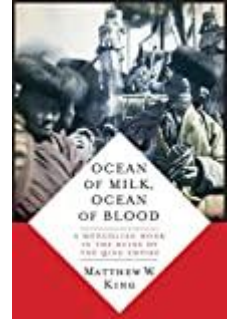
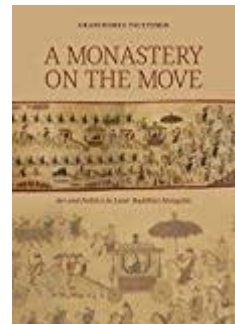


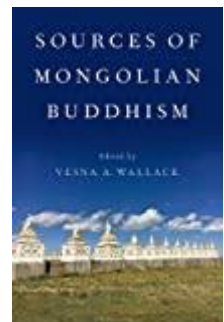
Matthew W. King. *Ocean of Milk, Ocean of Blood: A Mongolian Monk in the Ruins of the Qing Empire.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2019. xiv + 281 pp. \$65.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-231-19106-7.



Tsultemin Uranchimeg. *A Monastery on the Move: Art and Politics in Later Buddhist Mongolia.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2021. xix + 282 pp. \$72.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8248-7830-6.



Vesna A. Wallace. *Sources of Mongolian Buddhism.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. xxiii + 523 pp. \$160.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-19-090069-4.



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Recent Scholarship on Mongolian Buddhism

As an undergraduate at Berkeley in the early 1970s, I had the good fortune to study classical Tibetan with the late James Bosson (1933-2016), a leading specialist of Mongolian language and liter-

ature for whom Tibetan was a secondary field. Professor Bosson would often remind his students that many of the leading contributors to Tibetan learning during the past three or four centuries

have in fact been Mongols. Although this was his gentle way of hinting that we should look more closely into Mongolian studies, his advice could also be understood—not quite as he intended, to be sure—to reassure those of us who were not taking up Mongolian that, so far as our areas of interest were concerned, Tibetan would suffice to give us access to the main written contributions of Mongolian Buddhists.

Mongolian Buddhism has sometimes seemed to suffer, in academic Buddhist studies, from the perception that it is little more than an adjunct to Tibetan Buddhism. Knowledge of Mongolian Buddhism has been impeded, too, by the overwhelming preponderance of the Mongol conquests of Chinggis Khan and his immediate descendants in presentations of Mongol history, particularly those written on behalf of the general public.[1] Despite this, scholarship on Mongolian Buddhism has grown substantially over the past several decades, demonstrating the great interest the topic holds in its own right. The three titles reviewed here refer to much of the scope of relevant recent scholarship and so offer an expansive and excellent overview of this emerging field.

Sources of Mongolian Buddhism, edited by Vesna Wallace, presents, for the first time, a capacious selection of Buddhist texts by Mongol authors, some written in Mongolian but many in Tibetan as well. The period treated spans the seventeenth through twentieth centuries and includes, in eight parts, twenty-four chapters, each giving translations from original sources preceded by the translators' introductions. Readers not familiar with the history of Mongolian Buddhism may wonder why the work begins only with the seventeenth century, rather than with earlier Mongol encounters with Buddhism beginning under the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Mongol Empire, or during the sixteenth century with the career of Altan Khan (1507-82). For it is the latter whose consolidation of Mongol power and adherence to the Gelukpa order of Tibetan Buddhism

are often regarded as defining the inception of modern Mongolian Buddhism. (It was Altan Khan, let us recall, who awarded to the Tibetan Gelukpa master Sonam Gyamtso [1543-88] the title of "Dalai Lama," making him the third in the line after the title was retroactively applied to his predecessors.) An ampler historical introduction would have provided needed orientation for readers not already familiar with the pertinent developments. Wallace's earlier edited volume, *Buddhism in Mongolian History, Culture, and Society* (2015) may be profitably consulted for much of this background; it seems odd that no reference is given to it in the volume reviewed here. Much of the necessary historical framework will also be found woven into Uranchimeg Tsultemin's *A Monastery on the Move*, reviewed below.[2]

The first of the eight parts of *Sources of Mongolian Buddhism*, "Two Early Seventeenth-Century Texts," begins with Brian Baumann's "The Stone Inscription of Tsogt Taij (Čoytu Tayiĭi)," a short but evocative poem by the prince Tsogt Taij (1581-1637), who is best known to history as one of last major Mongol opponents of the Gelukpa and an adversary of the Fifth Dalai Lama. This is followed by another work written in Mongolian, "Siregetü Güüsi Čorĭi's *Treatise Containing the Complete Meanings of the Most Important [Doctrinal Concepts] to Be Used* (The Last Chapter)," translated by Agata Bareja-Starzyńska. The text makes evident the efforts expended around the period of its composition (1587-1607) to formulate Buddhist technical concepts in the Mongolian language, providing lists of numerical categories (five paths, ten stages, etc.) in a manner familiar from other traditional Buddhist lexicons, such as the *Mahāvvyutpatti* (the ninth-century Sanskrit-Tibetan "Great Lexicon"), but with additional notes lending it broader interest than as a compilation of doctrinal inventories alone.

Part 2, "Autobiography and Biography," shifts to works written by Mongolian authors in Tibetan. "The Autobiography of the First Khalkha Zaya

Paṇḍita Lobsang Trinley,” translated by Sangseraima Ujeed, is the lengthiest selection in the volume. Its author, the first Zaya Paṇḍita (1642-1715), was among the preeminent Mongolian monk-scholars and his memoir offers ample testimony to the thoroughly Tibetanized milieu in which he circulated. His remarks, however, also touch on the activities of other contemporary Mongols involved in Tibetan Buddhist affairs, notably the prince Tūšiyetü Khan, whom he served as attendant during the Khan’s pilgrimage to Lhasa in 1673 (pp. 76-77). The persistence of traditional Tibetan literary forms among the Mongols is seen in Matthew W. King’s chapter on Zava Damdin’s *Beautifying Ornament for the Mind of the Faithful: A Praise-Biography of my Root Lama Vajradhara, He Who Possesses the Three Types of Kindness, the Great Mahāpaṇḍita Endowed with Excellent Discipline and Learning Named ‘Sanjaa’*, written in 1914. The chapter is an extended verse eulogy honoring the teacher of the author, Zava Damdin, who is the subject, too, of King’s *Ocean of Milk, Ocean of Blood*.

In the third part of the volume, “Buddhist Teachings,” Tibetan models remain ascendant: Erdenebaatar Erdene-Ochir offers translations of three epitomes of Mahāyāna teaching by Ngawang Palden (1797-1864) and Shedrub Tendar (1835-1915); and extracts from Čaqar Gebši Luvsančültem’s (1740-1810) miscellaneous notes on the life of Tsongkhapa and other Tibetan topics are translated by Matthew W. King. Only the third chapter of this part, the editor’s “Teachings of the Pious Fat Paṇḍita Tsevelvaanchigdorji,” returns to writing in Mongolian, presenting a series of short moral tracts by a nineteenth-century scholar, Targan Paṇḍita, who, unusually, never pursued his studies in Tibet (though he knew Tibetan and wrote in that language as well).

In the three parts that follow, Mongolian voices are heard more distinctly and Tibetan influences, though never quite absent, recede to some degree. Part 4, “Buddhist Didactic Poetry,” is one of

the most attractive in the book and contains examples of verse by Mergen Gegeen (1717-66), translated by Uranchimeg Ujeed, and by Danzanravjaa (1803-1856), interpreted by Simon Wickham-Smith. Many readers will find the latter to be of particular interest; like Targan Paṇḍita, he never traveled to Tibet, but unlike the large majority of Mongol Buddhists after the seventeenth century, he was more closely associated with the contemplative, tantric traditions of the Nyingmapa and Kagyüpa orders than with the Gelukpa that was, in effect, the Mongolians’ official church. The poem “Perfect Qualities” (pp. 194-195), for instance, is addressed to his consort (“your body’s wonder / has truly captured my mind”) and recalls the love songs attributed to the libertine Sixth Dalai Lama.

“Buddhist Ritual Texts,” the topic of part 5, is appropriately limited to rituals pertaining to local Mongol cults, omitting the extensive contributions of Mongolian Buddhists to liturgical works intended to accompany widespread Tibetan Buddhist practices, such as the rites and devotions connected with lay and monastic ordination, tantric initiations and propitiation ceremonies, or worship of the lineages of the Gelukpa and other masters. This restriction usefully serves to accentuate some of the specific features of Mongolian Buddhism, for, as in other parts of Asia in which Buddhism flourished, originally Indian antecedents provided conceptual and literary frameworks for the codification of traditions belonging to what, in the Tibetan case, R. A. Stein termed the “nameless religion.” Although most of the rituals presented in this part of the book were written in Tibetan, their distinctive character is made clear in their geographical references (e.g., “The Khalkha Zaya Paṇḍita’s *Smoke Offering Rituals to the Khangai Mountain Range*,” translated by Krisztina Teleki), associations with Mongol folklore (“Ritual Texts Dedicated to the White Old Man with Examples from the Classical Mongolian and Oirat [Clear Script] Textual Corpora,” presented by Ágnes Birtalan), or religio-political specificities (for in-

stance, the “Incense Offering to the Lord Chinggis Khan,” interpreted by Matthew W. King). Additional ritual selections include varied purifications, offerings, and prayer texts.

Part 6, “Buddhist Oral Literature of the Eighteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” presents literary versions of selected narratives that had circulated in oral tradition before being set down by religious teachers (in the first case) or recent folklorists (in the second). “The Legend of Mother Tārā the Green,” by Brian Baumann, with its narratives of visits to the court of Yama and the hells, offers a fine example of Buddhist popular literature, reminding us of similar tales from many other Buddhist lands. (The entire Mongolian text is transcribed on pp. 374-381, the only such instance in this volume.) “Oral Historical Narratives from the Early Twentieth Century,” by Adrienne Gecse, presents brief selections, mostly concerned with aspects of pastoral life and the activities of Buddhist teachers in pastoral settings, drawn from a multivolume *Oral History of Mongolian Buddhism* published in Ulaanbaatar in 2010-13.

In the seventh part, “Tradition in Transition: The Twentieth-Century Writings,” we turn to the tumultuous and tragic period of Mongolia’s transformation from Qing dependency to independent Buddhist theocracy to Stalinist state.[3] “Zava Damdin’s ‘A 1931 Survey of Mongolian Monastic Colleges,’” by Matthew W. King, presents an account of the monastic colleges written just six years before the purges that would leave only three of Mongolia’s eight hundred or so temples and monasteries still standing, their monks laicized, imprisoned, or killed. In the chapter that follows, “Agwan Dorjiev’s Questions about the Past and Future of Mongolian Buddhism,” King turns to the influential Buryat tutor of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, best known by his Russianized name Dorjiev (1854-1938), who served as Tibet’s emissary to the czar and appears to have been the first Tibetan Buddhist to have visited western Europe, before becoming “a casualty of the revolution like

so many thousands of other monastic leaders” (p. 418). Dorjiev’s questions are accompanied here by the responses penned by the author introduced above, Zava Damdin. Their dialogue reflects, among other matters, something of the consternation that growing knowledge of European history and geography aroused in traditional monastic circles (“Shamarpa has said that [European maps] are examples of nonsensical chatter,” p. 426).[4] King also contributes to this part a mid-twentieth-century Buryat teacher’s essay on “The Origin of Human Beings and the Holy Dharma Kings and Ministers in Mongol Lands.” In “The Internal Regulations of Gandan Monastery in Ulaanbaatar,” Uranchimeg Tsultemin translates parts of the monastic code adopted by a preeminent center of Mongolian Buddhism in 1925, shortly after the foundation of the People’s Republic of Mongolia. “Literary Treatments of Buddhism in the Period of Transition,” by Simon Wickham-Smith, adds selections from works that evocatively preserve Buddhist themes, though composed during the revolutionary period.

The final, eighth part of *Sources of Mongolian Buddhism*, “Contemporary Buddhist Writings,” includes just one chapter, a short anthology of poetry and fiction, some as recent as 2012, presented by Simon Wickham-Smith. In most of these, Buddhism is explicitly referenced, though in modern literary forms. In G. Mönkhbaatar’s elegant lyric “I Close My Eyes ...” (p. 512), however, its presence remains allusive: *I close my eyes ... / traveling within ... / revealing myself, / as someone crosses my path, and / deeper into the darkness ... / closing my eyes, / I know there’s some kind of vast secret / deeper than the darkness ... / I am light as a feather / to tell you ... / I have opened my eyes.*

Sources of Mongolian Buddhism, in sum, is a gift to the Buddhist studies field, at last permitting those of us outside of Mongolian studies to access something of the richness of this tradition, both in its plainly Tibetan dimensions and along the

unique pathways it has also forged. Besides its evident value as a text for courses focusing on Mongolian or Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism, I recommend it to those teaching Buddhist studies more generally as a resource from which one may profitably draw materials illustrating the Mongols' many contributions to the Buddhist traditions to which they adhered.

The second book reviewed here, Uranchimeg Tsultemin's *A Monastery on the Move*, is a work of considerable beauty, in terms of both its visual aesthetics, employing copious, well-chosen illustrations, and its overall conception, which insightfully merges the study of art and material culture with that of social and religious history. The subject of *A Monastery on the Move* is Zanabazar (1635-1723), the first of the Jebtsundampa Khutugtus who came to rule Mongolia, and his originally mobile monastic encampment, Ikh Khüree, whose twentieth-century, settled, and socialist successor became the modern Mongolian capital of Ulaanbaatar. Zanabazar, his remarkable achievements as an artist, and the Jebtsundampa line of incarnate teachers that he initiated have received earlier attention and are well known to students of Mongolian history and culture, but Tsultemin brings a comprehensive and original vision to the study of this important figure that will surely remain a point of reference in the field for many years to come. Throughout the work, Tsultemin is concerned to overturn the perception, mentioned at the beginning of this review, that Mongolian Buddhism is little more than a sub-branch of the Tibetan tradition, and to assert instead its proper character and value.

Tsultemin's focus on Zanabazar and on the institutions of Khalkha Mongolia as a Buddhist polity, to which his contributions were fundamental, help us to understand why the seventeenth century may be taken as a point of inception, as it was in *Sources of Mongolian Buddhism*. For although the Mongols' engagement with Tibetan Buddhism had emerged during the pre-

ceding centuries, it was in this period that a definite synthesis was forged whereby the Mongols made the religious traditions they adopted unmistakably their own. Tsultemin's story, in this sense, concerns the formation of the unique aesthetic and political character of Khalkha Buddhism, its identity in relation to, yet distinct from, its Tibetan roots.

The political identity of the Khalkha, Tsultemin argues, was embodied in Zanabazar himself and drew upon the language of Tibetan conceptions of "Buddhist government," variously expressed in formulations such as the "pairing of religious and secular government" (Tib. *chos srid gnyis ldan*, Mong. *shasin tör*) or the "two systems" (Tib. *lugs gnyis*, Mong. *qoyar yosu*). But in its Mongolian form, this was not a simple, unaltered transfer of a Tibetan model to Mongolia. A major part of what distinguished the institution that emerged through the ascension and rule of Zanabazar was its explicit affirmation of its Chinggisid precedent—for Zanabazar was a direct descendant of Chinggis Khan—a precedent whose physical embodiment was seen in the mobile encampment that stood as the center of its authority. The religious aspect of the equation was made clear through the recognition of Zanabazar, when he was a child of five, as the incarnation of Tāranātha (1575-1635),[5] the great tantric master and historian of the Jonangpa order of Tibetan Buddhism, whose death, according to Mongol tradition, had occurred in Mongolia shortly before Zanabazar's birth.

After introducing Zanabazar to her readers in chapter 1, Tsultemin turns, in the following chapters, to summarize his outstanding contributions as an artist, his identity as a Gelukpa hierarch, and his representation in portraits. The fourth through sixth chapters then treat: the continuing traditions of portraiture in paintings of his successors, the Jebtsundampa incarnations; the history of Ikh Khüree, the mobile monastic city he founded, with its monasteries and colleges; and

the institution of “Buddhist government” of which it was the center. The far-reaching vision of Zanabazar and his legacy over the *longue durée* that thus emerges is buttressed by extensive visual and textual documentation throughout.

In respect to Zanabazar’s artwork, characterized by outstanding grace and a palpable sense of the bodily presence of the divine figures he created, Tsultemin insists on his apparent departure from the artistic traditions embraced by his Gelukpa contemporaries in Tibet. She regards the crucial differences to be evident in both iconographical and stylistic registers and argues, for instance, that Zanabazar “did not adhere to the particular iconographic forms, styles, and deities associated with Geluk practices in his art” (p. 65). But this seems to me to be misleading in some respects. The examples she mentions, such as the various forms of the divinities Tārā, Jambhala, Vasudhārā, and Kālacakra, as well as buddhas including Amitāyus, Vairocana, Vajrasattva, and Vajradhara, all belonged to the later Indian tantric koine and were thus the common property of the various Tibetan Buddhist lineages, the Gelukpa among them, as Tsultemin indeed acknowledges (p. 67). To affirm this collective background does not seem to me indicative of a notable distance from Gelukpa norms.[6] And Tsultemin does not discuss in sufficient detail the particularly telling example of the white, pacific aspect of Cakrasaṃvara (Skt. *Sitasamvara*, Tib. *bde mchog dkar po*), which, in the form in which it was magnificently realized by Zanabazar, had been transmitted specifically in the line of Tsongkhapa and was thus a marker of Gelukpa affiliation.[7]

More trenchant, I think, is Tsultemin’s foregrounding, following the work of her mentor Patricia Berger, of Newari stylistic influence in Zanabazar’s work, reflecting what David Jackson has termed the “Nepalese legacy” in Tibetan art. [8] Zanabazar’s artistic career, she rightly emphasizes, spanned a period during which Gelukpa institutions in Tibet had come to favor more recent

stylistic traditions. This, as Jackson shows, served to establish a new and distinctive visual persona accompanying the intensive Gelukpa expansion of the seventeenth century. Against this, Zanabazar’s artwork seems to have been reaching into the past for its sources of stylistic inspiration. Tsultemin finds a possible explanation for this in Zanabazar’s visits to Shalu (zhwa lu) monastery in west-central Tibet (p. 74), which preserved, in its murals and sculptures, a rich store of Newari-inspired artwork of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This celebrated center, she suggests, was perhaps particularly pertinent to Zanabazar’s interests owing to Shalu’s favorable connections with the Yuan dynasty in China during the fourteenth century. But Shalu, contrary to Tsultemin’s assertion, was not a monastery of the Sakyapa order, with which it was nonetheless loosely affiliated; its specific tantric and scholarly traditions, represented above all in the extensive writings of Butön Rinchen-drup (1290-1364), were absorbed into later Gelukpa teachings and in no way marked a point of difference from them. Zanabazar thus appears to have unambiguously affirmed his Gelukpa bona fides in his art, but at the same time with nuances that set him apart.[9]

If the artist Zanabazar marked the formation of the Khalkha Mongol Buddhist polity that endured under the aegis of the Qing dynasty for nearly three centuries, Matthew W. King’s subject in *Ocean of Milk, Ocean of Blood*, the historian and Qing loyalist Zava Damdin (1867-1937), witnessed the dynasty’s end. As this arresting book has been the topic of an earlier, justly enthusiastic review in this forum, summarizing its contents and main arguments, I will not use this occasion to restate what Brenton Sullivan has already well expressed there,[10] but will limit myself to a few points that I found to be notable, particularly in the light of the other works discussed above.

Part of the interest of Zava Damdin’s oeuvre stems from his evident engagement in traditions of historical writing—Chinese and European—

beyond sources traditionally familiar to Tibetan and Mongolian monastic scholars. Although, as we have seen earlier in a reference to European maps (note 4 above), his responses to these were sometimes unfavorable, his eager exploration of new knowledge is nonetheless striking in itself. A generation prior to the Tibetan maverick Gendün Chöpel (1903-51), now much lauded for his opening to nontraditional learning,[11] Zava Damdin was already engrossed in reconnoitering the landscape of Mongolian and Inner Asian Buddhist history as seen from previously remote vantage points. This was possible not because he could directly consult Chinese or Western texts but because Mongolian translators had long since begun to make some key works, including both histories and novels (Zava Damdin seems not to have distinguished between these genres), available to Mongol readers (p. 86), this being an important distinction between the modern Tibetan and Mongolian cultural spheres. His engagement with the beginnings of Mongol modernity, however, moved him to delineate and affirm his own brand of countermodernity, characterized in part by the forceful affirmation of a largely imaginary Mongolian Buddhist past, evidence for which he found in Inner Asian history long before what we usually think of as the “rise” of the Mongols through the conquests of Chinggis Khan.

Thus, for Zava Damdin, ancient Khotan, Sogdiana, and even the Xiongnu of the last centuries BCE were all Mongolian, their encounter with and adoption of the Buddha’s teaching preceding even the Dharma’s emergence in China, not to speak of later developments in Tibet.[12] Nevertheless, it was Tibetan Buddhism, above all through the Gelukpa dispensation of Tsongkhapa and its supremacy under the benign rulership of the Qing, that defined Zava Damdin’s vision of Mongolian Buddhism.

In contrast with the open and almost nonsectarian character of Zanabazar’s version of Gelukpa Buddhism, as attributed to him by Tsul-

temin, King’s reading of Zava Damdin, confronted with the collapse of the Qing empire and the rise of Mongolian socialism, suggests a more strident adherence. This is accentuated by Zava Damdin’s recourse to the apocalyptic prophecies of the Fifth Dalai Lama’s rival, Drakpa Gyeltsen (1619-56), and the cult of the protective divinity Shukden, the source of much recent controversy and now a token of extreme Gelukpa partisanship. Though it is uncertain that present extremism should be read back into the writings and career of Zava Damdin, he has indeed come to be associated, as King shows in his conclusions (pp. 201-202), with this in some circles today.[13]

In reading *Ocean of Milk, Ocean of Blood* in early 2022, three years after it first appeared, it is difficult to avoid a disconcerting observation: Zava Damdin in some respects seems to have been reaching for an early formulation of the ideology that has come to be known as “Eurasianism” and that, in its contemporary Russian iteration, marks a harrowing intrusion of a sort of “empty time,” to use the expression King borrows from Bakhtin, into the real time of our world. The ruins of the Qing, in which King situates his hero, figured among a great series of Eurasian ruins—those of the Chinggisid empire and its successors, to be sure, but also numerous others from the Scythians down to the Romanovs and Soviets as well—the continuing resonances of which continue to shape our world. King in fact intimates this, in references to the nostalgia surrounding late 1980s *perestroika* (p. 91), but then resists the suggestion. Imagined continuities between Mongol and Russian visions of empire have nevertheless been placed front and center by Eurasianist theoreticians themselves.[14] Though this topic takes us far from King’s direct concerns, it does highlight his success in presenting what might otherwise seem an obscure, recondite topic—the historical musings of a Mongolian Buddhist scholar of a century ago—in a way that seems strikingly relevant today.

The three works reviewed here, taken singly, are each important new contributions to the study of Mongolian Buddhism; together, they offer readers an invaluable conspectus of this field. Writing as a Tibetanist, they raise for me, once again, the issue of just how we should conceive of the relation between Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhisms. As with many questions posed in other contexts in Buddhist thought, “neither-the-same-nor-different” seems to be the best short answer. The situation may resemble to some degree that which obtains in the study of Orthodox Christianity, in which the prominence of distinctive local and national churches must be affirmed, but without neglecting the common founts and shared resources of their traditions. What is clear is that, while accepting the authority of Tibetan learning, lineages, and institutions in many contexts, the Mongols nevertheless asserted the unique value of the forms they gave to them. Owing to the specificities of their relations with China, Russia, and lands farther west, moreover, they forged civilizational crossroads that had few parallels in Tibet. As the authors amply demonstrate, the resulting achievements of Mongolian Buddhists merit sustained attention in the broader fields of Buddhist art, history, and literature, beyond their interest for specialized Mongolian studies alone.

Notes

[1]. For example, the noted historian David Morgan’s introductory text, *The Mongols* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), devotes only a final chapter of a mere eight pages, in a book of 238 pages, to the question of what became of the Mongols after the fall of Chinggis Khan’s empire.

[2]. One may note, too, that all three books discussed here focus upon a specific Mongol group, the Khalkha, who form the dominant population of modern Mongolia. Other groups mentioned include the Buryat, who are mostly settled in Siberia in the area around Lake Baikal. Mongolian-speaking peoples occupy regions as far west as the Caspian Sea (the Kalmyk Mongols) and east to In-

ner Mongolia (the Khorchin, Chahar, and others). Since the sixteenth century, forms of Tibetan Buddhism have been prominent among nearly all of them, but often alongside traditional Mongol religious and curative practices frequently designated as “shamanism.”

[3]. It should be borne in mind that Khalkha Mongolia became a Qing dependency in 1691, declared full independence under the rule of the eighth Jebtsundampa incarnation at the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911, and then was a socialist republic from 1924 until the dissolution of the Soviet Union, becoming a democratic state in 1990.

[4]. The preceding line apparently contradicts this in saying that “one should take works such as European geographies ... as authoritative,” but I do not think that the translation is quite accurate here. Although the wording is elliptical, I believe that the text should be understood to mean, “Because [Mindröl’s] *Geography*, in many cases, set forth details drawn from European geographies, leaving them just as they were, Shamarpa has said ...” The Tibetan text is given in Blo bzang rta mgrin, *gSung ’bum blo bzang rta mgrin* (Mongolian Lama Gurudeva, 1975–76), vol. 2, plates 560–61, Buddhist Digital Resource Center, purl.bdrc.io/resource/W13536. It should be noted that the figure referred to as “Shamarpa” was a Gelukpa hierarch in Amdo and not the well-known Kagyüpa master who held a similar title.

[5]. Tsultemin gives his dates as 1575–1634, as do many other accounts. However, the historiography of the Jonangpa tradition records that his death took place during the third month (*nag pa*) of the wood-female-pig year, that is, April 1635. (Refer to *Jo nang chos ’byung zla ba’i sgron me* [Xining: Krung go’i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1992], 59.) This would have still been about a half-year before Zanabazar’s birth, which Mongolian sources date to November 1635. It should also be noted that, according to the Jonangpa account, Tāranātha died at his hermitage at Jonang, and not, as some Mongol sources have it, in Mon-

golia. Neither do they claim him to have been executed by the Fifth Dalai Lama (!), as a Mongolian oral tradition maintains. On these Mongolian versions of the story, see Tsultemin, *A Monastery*, 23 and 89.

[6]. Among the examples adduced by Tsultemin, two embossed silver maṇḍalas of Jambhala and Vasudhārā found among the ruins of Zanabazar’s monastery at Saridag (66-67) are of considerable interest. I do not believe, however, that it can be affirmed categorically that such maṇḍalas “do not exist in later periods” (67). A circa nineteenth-century painted maṇḍala of Amitābha in my personal collection follows the same pattern Tsultemin describes here, with the central deity “surrounded by eight repetitive images.” More pertinent in the present case, however, is a maṇḍala of Jambhala dating to the seventeenth century, precisely the period with which we are concerned: <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/57911>. Tāranātha’s famous collection of tantric sādhanas, the *Sgrub thabs rin chen ’byung gnas*, which came to be widely diffused among the Mongols through its Gelukpa transmission in the lineage of the Panchen Lamas, also includes maṇḍalas of Jambhala surrounded by eight repetitions. An extensive set of Inner Mongolian illustrations for the collection has been published as *Deities of Tibetan Buddhism: The Zurich Paintings of the Icons Worthwhile to See* (Boston: Wisdom, 2000), though the editors, Martin Willson and Martin Brauen, apparently did not note Tāranātha’s role in its initial compilation.

[7]. Tsultemin, *A Monastery*, 95, fig. 3.4., uncharacteristically misidentifies an eighteenth-century *thangka* of Vajrasattva (in a form also sometimes called Vajraheruka) as Sitasamvara, though she correctly notes that Sitasamvara is the figure depicted above Zanabazar’s head in a painting (fig. 3.1) said to be a self-portrait. A superb sculpture of Sitasamvara, also attributed to Zanabazar, belongs to the collection of the Chojjin Lama Monastery in Ulaanbaatar (no. 58-215) and has been

published on several occasions, for instance in Françoise Aubin et al., *Trésors de Mongolie, XVII^e – XIX^e siècles* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1993), 140-43. The lineage in which Zanabazar received the teaching of this divinity, passing through Tsongkhapa and the latter’s disciple Khedrup-jé, is recorded in the *Tshe sgrub bde mchog dkar po’i brgyud ’debs* by Zanabazar, in Khal kha rje btsun dam pa 01 blo bzang bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan et al., *Khal kha rje btsun dam pa sku phreng rim byon gyi gsung ’bum* (Ulaanbaatar: R. Byambaa, 2004), vol. 1, plates 53-55, Buddhist Digital Resource Center, purl.bdrc.io/resource/W2D-B25419.

[8]. David P. Jackson, *The Nepalese Legacy in Tibetan Painting* (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2010).

[9]. Besides Shalu, I would suggest that future research delve into possible connections with the great stūpa and temple of Gyantsé, not far from Shalu, and with which Zanabazar may well have been also familiar. To my eyes, at least, the statuary and murals there seem to offer particularly close precedents for some of Zanabazar’s work, such as his fluid statues of the standing bodhisattva Maitreya. Executed during the early and mid-fifteenth century, the Gyantsé monuments involved the collaboration of authoritative Gelukpa masters, notably Khedrup-jé, while the Nepalese style was still entirely in the ascendant among them.

[10]. Brenton Sullivan, review of Matthew W. King, *Ocean of Milk, Ocean of Blood: A Mongolian Monk in the Ruins of the Qing Empire*, H-Buddhism, *H-Net Reviews*, December 2020. One technical point about King’s work should also be noted: for no apparent reason that I can discern (except perhaps overuse of the “Capitalize Each Word” function in MS-Word), Tibetan book titles are given with each syllable capitalized. In the case of Zava Damdin’s autobiography, cited throughout the book, this is compounded by an error in the transcription of the final syllable. Thus,

instead of “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ’Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” the title should read “Rang gi byed spyod rags bsdoms ’di snang za zi’i rjes gcod.”

[11]. Translation of and writing on Gendün Chöpel has assumed the proportions of a minor cottage industry in recent years; for a useful overview, refer to one of that industry’s major builders: Donald S. Lopez Jr., *Gendun Chopel: Tibet’s Modern Visionary* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 2018).

[12]. Zava Damdin followed earlier Mongolian authors in taking the current Tibetan word for Mongol, *sog po*, to mean Mongol even in very early texts. The ethnonym *sog po*, however, originally meant “Sogdian,” and was transferred to the Mongols only in later times. The question of Khotan’s Mongol origins was an important part of the dispute between Dorjiev and Zava Damdin, discussed in *Ocean of Milk, Ocean of Blood*, 104-107, and translated in full in King’s contribution to Wallace’s *Sources of Mongolian Buddhism*, 416-37. Oddly, given the commendable thoroughness of King’s research, he does not take note of earlier scholarship on the Tibetan records of Khotan, in particular, F. W. Thomas, *Tibetan Literary Texts and Documents Concerning Chinese Turkestan, Part I: Literary Texts* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1935) and R. E. Emmerick, *Tibetan Texts Concerning Khotan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967). In all events, against Dorjiev, Damdin was certainly correct that *Li yul* in old Tibetan sources referred to Khotan and not Nepal. Note, too, in this context, that King cites Damdin (p. 105) as referring to an unidentified “Abhidharma commentary” of the “great Mañjuśrī Emperor” (i.e., the Manchu emperor of China), but that Damdin’s text does not actually speak of a “commentary” here. He refers instead to the emperor’s “archive of so-called Abhidharma treatises” (*mngon pa’i bstan bcos zhes pa’i yig tshang*) which seems to be something quite different,

though the precise text Damdin quotes from this “archive” remains in any case unidentified.

[13]. King’s remarks on Damdin’s use of Drakpa Gyeltsen have helped me to better understand the background of the large *thangka* of this figure I saw at Erdene-zuu monastery in 2013 and reported in “Gter-ma as Imperial Treasure: The 1755 Beijing Edition of the *Padma bka’ thang*,” in *Trails of the Tibetan Tradition: Papers for Elliot Sperling*, ed. Roberto Vitali (Dharamsala: Amnye Machen, 2014), 167-69. Sometime after this article was published, the disciples of a prominent contemporary Mongolian lama, a proponent of the Shukden cult, began posting messages citing my work as supporting their stance. My remarks, however, had been purely historical and implied no position at all on my part in respect to current disputes. It may be noted, too, that Zava Damdin, though espousing Shukden and the prophecies of Drakpa Gyeltsen, does not seem to have questioned the legitimacy of the Fifth Dalai Lama, as some recent partisans have done.

[14]. See, for example, Sergei Glebov, “The Mongol-Bolshevik Revolution: Eurasianist Ideology in Search for an Ideal Past,” *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 2, no. 2 (2011): 103-14.

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