camels, ten head of large livestock and fifteen sheep; there will be given (as dowry) a horse and a camel, a coat with collar, a sleeveless robe, a saddle and bridle.

Only daughters fourteen-years and older can be taken (as brides).

Those (daughters) who are younger should be seized by informing leaders of forty or twenty (households); if someone breaks this code then the daughter will be given without any livestock.

A leader of forty must kill (for food) four head of large livestock and five sheep (for the wedding).

(For) a leader of twenty, it will be three head of large livestock and four sheep; (for) a modest person it will be two head of large livestock and three sheep; (for) a lesser person it will be one head of large livestock and two sheep.

Each year, from forty (households) four sons must become householders.

Ten sons from forty (households) should join together to give one ger.
S2  (If you) give (with the proposal) one additional large livestock, take one coat with collar; if you give another sheep take one (unsown) garment; do not take from the daughter’s garments.

S3  (If) the household is not arranged and nothing is given then according to code, take two camels, five horses and ten sheep.

S4  Every year from each of forty (households, there) should (be) made two coats of mail; if they do not make it, then according to code, take a horse and camel.

S5  For daughters reaching the age of twenty (the groom’s family) should go (to propose) three times to the (future) father and mother-in-law.

S6  (If) this (ceremony) is not done inform the noble (of those people).

S7  (If) (the daughter is given) without informing (the noble) the livestock that is given will be taken from the daughter’s father according to the code.

S8  (If) the (new) bride dies, then the dowry must be given back; if there was no wedding then half of the livestock will be taken (back).

S9  (If) the groom gives, in addition to the gifts, a helmet, coat of mail, or armor breastplate, then take (for) the helmet, five; for the coat of mail or armor breastplate take a nine headed by a camel; if a rifle was given take five.

S10  (If) someone steals an armor breastplate or quilted armor, take ten nines.

S11  (If) someone takes a coat of mail, take three nines.
S12  (If) someone takes a short armor jacket, take three nines.

S13  (If) someone steals a helmet take one nine.

S14  (If) someone steals a good sword, take nine from the best (livestock) and five from the lower (livestock).

S15  (If) someone steals a spear take three of the best horses and one lower horse.

S16  (If someone steals) a good bow with ten arrows, take three nines; for a modest bow and arrows, take nine; for the lowest quality bow and arrow take a goat with kid.

S17  (If) there was a marriage proposal ceremony, it will be (legal) under the code; if there was no ceremony it cannot be legal under the code;

S18  (From) a (marriage) proposal household in which the daughter was already promised and given to another, take from a wealthy (person) five nines headed by a camel, from (a person of) middle wealth take three nines headed by a camel, (and) from the lowest, take one nine headed by a camel.

S18  The woman and the gift of livestock must be taken back (from the new groom); (if this was done) without knowledge of (the bride’s) father and mother, make (the punishment) three times the customary code.
S1   The truth must be clearly known by forceful investigation of father and mother; for this code it should be taken from the groom; the father who was given the daughter should consume (what was given).

S2   (For) a son raised (by another family), who grows to love his (adopted) father, there is no compensation; let him go alone by himself.

S3   (For) a daughter, take her back (by) giving compensation.

S4   (The fate of) a girl who is raised (by another family) should be decided by those who raised her, livestock will be consumed equally and goods will be given equally.

S5   (For) someone who allows an unengaged daughter to be given away, (if) wealthy take seven, from a middle one take five, and from the lowest take one camel.

S6   Anyone who comes from another person should go back (to the place) from which he came.

S7   (If) someone comes to rely on a noble and they gave him something, and if he earned some livestock, half should taken (by those he came from).

S8   (If) some (livestock) dies from the bite of a mad (rabid) dog, take one from five; if a person dies, take one nine from one (who is) wealthy, seven from one of middle (wealth) and from the lowest take five.
S9  (If) a mad person kills someone take half (of all his belongings) and consider the quality (of that family); if that person keeps hurting people but then he finally dies, there is no guilt.

S10  (If) someone dies, Injured by a mountain spirit\textsuperscript{251}, take a nine headed by a berke, take five from one of medium (wealth) and take one berke from the lowest.

S11  (If) a lazy owner did not herd livestock to the pasture take one from (his) livestock.

S12  (If) a male camel, bull or stallion breaks-away, there is no payment (to the person watching them).

S13  (If) someone kills free (roaming) livestock or a person may it be (according to) what is right.

S14  (If) a horse kills its rider, may it be (according to) what is right (based on fault).

S15  (If) some (persons) run away and the husband is killed, take the female.

S16  (If) someone with armor is killed (while running away), take the armor; the next person (in the chase) can choose between the helmet and (arm or leg) guards, and the next persons can take whatever, according to who is first or later.

\textsuperscript{251} Meaning dies suddenly with no apparent cause.
S1  (If) an unarmed person (is killed) let (punishment) be by previous custom.

S2  (If) someone is captured and set free, take two horses with armor breastplates.

S3  (For) people who came (from another place) and who have been taken (or rescued) take from the great spoils (of the battle) nine with a berke.

S4  (If) someone is taken as a servant without permission of the noble and that person was valuable and died, gather (and give) a nine headed by berke.

S5  During a raid, if someone was captured because his horse was speared that horse should replaced and he should take nine; within three days if it is stolen back, take five; after that there will be punishment.

S6  (If) during an attack a friendly person is killed by mistake, a witness should say if that was true, and take one nine; if that witness says (it was) wrong, take three nines.

S7  During hunting, if someone is killed by accident, half punishment will be taken; take (the fine) according to (previous) example.

S8  (If any of) the six organs are injured, take five nines with berke; if thumb or index finger are lost, take two nines and a five; if the middle finger is lost, take nine, if the nameless finger is lost, take five; if the little finger is lost, take three; If (the finger) is recovered take nine with berke; if there is little (injury), take five; if garments are torn, take a horse.
S9  (If) a horse dies accidentally take a horse of the exact same quality; if someone eats the meat (of that horse) take one adult horse.

S10  (If) someone puts out a fire left in camp (when someone has moved), take a sheep.

S11  (If) someone rescues a person who might be killed by fire or flood, take five.

S12  (If) someone died trying to rescue (another) from fire or flood, take nine with berke.

S13  (If) a horse dies (while trying to rescue), it will be replaced along with a berke.

S14  (If) a slave recovers an armor breastplate or armor (leg or arm) guards (he can) take one horse for each.

S15  (If) armor plates and breastplates are recovered take both a horse and sheep.

S16  (If) a felt tent and other goods and possessions are rescued, then take one horse and cow and share it.

Page Twelve

S1  (If someone) saves livestock from fire, from each herd take two, or take one from smaller herds; consider the time (to rescue), the quality of the herd, and divide (accordingly).
(If) someone set a fire for revenge, (the fine) will be a great berke.

(If) a wealthy person dies (from a fire), there will be an attack; if a person of middle (wealth) dies, there will be taken thirty berke and three hundred livestock; if a low person dies, (take) fifteen nines headed by berke.

This starts the code about stealing.

The fine (for stealing) a camel is fifteen nines; for (stealing) a gelding or a stallion (it is) ten nines; for (stealing) a mare (it is) eight nines.

(For stealing) a cow, a two-year old horse or a sheep, for those three above, six nines must be taken; each nine must include a camel; consider how much is consumed of what was stolen.

(If) the (thief) was clearly caught, the owner must take half the fine and compensation of double (the stolen animals).

For (young, stolen) animals born after the new-year, take one horse.

(If) someone raids (the thieves) without telling the noble, the messenger of the noble and provisions (owed to the noble) must be doubled in compensation.

There must be three approaches to the trail (of the thieves).

(If) there is an investigation of the trail (left by thieves) (you) must go with good witnesses to the final end (of the trail).

(If) there are no good witnesses make a choice (to continue or not).
S13  If the trails leads to a small community, the head (person of that community) must take an oath; if this is not the case (where the head person takes an oath), then separate the people of the community who did the stealing and punish according to law.

S14  The elder of the community must testify before the best people of the district; the best people of the district must give (testimony) before the noble.

S15  Even if there is no evidence of guilt, take from him a nine with berke.

Page Thirteen

S1  Debts must be recovered after three announcements before witnesses.

S2  You must tell the leader of twenty that you are making this announcement.

S3  If there is no announcement to the leader of twenty, then take a horse.

S4  If the creditor took (the debt back) during the day without announcement then the debt is forgiven.

S5  If he took it at night without (making an) announcement, he must be fined a nine.

S6  All debts of Bula Tayishi are forgiven.

S7  If a female comes with milk vodka and mutton what she owed is forgiven.

S8  If her debt was very big, she must still pay half.
S9  (If) some livestock are wandering (off) and someone observes and
announces (this) over three nights, then he can take\(^{252}\) them.

S10  (If) someone takes (them) buts does not announce it within twenty-four
hours then take a three-year-old cow.

S11  Also take nine from those who change the earmark.

S12  (If) he shears (the livestock) take five.

S13  (If) there is announcement there is no trouble.

S15  (If) someone catches wandering (livestock) give (them) to the leader of
twenty; the leader of twenty should give (them) to a shepherd.

S16  The one who finds the wandering (livestock) may give them to the leader
of twenty or to a shepherd.

S17  (If) he does not give (them)(to either) then take double.

S18  But if he is asked (about them) and still hides (the livestock) take nine.

S19  (If) the wandering (livestock) are given to someone from far away, it will be
as before (take nine).

S20  (If) he gives to a nearby person take three nines.

S21  Take seven if someone eats fallen livestock.

\(^{252}\) Literally, he can ride them.
S22  (If) a woman is attracted by a man and both like each other, (and have an affair) take from the woman four and from the man take five.

S23  (If) a woman was forced against her will, take nine from the man.

S24  (If) that woman was a slave take one horse.

S25  (If) she was willing, there is no trouble.

S26  (If) a girl was willing to sleep (with a man) take two nines.

S27  (If) they liked each other (before the marriage) take one nine.

S28  (If) some person sleeps (has sex) with an animal and someone sees it, he can take (that animal); the owner of animal can take five (from the person).

S29  (If) two people are fighting and someone come in the middle (and tries to stop them) and he is hurt and dies, take nine with a berke.

S30  Each person who helped (to stop the fight) can take a horse.

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S1  (If) a weapon with a blade was involved (in a fight) and a serious injury results, take five nines; if the wound was medium, take three nines, if the wound was small, take one nine.

S2  (If) someone is stabbed for no reason, take one horse; the (injured) person can take whatever weapon was pulled.

S3  (If) someone is able to calm him he can take one horse.
S4  (If) someone uses wood or stone (to beat someone) severely take nine with a berke; for a medium (beating) take a horse and sheep, and for a small (beating) take a three-year-old cow and whatever he (the aggressor) carried.

S5  (If) someone hits (another) seriously with a fist or a club, take five; for a medium (beating) take a horse and sheep, and for a small (beating) take a three-year-old bull.

S6  (If) the clothing was torn take a two-year-old horse.

S7  (If someone tears) out a tassel or hair queue, take five for either or both.

S8  (If someone) grabs (another) by the beard take a horse and sheep.

S9  (If) someone spits in the face, throws dirt, or pulls a (dell) hem (take a) good horse.

S10  (If) all of these happen take one horse and two sheep; if two of them happen take one horse and one sheep.

S11  From a person (of) low (status) take a sheep and a lamb.

S12  (If) someone tears (pulls) out a woman’s hair and tassel, take one nine.

S13  (If) someone hurts a pregnant woman and she miscarries take a nine for each month that she was pregnant.

S14  (If) a young girl is scared because someone has kissed (her) in that secret place then take the equal of one dowry.
S15  (If) the girl is older than ten then there is punishment. If she is younger then ten, there is no punishment.

S16  (If) someone’s eyes become ill or teeth are loosened, for those take five; for good (undamaged) eye and undamaged teeth take half in the same way.

S17  (If) during a game or celebration some people die, that many horses will be taken.

S18  (If) an adult is killed take one berke.

S19  (If) two friends were playing and one (of them) died, take nine; take three nines if someone hides the fact that someone has died.

S20  (If) in a game there are damages to an eye, teeth, arm or foot and they can be cured, there is no penalty; take five if they are broken.

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S1  (If) someone conspires with a person with illegal intentions and provides transportation and food, take seven nines.

S2  (If) before that bad person escapes he leaves livestock and possession behind with a family and that family hides these things, take three nines.

S3  (If someone steals) a silk coat or a long sable coat or a carpet made from tiger, leopard or otter, or a cape made of silk and ermine with quilted lining, (the fine) must be five nines.
S4 For (stealing) those capes made from the hides of wolf, fox, steppe fox, wolverine or beaver, the fine must be three nines.

S5 For (stealing) a good coat of tiger, leopard, or tight woven material, fur, tanned hides, otter, or a silk robe, (the fine) must be one nine.

S6 For (stealing) a wolf, lynx, wolverine, beaver, or fabric robe or medium coat, for all of those, (the fine) must be seven.

S7 For (stealing) furs of sable, fox, squirrel, steppe fox, wildcat, raccoon, ermine, starting from the biggest, take a three-year-old cow; for the small ones take one sheep; for the animals in the trap the same as above will be taken.

S8 For (stealing) a good silver saddle, bridle, or head rope, apply the same as for a sable coat.

S9 For (stealing) a medium (quality) silver saddle and bridle, it must be the same as for wolf and lynx (furs).

S10 For (stealing) a hammer, anvil and tongs it must be one nine, but determine if the quality is good or bad.

S11 Compensate with one berke if a person dies from a hunting trap that was announced; if he recovers there is no trouble.

S12 (If) a person dies even if (the trap was) announced but the location was secret take three nines; if he suffers but recovers give a sheep and horse.
S13  (If target) training was not announced and a person dies, take five nines; if he recovers take five.

S14  If there was no announcement (of target practice) and livestock dies then replace with livestock of same (quality).

S15  (If) there was an announcement there is no trouble. The owner may eat the animal that was killed.

S16  (If a trap) was announced and someone takes and eats the antelope (killed in that trap) then he should replace it with one that is exactly the same: if there was no announcement five should be taken.

Page Sixteen

S1  (If) someone rescues sheep attacked by a wolf, that person can take those sheep (that are still) alive (as well as) the dead (sheep).

S2  (He can) take five arrows if there are less than ten (sheep).

S3  (If) the (sheep) killed have been eaten then take a three-year old cow.

S4  (If) someone pulls a camel from the mud take a three-year old cow.

S5  For (saving) a horse from the mud take a sheep; for (saving) a cow take five arrows; for a sheep, take two arrows

S6  (If) someone helps a person covered by a landslide, a person giving birth or a person who is sick, and cures him, they must give whatever they promised.
S7  (If) they made no promise then take a horse.

S8  (If) during a journey someone looses his ride on the way, the person who helps him and takes him home may take a horse.

S9  (If) there are two people who give testimony against each other, then the case is spoiled; but if during this testimony there were other witnesses, then learn (the truth) through investigation.

S10  (If there is) a person who has nothing and no livestock, the leader of twenty must testify and (the person) must be caught and given (to someone).

S11  (If) someone refuses to give fermented horse milk then take a sheep.

S12  (If) someone forcefully takes distilled milk liquor, take a horse with a camel.

S13  (If) someone damages a ger, take a horse

S14  (If) someone with a wood spike stabs a fire\textsuperscript{253} in a dwelling of a noble take six nines.

S15  (If) this happens in dwelling of a subject person then take a nine.

S16  (If) livestock were killed in jest, replace them with the same quality and quantity and take a horse; it should be investigated to know if it was a hoax or not.

S17  (If) someone takes wandering livestock and says it is his, take five.

S18  (If a person) gives false testimony that another has stolen (something) and insists (it is true), takes his possessions.

\textsuperscript{253} Meaning to attack the family hearth, a very damming symbolic action.
S19  (If) it later becomes known that (he gave) false testimony he may be fined as much as he took; whatever livestock as he consumed through this false testimony should be returned in full.

S20  (If) a thief brings and leaves bones and remains (of a stolen animal) (in a distant place) the owner of the local place can take nine.

S21  (If) there is a trail and one group is following that trail and another is trying to cover that trail, then the leader of twenty should give testimony.

S22  (If) he will not give testimony then the first person destroying the trail should give five; for each person who was involved (in hiding the evidence) the same number of horses must be taken.

Page Seventeen

S1  (If) there is a small or large group of people who steal things and later someone (of that group) comes to tell (about this) that person will not be fined.

S2  From the rest who were involved (in stealing) replace what was the stolen.

S3  (If) the informant tells after it was already known it does not count.

S4  (If) a thief kills a warrior and robs him, take (from him) nine with berke.

S5  (If) a messenger promised to go, (with a message) but did not, take nine.

S6  (If) a messenger wanted a relay (horse) and was denied, take double.
S7 All messengers are forbidden to drink (alcohol) until they have gone and returned.

S8 (If) he drinks take five.

S9 (If) a noble offers some drink he should take (it).

S10 (If) there is a deserter from the outside who asks to join and he is killed, take five nines (from person who killed him).

S11 (If) someone delivers (that deserter), (he may) take several quivers of arrows and the horse (the deserter was riding).

S12 (If) someone catches a deserter who is escaping he can take half of everything but leave him alive.

S13 (If) someone is offered a woman who was left behind, in that case that person should give nine with berke; from one of medium wealth take five; from the lowest ones take a camel and horse.

S14 A slave woman cannot be counted as a witness; but if she brings bones and meat (evidence) then it should count.

S15 (If) someone steals any type of livestock by force and kills (those livestock) and there is a witness there must be a fine (equal to) the complete extent of that livestock.

S16 (If) he does not confess the stealing then there will be an investigation.
S17  (If) someone breaks the line (during a hunt) by not going along with the line, take five horses.

S18  (If) someone galloped away (from the hunting line) three times (bow) shooting distance, take his horse.

S19  (For) twice the shooting distance, take a sheep.

S20  (If) it is one shooting distance take five arrows.

S21  (If) someone finds and hides an antelope killed by an arrow, take five.

S22  (If) someone finds and hides an antelope without an arrow, take his horse.

S23  (If) someone finds an arrow in the ground for which someone was looking and that person does not return it, take a horse.

S24  (If) someone kills a (trained hunting) bird on a leash take a horse.

S24  (If) someone witnesses any (crime) he can consume nine from the livestock fine (for that crime); the reward (will be) as much as was found.

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S1  (In regard to stealing such items as) a flint, knife, arrow, file, rope, horse hobble, leather strip bridle, belt hammer, neck scarf, good hat, boots, pants, scissors, iron stirrup, wooden saddle, felt cape, saddle cloth, quiver cover, long sleeve shirt of woven fabric, belt made from woven fabric, case for breastplate and helmet, draw knife, axe, good bridle without bit, whole sheep meat inside of leather bag, a poor coat, woman’s outer coat, saw, circlet, sheep tweezers, good
ring, net for fish and birds, or trap; if any of those things are taken, a finger must be cut (off).

S2  (If) there is sorrow for the finger, (take) five, meaning two large livestock and three sheep.

S3  (For stealing) a horse rope, lasso, camel rope, needle, awl, comb, thimble, thread, sinew, buttons, bowl, ladle, wooden plate, pail, wineskin, poor hat, boots, socks, saddle girth, leather belt, bridle without bit, saucer, glue, wood awl, drill, whip, small cabinet, chest, horse blanket, sheep skin, goat skin, blue lamb skin, arrow, bow string, or any other small personal items one might carry, all fit under this code; for good ones take sheep and lamb, for bad ones take goat and kid.

S4  (For) two people making a claim (against each other), if they do not appear there is no hearing.

S5  The person who is making a claim must announce (his claim) three times and then go and give testimony with good witnesses.

S6  (If) that does not happen take a horse and send a messenger to get (him).

S7  (If) someone will not allow a search then apply by this rule.

S8  Know truth or deceit through a witness. If there is no witness then the aimaq head must give his oath.

S9  (If) someone invites a female or male shaman take a horse from them.

S10  From the female shaman who came, take her horse.
S11  (If) someone saw this and he did not report (it), take his horse.

Page Nineteen

S1  (If) someone sees a shamanic doll they should take it.

S2  (If) the owner protects (that doll) and does not give it up, take a horse.

S3  (If) a (shamanic) curse is thrown at a good person, take five: if the curse is made to an ordinary person take two horses

S4  (If) a duck, sparrow or dog (is used by a shaman), for that take a horse.

S5  (If) a snake (is used by a shaman), unless it is from Alagh Mountain, take two arrows; if someone has no arrows take a knife.

S6  (For) livestock that die from a winter storm, if the carcass is stolen within ten days, take a three-year-old cow.

S7  (If) a horse kicks a small child the person who rescues the child may take a sheep.

S8  Excluding a female camel without a baby, a mare that escapes the rope, or livestock that have just given birth, if someone milks (any other livestock) take a three-year-old cow.

S9  In the absence of the father and mother of a girl given (in marriage) pillage the father.255

254 Alagh means motley or varied. In this case it may refer to a specific mountain.
S10  (If) this happened without agreement (without telling) then apply the previous code.

S11  (If) someone convinces a woman to run away from (her) husband, from a wealthy person (who took that woman) take nine nines headed by a camel; from a (person of) middle (wealth) take five nines headed by a camel; from the least wealthy (person) take three nines headed by a camel.

S12  (If) the woman ran away (to another) at her own decision then take the livestock and the female that left.

S13  The older and younger brothers (of a woman who ran away) can give livestock of equal quality and take her back.

S14  (If) they have no livestock then the brothers and sisters of her aimaq can give livestock and take (her back).

S15  (If a woman) has no relatives in the aimaq then the nobles should know (what must be done).

S15  (If a foster son still loves his (original) father, he and his (own) sons can go (back to his original home) but a daughter has to stay with the mother (who raised her).

\[255\] The meaning of this was not clear. It does not indicate for what crime the father would be punished. Rather that modify it to give it more specific meaning it was left as a literal translation.
S1  (If) the father and mother of a foster daughter wish to take her back and she is older than nine, they should give nine.

S2  (If) the daughter was not well raised, they should give half (of nine).

S3  (If) the child is older than fifteen she should remain (with the foster parents).

S4  Half of the livestock to be consumed at the wedding should come from both fathers and they should give equal provisions (for her marriage).

S5  There is no debt (obligation) for a grandson or granddaughter of a son on the mother’s side.

S6  (If) the mother’s side granddaughter or grandson takes (anything) from that (mother’s family) side there is no punishment, but they ought to give some payment.

S7  (As for) livestock taken from someone, if there is a good witness he should take back an equal amount.

S8  (If) someone bought it (the livestock) then take the ones that are left.

S9  (If) someone took lost livestock and a year has passed, the payment will be half.
CHAPTER IX

SEREN GEREL (MOON LIGHT) – THE BIOGRAPHY OF ZAYA PANDITA

Translated by A. Boskhomdziev and R. Taupier

This translation is indexed according to page and sentence number as found in the 2008 Volume XII of Bibliotheca Oiratica, a publication of Tod Nomin Gerel. That publication includes both a facsimile of the original Todo text as well as an indexed transliteration in Latin script. The subject-object-verb structure of Todo Bechig means that the sequence of phrases must be rearranged before rendering into grammatically correct English. Sentences do not end within each page, so sentence numbers start with the first sentence of the new page.

Words (like this) do not appear in the original text but are implied in the meaning of other words and written in the translation to make the English comprehensible.

Title Page (Folio 1A)

Folia 1B

S1  Namo Guru Manjugosha. I bow with faith to Ochir Dhara\(^\text{256}\) who transformed (this world) into a pure land, who dissolved into the five elements for all eternity and who showed us the seven methods.

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\(^{256}\) This is the Oirat/Mongol name for Vajradhara/Dorje Chang. In general Oirat names for Buddhist deities will be given in Oirat rather than Sanskrit or Tibetan.
S2 I bow and pray to those spiritual beings who are one with the cosmos and who can teach in a single voice and be understood by all beings, who realized in themselves the theory of not coming or going.

S3 I bow and pray to the rare jewel, the Hubligan\textsuperscript{257} adorned with 10,000 rare characteristics and abilities, (who) could appear in any place of which he thought.

S4 From that vessel\textsuperscript{258}, filled with the waters of many skills, he accomplished great teaching and rained down the essence of his understanding on all people.

S5 I bow down and pray to this Khan of Dragons\textsuperscript{259}, the Rabjampa Zaya Pandita, who was endowed with great ability and skill in teaching and method.

S6 The jewels of the Buddha and Lama are without superiors, the teaching is the jewel that leads souls to limitless nirvana, the Sangha is the jewel that implements the foundation of the Buddha and Dharma: I bow and pray to the eternal ability of those who have so dedicated themselves.

S7 I have heard the history of our great Holy Rabjampa Khutugtu\textsuperscript{260} Zaya Pandita; all of the history I know is fully explained here.

Folio 2A

S1 His bones were Khoshuud, his clan was Gurochin, and his sub-clan within Gurochin was Shangxas.

\textsuperscript{257} Enlightened one, meaning in this case Zaya Pandita.

\textsuperscript{258} Meaning his person.

\textsuperscript{259} The term translated here as dragon refers to the mythical Nagas of Indian and Tibetan lore.

\textsuperscript{260} Meaning an enlightened reincarnate individual.
S2  His grandfather, Kungkui Zayachi, was renown among the Four Oirats for his great wisdom.

S3  Babaxan was the oldest of the sons of Kungkui (and) among the eight sons of Babaxan the great Zaya Pandita was the fifth.

S4  (Included here) is the first stage of his becoming a novice monk, moving to Tibet, residing and studying there, reaching the end of his studies, receiving his name and becoming a lama, receiving the favor and blessing of the three Bogdos, foreseeing his own ability to be helpful to the religion, going by his own will to those who speak Mongol language, leaving (Tibet) and becoming a lama in Mongolia and Oiratia, spreading the teaching among the Seven Khoshoun and the Four Oirad, returning again to Tibet, bringing great offerings of things and animals, returning again to Oirat country and giving the Buddhists there more teachings, and leaving again for Tibet when, during the journey, he liberated himself from suffering and went forward to be reborn again.

Folio 2B

S1  Among the eight topics stated above, the first is the history of his going to Tibet; the Gegeen (Zaya Pandita) was reborn in the Earth Pig Year (1599).

261 Bogdos means Holy Ones. In this case if refers to the Dalai and Panchen Lamas and probably the Khoshuud leader, Nomin Gushii Khan.

262 Meaning the seven divisions of the Khalkha Mongols.

263 Literally meaning Brilliance, but implying a reincarnate holy person.
The father of Sechen Khan, Noyon Baibaghas Baatar, initiated the effort by the nobles of the Four Oirat when he said “let us each give one son to become a monk”, and they all did so.

Baibaghas Baatar Noyon said, (to Zaya Pandita) “become a monk instead of my son”, and so at the age of seventeen he took his vows; he took his novice vows from Manjushri Khutugtu.

(Next is) the history of when he went to Tibet and sat in study: after taking his vows, Zaya Pandita said “I do not need to be here” and in the Year of the Dragon (1616), he went to Kukunour: at that time Kholchi Noyon ruled Kukunour.

In the Year of the Snake (1617) he reached Baroun Talâ\(^{264}\); he became the close assistant of Depa Drunkhor\(^{265}\) for a short time and sat in studies.

When he first started to study, by understanding just one word, he was able to give examples of many words; “He will be very smart,” they said and everybody was amazed.

He stayed for ten years in that School of Logic and was given the title of Lhasa’s Rabjampa\(^{266}\) and did not miss even a single word such that everybody was amazed and agreed that his great title was appropriate.

\(^{264}\) Literally meaning the right Side, place or wing, but here it is taken as meaning the Right Side of the Oirat state in reference to Tibet that was under the military control of Gushii Nomin Khan.

\(^{265}\) It is not clear to whom this refers.

\(^{266}\) A title higher than Lharamba Geshe and given to only one scholar in Tibet each year.
When he was studying in the school of Tantra, a messenger came who said to him “you must become a lama of the Ngakpa267 sect,” but the lama who was explaining the Tantras said that though it would be good for the wise Rabjampa to become such a lama, “I am concerned about it.”

When this teacher showed his sadness (to) all the disciples who were studying Tantra, they were amazed; after becoming a Ngakpa lama he was among the ten monks in the ceremony at which the nineteen-year-old Dalai Lama took his monk vows from the Bogdo (Panchen) Lama:268 thus, he (Zaya Pandita) became a magic Ngakpa lama.

(This is) the history of how the two Bogdos bestowed merit and sent him to the Mongols and Oirad: the Bogdo (Panchen) Lama told him (Zaya Pandita) many times “if you go to the Mongols it will be a great benefit for religion and living beings”; he said, “you are not like other students,” and gave him the prayer beads he was holding in his own hands.

The Dalai Lama ordered him “go instead of me to those who speak Mongol, translate holy books and bring benefit to religion and living beings.”

He had stayed in study close to the Dalai Lama for all of twenty-two years.

Folio 3B

267 The implication here is that a Ngakpa lama is an advanced practitioner who is allowed to take a female consort for Tantric practice and thus no longer holds the same vows as a monk for whom such a practice would be forbidden.

268 Meaning in this case the Panchen Lama.
(This is) the history of when he went to the Mongols and Oirad: in the Earth Tiger Year (1638), when the Gegeen was forty years of age, he left Tibet and arrived in the fall of the Year of the Hare and stayed for the winter on the side of the Tarbaghatai Mountains (in Zungharia) in the lands of Ochitu Taiji.269

The mother of (Kalmyk Khan) Abala, Tayisung Aga, liberated herself from suffering (died at that time); Zaya Pandita conducted all the ceremonies for guiding her spirit and explained the teaching.

In the summer of that same year, Inzan Khutugtu270 was invited to come to Usun-Xujir271 on the Bulna River; during the ceremonies for blessing a stupa, Inzan Khutugtu spoke to the assembly of monks (gathered there) and said about Zaya Pandita, “even though my title and status is higher, the knowledge of this wise Ngakpa precious Dharma272 is greater”, and by saying that, the Rabjampa Khutugtu’s name became even more famous.

In that same place, among the great assembly of monks in the presence of Inzan Khutugtu Gegeen, Inzan Khutugtu himself, and those who were making offerings, asked Ngakpa Nomiyin Khan and Rabjampa Khutugtu if they would engage in religious debate: both of them were offered silk scarves and they started the debate.

269 Ochiru Taiji (meaning Vajra Prince) was the oldest son of Baibaghas

270 Inzan Khutugtu was sent by the Dalai and Panchen Lamas in 1630 to preach to the Oirad and traveled as far as the Ural River.

271 Like many of the places named in this text I am not yet able to identify its modern place name.

272 The term used here in Todo Bechig is Cosrje and appears to be from the Tibetan Chosje, meaning precious Dharma or Dharma king.
Nomiyin Khan began the debate of the basis of the *Tenggeriyin Nasuni*:
Nomiyin Khan, deciding that he was right, loudly shouted, korsum;\(^\text{273}\) when Inzan Khutugtu was asked his opinion about the debate he answered, “I agree with Nomiyin Khan.”

Folio 4A

Mergen Depa said that he also held the same opinion as Nomiyin Khan; Zaya Pandita, though he knew that they were mistaken in judging Nomiyin Khan to be right, did not argue with them.

Later Ngakpa Nomiyin Khan told other learned people that he had been able to say korsum to Rabjampa Khutugtu and when he told this to the Gomang Surpa, the Gomang Surpa asked, “did Rabjampa Khutugtu like it when you said you were right?”

Later when (Zaya Pandita) Khutugtu was going to Baroun Tala\(^\text{274}\) he asked Ngakpa Nomiyin Khan about those words. “Did you say that you said korsum to me? Why were you telling this (to everyone)?” When it was clear that Nomiyin Khan was mistaken they stopped on the way and held another debate.

When the Gomang Lama heard the truth he was amazed and praised Zaya Pandita, saying, “Though there are many stars in the sky the moonlight is brighter than all the stars.”

\(^{273}\) The English meaning of this term is unclear. It appears to be a Tibetan loan word used in debate when one debater believes he has made a winning point.

\(^{274}\) Meaning Tibet.
Then the Seven Khoshoun Mongol Jasagtu Khan sent a messenger called Ulaabu Sanjin to invite (Zaya Pandita); after the Dragon Year (1639) had passed, at the end of Tsagaan Sar\textsuperscript{275}, in the spring of the Year of the Snake (1640), Zaya Pandita left Tomor Chorgo.

From Jasagtu Khan’s place he was invited to Tusheetu Khan; from Tusheetu Khan’s place he was invited to Maha Samadhi Sechen Khan.

(As those three were) fulfilled by (Zaya Pandita’s) holy teaching, blessed by fortune, (he) and became a lama of these three great Khans of the Seven Khoshoun.

At that time there was a great assembly of the Seven Khoshoun Mongols and the Four Oirad: there was Mongol Jasagtu Khan, two Oirats Taiji, and others.

Jasagtu Khan asked (Zaya Pandita) “live with us for two or three years;” (Zaya Pandita) answered, because the three great Bogdos\textsuperscript{276} ordered Ochir Dhara Khutugtu\textsuperscript{277} to go to Seven Khoshoun and me to the Four Oirad, so I am going back to them without delay.

Jasagtu Khan agreed and said, because I am concerned about the benefit of religion, I invite you to ask for any livestock or possessions that you desire.

\textsuperscript{275} Meaning the white month, the first month of the New Year.

\textsuperscript{276} It is probable that the three great Bogdos refers to the Dalai and Panchen Lamas as well as the Khoshud Dharma King Gushii Khan.

\textsuperscript{277} This is believed to be in reference to Neichi Toin.
If you are giving me a choice (Zaya Pandita) answered, (then) respect and promote the Buddhist religion and especially promote the teachings of Tsongkhapa; let everybody recite mantras and fast; let all those novices and (those holding) lay vows do so; don’t create any obstacles for those who want to become noble monks.

Jasagtu Khan was very glad and praised (him by saying), “some lamas like you ask for livestock and possessions; I admire your requests”, and (he) ordered that all should be given nutritious food three times daily and offered thirty carriages and praised his title as Rabjampa Zaya Pandita; (he) asked him to translate Pachos\textsuperscript{278} and ordered a scribe called Nangso to follow him.

He (Zaya Pandita) returned from the Mongols to the Oirats in the Year of the Horse (1642); he stayed for the winter with Ochirtu Taiji in Bugastu; he performed all the greeting ceremonies for Tsagaan Sar.

From there, in the Year of the Sheep (1643), Dorbod Kondolong Ubashi invited him and he conducted the blessing ceremony for the stupa of Daiching Khoshouchi; he gave novice monk vows to ten boys and he took the seven best of them with him; he was offered 5000 head of livestock and many other offerings; he sowed the seeds of white merit and caused a rainfall of higher teachings with which he watered many dried souls.

\footnote{278 It is not clear to which Buddhist text this refers.}
In the same Year of the Sheep he stayed over for the winter with Kondolong Ubashi in a place called Khasuluqtu; he made greeting ceremonies for Tsagaan Sar and sowed the seed of compassion among living human beings.

In the Year of the Monkey (1644) he spent the summertime at the invitation of Ochirtu Taiji; then Darkhan Corji invited him to come to Erchishi Sum\textsuperscript{279} on the Irtysh (River); from Kugsali Bakhanas he moved with Ochirtu Taiji to the place called Lebshi Kharatal.

His monks stayed for the winter in their khüree\textsuperscript{280} near the temple of Darkhan Corji; Darkhan Corji gave them everything needed in that place to support them during their stay and he (Darkhan Corji) helped to translate Mani Ka-bum and to make other efforts to spread the jewel of religion.

(At that time) the Khan’s wife, Tayishi, was ill in the place called Bijidu; on that occasion he (Zaya Pandita) read a special blessing ceremony for her; it was Buyidar Orlug who came to invite the Gegeen to read the blessing in connection with that occasion on the 20th day of the last winter month of the Year of the Monkey; after that (Zaya Pandita’s) monks were given many offerings of things that had been stored at Darkhan Corji’s temple.

\textsuperscript{279} This is the name of a Buddhist temple.

\textsuperscript{280} A khüree is a nomadic monastery or monastic encampment in which a large central ger serves the purpose of a temple.
During that winter (1644) Dharma Doca Ubashi came to Darkhan Corji to listen to the teachings and he took some vows; (Zaya Pandita) rested there for seven or eight days and then he left.

Four days after he left was the start of Tsagaan Sar of the Year of the Roster (1645); in that month he reached Ulaan Obkuudtu.

On (Zaya Pandita’s) arrival Chikhul and other honored persons brought the remains of the Khan’s wife Tayishi from Bijidu; at that time all the people of this main group\(^{281}\) (of Oirad) came to Kharbaga and all the other groups stayed in there own places; the Khan came alone to Bijidu; they conducted a great funeral and placed Tayishi’s remains in a stupa and (Zaya Pandita) performed ceremonies and read many blessings.

From there, in the spring of the Year of the Roster (1645), (Zaya Pandita) was invited by the Torghud and so then he went to the Torghud; the son of Daiching, called Dayou Erke Taiji, died and Zaya Pandita made all of the necessary ceremonies without omission.

In summary, he was invited by Gombo Yeldeng, Lobzang, Sangin, and Kirsan, (and they) and other honored persons gave him many offerings; he sowed the seeds of white merit by copying holy texts, fasting, reading mantras,

\(^{281}\) Here group is the translation for the word nutug, which is difficult to translate into English. It often means homeland, the place were people dwell, a group of people, etc.
(making) offerings and praying and he filled with holy teachings the high, low, and middle level of many souls.

S2 Altogether, a total of ten thousand horses were offered to the treasury, one thousand horses to Pyaqmzodpa Corji; (to) each of (Zaya Pandita’s) assistants five hundred or more horses were given, each educated novice received one hundred or more horses, other non-educated novices got sixty or more, new novices each received twenty or more horses, (and) each ordinary servant received ten or more horses; although I was not there, when I later asked people they said that this was true:

S3 Gombo Yeldeng accompanied (Zaya Pandita) for some distance when he left and when he (Gombo Yeldeng) came back, (he) said, “Before, when Inzan Khutugtu was invited and left, there were no comparable offerings like these.” Khobing and Nokhula both said (to me) that in all there were up to twenty thousand horses offered.

S4 In the last month of the summer of the Year of the Dog (1646) (Zaya Pandita) returned.

S5 In the spring of the Year of the Dog (1646) Kondolong Ubashi went to war against two Dorbod Taijis\(^{282}\); he (Kondolong Ubashi) came to the places call Koku Usun\(^{283}\) and Khara Tala\(^{284}\).

\(^{282}\) Taiji means prince.

\(^{283}\) Koku Usun means blue water.

\(^{284}\) Khara Tala means black side or place.
When information about this came to both of the Taijis they crossed over Boro Khziraar and got ready (for battle): after that (Kondolong Ubashi) followed them and they were waiting in a place called Ukharliqtu, and they fought.

Folio 6B

That event took place in the presence of the Torghud (Kalmyk Khan) Daiching who was on his way to Baroun Tala.

When three uncles of Kondolong Ubashi attacked from the rear and thought they were winning, the Zunghar Danjin attacked them from the rear; the Khoshuud Danjin also came in a frontal attack and forced Kondolong Ubashi back; thus both the Danjin’s names became famous.

Old men who were witnesses of that time told (this to) me.

When the kin of the Dorbod Kondolong Ubashi lost this battle, Ochirtu Taiji said to Baatur Hung Taiji, my mother forbid me to fight but because I agree with (my) father I will fight.

Baatur Hung Taiji answered, you Khoshud will defend your Khoshud, but because my brother Dorbod came to kill me, give me the Dorbod.

In response to that Kondolong Ubashi said, “If I give my friends to you, even if I am alive, it would be as if I am dead.”

At that time, when the power of Kondolong Ubashi grew weaker, Ablai came to Khabirgradu with an army of four thousand and placed them in between and suggested let us kill those who are not friendly to us.
Sechen Khan got angry in response to (his brother) Ablai and said, “You should have come after I had been killed.”

Baatur Hung Taiji noted, “you Khoshud joined with your own Khoshud, but I will not leave the Dorbod.”

(Baatur Hung Taiji) asked, “Does the Kondolong Ubashi say that he will die?” I will find out if it is true said Sechen Khan and made a peace negotiation.

When the army of Kondolong Ubashi crossed over Talkiir (mountain) and returned (to his country), many livestock and people died of disease; afterwards they called that place “smallpox army”.

All this I heard from stories of other people, I did not see this myself.

The two Taijis led a large group of people back (toward their homeland) and they crossed Khayirtu Kholor and entered Ili.

The disciples and servants (of Zaya Pandita) stayed for the winter in Khorghondu.

The people of the Dorbod Kondolong Ubashi moved down stream.

In between this movement Khutugtu Gegeen met Kondolong Ubashi on some occasions (and he said); “I will find out about your affairs and establish a peace agreement.”

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285 This is the name of a small river leading to the Ili River.
Saying this he moved further. His treasury was left over the winter in a place called Ayighushi Tsagaan Tokhoi. He went to Ili to visit Sechen Khan.

The Khan’s headquarters for the winter remained in Ili at a place called Talghartu. The headquarters of Ablai stayed for the winter in Sara Tokhoo.

That winter the Khoid Shaqshan died (1646) (and) he (Zaya Pandita) led his soul (to a good rebirth), made a funeral, and without any delay he left at the invitation of Ablai, coming to Abala in Sara Tokhoo.

On his way, at the invitation of Ekerei Taiji, he gave a Yamantaka Mandala initiation, showing (in this way) his respect and honor for Zaya Pandita.

At that time (the Kalmyk Prince) Ghaldamba went (in war) against Torghud Daiching and he completed his business (by winning). The year of the Dog (1646) was over and the year of the pig started.

In the spring of the Year of the Pig (1647) he (Zaya Pandita) crossed the border and sent (many things) to be sold; he himself went to (visit) Kondolong Ubashi.

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286 Meaning White Bend or Elbow
287 Meaning Yellow Bend
288 Meaning he sent a caravan to China.
S2 Taryun Erdeni Hung Taiji\textsuperscript{289} was ready to go to Baroun Tala and he gathered a lot of livestock; the buffalos and cows he sent to Kitad (China) and he made an offering of 6000 sheep to the Khutuktu (Zaya Pandita).

S3 Then in the winter of the Year of the Pig (1647) he took Kondolong Ubashi with him and arranged a meeting with the two Taijis.

S4 That summer Sengge finished his business at a place called Chuy (a river near Ili) and he stayed for the winter at a place called Kurtu.

S5 Then Baatur Hung Taiji went with his army against the Khara Khalbaq\textsuperscript{290} and he suggested to Sechen Khan (that they) to go together (against the Khara Khalbaq).

S6 (He responded) “you go ahead and I will follow you.”

S7 At that time Uran Arya was doing some skilled work for Doyolong Sereng.

S8 He (Uran Arya) heard bad rumors about Doyolong Sereng getting ready to attack the homeland (of Baatur Hung Taiji) and he sent a messenger after the army (of Baatur Hung Taiji) to warn him.

S9 Doyolong Sereng found out that the army was coming back and at a place called Kunggushi Uker Buurseg\textsuperscript{291} on an island called Caqcayi he made a fort (to defend himself).

\textsuperscript{289} In English this would be Precious Fat Swan Crown Prince.

\textsuperscript{290} Meaning the Black Hats, a Turkic group.
S10  He (Baatur Hung Taiji) attacked those who could not fit on the island and he surrounded him (Doyolong Sereng).

S11  Khutuktu Gegeen came to judge them and (Sechen) Khan and Ablai also came to find out who was right or wrong and reached a peace agreement.

S12  He (Zaya Pandita) spent the summer with Zunghar Baatur Hung Taiji.

S13  That year he (Zaya Pandita) stayed for the winter with Ablai Taiji at the place called Chuyi.

S14  In the winter of the Year of the Mouse (1648) he created the clear letters (todo bechig).

Folio 8A

S1  He made a big blessing ceremony for Tsagaan Sar and he gave a great commentary and deep knowledge of the Bodhi Mor,\textsuperscript{292} Pachus and Buchi and (doing so he) promoted the jewel of religion.

S2  The mother of Sechen Khan whose name was Gunji Khatun returned from Baroun Tala and arrived in Tarbaghatai Ulaan Buraa (red branch).

S3  From the big homeland on the Ili he (Zaya Pandita) crossed Talkiir alone and came to Tarbaghatai Ulaan Buraa to meet her.

\textsuperscript{291} Which appears to be a river.

\textsuperscript{292} Literally meaning the Enlightenment Path but referring to the Bodhisattvacharyavatara of Shantideva.
In a previous summer in the Year of the Pig (1647) Sechen Khan and Khutuktu Gegeen, where sitting together one day and he (the Khan) asked, “for what purpose do you go back and forth” (among the Oirad)?

“First, for spreading the higher teaching, (and) second, because when I studied I received nourishment provided by the Dalai Lama and also received nourishment from monastery funds, I am gathering money offerings and nourishment to send to that monastery” he (Zaya Pandita) answered.

The (Sechen) Khan said, “I did not know why you did this.” “It would be better if you had told (me) about this sooner”, and saying this he sat silently.

When he (the Khan) returned to his headquarters he called all the division leaders and treasurers together and said, “I am going to go to Baroun Tala so let us gather ten thousand horses and send to Kitad (for sale).

They gathered ten thousand horses and sent Monghol Khonjin Lama and one hundred other people.

In the fall of the Year of the Cow (1649) he (Zaya Pandita) stayed in a place called Ulukhun between Ur and Yari.

Over the winter he stayed below the Boro Tala Temple in Khara Buta.

That winter Targhun Erdeni Hung Taiji came to Ili in order to go to Baroun Tala.
(Targhun) Erdeni Hung Taiji, after the event in Ukharliq, was feeling bad that he didn’t meet the Khutuktu and sent an ambassador to Khutuktu Gegeen with an invitation.

After the Year of the Cow (1949) at the end of Tsagaan Sar in the Year of the Tiger (1650) he crossed Talkiir and came to visit (Targhun Erdeni Hung Taiji).

While on the way he received non-stop invitations from Labai Jayisang Khoshuucci, Dorbod Chogthu, Lama Sagyab, and those sons and nobles invited him and gave offerings without end.

He reached the place Khulanchi Bulaq\(^{293}\) on the Ili.

That spring (1650) Sechen Khan came to meet him, and there he became friends with Targhun Hung Taiji.

After that Gegeen came back and spent the summer at the Khan’s headquarters in Yurban Khushuta.

From there he went to Jiriyn Koku Yuya to visit his treasurer in that place.

He sent ahead his main treasury and with a small delegation he went to Ablai for the benefit of religion.

Without delay he returned to (Sechen) Khan’s camp in Kuurgeyin Khol.

There the money from selling the ten thousand horses in China arrived.

\(^{293}\) Wild Horse Springs
(Sechen) Khan said, “All the money from the ten thousand horses I am offering to you.”

Folio 9A

Khutuktu (Zaya Pandita) said, “My belongings are so great because you are a great person, (so) instead of me make this offer to the great Bogdos.”

“Your child Khubligan is there (in Tibet) and it will be good for you to send a group of the best people (with the offering) and earn merit”.

The Khan answered him, “I was thinking to make an offering to you a long time ago and I am not going to take this money back.”

“It is up to you to give this money to the Khubligan or not,” and he offered him all the money from the sale of the ten thousand horses.

In summary, from the Year of the Tiger (1638) to the year of the Tiger, (1662) while among the Khoshud, Torghud, Dorbod, Zunghar, Khoid and others of the Dörbön Oirat, he (Zaya Pandita) translated sutras, shastras, and primary teaching texts including: (list of texts follows and goes to mid of folio 11A).

This is what I remember, but obviously there were many more (books) that I do not know about.

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294 The Khan had sent his child to study in Tibet and he was recognized as an important reincarnation.
S2  His disciples Erke Chosje, Rabjampa Chosje, and Kelemerchi Gsoldpon also translated the following: (list of 36 texts).

Folio 11B
S1  Among all the translations, as precious as the udumbar flower, are the texts based directly on the Buddha’s words.

S2  With hard dedication he (Zaya Pandita) studied and arrived at the end of knowledge.

S3  Returning to the country of his birth, Bogdo Zaya Pandita translated holy texts and made actions to promote the religion of the Omniscient Buddha.

S4  Also he gave initiations for monks, nuns, novices, laymen, and laywomen, and he was a teacher who gave commentaries and teachings for those who took one-day fasts and other vows.

S5  Anybody seeing someone worshiping onghu should burn that onghu and take one horse and sheep. Anyone who invites a Bo (male shaman) or Udaya (female shaman) to make a shamanistic ceremony, take the horse of the inviter and surround that male or female shaman with the smoke of burnt dog shit.

Folio 12A
S1  These orders were given and spread.

S2  Because he (Zaya Pandita) was promoting the Buddha’s religion, awakening the best white intentions, and fulfilling the souls of the happily born.\textsuperscript{295}

\textsuperscript{295} Meaning those born among the Dörbön Oirad, who had become Buddhist.
all the great and small Dörbön Oirad nobles and also the monks and laypeople, rich and simple, all respected him as the jewel on the country.

S3 In the middle month of the fall of the Year of the Tiger (1650) from Kourgeyin Khol he went to Baroun Tala.

S4 Then he reached Bulunggirtu and stayed for the winter at Yurban Baqtu.

S5 At the time when Rayireng Nomiyin Khan Darja Yabchu was on the way to the Oirad they met at Bulunggirtu and stayed the winter together at Yurban Baqtu.

S6 There, for the celebration of Tsagaan Sar, they made great ceremonies and gave Darja Yabchu the title of Rabjampa and gave him a carpet, a felt cover, a frame pillow seat back, a long robe, a ger, a horse, and other items.

S7 There Rasgreng Nomiyin Khan told Bogdo Lama, this Rabjampa Khutugtu is wise among the wisest and from him come many good benefits for religion and living beings; “who was he in the previous life?"

S8 “He was in the previous life a great wise pandita in India.”

Folio 12B

S1 (Rasgreng Nomiyin Khan) said jokingly, “Bogdo Lama said he is a pandita, so who is becoming a pandita?”

S2 With a smile (he) answered, “that one who has had many rebirths.”

S3 After spending winter in Yurban Baqtu, in the spring of the Year of the Rabbit (1651) he reached Kukunour.
From the caravan luggage sent before them, on the mountain pass called Changla, goods worth one thousand langs of silver were lost.

Tanguts were overheard along the way were talking to each other; “That Lama (Zaya Pandita) probably no longer has anything left for offerings.”

At that time Khutuktu spent the winter at Bars Kuldu with his brother’s son, Jayisang Balbaachi and then reached Kukunour.

From the great Oirat noyons there was Choukur Ubasha and Targhun Erdeni Hung Taiji.

Then, in the middle month of the fall (of 1651) they left Great Chayidam and entered Baroun Tala (Tibet) in the last quarter of the mid month of fall.

There Targhun Erdeni Hung Taiji could not overcome the traveling conditions, became sick and went back from the source called Ereen Nour (lake) of the (river) Solomo.

From there, at the last quarter of the first winter month, they reached Zuu (Lhasa).

The Dalai Lama Gegen, Gushi Nomiyin Khan, and Yeke Depa²⁹⁶ had gone to Checheq Taladu and were coming back and when resting at noon at Khara Khotodu they (Zaya Pandita’s group) met and bowed and prayed to them.

The Depa said, “you offer me a silk scarf and I will offer you a silk scarf.”

²⁹⁶ This is the title of the Dalai Lama’s Regent Desi Sonam Chophel, the same Regent who had gone to Gushii Khan in 1634 and asked for him to come to the aid of the Dalai Lama and the Gelukpas.
The Gegeen Lama (Dalai Lama) was on his way to Drepung Monastery.
The Drepung monks met him according to customs of the Yellow Religion.
So many lay people and monks gathered together in that place that no spaces were left.
That year, the Oirat delegation of great patrons, who came from far away to the ceremonies of blessings, greatly wanted to invite the Dalai Lama to visit, and they did so.
He answered, “I have to go to Ganden and Sera also.”
Rabjampa Khutuktu, Choukur Ubashi and Erdeni Hung Taiji and the great Mongolian master teacher Yeke Altatu Corji and other great patrons told their wishes to Gushi Nomiyn Khan and Yeke Depa.
“First, we are sentient beings who have come from far away to listen to these great blessings, and second we have come to the land where the holy teaching is explained and we brought and made offerings; therefore we wish that his Holiness should come to visit.
If this is so “I will go”, and having said this he went to give blessings.
Who will make the first offering and who will be the chief patrons asked the Depa.
First Rabjampa Khutuktu, after him Altatu Corji, then Choukur Ubasha and then Erdeni Hung Taiji and the others will come after.

Folio 13B

The sum of the funds of the Khutuktu amounted to one hundred ten thousand (taels) of silver.

For the monks of the (Dalai) Lama Gegeen they offered 50,000 (taels).

From the sum of 50,000 (taels), they gave half to build a statue and the other half to build a golden roof at Drepung.

Fifty thousand (taels) they offered for the places of holy teaching that enlightened people.

During the ceremonies of blessing they gave a khadag, a tea brick, a piece of fine silk, and three coins to each monk; even without the money, the tea was plenty.

In the four temples of Ganden, Sera, Drepung and Tashi Lungpo, they offered one lang of silver, one khadag for merit, one piece of fine silk, and one tea brick for each monk.

In the Yellow temples according to custom they gave plentiful offerings of tea and money.

To the Red Sakya and Karma equally they gave great offerings of money and tea.
S9  His (Zaya Pandita’s) great name spread widely to everyone, like the son of a great rich person.

S10  It is said that all together the offerings were great and big.

S11  They listen to the blessing ceremonies until the 15th day of Tsagaan Sar and then the Khutuktu and the nobles together went to Tashi Lungpo.

S12  There they offered 25,000 for the Bogdo (Panchen) Lama and at the end of the ceremony they bowed and offered one piece of white silk, one mirror, and a white pearl rosary and gave this speech of blessing.

Folio 14A

S1  “At the time that Tsongkhapa was the son of a Brahmin he offered a crystal (glass) rosary to Buddha and he made the wish that in the future “when I am dedicated to the right view may I clearly perceive emptiness”.

S2  When he (Zaya Pandita) gave this speech of blessing he said, “May I obtain the same.”

S3  “Let it be also with me” (said the Bogdo Lama).

S4  After he said this he bestowed the initiation of the Root of the Red Guidance teaching.

S5  Then the Depa made a great festival with food in the City of Zangpo when Depa Norbu came.

S6  They stayed there for ten nights and then went to Lhasa.
One thousand pieces of fabric and everything necessary were bestowed from the treasury of the Dalai Lama.

The Bogdo (Panchen) Lama went to meet the Dalai Lama at Dam and then they went to Tashi Lungpo.

When Zayisangs Balbaachi died at Kukunour, Tsagaan Gelong was sent to make the funeral blessings.

He arranged for blessing prayers to be made by the highest lamas and he also asked the Bogdo (Panchen) Lama which prayers they should read.

“Recite the Vajrasattva mantra ten thousand times,” he answered.

That is very easy and he was quite glad.

(Zaya Pandita) returned to Kukunour early and waited there for one month.

There Dalai Hung Taiji and other greater and lesser nobles stayed on the side of Kukunour called Shabarta and prepared a great stage and made everybody pray to the (Dalai) Lama Gegeen.

For the benefit of living beings and religion (Zaya Pandita) met the (Dalai) Lama Gegeen and said, “for those who speak Mongol there is no one more
important than the enlightened\textsuperscript{297} Bogdo Khan\textsuperscript{298} in the respect that we do not go beyond (his) edicts.”

S4 "Could you ask (the Manchu) Bogdo Khan to allow the spreading of Mongol letters and Mongol books?"

S5 The (Dalai) Lama Gegeen responded with a smile, “Although you are right, the Khan is very proud, when we get there we will find out.”

S6 Later on (he) told us that it was clear that the Khan’s personality was bad.

S7 There (at the place with the Dalai Lama) the Ubasansa of Zayisang Balbaachi offered a ger with silver coated iron crown ring, painted poles, painted walls, silver coated door, green and red silk fabrics, and a covering painted with different colors and ornaments.

S8 (She) also (offered) ten camels with ten silver nose sticks, covered with silk camel blankets, and ten horses with ten silver saddles and many other things and livestock.

Folio 15A

S1 She offered these to benefit the places where many people came to pray and to gain blessings for her dead husband.

S2 Everyone acknowledged this with approval, and although her offerings were not so great her choices of gifts were skillful.

\textsuperscript{297} Literally, gone beyond.

\textsuperscript{298} This refers to the Manchu Emperor.
S3 The ger she gave was used as the main headquarters of the (Dalai) Lama Gegeen, and she received full nuns vows and took the name Padma Getsul.

S4 There the Khutuktu (Zaya Pandita) was offered many animals for carriages and riding and fabrics as well as many other things.

S5 When the Lama Gegeen was ready to go to Kulgun everyone surrounded him and gave him many good wishes and touched their heads to his stirrup.

S6 Lama Gegeen raised his holy arm and said, “May everyone be healthy.”

S7 Everyone who saw this felt great exultation at this heartfelt blessing.

S8 In the winter of the Year of the Dragon (1652) (Zaya Pandita) arrived at Sechen Khan at Hara Tala and stayed for the winter.

S9 That winter Sechen Khan’s mother, named Gunji Khatun, passed away.

S10 He called her soul and made many blessings.

S11 That winter Sechen Khan took control of the Buruds\textsuperscript{299}.

S12 In that action Ghaldamba, who was seventeen, killed Yanggir Khan\textsuperscript{300}.

Folio 15B
S1 In memory of his mother he (Sechen Khan) gathered one hundred boys; fifty boys were offered to the Khutuktu to make them novices; others were offered to Acitu Corji and other lamas.

\textsuperscript{299} They are thought to be a Muslim people, probably Kirgiz.

\textsuperscript{300} He is though to be a Kirgiz or Kazak.
S2 He made offerings to twelve hundred monks, including one hundred Burud boys and one hundred local boys, in total two hundred novices, his mother’s herd of eight thousand sheep, and twenty thousand other livestock.

S3 It was told that Sechen Khan gave all the belongings of his mother to the Khutuktu, excluding nothing.

S4 When Sechen Khan, in memory of his mother and consideration of her kindness, wanted to go to Baroun Tala, Khutuktu, Abalai and others, tried to reason with him, saying, “For a great noble like you, to go without offerings is wrong.”

S5 The Khan answered, “I do not want to repay my mother’s kindness by giving things and livestock taken from others.”

S6 “By thinking about my mother’s kindness I will reach Lhasa and the Dalai Lama Gegeen, and will make nine circumambulations and nine prostrations and will give best wishes and this is how I will repay my mother’s kindness.”

S7 Not long after that he left.

S8 At one time Sechen Khan explained, “Once Khutuktu bestowed on me one bowl of arki “. Drinking it he said, “Khutuktu I wish to ask you something,” and then he continued. “

Folio 16A

S1 “You cannot be raised to greatness because you are already great, nor reduced, as you cannot be made small.”
“Everywhere you go you are a respected Lama. “

“Instead of staying as a child you went to Baroun Tala to become a novice and you studied great knowledge there.”

“By order of the two Bogdos you returned to the Mongols and Oirats to spread religion.”

“My mother and father showed you great kindness and I cannot even express the great kindness they gave to me.”

“Please do not allow them to go to any of the three miserable rebirths but send them on to the path to liberation.”

Zaya Pandita responded, “This is true, you are right. Let’s go ahead.”

Saying this the Gegeen became emotional and tears came to his eyes.

The Khan took his (Zaya Pandita’s) hand and put it to his head in blessing and then sat back on his carpet.

(If I stay) at your place I will get drunk quickly and so, taking one more bowl of arki, he went out and rode away.

Thus the Khan went to Baroun Tala.

(Zaya Pandita’s) khüree remained that winter with Ablai at Tomor Sorho.

That winter (1653) Batur Hung Taiji became a god (passed away).
Sechen Taiji and his other children invited (ZP) to become the guiding lama, and he called his soul and put his ashes in an urn.

During the forty-nine days they made great offerings in his memory and recited many prayers.

Yum Aghas (Baatur Hung Taiji’s wife) had the wish to spread the holy teaching.

The Gegeen awoke these intentions in her.

At the time when Sengge wanted to become the brother-in-law of Sechen Khan the Khutuktu Gegeen was friendly and respectful (toward him).

First he was a great noble, second he had religious faith, and third he was a relative.

Sengge, out of respect and belief, took vows and listened to prayers and he promised that all the books that had been translated (by Zaya Pandita), “I will copy and keep with me”, and his belief had no limits.

That winter the Torghoud Dayiching stayed there and in the summer he stay with Ablai at Bulnayin Usun Khujirtu.

That summer (1653) Ablai took the Sonidi (Sunni Muslims) under his control.
When Torghoud Dayiching was with Ablai, Ghaldamba and Sonomsu came from Kuku Usun Khara Tala to meet with Dayiching.

There with Abalai in the presence of the Khutuktu Gegeen they held a great celebration.

The Torghoud Dayiching invited the khüree (of Zaya Pandita) and left.

Ghaldamba also said, “I left my place with no master” and left quickly.

At that place Ablai offered Khutuktu some of the belongings of Erke Noyon and also offered one hundred camels.

“When you return from the Torghud, please come to visit us,” he asked.

From there he went to his treasury at Bughas and then to visit the Torghud.

At the time when Rasgreng Nomiyin Khan was known as Rabjampa Corji he gathered many belongings and livestock and was on his way to Baroun Tala when he met (Zaya Pandita) at the place called Nurayin Khurghaljin.

(He) offered two horses, both pure black, one a rare trotter, and the other (a special breed) called Arghumaq, and took vows (from Zaya Pandita) and made a celebration and continued on his way.

Three princes, Geshkib, Tsagaan, and Sechen invited the khüree, and it stayed over the winter at the place called Uduqmunsuq.
For Tsagaan Sar (in 1654) he performed all the ceremonies and explained Bodhi Mor and Buchoi\textsuperscript{301} and so he spread actions of white kindness, and the nobles expressed their religious and respectful feelings by offering him thirty camels and three hundred gelding horses.

That spring (of 1654) the Dorbod Gombo Noyon passed away.

He (Zaya Pandita) blessed the remains and made all the necessary ceremonies and filled everyone with the nectar of great teaching and then continued on his way.

During his travels he was invited (to visit) Toyin Ombo and Ayushi Noyon and these two made great offerings.

Also Aldar Tayishi invited (Zaya Pandita) and based on great religious respect he had many religious texts copied and, with the intent of showing worship and respect, Gegeen gave (him) one set of his clothes.

And showing great religious respect he (Aldar Tayishi) offered three hundred geldings and thirty camels.

(Zaya Pandita) filled everyone with the nectar of great teaching.

While on the Ural River he was invited without stop by Oqzodbo and Mergen Taiji who were the sons of Gombo Yeldeng, and other great nobles such

\textsuperscript{301} Lam Rim Chen Mo by Tsongkhapa
as Sangin, Urjaan, Namo Sereng and also many lesser nobles such as Sharab Ombo and Jirid Chulum Taiji.

S5 They made great offerings of tea and food and some offered more and others less but in doing so they planted the seeds of white merit for their future.

S6 He filled everyone with the nectar of great teaching.

S7 So he reached Dayiching at the Ural River and stayed for the winter.

S8 That winter he gave many blessings during Tsagaan Sar (1655) and (in) everyone who listened to the holy teachings were planted the white seeds of merit for their future.

S9 During the last month of the summer when he was returning he received a great offering of three thousand geldings and other things.

S10 At that time (summer of 1655) Louzang became angry at the attacks of the Manghud (Muslims) and he crossed a tributary of the Ural and joined with Oqzodbo and Tughulaa.

Folio 18A

S1 Thus the three together had Mergen Taiji build a fortress at the Lake called Aqsaghal Nour. He (Zaya Pandita) called a meeting to establish peace.

S2 The winter of the Year of the Monkey (1656) he spent with a Dorbod noble at Khara Khum.
He (Zaya Pandita) made all of the blessings for Tsagaan Sar and after listening to the holy teachings and by giving one hundred horses and other great offerings he (the Dorbod noble) accomplished meritorious actions for his future.

Oqzodbo invited (Zaya Pandita) and offered one thousand horses and doing so made meritorious action.

Tughulaa also invited and offered five hundred horses.

Louzang also invited (him) and offered one thousand horses and so they all made great actions to earn merit.

From there (he went) to Ablai’s temple (in current Kazakhstan) he was invited by Ubasha Hung Taiji, Dorji Taiji, Erke Dayiching, Mongku and others.

They (all) took vows and guidance and copied books and in doing so they sowed the seeds of white merit for their future.

(He) also was invited by Sharab Sengge and Lobzang Ubasha who offered forty novices, forty gers, five hundred black horses, a herd of ewes, two long trumpets, and many generous offerings too great to count, and so accumulated blessings and great merit.

Folio 18B

Torghoud Abala’s maternal relatives, the children of Buyantu Bugi Sugi, Invited (Zaya Pandita) and they received blessings from hearing the teachings and made offerings.
With the purpose of blessing his temple, Ablai sent an ambassador called Mergen Gabchui to invite (Zaya Pandita).

(Zaya Pandita) sent the main part of his khüree to Lebshi Khara Tal.

He himself went to Ablai’s temple at the place called Chookoor Beshke.

Khutuktu Gegeen, Dayan Corgi, Sertoq Corji and another thousand monks, made a blessing ceremony (for the temple) on an auspicious day of the first winter month of the Year of the Roster.

Great offerings were made there of money and tea.

That winter (1657) he spent at Bokuni Ghol.

He made all blessing ceremonies for Tsagaan Sar and all who were there listened to prayers, Bodhi Mor and other texts and copied and took with them translated texts.

In that winter (of 1657) the snowfall was seven hand-spans.

Before we arrived, in the summer of the Year of the Roster, the Zunghars split into warring factions, east (zoun) and west (baroun).

The East part was defended by Ablai and the West by Sechen Khan.

Ghaldamba and Ablai came to Emil (river) and made a peace between east and west.
In the Year of the Dog during the first fifteen days of Tsagaan Sar, the warrior noble of Bukhara, called Abdu Shukur, came to Talas with an army of 38,000.

Ghadamba was alone on the border and managed to gather three thousand people.

In the early morning at the place called Khulang Jilang he attacked and chased them until the beginning of the river Kuu and killed Abdu Shakur.

When Saq Khozo and others who were still alive gathered three hundred strong men and stayed on the southern side (of the river) to defend themselves, Ghaldamba captured them and leaving only one horse for each of two people and sent them to the border town.

That summer (1658) while at Bulnayin Usun Khujir he (Zaya Pandita) went to Sechen Khan.

On the way he stopped at his disciples and servants. There, Achitu Corji came alone to meet him.

Actually, though many lamas supported the work of (Zaya Pandita), it is true that he (Achitu Corji) was really helping to advance his holy actions with true religious conviction.
Bayan Abaghai Dalai Ubasha invited (Zaya Pandita) to the place called Ulaan Buraa and offered food and tea and held a great festival and offered one hundred cows and one hundred sheep.

(Zaya Pandita) came to Sechen Khan at the place called Asudu. Bunstuq Drolma and others went to meet him at a distance of one day and Sechen Khan himself went out to meet him at a distance (required to) travel from morning until noon, and then escorted him to his headquarters.

That winter of the Year of the Dog (Zaya Pandita) stayed for the winter at the place called Shara Tokhoi (Yellow Elbow).

The fall before that winter Pyaqmzodpa Corgi had arrived from China.

Before that Year of the Dog, in the Year of the Sheep (1655) Sechen Khan had returned from Baroun Tala.

In the summer of the Year of the Pig (1659) (Zaya Pandita) spent the summer at the place called Asutu and the winter at Shara Tokhoi.

That year Labai Zayisang Khoshouchi, Ombo, son of Ukerei Taiji, and Ghaldan, son of Sechen Khan all passed away (became liberated).

Zaya Pandita guided their liberated souls and read the prayers.

In the memory of Labai Zayisang Khoshouchi fifty boys were given to become novices and thirty of those boys were offered to Khutuktu.
That winter of the Year of the Pig (1659) Choukur, Sengge, Sechen Baatur and others won over the Eastern (Zunghars).

In the fall of the Year of the Mouse (1660), (Zaya Pandita) loaded goods and sent Pyaqmjodba Corji along with them.

The summer before (1660) Sechen Khan and others of the Khoshoud and Zunghar arranged a big council meeting at the place called Tarakhai Khara Khojir.

After he sent Corji, Khutuktu (continued) on his way to the Khan and was invited by Danjin Hung Taiji who offered Zaya Pandita one hundred fifty camels, and received his blessings, planting the seeds of white merit for the future.

So he arrived at the Khan at the place called Chuy.

That fall, Uyizeng Nangso took three hundred camels and went ahead.

That fall (1660) Ablai and Sechen Khan had a short meeting in the presence of Khutuktu at the place called Boom.

That winter the khüree stayed for the winter with Bayan Abaghai at the place called Khara Tala.

Abalai was situated at the place called Ayighushi Tsagaan Tokhoi.

That winter Sechen Khan took his army and moved his people across the river called Khayirtu Ghol.
S5 Abalai went further and concentrated (his army) at the place called Alghuyi.

S6 Khutuktu, Lobzang Khutuktu, Rasgreng Nomiyin Khan, Dulba Corji, and Achitu Corji got together and reasoned with Sechen Khan.

S7 (Sechen Khan) answered, “I agree with your words, let us call Ablai for a meeting.”

S8 Rasgreng Nomiyin Khan went and Khutuktu sent Erke Corgi and other lamas as ambassadors.

S9 Ablai concentrated at the place called Alghuyi Ghashouni Tuurei Ulukhun.

S10 Ablai did not agree with their reasoning, so they returned without success.

S11 On the third day of the first decade of the first month of the summer of the Year of the Cow (1661) they took positions facing each other on the bank of the Emil (Saddle) River.

S12 It is said that on the first day Ablai had thirty thousand (men).

S13 The Khan also had thirty thousand (men).

S14 When Sengge and Khoid Solton Tayishi joined the Khan his numbers were greater.

S15 At the beginning of the first battle the sons of Dorbod Kuundolong Ubasha said let us go to the place called Buleni Chon.

S16 Ablai answered, “Wait, I will decide myself.”
Then Sechen Khan camped and dug an earthen berm for defense.

The sons of Dorbod Kuundolong Ubashi thought that by his actions we will get in trouble, so the battle was not started.

The next day Ablai moved and came to the Emil (River).

At that time Ablai sent a unit to pillage the people (of Sechen Khan).

They didn't attack each other but moved up-stream to the River Sara Khalulasan and reached the place called Dalan Turgen.

Sengge and Solton Tayishi also came there together.

When Mongku and Gumuske attacked the ulus together; Danjin and Oqzodbo met them and gave battle.

They captured Mongku and killed Gumuske.

At that time the Khan was winning.

When Ablai met Sengge they dismounted and camped.

The Khan attacked from the rear and started to kill those in the back.

But those who were not inside (the camp) went through the attackers and, getting angry at Ablai, killed a large number of the best people.

Both sides spent the night making defenses.
In the morning, Sengge placed canons and seeing this they became concerned.

Sechen Khan, who was in the front, ordered, “let’s go.”

Ghaldamba said, “It is wrong to go”.

(Sechen Khan) hit Ghaldamba’s horse on the head and said, “You are still young and do not know, so say nothing.”

So he went a short distance and stayed for a while. People thought, “What does he want?”

Good fortune had betrayed Ablai and he left to go to the River Emil.

(Sechen) Khan also followed him.

There Ghaldamba became furious and he took action and so brought death to many of his good people.

When Ablai was crossing the mountains at the place called Khabar Dabaa there was a big snowstorm and many of his geldings died.

The Khan sent a unit of ten thousand (men) under the command of Danjin Hong Taiji to cross the mountains at a place called Choulee to attack Ablai’s people.

Ablai learned about this and sent a messenger to his people.
The people of the Dorbod Kondolong Ubasha went down stream and the people of Ablai went up stream of the Irtysh toward their temple compound.

Then they came and took half of the people and then Ablai divided his army in two parts.

The army of Dorbod Kondolong Ubasha followed their people.

Ablai went quickly inside his temple compound.

He was under siege for between a half and a full month and many livestock died.

“Even if it seems that it will not clear from a rain storm, rain is not forever and it will be clear again.”

“It is the same when someone is suffering and it seems like it will last forever, but suffering will end and everything will pass.”

With these words the stepmother of the Khan called Sayikhan Zui Khatun came out from the Temple and talked to him.

The (Sechen) Khan accepted her words and said, “Ablai made unjust actions toward me but I didn’t do him harm, but I will follow your words and will make peace.”

When Ablai met with the Khan, Ghaldamba also went inside the walls into the temple compound with four or five companions.
Everyone was pleased and said it was true that Ghaldamba came with only a few people to relieve the suffering of many.

Everyone was happy and said, “This is the sun rise of a beautiful life.”

The Khan came into the temple fort and started to drink arki.

Ablai’s Sonid Agha met with Sengge.

The Khan gathered his council to discuss what to do with Ablai.

“Should we give him back his people or not?”

“If we give them back, how shall we give them?”

Sengge and other nobles responded, “It is your decision to give them back or not.”

When the Khan consulted with his nobles some said, “He should be held in confinement.”

Some of them said, “Give him back part of his people.”

Some of them said, “He should be sent to another country.”

Many opinions were given.

A man called Malai Khashakha said, “Who do you think this is, this is Ablai, it would be just to kill him, but if he is not killed you should give him all his people.
“You should do one of these two.”

When he said this Ghaldamba said, “My thoughts are the same.”

“I think you are both right,” said the Khan and he returned everything, even the least, to Abalai.

When Sonid met again with Sengge he said, “I agree with the Khan and Ghaldamba” and promised to return everything in its entirety.

Khoshuud Danjin also gave back everything but there were many other nobles that hid the belongings and livestock and did not return it.

Everyone spoke of the justice of Sengge and Danjin.

At the earlier siege of the temple compound a messenger had come with a message of the decision to attack.

Khutuktu sent Dayiching Nangsuyi to the Khan as ambassador with the words “if you can, return his people; if you cannot, do not make him suffer.”

After that everyone returned to his home territory.

At that time (Sechen) Khan was roaming from Tsagaan Khugir to Kharbagha.

His army came and camped on the upper Ayighushi River.
Gegeen sent me (the author) from the place called Khara Butu, which is on the upper Ayighushi, with orders that I, his assistant, should deliver some camels and horses to Ablai, give greetings and ask after his health.

I met Ablai soon after he came from his fort to the river Bokuni Ghol.

Then I went to Tsagaan Tokhoi on the river Ayighushi.

Passing by the lake coast I returned through the place called Erirung Toyirungger upstream on the river Boom.

When Khutuktu Gegeen came to the River Biji he told the Khan and other great donors and Achitu Corgi and other great lamas and his community of monks and all the other subjects of the Oirat khans, "I am going to Baroun Tala."

When the Khan and all others tried to convince him not to go, he responded, "First, my age is advanced, second I am ill, and third it seems I am coming to the end of actions in my present life; therefore please do not try to convince me to stay."

"What is true is true and what is right is right."

None of them were able to saying anything (in response).

They stayed for the winter at the place called Toguriq Khonghor Olong and decided to leave in the springtime.

Sengge’s headquarters were at Osuq Saamaldu.
Sechen Khan’s headquarters were at Talghar.

Ghaldamba’s headquarters were at Chui Talas.

Choker’s headquarters were at Tomor Sorgho.

Ablai’s headquarters were at Kharbagha.

Ayuuki and Tsagaan came alone to Danjin’s people in a place called Kuku Usun at Khara Tala.

Danjin Hong Taiji was at Khara Tala Tesketu.

Targhun Erdeni Hong Taiji was at Bogdo Ereen Khabirha.

Khoid Solton Tayishi was at Zultus.

The Shabinar stayed for the winter close to the Zoun Ghar Shabinar.

That spring Sengge offered a horse and silk scarf and sent an ambassador (to Zaya Pandita) asking him to translate the history of Shevang Gyalmo Padma Sambhava.

Khutugtu answered, “I have translated Bodhi Mor and Pachoi for learning methods.

For learning and practicing the history of Bogdos I translated Burhani Tougi (History of Shakyamuni), Buchoi, Milayin Tougi (History of Milarepa) and many others.
S14  For the purpose of practice I translated volumes of Gunriq Sedpaq Nighuusa, Yamandaga, Dörbön Doqshid (Four Wrathful Protectors) and many other texts.

S15  For how the Kalpa began and the Buddha came and started his teaching, to learn of these I translated Nomiyin Gharulgha (Guide to the Teaching), Chukhula Kereqtu, Ugeyin Sang (Treasury of Words) and many others.

Folio 23B

S1  If you wish to learn the words of Buddha and read them (I translated) Nayiman Mingghan Shuluqtu (Eight Thousand Verses), Altan Gerel (Golden Light Sutra), Tarpa Tsenbo, Panja Ragkha and many other texts.

S2  “First, (I am) sick, second (I am) old and because I am close to dying I am doing meditation, so don’t bother an old man,” he said in jest.

S3  Sengge came for a short visit and received some initiations and short teachings and before leaving he (Sengge) said, “On the way to Baroun Tala, please visit us.”

S4  That winter the son of Zunghar Bayan Zayachi took monk’s vows and received the name Biliqtu Toyin.

S5  He was the last with the good fortune to take vows (from ZP).

S6  In the year of the Tiger (1662), on an auspicious day of the first month of the summer, from the place called Biliqtu he left for Baroun Tala.
On the way he visited Sengge’s headquarters at the place called Osuq Saamal and stayed for ten days and gave teachings and for ten days they feasted without stop and listened to teachings.

He was offered a long robe and many other clothes.

The horses called Tarachi Ker and Darkhan Tsabidar were offered along with one hundred geldings.

He left from there and climbed the Kunggis (mountains) and crossed Aduun Kuruber and entered Zultus.

From there he moved through Khotan toward Keree Khada (Maroon Rock).

On the way a man called Sumer invited them, and gave a meal and offerings.

At the middle of the place called Ghurban Tasha he reached Solton Tayishi.

At the high elevations he felt (Zaya Pandita) sick and when they went down he became better.

Khutugtu was invited (by Solton Tayishi) but he said, “I cannot go but let the monks go.”

He invited the monks for five or six days and made great feasts.
In the middle of that month they crossed the river called Khurtagi Daarin Khayid and were going toward Tarim and crossed the maintain range called Nukuter.

When they entered the place called Khoriuli Daarin Gas for ten days they stayed and rested (got fat).

There Ortong Tsagaan met them by accident and received his blessing and continued on his way.

Then at the place called Khajir (Zaya Pandita) visited his treasury for five days and during that time signs of illness also appeared.

They sent the son of Ukerei Taiji called Biliqtu Gelong to Baroun Tala with a message about his illness.

After a three-night stay his face became uneven and his speech became unintelligible and he became paralyzed and everyone became frightened.

Kelumurchi made these poetic verses with wishes of good health.

Here they are.

Forever establishing the religion of the victorious Buddha,

And promoting the religion of the second Victorious One,

You who gave compassion to all living beings, especially us,
Without liberating yourself from this world, strongly remain.

S3 Others misunderstood his words and said, “Please reappear in this country,” and opening the doors read these verses three times.

S4 And although they were mistaken this was a sign that the Khubilghaan would be reborn.

S5 Tears appeared on Gegeen’s face and he cried and we monks also cried and could not read prayers.

S6 Although his speech was unclear and he could not talk, because he had such a great spirit, he showed by signs (with his hands) and managed to bestow great blessings to his monks.

S7 At the time when the left khüree of Kelumurchi finished prayers to the Yidam and started those to the Protectors on the twenty-second day of the middle fall month in the Year of the Water Tiger, called adding merit, (1662) as the first rays of the sun came, the Gegeen’s soul came out of the body and dissolved into the air.

S8 Thus he showed his liberation from the world of suffering.

S9 Just as the sun of the universe that lights the darkness of Jambudvipa sets, so behind the mountain also set the sun that gave the light of religion to the Mongols and lightened the darkness of the mind.

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As soon as he had passed they placed a tent near the door of his ger and the monks started to read Nighuusa Khuranghui (Guyasamaja) and from time to time they were offered tea and food.

The old man called Darbya Gelong was drinking tea and they started to distribute tobacco (snuff).

Because the givers and receivers of the tobacco had been crying and they could not see each other, some persons thought the tobacco was flour and the tea cup was the tobacco holder and he (Darbya) took the tobacco and ate it like flour and coughed from the bitterness and choked and seeing this monks could not help but laugh.

This was also a sign that the Khubilghaan would appear again soon.

They sent the man Erke Zayisang ahead (to Tibet) in order to arrange the prayers of blessing quickly.

Uyizeng Nangso, Kelumurchi, Dayiching Nangso and other of the Shabinar talked and decided among themselves that first it would be too hot and second too hard to carry the whole body and so they cremated the body and put the ashes in a urn.

A rainbow appeared as well as many other auspicious signs.

After the third day of the first decade of the last fall month (of 1662) the ashes were brought from Khajir to Baroun Tala.
In truth, Gegeen (Zaya Pandita) had been known to say earlier, “I do not wish to die away from the great masters of giving.”

When he first became sick at the place of Solton Tayishi he said to those around him, “If I can reach Khajir my wishes will be fulfilled.”

On the basis of saying this he had foreseen the end of his time.

Taking his ashes, they reached Zuu (Lhasa) on the auspicious day of the first decade of the first winter month (of 1662).

For one full day they received the non-stop funeral prayers of the Dalai Lama Gegeen.

After forty-nine days they took the ashes out to the open plain called Joyful Emptiness that was situated south of the Potala and showed the ashes to the (Dalai) Lama Gegeen and made an offering of ten thousand (taels of silver).

The (Dalai) Lama Gegeen blew on the ashes he had taken in his hand and said, “it seems the fire was too hot.”

In Ganden, Sera, and Drepung and in other large and small Yellow (Gelukpa) Temples they made great offerings of food and money.

Without excluding Sakya, Karma and other red temples they also made big offerings of food and money.

303 Meaning the teachers of Tibet.
We, Kelumurchi, Dayiching Nangso and others, went to Tashi Lungpo and made offerings of food and money.

They worshiped the holy relics and ashes of great lamas at Tashi Lungpo.

They offered to the ashes of Gegeen one thousand silver Langs and many other things.

It was a time when they were building a silver stupa there (in Tashi Lungpo) and they offered to Galdan Khutugtu a silver tea vessel, a silver saddle and bridle, a bale of tea and other offerings and received his blessings.

In the temples of the lands of Zang they had been making offerings of food without stop.

From Tashi Lungpo we returned to Zuu.

Without us being there, on the 23rd day of the first winter month, Pyaqmzodpa Corji passed away.

Nima Tang Khutugtu called his soul.

We told the Dalai Lama of this and received his funeral blessings.

We made a lot of food and held prayer ceremonies for a full day.

In a letter that was given (to the Dalai Lama) we asked about the rebirth of Gegeen Khutugtu and what actions would make it happen.
S11 He responded, “In regards to his rebirth, he is already in the womb of his mother.”

S12 “If he is born it will be good.”

S13 “If he is not born, at sometime in the future he will still obtain a mighty rebirth and bring benefits for living beings.”

S14 “Therefore you should save living beings in danger of being killed and dedicate them and also distribute food and drink to beggars.”

Folio 26B

S1 Also he stated, make statues of Nighuusa Khuranghui, Yamandaga, Mayidiri and lamas for the benefit of the holy teachings.”

S2 We monks asked hopefully, “Will it be good to make a statue of our Lama.”

S3 “Yes”, he agreed, “make it.”

S4 When we asked what to do with the ashes the response was, “If you mix the ashes with ink and write prayers and other (holy things) and place them inside the statue, that will be right.”

S5 He ordered the reading of a special prayer of praise for the quick return of Khubilghaan.

S6 This is what he caused to be written:
I pray to the master, that great guide and spiritual root lama, who fully realized the jewel of eternal happiness and who, on the boat of wisdom, crossed the ocean of sutras and tantras.

I pray to the kindness of the wise Toyon whose power brought us to the house of the master of great holy teaching and who opened with the great keys of unmistaken focus and analysis the gates that lead to the religion of the four great perfections.

I pray to you Gegeen, who followed the path of perfect understanding and had no limits in the kingdom of highest knowledge, and who was dedicated to listening (to the teaching) and made other wise people seem like bugs in the fire.

Folio 27A

I pray to you who accomplished great honorable actions, and abstaining from lower paths (entered) into calmness and strongly started the fire of religion and good peaceful lives for living beings born into less fortunate frontier countries.

I pray to you who listened to many root teachings, who became a wise master through strong dedication, a Toyon who tamed the source of feelings through strength of awakening, (who through) the goodness of even compassion toward all living beings without discrimination (became) holder of history’s highest (goal).
S3 I pray to you who by virtue of giving, morality, diligence, patience, and meditation, ripened completely the seed of the foundation (of wisdom) and who observed well (all vows) and tamed the four gathering consequences.

S4 I pray to you, that chariot of merit, filled with great fortune, who magically delivered those old ones covered in the dust of the four vows and driven (to the) deep path of no beginning and no ending, as endless as the meeting of the Ganges and the ocean.

S5 May your reincarnation appear quickly for the sake of innumerable living beings, who have all been our mothers (and are as vast as) the deep ocean and as impossible to measure as the universe, (so that) I and all others who believe in the wonder of your rebirth might be set at ease.

Folio 27B

S1 (By offering this) mandala created with the Lama, the Yidam, the gods of the mandala, the gathering of mighty protectors (and the) blessings of compassion of the three jewels, may (this prayer) be fulfilled by great blessings.

S2 May I be steadfast in firm belief, and may all be accomplished purely under the all-supporting heavens, (so that) hermits and all others who doubt and do not trust words (will believe).

S3 (The Dalai Lama) explained about the need for (us to) pray personally to the wise teacher Namkai Gyatso (Zaya Pandita) and (also) of how the ease of (his) rebirth (would be aided) by the merit of all helpers, (and) how the Gomang
Lopon Zorpa called Ngawang Paljor and Kunga Lobzang started (to call the) Chosje by wishful prayers (aided by) the followers and others who made up the Mongolian disciples, and the newly arrived Jamyang wrote (all) this.

Folio 28A

S1  (A statue of) Maitreya was constructed from 1000 Lang (of silver) (and) Yamandaga, Nighuusa Khuranghui (Guhyasamāja), three Bogdo Gegeens (and) others (were made) with pure silver.

S2  It would be good if you followers constructed (a statue of Zaya Pandita) up to the elbow in size so (when you leave) to go to Mongolia (you can) keep it forever and give prayers.

S3  When (the Dalai Lama) gave these instructions a statue was made with 300 lang (of silver) by the skilled Muni Dharma, Amsing Zeyidana and sixteen other Nepalese.

S4  Gomang lamas named Ngawang Paljor, Lobzang Gabji, Kelumurci, Daychen Nangso, Uyizeng Nangso, Erke Lama, Lobzang, Gendun Gelong and others participated with great diligence and it was completed in two months.

S5  Charcoal and all other necessities were provided from the treasury.

S6  (There were) gathered together and placed inside the statue relics of the Buddha, relics of great lamas, (pieces of) garment from Tsongkhapa, as well as (pieces) of garments from the Bogdos, a hair from the Dalai Lama and hairs from
other great lamas, rainbow and other (types of) pills, mantras of Bazar Sado, and other various mantras from the highest lamas, (as well as other) various fabrics.

Folio 28B

S1 On the auspicious day of the middle month of the summer in the Year of the Rabbit this well made (statue) was blessed and brought to life.\textsuperscript{304} The Lama Gegeen (Dalai Lama) instructed “this statue should stay at my high place for three days, and so it spent three days with the Geegen.

S2 There (he) bestowed the seven-verse supplication prayer called Dedu Cahan Oki\textsuperscript{305} like this:

S3 Mayidiri (who is the) empowering sound of the great vehicle, (who became) Lord of the Paradise of Precious Joy (by power) of the jeweled crown, (may that crown) be placed upon (you) just as Deed Cahan Oki (placed it on Mayidiri) in the country of the distinguished (gods)\textsuperscript{306}.

S4 (Oh) great distinguished protector of accumulated merits, with one sweep of (your) great hundred-pointed diamond scepter, crush the power of the four consequences (and) close the wombs of female asuri, until the root of samsara flees before the faith.

S5 (Through) the skillful hands of Neepa, your (body) appeared in precious melted white silver, and recognized as the nectar of the guide of all (may you)

\textsuperscript{304} Meaning that its eyes were opened (painted) and through blessings was regarded as a living presence.

\textsuperscript{305} A goddess

\textsuperscript{306} The Buddha Maitreya is known as the Lord of the Paradise of One Hundred Deities.
Rabjampa Nomiyin Khan be clearly seen (by the) faithful Mayidiri (as the) happily born (one who) gathered the merits (of the enlightened) mind in the crude frontier Mongolian country (and) spread the religion of the victorious one.

Folio 29A

S1 Through this clear and excellent image of Oqturhuyin Dalai may you quickly obtain a (Buddha's) body as (one of) perfect actions.

S2 May Gung Tang Kaju Sayin and others who called (as) helpers and relatives of great merit and precious words be strong (and) may all causes (and those who) implement them by the system of three gates follow and hold to them.

S3 Until the light of the moon and sun (simultaneously) remove the darkness of the four continents may there be no overturning the diamond-like result (of you who) obtained by his own merit that precious birth in Paradise.

S4 (As) this distinguished religion is full of the joy, (bringing) benefit to all entrance ways just as (the) moon (brings light), (may you be) clearly known among people in the universe as one of excellence (and) may (you) consume forever the nectar of beneficial calmness.

S5 (You who were) called Ngakpa Nomiyin Khan Rabjampa Corji Namkai Gyatso appearing (now) as a white silver statue, (called by those) as great as Mayidiri, named Gomang Lopon Zorpa Ngawang Paljor, Kunga Kaju Lobzang and others, from the time (the statue) was created, may (you) be strongly seated
(there), based on the wishes of other (many) Mongolian disciples and the newly appointed Jamyang (who) wrote (this).

Folio 30A

S1    On the auspicious day of the middle summer month of the Year of the Rabbit (the) statue was brought to Xajir.

S2    From there (it was) taken on the first quarter (of the new moon) in the first fall month and brought to Cahan Usun in the last quarter (of the old moon) during the last fall month.

S3    The khüree stayed for the winter at Lebshi. Sechen Khan’s court spent the winter at Sara Toxoi on the Ili.

S4    In the Year of the Dragon Phuntsok Dolma (and) Ghaldamba both (came) to visit (and) bowed and prayed to the statue; Chouker Ubashi also came.

S5    That fall Sengge remembered the words of promise he made when Khutugtu Gegeen was alive; “I will (sponsor) copies of all texts you translated.”

S6    In the fall of the Year of the Dragon (he) invited Kelumurci (and other) scribes.

S7    (Sengge) had Kelumurci translate and Kelsang, Bicici Gelong, Khurdun Bicici and nine other scribes wrote texts, and when they left (he) gave them great offerings, (and) told (them) if your horse is exhausted take a horse (from) our khoshun, if (you) lack supplies, consume our supplies, and he granted (him the title) Darkhan.
S8 When Kelumurci reported Sengge’s benevolence to (Sechen) Khan (he instructed), “as this was through the grace of Sengge's, may it be so.”

Folio 30B

S1 In the winter of Year of the Dragon the khüree spent the winter at Basxa.

S2 It appeared that the Khubligan was reborn in that Year of the Dragon.

S3 In the first month of the summer of the Year of the Snake Ochirtu Taiji went from Koku Usun to Baroun Tala.

S4 That was the time (when) Erke Corji was in charge of the shabinar.

S5 From that place (he) sent out wise Kelumurci saying, "go and find out (from) the Highest All-seeing (Dalai Lama) if (our) Khubligan was reborn or not."

S6 In the Year of the Snake in the month of Zul307 Ochirtu Taiji reached Lhasa.

S7 Before (he arrived) Gomang Lama was handed a letter about the appearance of the Khubligan, and in the response to the letter spoke and responded: (he) obtained birth in the middle tower residence in (a place) of sparse trees (and a) courtyard with a white horse and a small number of livestock.

S8 In the Year of the Snake Kelumurci returned and (he) also carried a letter.

S9 In the response the instructions said, “cross the Galzou Moreni (and look) in the hills surrounding Xara Xoto (and) Cha Sangha.”

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307 Generally meaning December when the birthday of Tsongkhapa is celebrated.
Earlier the Lama Gegeen at the Potala at the time he (Zaya Pandita) was to be reborn pointed with his index finger to Cho Dronpa (near) Xara Xoto, and said, “Ngakpa Sechen Corji (will be) reborn there”.

Folio 31A
S1 Kelumurci went there to look around (and) saw a courtyard (with) sparsely planted trees (and) one white horse, (and) saying, “let us stay overnight,” dismounted (and) went inside.

S2 Before (he came) that child (for whom they were looking) spoke, saying, “a Mongol guest is coming”.

S3 Kelumurci went into the house and sat on the felt carpet (and the) child (sat) on his mother’s knees and watched and looked.

S4 (When) Kelumurci said, “come and eat some rilu,” the child came with no hesitation and ate rilu and sat on top of his knee.

S5 Kelumurci whispered “(are you) indeed the Khubligan of Khutugtu?” and (the child) responded, “indeed.”

S6 He spent the night there and talked to the mother and father.

S7 (They) asked, “Mongol, where you going.”

S8 (He) responded, “(I) came (to) pray (at) the temple of Zangpo (and) spent only one day and night.”
S9  Kelumurci, (while) talking to the mother, asked, “when did this child first come to the womb (and were there) any signs; (when the child) started to speak what (did he) say?”

S10  (She) answered, ”at the time of the birth one great lama came and bestowed religious robes, (and) at the time (he first) spoke (the child) would respond “adabisi”, (and) we do not have such a word in Tangut”.

Folio 31B

S1  (He) spent the night there not saying anything to the (parents), and (he) returned (and) reported to the Great All-seeing (Dalai Lama).

S2  (The Dalai Lama) asked, and said, “What did I say before?”

S3  (Kelumurci) responded, “ (you said) in a courtyard sparsely planted with trees (and with) a white horse tied up, in such place would (he be) reborn.”

S4  (And the Dalai Lama said), “if so, that is indeed (him)”.

S5  Then in the Year of the Horse Ochirtu Taiji (went to the Dalai Lama who bestowed clothes befitting a khan, (and also) bestowed the title Ochir Sechen Khan (on him).

S6  The Khan's wife, Phuntsok Dolma, asked the Great All-seeing (Dalai Lama) “first (this child is my) Lama's Khubligan, (and) second I indeed do not have any children, so (may) I take (him and) later send (him) to study?”
“Indeed now (he) is still young, maybe (you) can (do this) later, (it) does not seem good to take the child” (the Dalai Lama said), (and) he instructed, “in that land food supply is scarce, (it) will be good to deliver food supplies.”

(In) the Year of the Horse Ochir Sechen Khan came back to his homeland.

The khüree spent the winter at the junction of two rivers at Lebshi Basxa.

The khüree spent summer in the Year of the Sheep at Saraqtu.

That fall Ghaldamba became a god (died) at Bijid, (and we) made a great prayer service for the funeral.

Without delay the cremation was done (and) the ashes were sent to Baroun Tala.

A messenger was sent to Baroun Tala (to request) funeral prayers, (when the prayers) were done, (they) blew on the ashes there appeared a bone in shape of a heart.

It is true (when) it is said that a good person has a heart of bone, said (the Dalai Lama) (and he) separated the bone (from the ashes) with a silk offering scarf and holding (it) in (his) hand blew (on it).

(When asked) to foresee (where he was reborn, he) said, “(He was born) as the Tengri.”

In the Year of the Sheep the khüree spent the winter at Basxa.
S4  In the summer of the Year of the Monkey the khüree was at Lebshi.

S5  Lobzang Kabcu left the khüree for Baroun Tala (and) crossed and spent the winter at Alhui, (and) in the spring crossed Ene Tala.

S6  That summer Ablai was moving down (river).

S7  In the summer of the Year of the Chicken Erke Corji (went) from Lebshi to the Baroun Tala with the adult disciples to meet with Khubligan on the auspicious day of the first month of summer.

S8  (When) going along the bank of the Olon Nour (and) then (over) Mingyan Tagagar at the bottom of the (mountain) Eren Xabirgyar the camels’ feet became swollen and the livestock became sick due to heat and flies.

S9  Because of that they had to delay shortly at Dorboljin (and then) continued.

S10  From there they reached Tal Nacin at the Gobi, dividing into two groups.

S11  Erke Corji with most followers went toward Xoyor Sayixan, (and) Kelumurci and a few people went toward Uyibeng Xarata.

S12  Kelumurci went over Xara Daba (and) arrived at Kokonor (and) stayed for the winter (with) Bolodoi at Dabusun Gobi.

Folio 32B

S1  Erke Corji reached the treasury at Oro Ice and went on to Baroun Tala.

S2  Upon return from there, in the fall he went back to Baroun Tala again.
Then wise Kelumurci, on an auspicious day of the first month in the Year of the Dog, (went) from Dabusun Gobi to Baroun Tala (through) Xulusun Siber and in the last month of the summer arrived at Dam.

Wise Kelumurci stayed at Dam for the sake of being with the Khubligan.

Uran Xonjin Gelong (and) a few of us people (went) through the Hangpa Cinar (and) arrived in Zuu.

(In the) beginning (we visited) Drepung (where the) Gegeen of Zabas Drong, (which is) between and behind the sacred abode of the Dalai Lama and Bukun Talxo (at the place) called Olzoyitu Balgasun, met (us) and prayed and (we) were blessed to sit in the front row, (and) I was in the main seat.

(He) looked at me and asked, “Which one is Kelumurci?”

Kelumurci responded, “Here, I am indeed Kelumurci.”

Then, “Are you not Radnabhadra?” he distinctively asked (me).

There the Khubligan of Bogdo Lama came to receive novice vows from Dalai Lama.

There on the auspicious day at the time of bestowing vows, (we) asked (if it) would be good if (they were) done together (for) our Bogdo Khubligan (and this was) reported it to the Highest (Dalai Lama?).

He instructed, “This should be requested by Pyaqmzodpa.”
When we had asked this of Bogdo Pyaqmzodpa, (he said he) did not like (the idea) and so (we) let it be known to the Highest (that he) did not like it.

The Highest smiled and said, “If he becomes a lama one day later that would not be bad.”

So in the fall of the Year of the Dog, (the Khubligan) at the age of seven (he) took this good action (of receiving his vows).

In that place the Dalai Lama gave this speech, “Rabjampa (Zaya Pandita) has three merits for me.

Earlier when (Dalai) Lama Gegeen was only the age of seven and he was taken to Drepung, the son of Xoloci Noyon, Yeke Toyin, asked (him) to come to Kukunour, but the Gegeen was at a young age and would not stop crying.

At that time the great Depa asked Rabjampa Khutugtu (who was) called Sechen Ombo, “Sechen Ombo, what you would tell us to do?”

“Indeed, Yeke Toyin is mighty, (and) because (he very much dislikes) the Gegeen, it could be dangerous to (his) life; (he should) escape to Gerel Lingpa.”

“You should come (also)” (the Depa) said.

That night they went secretly out from Drepung and went on a boat up the Galzou Muren (river), and then rode geldings along the riverbank.

At that time this Mongolian person (Zaya Pandita) was (very) helpful.
Folio 33B

S1  At the places (where it was necessary) to carry (me on horseback he) carried (me), and at the places (where he should carry (me on his back) (he) carried (me on his back), and that was his first (source of) merit.

S2  Secondly (he) relentlessly worked on behalf of Buddha’s religion, (and) especially our Yellow Religion.

S3  Third, gathering great things with out any sorrow to the great number (of people) he became a master of giving.

S4  This was the speech that he gave.

S5  At one time (when we were) on way to the prayers at Zabas Drong the following words were spoken to the Gomang monks: “Take and bring carpets and sleeveless robes for the place at Choira.”

S6  At that time Kelumurchi was staying at Zabas Drong.

S7  That winter Erke Corji stayed for the winter in Zuu and he listened to the prayers of Tsagaan Sar.

S8  During the Year of the Pig (1670), in the middle month of the summer, (we) came over to the settlement of Serteng.

S9  From Serteng, in last month of the summer, (we went) east pass Dang, entered Bulinggir and went around the Gobi, and from there proceeded by Baras Kul and came to Eren Xabirha, exited Tesker, and arrived at Buhu Usun, where (we) bowed and got an audience with Rgareng Nomiyin Khan.
Mahada (and) Phuntsok Drolma had both been (there) in the care of Nomiyin Khan.

Folios 34 to 42 are not included in this translation but their translation has been completed. Those pages are to be the subject of a later work that will cover the years following the 1670 assassination of Sengge by his half-brothers and the return of Sengge's brother Galdan from Tibet. Galdan avenged his brother's death and reconsolidated the Zunghars under his command. The text then indicated that Sechen Khan of the Khoshud went to war against Galdan in 1675 (folio 34B) and was eventually defeated by Galdan in 1676, giving rise to the formal Zunghar Khanate that survived until its ultimate defeat to the forces of the Manchu Emperor Qianlong in 1757. The Seren Gerel ends in 1992 and provides many details of that turbulent period of warfare in Zungharia and eventually in Mongolia when Galdan waged war with the Khalkhas, bringing an end to the Great State formed in 1640.

The text of the Seren Gerel ends with this dedication:

This is the history, called Moon Light, of Rabjampa Zaya Pandita, who was like the sun, illuminating religion and showing the basis of the teaching to many of fortunate rebirth. Through his fine and penetrating mind he revealed to those like me the meaning of all 84,000 Dharmas.
Although I was born in times of great degeneration, in order to do some good I turned to the religion of Buddha and concerned myself with the serene, higher truth of the mind of enlightenment. Though my mind is dull and I have little knowledge, I undertook this based on the wishes of Lobzang Gelong and other gelongs who have always made great effort to gain merit.

I, the Gelong Solpon Radnabhadra, have taken these letters and strung them together into a rosary of words. The Bakshi Rinchen Ka wrote everything on paper with great skill. Through the merit of making clear the history of the great Lama may the incomparable religion of the Buddha spread in the ten directions and may the mind of enlightenment take birth in living beings and may they all quickly gain the state of the Dhyana Buddhas.

Sarva ma gha lam
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