

Writing True Places in the Twilight of Empire and the Dawn of
Revolution: The Buddhist Historiography of the Mongol Zawa
Damdin Luwsandamdin (1867-1937)

by

Matthew William King

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department for the Study of Religion
University of Toronto

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the life and historiography of the Khalkha Mongol polymath, Zawa Damdin Luwsandamdin (*bLo bzang rta mgrin*; *bLo bzang rta dbyangs*) (1867-1937); a Buddhist monk, abbot, pilgrim, and modernist discontent who wandered extensively through the shifting socio-political landscape of the Qing-socialist transition in Outer Mongolia. Focusing upon Zawa Damdin's autobiographical and historiographic works, previously unexamined outside of Mongolia, in the first place this study analyzes monastic literary constructs of the space and time of Mongolian Buddhism after the Qing imperial collapse in 1911, and before the purges of the late 1930s. Drawing upon Michel de Certeau's notion of the "historiographic operation" and Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope, in the second place this dissertation explores the generative practices of monastic historiography, focusing especially upon interpretative techniques and writing strategies. What emerges is Zawa Damdin's stark dystopian-utopian contrast between the degeneracy of the revolutionary-era and a embattled monasticism, and an idealized form of Buddhist authority most fully manifested during the Qing formation but long absent by the author's present. Zawa Damdin inscribed this binary firmly embedded within a Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist interpretative community, but still drew upon newly available

European scholarship on nationalism, science, Asia and Buddhism. This dissertation suggests that holistic analyses of Inner Asian Buddhist mediations of modernist trends in the late-and post-imperium could contribute to a dynamic, and much needed, cultural history of both Orientalism and Occidentalism.

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an entirely unexpected course of study in Buddhism alongside my graduate program at the University of Toronto. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have studied under (and alongside) such a learned Tibetan scholar trained in the traditional monastic system (though, all mistakes in doctrinal and historical matters in this study are my own). Earlier in my graduate career, Thubten Champa graciously helped me begin working through these materials outside of his seminars on Classical Tibetan, and so I also wish to thank him here.

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List of Conventions

1. Tibetan Transliteration

The spelling of Tibetan words in the body of this dissertation follows the phonetic transcription of the Tibetan and Himalayan Library (THL)'s Simplified Phonetic Transcription of Standard Tibetan. The Wylie transliteration of Tibetan is given in every case, either as a footnote or in parentheses as appropriate.

2. Mongolian Transliteration

Including the spelling of Mongolian words in the body of this dissertation has been somewhat challenging, since the primary sources which I treat are all in Tibetan, contemporaneous Mongolian sources used the traditional vertical script, and the Mongolian secondary scholarship which I reference uses the Cyrillic script. For the sake of simplicity, and since the differences will be obvious already to specialists and only of peripheral interest to non-specialists, I provide the traditional vertical script equivalents of Sanskrit and Tibetan Buddhist technical terms and the Cyrillic spelling in all other cases. The vertical-script Mongol equivalents for Buddhist technical terminology, when I could find them, are drawn from Ishihama and Fukuda's critical edition of the *Mahāvvyutpatti*.¹ In both cases I use the Tibetan and Himalayan Library (THL)'s simplified Mongolian transcription system, developed by Christopher Atwood.

3. Tibetan Capitalization

This dissertation capitalizes the root letter of Tibetan text titles, personal names, and place names.

4. Dates

Dates for individuals and texts, unless otherwise noted, are based on the electronic database of the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (TBRC).

¹ Yumiko Ishihama and Yōichi Fukuda, *A new critical edition of the Mahāvvyutpatti: Sanskrit-Tibetan-Mongolian dictionary of Buddhist terminology* = 新訂翻訳名義大集 (東京: 東洋文庫, 1989).

5. Foreign Terminology in Parenthesis

Certain English terms, Buddhist technical language, and person, place, and text names are followed by transliterated equivalents in Tibetan, and in some cases, Mongolian, Sanskrit, Chinese, French, German, and Russian. In each case, transliterated equivalents are given in parentheses or as footnotes, the respective language clearly marked, and are all separated by a semicolon: for example “... Buddhist logic (S. *pramāṇa*; T. *tshad ma*; M. *kemjigen*).”

Introduction

The Mongolian delegation's third question: "Ought not the [Mongolian] People's Revolutionary Party be transformed into a Communist Party?"...

Comrade Lenin explained the essence of a Communist Party as a party of the proletariat, and said: "The revolutionaries will have to put in a good deal of work in developing state, economic and cultural activities before the herdsman elements become a proletarian mass, which may eventually help to 'transform' the People's Revolutionary Party into a Communist Party. A mere change of signboards is harmful and dangerous."²

A couple of years ago, already some time into my doctoral research, I once again made the journey south from Ulaanbaatar city to the revived Gobi desert monastery of Zawa Damdin.³ Over the years I had come to know the small monastic community, many of the local townspeople and herders, and the current incarnation of Zawa Damdin, known as Zawa Damdin Renbüchi Luwsandarjaa (1976-) (hereafter: Zawa Rinpoche). On this occasion, Zawa Rinpoche sat upon the throne in front of the monastic assembly and a large audience of lay devotees, having just finished several days of prosperity rituals. The memory of the previous Zawa Damdin, the protagonist of this dissertation, was (and remains) everywhere in that monastery. His enlightened mind is thought to animate the body of Zawa Rinpoche, who regularly wears the tattered robes of his predecessor and who dons a small mustache reminiscent of the many portraits of Zawa Damdin that decorate the monastic grounds, including a fifteen-foot statue that dominates the altar space of the main yurt temple. Everyday items associated with Zawa Damdin, from the small yurt he had used while on pilgrimage to his cooking utensils, are on display alongside the usual images of buddhas, bodhisattvas, and tantric deities as sacred "supports" for the merit accrual of devotees. Much of this had, like so much of the materiality of

2 Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 42 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), 360–361.

3 Today it is known as Delgeriin Choir, in Dungov Aimag (Central Gob Province), but is known in the early twentieth century materials examined below as Chöying Ösel Ling (T. *Chos dbying 'od gsal gling*)

Mongolia's Buddhist revival, been recovered from boxes buried in the sand by monks anticipating the purges of the late 1930s (some eight hundred monastics had been killed at this monastery alone in 1937), or else collected from elderly disciples who kept them in secret during the socialist period (1921-1990). The legitimacy, contours, and content of this particular post-socialist Buddhist revival was founded in the materiality of Zawa Damdin, whose prominent display was working to mediate new memories, forms of social relation, and religious sensibilities into this small patch of Gobi.

My own academic interest in the previous Zawa Damdin and his historiography had always been warmly received in his revived monastic community, but, I sensed, treated with some suspicion. This was understandable, given the labor of these monks to repair a Buddhist tradition so ruined by state coercion within living memory. For that reason, I was apprehensive upon arriving at the Gobi monastery that particular evening, since Zawa Rinpoche knew that I had been working on translating and studying his predecessor's historical works. These are valuable cultural commodities that he himself had been translating from Tibetan into modern Mongolian, and which guided so much of his own revivalist efforts (from architectural choices and ritual programs to the content of Buddhist summer camps for urban youth). As he warmly inquired into the state of my study, still atop the throne and in front of his community, the politics and complicated reception of the present research once again became clear. "It is wonderful that you are studying the work of Zawa Damdin, but not just anyone can understand the contents of those histories" I was reminded, "their meaning is profound, and not easily understood by common people." Most pointedly, Zawa Rinpoche mused that, "Zawa Damdin's histories are like a golden key to all history, and must be protected."

In memory of Zawa Rinpoche's cautious, but ever warm, support over the years (and in humble acknowledgement that the present study will not meet his expectations), I evoke his

notion of “the golden key to all history” at the outset. The universalism implicit in this metaphor also aptly describes my struggle with these texts. The scope of their content, the lost intellectual and religious life they represent, and the dizzying mosaic of sources, lines of inquiry, and historico-philosophic arguments they contain has made developing a cohesive (never mind a comprehensive) analysis difficult indeed. However, I am comforted in my struggles by Zawa Damdin’s own reflections on the disorienting project of writing the history of Buddhism in Inner Asia, and it is his self-deprecating apology to his readers that I echo at the outset of this study:

I have traveled to many different countries, been to their libraries, and read many scholarly texts, and all of those I understand. But I know that there are many different texts with many different meanings and many different perspectives, so it is difficult to make only one single point. So, because of that, and because of my own understanding, it is possible that I made many mistakes so please forgive me!⁴

If nothing else, I hope that through this study much more of Zawa Damdin’s fascinating life and intellectual pursuits will become better known outside of Mongolia and a dispersed Tibetan readership. His works are a vital aperture into a soon to be erased religio-political world that straddled (and helped form) vast swaths of Eurasia. If nothing else, in what follows I hope to hint at the promise of broad, comparative studies of Buddhist monastic life in the twilight of empire and in the dawn of revolution. Scholastic negotiations of self-consciously “modernist” movements in Inner Asia, even if they were elitist and had little actual impact, represent a history of Buddhist accommodation and creativity too long effaced by the physical violence of purges, the epistemic violence of state historiography, and the economic and political designs of successive communist and post-communist authorities.

⁴ bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” in *gSung ’Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 2 (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 479.

1 Buddhist Monastic Life During Asia's First Modern Revolution

1.1 A Critical History of Buddhism in Modernizing Asia

This is a study about a particular scene of Buddhist place making, temporalization, and interpretative practice. In what follows, I am interested in one very general question: As social forces, how do experiences, beliefs, and formal practices of time and space (such as writing history) constitute periods of prolonged upheaval and rupture (as in war, imperial and colonial subjugation, dynastic change, and revolutionary transition)? A particularly rich context wherein to explore these questions comes from a period in modern Mongolian history generally known as the Two Revolutions (*Khoyer Khuwĩsgal*, c. 1911-1940). First a heady, elitist project of national self-realization and then a bloody contest to consolidate and defend economic and political interests, the imperial-socialist transition first took shape as an autonomous Mongolian nation state (1911-1919) and then as the world's first Soviet satellite state (1921-1990). In elite circles at least, previous categories of Mongol social imagination defined by imperial subjugation were rapidly reformed in light of newly transiting European political and academic discourse and practice. Seemingly in a matter of months, Mongols at the helm of revolutionary development were thinking the nation, and adopting academic disciplines such as philology, archeology and a nascent religious studies to define the contours and content of the Mongolian people and the Mongolian nation. Hegemonic Buddhist institutions and their representatives were a central element in that process, as progressive and conservative monks, incarnate lamas, and lay intellectuals sought to define the content and contours of a post-imperial social imagination. This would continue through the 1930s, until hardline socialist elements took power and, at Stalin's infamous behest, oversaw the mass purge of monastics and counter-revolutionaries beginning in 1937.

Cold War-era funding of American area studies programs has meant that we do know much about the political and economic history of socialist Mongolia. As yet, however, there has been little scholarly attention paid to two related and fundamental fields of revolutionary contest: Buddhist monastic mediations of imperial collapse and the newly flexible routes for social mobility, political legitimation, and knowledge production in the post-imperium. Attending to Tibetan language works of Mongolian monastics during the this period, as I do in this dissertation, allows us to begin answering several critical questions in the study of the modernist formations of Buddhism in Inner Asia: Who were the agents that translated political ideologies of nationalism and related concepts of religion? What were the mediating practices they adopted? What were the topographies of exchange and the contours of the social imagination these engendered? What forms of Buddhist life were made visible and invisible in the process?

It is here, in the comparative study of the contact zones of political, academic and Buddhist discourse and practice that a properly *critical history* of Buddhism in modernizing Inner Asia must begin. In the case of revolutionary Mongolia, there are few better sources than the prolific works of the Khalkha monk Zawa Damdin Luwsandamdin (1867-1937). His labor to set his revolutionary present into time and space—whether his subject was Buddhism, the Mongolian people, an encroaching European scientism, or his own life story—offers an invaluable and largely unexamined source on the contested terrain of social imagination at this time. Zawa Damdin staged a creative, if muted, polemic against what he saw as the dystopia of the revolutionary period, and developed perhaps the most expansive utopian vision of Buddhist religio-political authority in Tibetan or Mongolian cultural regions. He did so on the very eve of the socialist purges, decades after the collapse of the Qing Empire (whose authority he continued

to venerate), and nearly a century after the historical episode he theorized had caused enlightened influence to retreat from the Mongol steppes.

1.2 Historical Context: Social Imagination in the Plural

Before introducing Zawa Damdin and his historical works, for the non-specialist reader I will provide a necessarily brief and incomplete historical survey of Outer Mongolia during the imperial-socialist transition. This will be somewhat idiosyncratic, as I pay attention to actors and developments that affected Zawa Damdin, as opposed to broader military or political intrigue that are peripheral to the present study. In any case, the chronology of this transition, told from the perspective of the late-imperial, nationalist and then socialist government, is already relatively well documented and readily available elsewhere in European languages.⁵

5 In English alone, to name just some relevant studies, we have: Charles R. Bawden, *The Modern History of Mongolia* (New York: Praeger, 1968); Charles Roskelly Bawden, *A Contemporary Mongolian Account of the Period of Autonomy*, vol. 4, 1st ed. (Bloomington, Indiana: The Mongolia Society, 1970); Robert A. Rupen, "The Buriat Intelligentsia," *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (1956): 383–98; Robert A. Rupen, *Mongols of the Twentieth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Publications, 1964); Robert Arthur Rupen, *How Mongolia Is Really Ruled: A Political History of the Mongolian People's Republic, 1900-1978* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1979); Robert A. Rupen, "Cyben Zamcaranovic Zamcarano (1880-?1940)," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 19, no. 2 (1956): 126–45; Owen Lattimore, *Nationalism and Revolution in Mongolia: With a Translation from the Mongol of Sh. Nachukdorji's Life of Sukebatur*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955); York American Geographical Society of New and Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (London, 1940); Owen Lattimore, *Nomads and Commissars; Mongolia Revisited* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962); Owen Lattimore et al., "Religion and Revolution in Mongolia," *Modern Asian Studies* 1, no. 1 (1967): 81–94; Emanuel Sarkisyanz, "Communism and Lamaist Utopianism in Central Asia," *The Review of Politics* 20, no. 4 (1958): 623–33; Alan J. K. Sanders, *Mongolia: Politics, Economics and Society* (London; Boulder: F. Pinter; L. Rienner, 1987); Irina Y. Morozova, "Socialist Revolutions in Asia: The Social History of Mongolia in the Twentieth Century" (Routledge, 2009), /z-wcorg/; Irina Y Morozova, *The Comintern and Revolution in Mongolia* (Cambridge: White Horse Press for the Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit, University of Cambridge, 2002); Christopher Pratt Atwood, "Revolutionary Nationalist Mobilization in Inner Mongolia, 1925- 1929" (Indiana University, 1994), /z-wcorg/; Johan Elverskog, *Our Great Qing: The Mongols, Buddhism and the State in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006); Carl Johan Elverskog, "Buddhism, History and Power: The Jewel Translucent Sutra and the Formation of Mongol Identity" (9993532, Indiana University, 2000), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses (PQDT); Larry William Moses, *The Political Role of Mongol Buddhism*, Indiana University Uralic Altaic Series - Asian Studies Research Institute, Indiana University; (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University, 1977); Larry William Moses, *Introduction to Mongolian History and Culture*, Indiana University Uralic and Altaic Series; (Bloomington: Research Institute for inner Asian Studies, Indiana University, 1985); Michael K. Jerryson, *Mongolian Buddhism: the rise and fall of the Saṅgha* (Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkwork Books, 2007); Anya Bernstein, "Pilgrims, Fieldworkers, and Secret Agents: Buryat Buddhologists and the History of an Eurasian Imaginary," *Inner Asia* 11, no. 1 (2009): 23–45; Thomas E. Ewing, *Between the Hammer and the Anvil?: Chinese and Russian Policies in Outer Mongolia, 1911-*

As we shall see, imperial collapse in Inner Asia was, among other things, at first a period of contested, elitist theorization about the content and contours of Mongolian (and Tibetan, Chinese, and Russian) social relations. My interest in Zawa Damdin's historical and (auto)biographical writing relates to what is often called the social imagination, and not to supplementing our factual record of Inner Asian revolution. Despite its ubiquity in scholarship, it remains to be seen how effective the recent replacement of "culture" by "imaginary" has been in substituting the perceived fixity, homogeneity and Otherness presumed in the former.⁶ While I do not accept the notion of a static or consensual modern social imaginary (much less to find this surfacing in Inner Asia on a European model), Charles Taylor's use of the term does help us see the high stakes and creative possibilities in revolutionary Mongolia. Taylor usefully

1921 (Bloomington: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, Indiana University, 1980); Thomas E. Ewing, "Russia, China, and the Origins of the Mongolian People's Republic, 1911-1921: A Reappraisal," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 58, no. 3 (1980): 399-421; John Snelling, *Buddhism in Russia: The Story of Agvan Dorzhiev, Lhasa's Emissary to Tzar* (Element Books Limited, 1993); Yeshen-Khorlo and Robert Montgomery Dugarava-Montgomery, "The Buriat Alphabet of Agvan Dorzhiev," in *Mongolia in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Stephen and Bruce A. Elleman Kotkin (Aromonk, New York; London, England: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 79-97; Urgunge Onon and Derrick Pritchatt, *Asia's First Modern Revolution: Mongolia Proclaims Its Independence in 1911* (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1989); Sechin Jagchid and Paul Hyer, *Mongolia's Culture and Society* (Westview Press, 1979); William A. Brown, Urgunge Onon, and B. Shirendev, *History of the Mongolian People's Republic* ([Cambridge, Mass.]; Cambridge, Mass.; London: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University; Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1976); Kh. Ts. Raldin, "Great October and the Affirmation of the Socialist Mongolian Nation," *Studia Historica* 7, no. 3 (1968); Baabar and C. Kaplonski, *Twentieth century Mongolia* (Knapwell: White Horse, 1999); B. Dashtseren, *The History and Culture of Mongolia* (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1997); Danzanhorloogiin Dashpurev and S. K. Soni, *Reign of Terror in Mongolia: 1920-1990* (New Delhi: South Asian Publ. [u.a.], 1992); Uradyn Erden Bulag, *Nationalism and Hybridity in Mongolia* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1998); Pamela Kyle Crossley, "Making Mongols," in *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Pamela Kyle Crossley, *Orphan Warriors: Three Manchu Generations and the End of the Qing World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990); Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Johan Elverskog, "Wutai Shan, Qing Cosmopolitanism, and the Mongols," *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*, no. 6 (2011): 243-74; Lynn A. Struve, *The Qing Formation in World-Historical Time*, Harvard East Asian Monographs; (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2004); *The History of Mongolia 3, The Qing Period Twentieth-Century Mongolia* (S.l.: s.n.], 2010); Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).

6 Claudia Strauss, "The Imaginary," *Anthropological Theory* 6, no. 3 (September 1, 2006): 322-44.

differentiates between social imaginary and social theory, where theory is the specialized domain of experts (like Grotius and Locke) that only gradually permeate the imagined lives of larger social groups.⁷ Zawa Damdin's works during this period bridge Taylor's differentiation, and are for that reason of great value in building a more robust cultural history of modernism and Buddhism in Inner Asia. On the one hand, as a representative of a previously hegemonic monastic institution, Zawa Damdin's histories generally imagine their social surroundings with images, stories, and legends. However, as an elite member of the monastic establishment, a proponent of imperial forms of authority and social organization, and as a scholar writing in a non-colloquial literary language, Zawa Damdin was also a social theoretician. Since the Two Revolutions were periods of creative reformulations of the social imagination (at least amongst some nationalists, party cadres and monk-scholars), Zawa Damdin's works must equally be understood as mobilizing, and being produced by, certain common understandings in his monastic milieu that made "possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy."⁸ Indeed, just what counted as "legitimate" common practices, and just what defined the contours of commonality, were precisely what had become contested during the latter decades of Zawa Damdin's life.

For that reason, in this dissertation I mainly point to the diversity and politics of imagining place, time, and social relations during the imperial-socialist transition, of which Zawa Damdin's works count as a critical monastic iteration.

7 Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 24.

8 Ibid., 23.

1.1.1 Black and Yellow Society in Nineteenth Century Outer Mongolia

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Mongolian hinterlands of the Qing were societies divided, administratively and conceptually, between “black” (*khar*) lay society and “yellow” (*shar*) monastic society. Each had their own regional relations to the Qing Empire and to each other, as well as uneven opportunities for political representation, economic advancement, and physical movement.⁹ These extended from incarnate lamas and hereditary nobility at the top of the social hierarchy, down to common herdsmen, uneducated monks, vassals, and slaves.¹⁰ Outer Mongolia was a territory of the Qing primarily populated by Khalkha Mongols, and was the Khalkha homeland of Zawa Damdin, which he often referred to as the “center of the great land of Hor (ie. Mongolia).”¹¹ It was a region pervaded by Buddhist monasteries, active philosophical colleges, and a stunningly high monastic population. Travel between regions was limited for most, and by the end of the nineteenth-century, extreme debt, heavy taxation, and the pressures of forced immigration of Han and Slavic peoples added

9 The division of Mongolia society into “Black” (secular) and “Yellow” (monastic) also included family organization and the delegation on slaves by this period. According to Qing law, eldest sons inherited their father’s rank, middling sons took titles one rank lower and went into banner administrative service. Nobility were organized into six ranks during the Qing: in order of precedence, they were: two classes of wang (*chin wang* and *chünwang*); *beile* and *beise*; and two classes of *gung* (*tüsheegün* and *gün*). Also according to Qing law, youngest sons of khans and noyon princes took up important posts in the monastic system as monks. In the nineteenth century, the slave class was absorbed into the banner and monastic estates. Slaves comprised prisoners of war, criminals sentenced to slavery and their families, people given as rewards by Manchu authorities, or else people who were simply bought. Almost anyone, including serfs, could own slaves (Bawden, *The Modern History of Mongolia*, 138–139.).⁹ They had no rights or duties as citizens, and were not listed in the banner census (Jagchid and Hyer, *Mongolia’s Culture and Society*, 289.).⁹

10 Jagchid and Hyer, *Mongolia’s Culture and Society*, 381.

11 M. Gadaad Mongol; *Ar Mongol*; T. *Phyi sog yul*; C. 外蒙古, Wai Menggu. Khalkha was made up of four khanates (M. *aimag*) during the Qing: the Dzasagt Khan, Sainnoyon Khan, Tüsheet Khan, and Setsen Khan (of which the latter was Zawa Damdin’s homeland, whose hereditary leader requested the *Golden Book*’s composition in 1919 and whose genealogy is part of its content). Each khanate was further divided into “banners” (M. *khoshuu*) and then smaller “arrow” administrative units (M. *somons*; *sum*). There was also a large Chinese community in Mongolia at the start of the twentieth century, which was the cause of so much resentment. According to Sanders, there were some seventy-five thousand Chinese traders, fifteen thousand workers and craftsman, five thousand agricultural laborers and until 1919, some Manchu administrators. This long-standing, transitory community of mostly males had departed by 1925 (Sanders, *Mongolia : Politics, Economics and Society*, 47.).

pressures to non-elite Mongols that began to stir widespread resentment to Qing and, in Buryat and Tuvan regions, Tsarist rule. The people's "duguylan" or "arat circle" movements that arose in response were, prior to 1911, regional and of varying character and political aspiration.¹² As these local people's movements began to stir, a nascent nationalist movement began to take form under the guidance of a small group of Buryat-Mongols trained in the Russian academy and familiar with European political categories. These were often "especially energetic activists suffering crises of identity, who became authors of nationalistic conceptions and ideals for the Asian country's development."¹³ Such nationalist designs, made explicit on the European model, formed alongside and in conversation with other modes of circumscribing the social contours and history of the revolutionary transition.¹⁴

Such was the broad turn to new social imaginaries in the post-imperium; ones that, "needed vivid and yet simple visions that could be connected with mythological and mystical consciousness," and so turned to history across many different stratas of society, "frequently expressed in appeals to the 'great past', or the 'golden age' and, of course, to the religions that had deep roots in the social consciousness of the Eastern peoples."¹⁵

¹² Ibid., 26.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ For example, across Inner Asia, Buddhist prelates negotiated the crisis of imperial decline and their increasingly unstable social position by social injunctions grounded in prophetic appeals to time. Widely circulated tracts hoping to consolidate monastic authority predicted the apocalyptic consequences of moral decay, smoking, gambling, and joining the socialist party (Alice Sárközi, *Political Prophecies in Mongolia in the 17-20th Centuries* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992). The Bogd Khaan was himself a prolific prophet, credited with predicting the purges of Buddhist monastics that came years after his death. Millenarian traditions associated with the legends of the Kingdom of Šambhala and Geser Khaan, which anticipated the descent of divine military forces from "the north" to rid Inner Asia of non-Buddhist elements, found new currency in post-imperial contexts.

¹⁵ Morozova, *The Comintern and Revolution in Mongolia*, 70.

1.1.2 The Autonomous Bogd Khaanate (1911-1919)

As the Qing Empire began to falter in 1911 and collapse back into China, religious and aristocratic elites in the city of Ikh Khüree (otherwise known as Bogdiin Khüree, Urga, and present day Ulaanbaatar) colluded to expel the Manchu ambans and found an independent Buddhist theocracy. An ethnic Tibetan and the highest incarnate lama in Outer Mongolia, the Jebzundamba Khutugtu VIII (*alias* the Bogd Gegeen, 1869–1924), was dully enthroned as the *Bogd Khaan* (“Holy King”) and installed as the theocratic ruler of an independent Mongolian nation-state (*Olnoo Örgörcsön Bogd Khaant Mongol Uls*).¹⁶ “By adding temporal authority to [the Jebzundamba’s] religious primacy,” during the Bogd Khaanate, “it was possible to create a personal sovereign, replacing the Manchu Emperor, for the time being, and out of reach of the quarrels over precedence among hereditary Mongol princes.”¹⁷ All this inspired nationalist designs amongst Inner Asian peoples elsewhere in China and Tsarist Russia who had begun to newly conceive of a pan-Mongolian socio-political identity.

So began a period of Mongolian history known as the Autonomous Period, or the Bogd Khaanate (M. *Bogd Khaant Mongol Uls*) (1911-1919). Although short-lived, this was a fascinating, if fraught, project to construct a “modern” and ethnically “Mongolian” Buddhist nation-state. It combined Qing imperial administrative traditions and European parliamentary institutions (M. *ulsîn khural*) with new pan-Mongolian objects of knowledge and frames of experience. Alongside influences from Russia, these also developed in dialogue with nationalist currents in post-imperial China, such as the Republican period rhetoric of “five races under one

16 The autonomous Mongolian state was first known as “The Mongolian State Elevated by Many” (*Olnoo Örgödcön Mongol Uls*), a name resisted by Russian authorities and indicative of the new visibility of an expansive Mongol community that included commoners.

17 Owen Lattimore, *The Mongols of Manchuria; Their Tribal Divisions, Geographical Distribution, Historical Relations with Manchus and Chinese, and Present Political Problems*. (New York: H. Fertig, 1969), 122.

union.”¹⁸ The imagined community of the Mongol nation was, as elsewhere in the post-imperium, neither immanent nor self-evident. A national “Mongolian” linguistic heritage, folk traditions, political histories, and most centrally, Buddhist history and practice, was circumscribed using newly plural forms and sites of knowledge production. The disciplines that produced national social imaginaries during the Bogd Khaanate were scientific and explicitly European (such as philology, professional history, ethnography, Buddhology, and Altaic linguistics) and monastic and explicitly Indo-Tibetan and Mongolian (ritual subjugations of the national hinterland, prophetic interpretation, education reforms, and certain traditions of historiography).

1.1.3 The Mongolian People’s Republic (1921-1990)

Succumbing first to Chinese military advances in the south and then White Russian occupation from the north, a nascent Mongolia socialist party took power in 1921 with substantial Soviet backing. The Bogd Khan was demoted to a constitutional monarch and the Mongolian People’s Republic (*Bügd Nairamdakh Mongol Ard Uls*) was founded. Between 1921 and about 1940, the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party undertook a slow and uneven project to provoke the socio-economic conditions necessary to transition into state socialism, something that was never really consolidated until mid-century. Party leaders, Comintern agents and revolutionary intelligentsia engaged in the creative revisionisms required to fit a sparse society of nomadic-pastoralists, hereditary nobility and de-centered monastic institutions into the universalist models of historical materialism. A “dictatorship of the proletariat,” after all, required the invention of social classes in the Mongolian context whose newly imagined historical experience could convincingly map onto Marxist-Leninist models of historical change.

18 C. 五族共和; *wu zu gong he*.

“Mongolian proletariats” were found first in serfs (*shavi*) freed from monastic estates, then in women, and finally amongst the “lower classes” of monastics.¹⁹ Over a decades-long process that began to solidify only in the 1950s, a “Soviet-type command economy” was implemented in Mongolia. This “imposed a structural unity, a principal of nesting domination, on individuals and groups that were otherwise different from one another (for example in native region, education, or religious attitudes).”²⁰ Connected with this consolidated system of domination was the growth of a mature and hegemonic state historiography, deeply influenced by Soviet models, which charted Mongolian national history back to the thirteenth century Yuan dynasty in the historical materialist idiom of class conflict.²¹

As Stalin took power in the USSR and as hardline factions rose through party ranks in Mongolia, Buddhist institutionalism was increasingly criminalized as counter-revolutionary. This was in contrast to the heady and more accommodating climate of the early revolutionary period, especially for Buddhist monastic actors. Party aggression increased substantially after the Bogd Khaan’s death in 1924, when “Soviet ideology was taken up almost more sincerely, more naively, more brutally than in the USSR itself.”²² Soviet-era historiography would remember this as the time of the “Struggles of the Mongolian Nation for a Non-Capitalistic Route to Development”; one increasingly bloodied by show trials and eventually, mass purges.²³ Though much is still unknown about this dark period, conservative estimates are that some

19 Caroline Humphrey, “Remembering an Enemy: The Bogd Khaan in Twentieth Century Mongolia,” in *Memory, History, and Opposition under State Socialism*, ed. Rubie S. Watson (Sante Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Press ; distributed by University of Washington Press, 1994), 24.

20 Ibid.

21 For example: Brown, Onon, and Shirendev, *History of the Mongolian People’s Republic*.

22 Caroline Humphrey, “The Moral Authority of the Past in Post-Socialist Mongolia,” *Religion, State and Society* 20, no. 3 & 4 (1992): 375.

23 For instance: L. Gerasimovich, *History of Modern Mongolian Literature, 1921-1964 [Literatura Mongol’skoj Narodnoj Respubliki 1921-1964 Godov]*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Mongolia Society, 1970).

30,000 people were executed from a population of only about 900,000 in the years 1937-38 alone.²⁴

Owen Lattimore, with some dramatic flare, observed of Mongolian Buddhism in the early revolutionary period that, “institutionally this religion, like one of its many-headed, thousand-armed deities, had a head to dominate every human thought and a hand to control every human action.”²⁵ Even if it is true that, “in the long history of Buddhism perhaps no country or people in the world were as affected by the faith as were the Mongols of Great Mongolia,”²⁶ it took just years for it to be criminalized, and just months for the terror of state violence to erase its previous hegemony.

1.2 Buddhism and the Revolutionary Imagination

The Buddhist tradition of revolutionary Mongolia was overwhelmingly that of the reformed Géluk tradition,²⁷ the so-called “yellow” school founded by the Tibetan polymath Jé Tsongkhapa Lozang Drakpa (1357-1419).²⁸ So ubiquitous was this sect in Mongolia that Buddhism was, and is still today, known simply as the “Yellow Religion” (M. *sharîn shashin*); a form of religiosity distinguished from “Black” shamanism and other, unreformed “Red” sects of Tibetan Buddhism.²⁹ At the time of the 1921 people’s revolution, there were at least seven

24 C. Kaplonski, *Truth, History and Politics in Mongolia : The Memory of Heroes* (London; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004).

25 Lattimore, *Nationalism and Revolution in Mongolia.*, 81.

26 Moses, *The Political Role of Mongol Buddhism*, 5.

27 T. *dGe lugs, dGa’ ldan*.

28 T. *rJe tshong kha pa blo bzang grags pa*; M. *Bogd zonkhaw luwsandagwa*.

29 In many Mongolian cultural regions to this day there is also “yellow shamanism”, a mode of shamanic practice aligned explicitly with Buddhist cosmologies and ritual technologies, or else performed with some Buddhist affiliation or by a ritualist with training as a Buddhist lama. For examples and descriptions, see: Katherine Swancutt, *Fortune and the Cursed: The Sliding Scale of Time in Mongolian Divination* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012).

hundred and fifty monasteries in Outer Mongolia.³⁰ Many years after the purges, academician B. Rinchen mapped the ruins of 941 monasteries, temples, and other religious sites, including mosques and temples devoted to Geser Khan and Erlag Khan temples.³¹ With a monastic population of around 120,000, about forty percent of Mongolia's male population was a monk.³² While male monastic affiliation was phenomenally high relative to total population, it is important to note that then, as now, being a Mongolian Buddhist monk (or *lam*) did not necessarily mean one lived in a monastery, performed only monastic functions, or abstained from having a family.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Buddhist monasteries in Mongolia held overwhelming political authority and were at the center of the economy.³³ In addition to donations, taxation, and corvée, Buddhist monasteries bolstered their income from regular financial support from the Qing administration and from leasing land at high rates.³⁴ Education, printing, historiography, medicine, arts and crafts, cartography, mathematics and veterinary skills, to name but a few fields of knowledge and pedagogy, were centered almost exclusively in the Buddhist monastery. These were practiced in broad affiliation with Tibetan monastic traditions and institutions on a presumed Indic model. As we shall see, the transition to national

30 A common estimation seems to be 747.

31 Rinchen., *Mongol Ard Ulsyn Ugsaatny Sudlal, Khelnii Shinzhleliin Atlas =: Atlas Ethnologique et Linguistique de La République Populaire de Mongolie* (Ulaanbaatar: BNMAU Shinzhlekh ukhaany akademi, 1979).

32 There are no comparable statistics for nuns of which I am aware. However, the oral tradition in Mongolia today is that there were very few formal monastic communities for women in Mongolia, even though one does meet older women who identify as having been nuns prior to the purges (often living independently or with family on the periphery of a monastery). This monastic gender imbalance is the same in the contemporary post-socialist Buddhist revival.

33 Monastic property on the eve of revolution amounted to about 57 million rubles of the 257 million total national properties, and monastic estate owned some 2.5 million head of livestock, and controlled a further 1.5 million (Rupen, *Mongols of the Twentieth Century*, 82.).

34 Cited in Morozova, *The Comintern and Revolution in Mongolia*, 91, ff. 6.

autonomy and then state socialism disrupted the monasteries' previously exclusive hold over the political economy and knowledge. The monastery became a contested site for new models of social mobility, lay secular education, and new discourses concerning the proper location of religion in a modern society. In all this, as we shall see, prominent monastics were not only sought after interlocutors for progressives, but were themselves at the forefront of religious, social, economic and political reforms well into the socialist period. This was true even when they resisted such reforms, as was the case with Zawa Damdin.

With the Qing collapse, the contours and nature of this mass socio-political force in Mongolian society was open to re-definition and new sources of critique. For revolutionary agitators and Soviet historians, for example, “the one hundred thousand lamas [...] included both exploiters and the exploited,”³⁵ which were “comprised of incarnate lamas, clerical administrators, and church labourers.”³⁶ Despite its hegemony in Mongolian society at the time of the Qing collapse, and of great consequence for the fractured Buddhist response to socialist pressure, monastic infrastructure was decentered. Even if Ikh Khüree and the figure of the Jebzundamba anchored the Mongolian Buddhist gaze, there was no unified, inter-regional bureaucratic or administrative structure. Local corporate rule ran regional monastic estates with distinct lay affiliations. These, in turn, were all tied to location in a particular “banner” (M. *khoshuu*) and other hierarchies of place in the late Qing administrative system.³⁷

35 B. Shirendyib, *By-Passing Capitalism* (Ulaanbaatar: Mongolian People's Republic State Press, 1968), 11.

36 Sanders, *Mongolia : Politics, Economics and Society*, 32.

37 For detailed studies of Qing administration, see: Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford University Press, 2001); Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton, *Empire at the Margins : Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, Studies on China ; (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0515/2005018339.html>.

This decentered, locally embedded monastic infrastructure explains the quick penetration of foreign ideas and progressive movements into the capital, despite the protests of many prominent and powerful monastic leaders. The lack of monastic centralization buffered earlier socialist attempts to annex and dissolve the political, economic, and ideological clout of Buddhist institutionalism. In time, however, monastic independence retarded the formation of an effective, unified monastic response to such policies across monastic estates and traditional polities.

1.3 The Two Systems: “Enlightened” Religio-Political Authority in Inner Asia During the Qing-Socialist Transition

An absolutely central category to clarify in any analysis of Mongolian Buddhist mediations of the imperial-socialist transition is that of the so-called “Two Systems”, a pillar of Géluk and Qing authority in the region, and an ambiguous survival during the first two decades of the revolution. Zawa Damdin took the Two Systems as his primary historical subject decades after its decline in his Mongolian homeland, and, according to Khurelbaatar, even worked for a time in the socialist party’s Institute of Scripts and Letters to try and transpose the concept into the new socialist state.³⁸ Indeed, even as the categories of a Euro-Russian Buddhology entered Mongolia—one that reified a homogenous, singular, world religion as its subject—for Zawa Damdin and his primary interlocutors (what I will be calling his interpretative community), the subject of his “Buddhist” histories was actually this religio-political matrix.

Concepts of Buddhist government in Inner Asia—enacted by political authorities thought to be manifestations of buddhas and in polities governed by recognizably Buddhist ethical

38 The details of Zawa Damdin’s involvement with the Institute, and any scholarship he helped produce, have remained frustratingly unclear to me, with the exceptions of a few tantalizing notes in: Lkhamsurengiin Khurelbaatar and G. Luvsantseren, *Ogtorguin tsagaan gardi*, vol. II (Ulaanbaatar: Mongol Uls, Shinzhlekh Ukhaany Akademiin Khel Zokhiolyn Khureelen, 1996).

principals—first entered into Tibet during a period of political and religious centralization in the eleventh-twelfth centuries.³⁹ This was as part of cycles of “treasure texts” (T. *gter ma*) thought to have been hidden during the Tibetan imperial period (sixth-ninth centuries), and recovered by a new class of Buddhist visionary known as “treasure revealers” (T. *gter ston*). It was from such texts that memories of a thriving Tibetan Buddhist imperial period took form. This was remembered as one ruled by manifestations of the buddha Avalokiteśvara in human form, such as king Songtsen Gampo and his Chinese and Nepali wives, considered manifestations of the Buddha Tārā.⁴⁰ Early Tibetan treasure texts like the Mani Kabum⁴¹ and the Péma Katang⁴² became particularly influential across Inner Asia during the Qing, with the former containing injunctions such as, “If you establish the imperial law tightly, it will be the cause of sins and bad life. Therefore, you must establish the religious law well. [Thus is] the teaching to a prince for bringing together the kingship and Dharma.”⁴³

During the seventeenth-century consolidation of Géluk temporal and religious authority in Central Tibet under the Dalai Lama V and Gushi Khan, such legends of enlightened kingship (especially centered on Avalokiteśvara, with whom the Dalai Lamas began to be recognized) gained new currency and were central to the political ideology of the Géluk school’s Ganden

39 Ronald M Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance Tantric Buddhism in the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10579918>.

40 *Srong btsan sgam po*, r.c. 605-650 CE. See: Matthew Kapstein, “Remarks on the Maṇi Bka’-’Bum and the Cult of Avalokiteśvara in Tibet,” in *Tibetan Buddhism Reason and Revelation*, ed. Steven D Goodman and Davidson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 79–93.

41 *Ma Ni bka’ ’bum*. For a recent addition, see: Srong btsan sgam po, *Ma Ni Bka’ ’Bum*, 2 vols. (Delhi: Spungs thang par khang, 1975).

42 *Pad ma bka’ thang*. For a recent edition, see: O rgyan gling pa, *Pad+ma Bka’ Thang* (sKu ’bum byams pa gling: sKu ’bum byams pa gling, 2001).

43 Cited in: Ishihama Yumiko, “The Notion of ‘Buddhist Government’ (chos srid) Shared by Tibet, Mongol, and Manchu in the Early 17th Century,” in *The relationship between religion and state (chos srid zung ’brel) in traditional Tibet: proceedings of a seminar held in Lumbini, Nepal, March 2000*, ed. Christoph Cüppers (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2004), 17.

Potrang government and its affiliation with the Qing formation.⁴⁴ Yumiko Ishihama notes that some of the Dalai Lama V's most prominent Mongol disciples—those responsible for bringing the Géluk tradition to Mongol peoples as part of the Qing consolidation of Inner Asia—translated the Mani Kabum and Padma Katang into Mongolian. Mongolian Buddhist scholars such as Zaya Pandita and the author of the *Erdeni-yin tobci* consolidated a particularly salient vision of the connections between religion and state (T. *chos srid zung 'brel*) amongst Mongols, Manchus, and Tibetans in the early Qing period.⁴⁵ An entire lexicon for such religio-political authority developed in post-sixteenth century Inner Asian Buddhist historiography, such as the “Two Laws” or “Two Systems” (T. *chos srid lugs gnyis*; M. *khoyar yosu*), compound nouns which collapse the two into one (T. *bstan srid, chos srid, bstan gzhung*; M. *törü shasini*). Some terminology subsumed these spheres of authority into one abstracted whole, such as “the unification of Dharma and politics” (T. *chos srid zung 'brel*). Early Manchu leaders, including even Hong Taiji (1592-1643), codified the translation of these terms into Manchu at the very outset of the Qing formation; for example, *doro shajin*, clarifying that *doro* would hereafter mean only the Buddhadharma, and not its previous general connotation of “ceremony.”⁴⁶

44 *dGa ldan pho brang*. Originally the name of the Dalai Lama's seat at Gaden monastery in Central Tibet, under the Dalai Lama V, his regent, Desi Sanggye Gyatso, and the Mongol forces of Gushi Khaan, the Gaden Potrang became the de-facto political authority in Central Tibet as part of the Qing formation. See: Robert E. Buswell and Donald S. Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton University Press, 2013), 237. For a fascinating discussion of the legal frameworks for the Gaden Potrang government, rooted firmly in the ideology of the Two Systems, see: Rebecca R. French, “Tibetan Legal Literature: The Law Codes of the dGa' Ldan Pho Brang,” in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, ed. Lhundup Sopa, José Ignacio Cabezón, and Roger R Jackson (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion, 1996), 438–57.

45 Ishihama Yumiko, “The Notion of ‘Buddhist Government’ (chos srid) Shared by Tibet, Mongol, and Manchu in the Early 17th Century,” 16.

46 Ibid., 22.

Relevant in all this is the way those sources, and the resultant theories of religio-political authority to which they gave birth, subsumed imperial law (T. *rgyal khrims*) to religious law (T. *chos khrims*). As the Péma Katang puts it:

Then the king, being very delighted and performing many prostrations, established the religious law firmly like a silk knot, and brought together the imperial law, which is as heavy as Mt. Yoke, one of the Seven Golden Mountains, and the religious law, which is smooth as a silk knot.⁴⁷

In histories written in the century after Mongolians began to adopt Buddhism in the sixteenth century, the concept of a unified dharmic and political authority became increasingly common. For example, the sixteenth-century *White History* explicitly identifies its purpose as, “a handbook to actualize these Two Laws rightly.”⁴⁸ While we must refrain from using the notion of “Two Systems” unselfconsciously in our own analysis—especially in following our sources in seeing its providence outside of the Qing formation—by the time of the imperial collapse in 1912, the Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist historical corpus took this concept for granted, and had tracked its genesis into pre-history itself. In other words, by the time Zawa Damdin wrote his histories, Qing authority had long been situated as the natural political expression of the Buddhist dispensation since the time of Śākyamuni himself.⁴⁹

However, what happened to the theory of the Two Systems when it’s fullest expression, the Qing formation, collapsed in 1911-1912? How did Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhist historians reconcile the transition to nationalist and socialist forms of governance in light of its enduring appeal?

47 Cited in: Ibid., 18.

48 Ibid., 19.

49 See: Carl Johan Elverskog, “Buddhism, History and Power: The Jewel Translucent Sutra and the Formation of Mongol Identity” (9993532, Indiana University, 2000), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses (PQDT) (MSTAR_304600342); Elverskog, “Mongol Time Enters a Qing World”; Johan Elverskog, *Our Great Qing : The Mongols, Buddhism and the State in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006).

While much comparative study must still be done to even begin answering these important questions, in the case of Outer Mongolia during the Bogd Khaanate, the authority of both religion and state was invested into the person of the Jebzundamba VIII, even as the abuses of the late Qing were widely promoted as justifying “Asia’s first modern revolution.”⁵⁰ For example, a nearly contemporaneous history of the Autonomous Period describes the transition in the following terms:

When Hsüan T’ung, the eleventh emperor of the Manchu, or Ta Ch’ing, was small, the dignitaries and aristocrats who held state power, high and low, metropolitan and provincial, civil and military, all having lost the principles and virtues of government, their despotism, cruelty, graft, greed and indiscipline exceeded all bounds, and the masses of the five races subject to the state, the Manchus, Mongols, Chinese, Tibetans and Moslems, were truly unable to bear it, and were hard put to it to find their living, so that in the southern provinces of China there broke out the revolution of the revolutionary people’s party known as the Ge min dan, which directly attacked the government of the Manchu Dynasty. Moreover, in Northern, Outer Mongolia, the place known as Urga was a place of extreme importance as the center and forefront and the root and the base, in fact, of all the Mongol aimaks, where the Holy Jebtsundamba Lama, worshipped and venerated by all the Mongol aimaks, had dwelt for many years, where the doctrine of the Buddha Śākyamuni flourished properly, where further all sorts of trade and industry were progressing greatly, and the people of all the tribes and sticks of Inner and Outer Mongolia mingled and settled together.⁵¹

With the socialist transition in 1921, previously privileged notions of Buddhist and hereditary imperial authority were slowly marginalized and, eventually, criminalized as feudal, reactionary, and counter-revolutionary. By the time that Zawa Damdin completed his most extensive historical work on the Mongolian ethnoreligious genesis in 1931, the Two Systems was a decidedly out of favor, if not dangerous, object of scholarly exaltation.

For that reason, Zawa Damdin’s career during the imperial-socialist transition, his Qing nostalgia late in life, and his stubborn historicization of the Two Systems represents an

50 Onon and Pritchatt, *Asia’s First Modern Revolution : Mongolia Proclaims Its Independence in 1911*.

51 Bawden, *A Contemporary Mongolian Account of the Period of Autonomy*, 4:7.

absolutely unique and previously unstudied example of mediations of the Two Revolutions amongst Buddhist monastics outside of party cadres. It is to these mediations that the remainder of this dissertation now turns.

2 The Life and Work of Zawa Damdin Luwsandamdin (1867-1937)

2.1 Zawa Damdin, the “Stubborn Logician of the North”

While the works of the Khalkha polymath Zawa Damdin (1867-1937) represent some of the most prolific and mature statements by Mongolian Buddhist literati prior to the purges, little is known about his life or expansive literary production outside of Mongolia and a select Tibetan-language readership.⁵² The following chapter examines his autobiographical works, and so there is no need to extensively introduce his life here. There are a few details, however, that come from Soviet-era and post-socialist Mongolian scholarship and news articles that remember the man in ways that are not covered in his own literary self stylization. Some of this, drawn from oral history interviews with Zawa Damdin’s disciples, not only create a wonderfully complicated picture of this abbot and cosmopolitan scholastic, but also provide details of his death and the impact of the purges on his monastic seats.

Zawa Damdin was born on February 7, 1867, in the Gobi region of Üijüng gung, part of what was then Tusheyetu Khaan Banner.⁵³ Training first in his local banner monastery under an uncle who was a lama, Zawa Damdin rose to prominence as a logician and scholar in the monastic city of Ikh Khüree around the turn of the twentieth century. According to his own

⁵² *Alias*, Sh. Damdin. His most common Tibetan authorial names are: *bBo bzang rta mgrin*; *bLo bzang rta dbyangs*. In post-socialist Mongolia, he is known as Zawa Damdin, by which I refer to him here.

⁵³ “Zawa Damdin Namtar Sudlalaas Üüdsen Bodlîn 13 Khelkhee,” *Ödriin Sonin*, August 29, 2007, <http://news.gogo.mn/r/5822>.

autobiographic statements, Zawa Damdin studied with such eminent masters as Jikjé, the “King of Learned Ones” (*mKhas dbang 'jigs byed*), the Ācārya Sanggyé, who had apparently studied in India, and the Chief Abbot of Ikh Khüree, Pelden Chöpel (*Da bla ma dpal ldan chos 'phel*).⁵⁴ A staunch conservative resistant to education reform in the monasteries, Zawa Damdin was still of an open and prestigious intellect befitting his cosmopolitan times. He was in the inner circle of Mongols who hosted the Dalai Lama XIII and his entourage in Mongolia between 1904-05 (while on the run from the British invasion of Tibet under General Younghusband), and was a sought after interlocutor of the many European and Russian scholars and administrators who flooded Ikh Khüree at that time, including the Russian Buddhologists Scherbastky and Tubyansky (a member of the Bakhtin Circle). He graduated from his monastic training in 1906, and in the twilight of the Qing traveled as pilgrim, student, preceptor, and teacher to sites of importance in the Mongolian Buddhist *imaginaire* such as Mt. Wutai in Shanxi Province, the great Géluk monasteries of Amdo (eastern Tibet), and even Beijing itself. After the Qing collapse in 1911, he rose to occupy senior monastic positions in Ikh Khüree and in his Gobi homeland. In addition to monastic duties and his many writing projects (much of which were compiled and printed in his Gobi monastery around 1930, according to an oral history interview with his disciple Myataw Lam),⁵⁵ Zawa Damdin remained active in founding new monastic colleges, consecrating grand statuary, and curating large-scale devotional festivals across central Mongolia until about a year before his death. According to an interview with Myataw Lam conducted by the Mongolian scholar G. Akim in 1997 and a short newspaper piece by J. Choidorj, Zawa Damdin died from natural causes in 1937 in the home of his brother and sister in

⁵⁴ I present narratives of their lives from Zawa Damdin’s works in the following chapter, but as yet know little about their biographies beyond those materials.

⁵⁵ Khurelbaatar and Luvsantseren, *Ogtorguin tsagaan gardi*, II:228.

Ikh Khüree (then Ulaanbaatar).⁵⁶ Despite his orders for a humble and private funeral, his remains were paraded in a coffin from Ikh Khüree to his Gobi homeland on a white horse, and cremated near his Gobi monastery. Just months later, his abbatial successor and some eight hundred monks were executed at that very monastery, which was destroyed and eventually became the site of an agro-commune at mid-century.⁵⁷

2.2 Zawa Damdin in Euro-American Scholarship

While he has not attracted any sustained study to date, Zawa Damdin is known to Euro-American scholarship of Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhism already, often cited under various pseudonyms in footnotes for his unusual departures in matters epistemic, logical, philosophic, and historical. For example, his philosophical and tantric commentaries, which I will introduce more fully in later chapters, are still prominent in Tibetan Géluk philosophical colleges in exile, and for that reason have attracted some scholarly attention. Zawa Damdin's Madhyamaka commentary (*The Essence*) not only continues to be debated on the monastic courtyard, but also has been prominently featured in an earlier era of philosophy-heavy American scholarship on Tibetan Buddhism.⁵⁸ Tibetologists have also noted Zawa Damdin's works on epistemology⁵⁹

56 G. Akim, "Zawa Bagshiin Sharilīg Kherkhen Khailuulsan Be?," *Unknown*, 1997, VI.I-VI.7, no. 22 (245) edition; J. Choidorj, "Zawa Damdin," *Minii Ardîn*, unknown.

57 G. Akim, "Zawa Bagshiin Sharilīg Kherkhen Khailuulsan Be?"; J. Choidorj, "Zawa Damdin."

58 Jeffrey Hopkins, "A Tibetan Perspective on the Nature of Spiritual Experience," in *Paths to Liberation: The Mārga and Its Transformations in Buddhist Thought*, ed. Robert E. Buswell and Robert M. Gimello (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992); Tupden Kensur Yeshey et al., *Path to the Middle : Oral Madhyamika Philosophy in Tibet : The Spoken Scholarship of Kensur Yeshey Tupden Commenting on Tsong-Kha-Pa's Illumination of the Thought, Extensive Explanation of (Candrakirti's) "Entrance to (Nāgārjuna's) 'Treatise on the Middle Way'" : (dbu Ma Dgongs Pa Rab Gsal), the Sixth Chapter, "Perfection of Wisdom" Verses 1-7* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1994); Elizabeth Napper, *Dependent-Arising and Emptiness : A Tibetan Buddhist Interpretation of Madhyamika Philosophy Emphasizing the Compatibility of Emptiness and Conventional Phenomena* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1989); Jules Levinson, "Metaphors of Liberation: Tibetan Treatises on Grounds and Paths," in *Tibetan Literature : Studies in Genre : Essays in Honor of Geshe Lhundrup Sopa.*, ed. José Ignacio Cabezón, Roger Jackson, and Lundup Sopa (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion, 1996), 261–74; Jules Brooks Levinson, "The Metaphors of Liberation : A Study of Grounds and Paths according to the Middle Way Schools" (University of Virginia, 1994).

and some of his historical conclusions related to Tibetan historical development (for instance, related to Köden Khan's supposed letter to Sakya Paṇḍita and the biography of the Dalai Lama III).⁶⁰ At the behest of the current Dalai Lama—who previously used Zawa Damdin's Kālacakra commentaries around the world in his many large-scale initiations of that tantric deity⁶¹—José Cabezón translated Zawa Damdin's one hundred-and-eight-verse *Praise to Great Compassion* for distribution to Western devotees (the only translation of Zawa Damdin's works into a Western language of which I am aware).⁶² In that parochial vein, Zawa Damdin's commentaries on “Mind Training” (T. *blo sbyong*) have also been referenced in popular translations of such texts by contemporary Tibetan Buddhist lamas.⁶³ While there is not space here to explore the political intrigues of this schism in any detail, Zawa Damdin has also enjoyed a curious circulation amongst proponents of the much-maligned protective deity Dorjé Shukden. In light of the current Dalai Lama's 1996 ban on the propitiation of this deity as a Géluk fundamentalist

59 L. W. J van der Kuijp, “Tibetan Contributions to the ‘Apoha’ Theory: The Fourth Chapter of the Tshad-Ma Rigs-Pa'i Gter,” *Jameriesoci Journal of the American Oriental Society* 99, no. 3 (1979): 408–22; L. W. J Kuijp, “Phya-Pa Chos-Kyi Seng-Ge's Impact on Tibetan Epistemological Theory,” *J Indian Philos Journal of Indian Philosophy* 5, no. 4 (1978): 355–69.

60 Vladimir Uspensky, “The Previous Incarnations of the Qianlong Emperor according to the Panchen Lama Blo Bzang Dpal Ldan Ye Shes,” in *Tibet, Past and Present: Tibetan Studies I. PIATS 2000: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, ed. Henk; McKay Blezer (Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 2002), 215–28; E. Gene Smith and Kurtis R. Schaeffer, *Among Tibetan Texts : History and Literature of the Himalayan Plateau* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001), 426, n. 305; Dieter Schuh, “Erlasse und Sendschreiben mongolischer Herrscher für tibetische Geistliche. Ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der Urkunden des tibetischen Mittelalters und ihrer Diplomatie” (VGH-Wissenschaftsverlag, 1977), xvii, 18, 51f, 76 . 125, /z-wcorg/; Toni Huber, *The Holy Land Reborn Pilgrimage & the Tibetan Reinvention of Buddhist India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

61 The Dalai Lama stopped using Zawa Damdin's Kālacakra commentaries once the Dorjé Shukden scism began in the mid-1990s, which I explain below

62 Lobsang Tayang and José Cabezón, *One Hundred and Eight Verses in Praise of Great Compassion: [a Precious Crystal Rosary]* (Mysore: Mysore Printing and Publishing House, 1984).

63 Lhundup Sopa, Michael J Sweet, and Leonard Zwilling, *Peacock in the Poison Grove: Two Buddhist Texts on Training the Mind ; the Wheel Weapon (mtshon Cha'khor Lo and the Poison-Destroying Peacock (rma Bya Dug joms) Attributed to Dharmarakṣita* (Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2001).

spirit tied to events in seventeenth and early twentieth-century Central Tibet, advocates have looked to Zawa Damdin's works on Shukden for alternative histories outside of the polemic of the Tibetan Government in Exile and sympathetic scholarship.⁶⁴

2.3 Zawa Damdin's *Collected Works* (gSung 'bum)

From amongst several hundred works in the Tibetan language now contained in a seventeen-volume collection, Zawa Damdin's writings include some of the last and most prolific statements by a Buddhist monastic on the Mongolian religious, ethnic, and political past. The most current edition of his collected works is seventeen-volumes long, and some four thousand five hundred pages in length. Contemporary members of Zawa Damdin's revived community in Mongolia tell me that the original, twelve-volume long collection of his works produced around 1930 was expanded to seventeen volumes by the great curator of Mongolian Buddhism in the late twentieth century, Guru Dewa Rinpoche.⁶⁵ The true extant of these works is beyond the purview of this short introduction, but will be extensively referenced later in this dissertation in relation to his autobiographical and historical works.

2.4 Zawa Damdin's Buddhist Histories

In addition to several (auto)biographies and monastic chronicles, Zawa Damdin produced two major histories that are the primary subject of this dissertation. The first is a short,

64 Trinley Kelsang, "Lobsang Tamdin (1867-1937)," *Dorje Shugden History*, 2010 2008, <http://www.dorjeshugdenhistory.org/among-shugden-texts-1867.html>. Georges Dreyfus, *The Shuk-Den Affair : Origins of a Controversy ; Nachdruck Eines Artikels Aus: Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, Vol. 21, Number 2, 1998* (Dharamsala: Narthang Publ., 1999).

65 Blo-bzañ-rta-mgrin, *The collected works (gsuñ 'bum) of Rje-btsun Blo-bzañrta-mgrin*. (New Delhi: Gurudeva, 1975).

versified “root text” on Mongolian religio-political history called the *Dharma Conch*.⁶⁶

Undated, it must have existed in some form around the time of the Dalai Lama XIII’s flight to Ikh Khüree in 1904-1906.⁶⁷ Khurelbaatar’s oral history interviews provide an interesting narrative of its genesis: none other than the Jebzundamba VIII requested its composition. Zawa Damdin apparently accepted only begrudgingly, due to his dislike of the highest Mongolian incarnate lama (a sentiment made explicit in histories written after the Jebzundamba’s death in 1924).⁶⁸

In 1919, at the behest of a consortium of nobility under the Tusheyetu Khan, Zawa Damdin was requested to write a commentary to the *Dharma Conch*. The result was the four hundred and fifty folio *Golden Book*, begun in 1919 but only completed in 1931 due to “difficult circumstances.”⁶⁹ The *Golden Book* has long been known outside of Mongolia via Lokesh Chandra’s 1964 reproduction, though neither it nor the *Dharma Conch* has received any sustained study.⁷⁰ In addition to these major religious histories, both written firmly in the Tibetan-inflected genre of “Origins of the Dharma” (T. *chos ’byung*), Zawa Damdin also co-authored an eleven volume state history at the end of the Autonomous Period (1918-19).⁷¹ In the

66 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Hor Gyi Yul Du Dam Pa’i Chos Rin Po Che Byung Tshul Gyi Gtam Rgyud Bkra Shis Chos Dung Bzhad Pa’i Sgra Dbyangs/,” in *gSung ’Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 2, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 9–42.

67 It seems to have been then that Agvan Dorjiev read the *Dharma Conch*, which led him to compose several questions and critiques of its historical claims (examined later in this study).

68 Khurelbaatar and Luvsantseren, *Ogtorguin tsagaan gardi*, II:230.

69 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975.

70 Blo-bzañ-rta-mgrin and Lokesh Chandra, *The golden annals of Lamaism: being the original Tibetan text of the Hor-chos-hbyuñ of Blo-bzañ-rta-mgrin entitled ’Dzam gliñ byaṅ phyogs chen po Hor gyi rgyal khams kyi rtogs pa brjod pa’i bstan bcos chen po dpyod ldan mgu byed no mtshar gser gyi deb ther* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1964).

71 The result was entitled *Zarligaar Togtooson Mongol Ulsyn Shastir*, which in the anachronistic view of later Soviet scholars:

early years of the socialist period he was made a founding member of the Mongolian Scientific Institute (*Shinjlekh Ukhaany Khüreeleen*). While the details have unfortunately eluded me, there he seems to have researched historical and political subjects for the new people's government.⁷²

In none of Zawa Damdin's religious histories, however, are contemporary Mongolian politics ever addressed at length. Neither are the contents of post-imperial party rhetoric, the ideology of pan-Mongolism, or even Buddhist reform movements that swept Mongolia and Buryatia in the early twentieth century. Despite the fact that Zawa Damdin was personally engaged in all these developments and was a close colleague to many of the early revolutionary leaders, explicit mention of the Russian Revolution, the Autonomous Period, and the People's Revolution are unknown in the pages of his histories or, to my knowledge, any of his other works. The periodization of Mongolian history that coalesced in so-called state directed "scientific" historiography after the Qing and Tsarist collapse—Qing domination, national awakening, autonomy, a people's revolution—does not inform Zawa Damdin's contemporaneous histories. Even if early party intellectuals, such as A. Amar, were reading Zawa Damdin's histories, the reverse was apparently not true (or, at least, did not warrant inscription).⁷³ The same is true in his autobiography, completed in 1936 just prior to the purges

"[P]ropounds the view that Mongolia has from time immemorial been an independent state which, after emerging from being a part of the Manchu Empire, was revived in the form of a Mongolian monarchy. It is interesting to note that it contains a critical observation about the policy of the Manchus in Mongolia... This quotation shows that, although the representatives of the feudal class of Mongolia were very circumscribed in their criticisms of the policy of the alien oppressors, and despite the fact that the reasons for the establishment of an independent Mongolian monarchy were quite inadequately disclosed, it is still a noteworthy fact that the ideas of the national liberation movement did find expression to some extent in Mongolian historical writing at this time." (Brown et al. 1976, 263)

72 Known then as the Institute of Scripts and Letters (*Sudar Bichigiin Khüreeleen*).

73 Amar lists Zawa Damdin's histories as his primary source for Tibetan-language historical works (A Amar et al., *Mongolyn товч түүх* (Ulaanbaatar: So-embo Printing, 2006).).

and his own death (though, here one suspects self-censorship and self-preservation as a primary motivation).

At face value, Zawa Damdin reads as an aged conservative monk, disengaged from current events and oblivious to political forces increasingly antagonistic to Buddhist institutionalism. Even as we read of encounters with European scholars and of his travels, he presents at first as a monk stubbornly preoccupied with outdated legends, public rituals, and monastic textbooks. Such is the characterization of him in later Soviet works. These celebrate his intellectual openness to new scientific currents, but lament his inability to move beyond the class biases of his feudal monasticism:

Among the historians of the Mongolian monarchy period mention should be made of Sh. Damdin (1867-1937) [*alias* Zawa Damdin]. He was a historian who had formerly been a lama,⁷⁴ and wrote in Tibetan. Between 1900 and 1920 he wrote the following works: *Chronological Treatise*, *Short History of Fa-syang*, and others. In 1919 he began to write a history of Mongolia under the title *The Golden Book*. Although Damdin introduced a number of innovations by making use of contemporary historical data, nevertheless he was unable to free himself from the trammels of the feudal and religious ideology which were typical of Mongolian historiography of that period.⁷⁵

Contra this superficial impression (which, I admit, guided my initial research of these materials), a closer reading of Zawa Damdin's histories reveal a complex argument for an enduring Buddhist institutionalism in a quickly changing Mongolian society. How is this so? How does a sustained narrative omission function as polemic? The answer is, quite simply, that no such omission exists. What *is* absent is a temporal structure and mode of inquiry adopted by

74 I have yet to see any evidence that Zawa Damdin ever disrobed or formally disaffiliated himself from his monastic duties. That said, the sparse account of the final years of his life from his autobiography suggests he was engaged in solitary retreat away from any monastery. We also know from oral history interviews that he died of illness in the home of his brother and sister. It remains unclear whether he had disrobed out of fear as more and more of his colleagues were victims of state violence, or whether there simply was no monastic institution left with which to be affiliated at the end of his life.

75 Brown, Onon, and Shirendev, *History of the Mongolian People's Republic*, 264.

foreign-trained academics and state-directed histories during the revolutionary period (one's that are more familiar to our scholarship on this period of Mongolian history). Instead, the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book* interpret and write the past using practices and narrative structures rooted in the Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist scholastic tradition. These set Zawa Damdin's revolutionary present into parallel but distinct notions of space, time, ethno-religious community, and forms of authority. For example, the *Golden Book* contrasts contemporary events with a utopian past sealed off after the death of the Jebzundamba V in the mid nineteenth century: a golden age unknown in the nationalist and Marxist-Leninist periodization at play in contemporaneous state histories and party rhetoric. In regular authorial intrusions into his texts, in small asides and in sustained reflections upon material as diverse as the Tibetan prophetic record and archaeological data, Zawa Damdin waged a muted but sustained critique of the post-imperium. For that reason, and against our initial impressions, these works represent the most expansive Buddhist monastic reception of modernist developments in Inner Asia prior to the purges.

Even as he liberally engaged the fruits of European scholarship on Mongolian culture and history newly available in the revolutionary era, and even as he became affiliated with new secular academic institutions, Zawa Damdin worked within a specific mode of historical analysis and production; something I refer to below as his "interpretative community." This was founded largely in narratives and interpretative precedents established during the Qing by a relatively small group of Géluk monks from the Sino-Tibetan-Mongolian border region of Amdo. As intermediaries between the Qing Empire and its Inner Asian hinterlands, these multilingual and cosmopolitan monks drastically extended the form and content of Géluk Buddhist scholasticism. Not only do Zawa Damdin's autobiographical, geographic, and historiographic works represent the final statements of an embattled Mongolian monasticism.

They also mediate this extended, pan-Inner Asian Géluk *moderne* that was at the forefront of Buddhist receptions of new knowledge as diverse as Copernican cosmology, Chinese imperial histories, and state socialism over the course of the Qing formation and its dissolution.

3 What Time Was Revolution in Mongolia?

For these reasons, Zawa Damdin's historical works represent a subaltern record of modernist developments in Inner Asia that help nuance our historical picture. Successive polities and institutions in Mongolia's Two Revolutions, as in other revolutionary crises, were founded in contested "regimes of historicity."⁷⁶ That is to say, the social imaginaries ignited after the collapse of the great Eurasian empires were, among other things, founded in the dictation of time. Within government institutes and amongst Euro-Russian trained party literati, this historicization took the form of national history in sites and narrative structures distinct from the monastic histories that had so proliferated during the Qing. In this very limited disciplinary sense, the end of the Qing was the beginning of professional history in Mongolia; this, even as the contours and depth of Mongolia's past had never seemed so wide, and the direction of its people's struggles never so clear.⁷⁷

Until the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party centralized its authority after 1940, there were many master narratives circulating in (and in between) People's Congresses, monastic courtyards, and district capitals. For example, the power assigned to the Bogd Khaan as theocratic ruler during the Autonomous Period combined the right to rule of an incarnate lama, the Manchurian emperor, and a constitutional monarch. These variously evoked a history of enlightened intervention into Mongolian society across successive incarnations, the similarly

76 Myriam Revault d'Allonnes, *La crise sans fin: essai sur l'expérience moderne du temps* (Paris: Seuil, 2012).

77 C Kaplonski, "Creating National Identity in Socialist Mongolia," *CENTRAL ASIAN SURVEY* 17, no. 1 (1998): 46.

enlightened patronage of the Manchu emperors, and the hereditary right of a monarch to rule over an enduring and cohesive geo-political territory. An example of this creative accommodation (and the regimes of historicity they evoke) comes from an anonymously authored state history from the Autonomous Period:

In 1911, European style, the third year of Hsüan T'ung of the Manchu or Ta Ch'ing Dynasty, the first day of the middle month of winter in the female white pig year of the fifteenth cycle, Mongol style, they initiated an independent state of Mongolia and established a separate country, raised the Holy Jebtsundamba [...] putting all religious and secular power concurrently in his control, and they called that country Mongolia.⁷⁸

Moreover, the celebration of Mongolia's autonomous Buddhist theocracy in 1912 and the consolidation of the early socialist party both took place at Baruun Örgöö. This was the shrine of Abudai Khan, the sixteenth century Khalkha leader credited with orchestrating the Buddhist conversion of his people.⁷⁹ The invention of a new proletariat with each turnover of power in the people's government was also tied inextricably to the invention of a new temporality.⁸⁰ While the majority population of herdsmen (M. *arad*) remained largely unaware of revolutionary redefinitions of the Mongol imagined community until the collectivization programs of the mid twentieth century, representations of their historical experience were central to the projection of post-imperial authority. For instance, the first two years of socialist government in Mongolia (1921-22) were later referred to in state history as the "coalition between herdsmen, *arad* and the mass of Mongolian national feudalists for the struggle against the Chinese and imperialism."⁸¹ Prominent Buddhist reformers and early revolutionary party

78 Bawden, *A Contemporary Mongolian Account of the Period of Autonomy*, 4:9.

79 Marie-Dominique Even, "Ritual Efficacy or Spiritual Quest? Buddhism and Modernity in Post-Communist Mongolia," in *Revisiting Rituals in a Changing Tibetan World*, ed. Katia Buffetrille (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 244.

80 Humphrey, "Remembering an Enemy: The Bogd Khaan in Twentieth Century Mongolia," 24.

81 Irina Y. Morozova, *Socialist Revolutions in Asia : The Social History of Mongolia in the 20th Century* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 28.

sympathizers, such as the Darva Bandida of Arhangai, also took up the cause of “the people” (and their histories) in their appeals for social and monastic reform and modernization.

On the defensive as the revolutionary government adopted a stronger anti-clerical platform towards the middle of the 1920s (such as cancelling land rights in 1925 and taxing income in 1926), monastics began a counter-propaganda program to incite the common people against the communists in part based on allegations that the revolutionary party leader Ts. Dambadorj was an incarnation of Langdarma, the infamous ninth century persecutor of Buddhism in Tibet.⁸² The “time” of national and socialist revolution was complicated still further by representations serving foreign interests. Prominent examples here include the Buddhist-Communist “United States of Asia” vision of the Theosophist Nicolas Roerich, the pan-Mongolism espoused by the Baikal Cossack and anti-Bolshevik Grigory Semyenov, and the Chingissid and Qing revivalist ideology of the White Russian Baron von Ungern-Sternberg.

For all these reasons, my approach to the traces of Zawa Damdin’s life and historical vision resists a simple reconstitution of the “facts”. My interest instead is to explore their content and contexts of production in light of this complex period of social imagination and newly plural sites for the social production of knowledge about time, place, community, and religion. In this sense, I respond to Sebastian Conrad’s seminal article “What Time is Japan?” There, Conrad urges researchers to attend more to transnational histories of historiography.⁸³ By this he means taking as an object of inquiry the vicissitudes of ideas about writing history as they travel and are naturalized in local contexts under the influence of local sensibilities and motivations. For Conrad and other Asianists, the circulation and reception (and, we should expect, resistance and

⁸² Even, “Ritual Efficacy or Spiritual Quest? Buddhism and Modernity in Post-Communist Mongolia,” 248.

⁸³ Conrad, Sebastian. 1999. What Time is Japan? Problems of Comparative (Intercultural) Historiography. *History and Theory* 38 (1), Feb. 1999.

mutation) of historiographic models are themselves historical formations and a relatively unexploited area of scholarly inquiry.⁸⁴ Douglas Howland has argued much more generally, yet still relevantly, that:

The meaning of ideas in culture must always be negotiated even among those who employ the so-called 'same' language, we must, in the end, engage in the comparative work of tracing the mutations that ideas undergo as they travel from one setting to another if we are to understand them. They are, after all, cultural material available to any users for any number of purposes. The key scholarly intervention... is to understand how ideas- and the words that contain them- have been used.⁸⁵

I situate my own methodology in this study as just such an intervention. I endeavor to highlight notions of “use” (ie. social practice) of local and non-local forms of historical discourse and interpretative procedures in pre-socialist Mongolia. In that way, I hope to answer Charles Hallisey’s call that Buddhist studies should further attend to local Buddhisms and “local conditions for the production of meaning.”⁸⁶

More recent scholarship presents a picture of these decades-long, post-Qing revolutionary struggle and its late nineteenth century antecedents as a highly imaginative period in Mongolian cultural and intellectual history.⁸⁷ Members of a variety of Mongol groups

84 In the case of the Qing specifically, see: Elverskog, “Buddhism, History and Power: The Jewel Translucent Sutra and the Formation of Mongol Identity”; Elverskog, “Mongol Time Enters a Qing World,” 2005; Elverskog, *Our Great Qing : The Mongols, Buddhism and the State in Late Imperial China*, 2006; Struve, *The Qing Formation in World-Historical Time*; Lynn A Struve, *Time, Temporality, and Imperial Transition: East Asia from Ming to Qing* (Honolulu: Association for Asian Studies and University of Hawai’i Press, 2005); Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror : History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology*; Crossley, “Making Mongols”; Crossley, *Orphan Warriors : Three Manchu Generations and the End of the Qing World*.

85 Howland, Douglas. 2003. The Predicament of Ideas in Culture: Translation and Historiography. *History and Theory* 42 (1): 45-60.

86 Charles Hallisey, “Road taken and Not Taken in the Study of Theravada Buddhism.” In *Curators of Buddha: The Study of Buddhism Under Colonialism*, edited by Jr. Donald S. Lopez, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995, 51.

87 Atwood, “Revolutionary Nationalist Mobilization in Inner Mongolia, 1925- 1929”; Bulag, *Nationalism and Hybridity in Mongolia*; C Kaplonski, “Creating National Identity in Socialist Mongolia,” *Central Asian Survey* 17, no. 1 (1998): 35–50; Elverskog, *Our Great Qing : The Mongols, Buddhism and the State in Late Imperial China*; Munkh-Erdene Lhamsuren, “The Mongolian Nationality Lexicon: From the Chinggisid Lineage to Mongolian Nationality (From the Seventeenth to the Early Twentieth Century),” *Inner Asia* 8, no. 1 (2006): 51–98; David

(Buryats, Khalkhas, etc.) began to conceive of a trans-tribal Mongolian ethnic and national family beyond local administrative and tribal units. This was, among other things, tied to economic and demographic pressures linked to policies of forced migration of Slavic and Han Chinese populations into Mongol territory in the Russian and Qing Empire, respectively. The result was an inclusive imagined community that encompassed more than the rarefied bloodlines of Chinggisid nobility, the exclusive “Mongol” subject of many earlier genealogical traditions.⁸⁸ This all, as we can imagine, entailed reformulating historical narratives.

Outside of shifting histories evoked by state rhetoric in the post-imperium, new nationalisms and pre-existing Buddhist symbolic repertoires were put to broad use in scholastic circles and village centers alike across the pan-Mongol imaginary (encompassing groups from Siberia, Central Mongolia, north China, and even the Tibetan plateau in some formulations). Emanuel Sarkisyanz wrote long ago of the tenacity and pervasion of the Śambhala and King Gesar myths in Buddhist attempts to forge common ground with communism and communist utopian vision in Inner Asia.⁸⁹ Millenarian movements mobilized prophecies related to the immanent arrival of forces from the legendary Buddhist kingdom of Śambhala (T. *bde 'byung*) to rid Inner Asia of non-Buddhist barbarism. The equally pervasive epic tradition of King Gesar (T. *gLing ge sar*; M. *Geser Khaan*) was put to similar use. Many Tibetan and Mongolian lamas had identified the Tsar and the Romanov court as the fabled rulers of Śambhala, ready to fight the enemies of Buddhism (such as the British, Japanese and Manchus). Even the troops of the

Sneath, “Political Mobilization and the Construction of Collective Identity in Mongolia,” *Central Asian Survey* 29, no. 3 (2010): 251–67.

88 Munkh-Erdene Lhamsuren, “The Mongolian Nationality Lexicon: From the Chinggisid Lineage to Mongolian Nationality (From the Seventeenth to the Early Twentieth Century),” *Inner Asia* 8, no. 1 (2006): 51–98.

89 Sarkisyanz, “Communism and Lamaist Utopianism in Central Asia.”

early Mongolian communist leader Sükhbaatar reportedly sang Śambhala military cadences. In the early days of Bolshevism, charismatic Buddhist leaders and Tsarists took power in polities delimited along new ethnic and national lines, as occurred under the Buddhist monk Samdan Tsydenov in Khorī Aimag east of Lake Baikal.⁹⁰

These all, in turn, existed in dialectic with orientalist movements in a late nineteenth century Russia increasingly looking to define its national identity in light of its Asia hinterlands.⁹¹ From mystical movements such as theosophy to emerging academic traditions of Buddhology and Asian ethnology, a new “Eurasianist” gaze formed in Russia at the start of the twentieth century as part of imperial concerns to define and secure its Asia borders.⁹² Elsewhere, Tibetan and Mongol Buddhist leaders were successfully spreading Buddhism to a receptive Chinese public in the newly defined minority rubrics of the Republican-era.⁹³

As we consider Zawa Damdin’s writings during this period of profound historical imagination, we must remember that neither of Mongolia’s Two Revolutions were, in fact, really revolutions at all (if we accept revolution to mean minimally a relatively rapid socio-political transition driven from below). Far from a mass nationalist awakening or a struggle of class-conscious proletariat-herders (who existed only as characters in state-histories until mid-century), it is clear that both revolutions were actually top-down affairs orchestrated by a mix of monastic, military, and aristocratic elite. Material interests and power brokering along unstable

90 Nikolay Tsyrempilov, “Samdan Tsydenov and His Buddhist Theocratic Project,” in *Biographies of Eminent Mongol Buddhists*, ed. Johan Elverskog (Halle: IITBS, International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, 2008), 117–38.

91 Marlène Laruelle, “The Orient in Russian Thought at the Turn of the Century,” in *Russia Between East and West: Scholarly Debates on Eurasianism*, ed. Dmitry Shlapentokh (BRILL, 2007), 9–38; Bernstein, “Pilgrims, Fieldworkers, and Secret Agents: Buryat Buddhologists and the History of an Eurasian Imaginary.”

92 Dmitry Shlapentokh, *Russia between East and West: Scholarly Debates on Eurasianism* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007).

93 Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

post-imperial axes of authority extending into Siberia, Russia more broadly, Japan, and China governed their contentious post-imperial designs. If national or class-conscious revolutionary workers existed at all after the collapse of the Qing, they were an intelligentsia composed of Mongol-Buryat ideologues, aristocrats, lamas, scientists, and commissars. They articulated their propositions for a post-imperial Mongolian future across porous boundaries between monastic colleges, newly minted Scientific Committees, foreign ambassadorships, and socialist tribunals.

3.1 Roads Taken and Not Taken in the Study of Inner Asian Historiography

The sheer diversity of socially embedded practices of the social imagination evident during the imperial-socialist transition challenges several inter-related presumptions in the study of Inner Asian Buddhist history and the spread of a post-imperial modernity heavily inflected by European political and scholarly categories. Buddhism and modernity have long been polarized in both Soviet-era scholarship and the recent narratives of Mongolia's post-socialist cultural revival, whether in the idioms of Marxism-Leninism or the romantic trope of a culture once lost but now found. Contrary to such anachronisms, Buddhism, nationalism, and state socialism actually produced one another in the early revolutionary period. Buddhism provided the conceptual and practical resources for a modernist re-structuring of Mongolian society. This religion (which was, at this time, constructed as a world religion in line with Euro-Russian scholarly categories) was projected in turn as a unifying feature of the newly imagined "Mongolian people." Prominent Buddhist leaders and monastics made up much of the early revolutionary leadership, and Buddhist monastic institutions and their technologies (for instance, printing presses and philosophical colleges) helped mediate the very terms of post-imperial Mongol self-identification. With the transposition of European scholarly discourse into Mongolia came the conceptual products of a nascent religious studies, especially Buddhology.

Here, the utopian, original Buddhism imagined and owned by the European scholar was translated into reform movements in Asia's heartland, producing a modernist, rationalized vision of the tradition palpable to the revolutionary imagination for some time. This was, in other words, an Inner Asian iteration of what has been called "Buddhist Modernism".⁹⁴

Despite all this, to date there is little scholarship on Buddhist life during the imperial-socialist transition, due in large part by the lack of attention to Tibetan-language monastic records. As such, the diversity of Buddhist receptions of the post-imperium represent a significant lacuna in the field of modern Buddhist thought and post-imperial cultural history in Inner Asia.⁹⁵ The little scholarship currently available comes mostly from state archives and a few autobiographical narratives concerning elite monastics or lay Buryat Buddhist intellectuals who helped lead revolutionary events, and who represent just a fraction of Buddhist revolutionary experience.⁹⁶ Little is yet known about the experience of the majority of Buddhist monastics who stood outside or against revolutionary movements, or who mediated Inner Asian modernism in contrarian terms effaced during the Soviet-era. It is to alterior social imaginaries of the post-imperium, Buddhism, and the Mongol subject evident in the largely unexamined monastic archives that this sets out to explore, however provisionally.

94 David L. McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

95 Onon and Pritchatt, *Asia's First Modern Revolution : Mongolia Proclaims Its Independence in 1911*.

96 For example, see: Owen Lattimore, Fujiko Isono, and Diluv Khutagt, *The Diluv Khutagt: Memoirs and Autobiography of a Mongol Buddhist Reincarnation in Religion and Revolution* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1982); Dugarava-Montgomery, "The Buriat Alphabet of Agvan Dorzhiev"; Bernstein, "Pilgrims, Fieldworkers, and Secret Agents: Buryat Buddhologists and the History of an Eurasian Imaginary"; Paul Hyer and Sechin Jagchid, *A Mongolian Living Buddha: Biography of the Kanjurwa Khutughtu* (SUNY Press, 1983); Gombyn Tserenchimed et al., *Da Lam Tserenchimed* (Ulaanbaatar: Mongol Ulsyn Ikh Surguul, 2002); John Snelling, *Buddhism in Russia : The Story of Agvan Dorzhiev, Lhasa's Emissary to the Tzar* (Shaftesbury, Dorset; Rockport, Mass.: Element, 1993); Ookhnoin Batsaikhan, Zorigtyn Lonzhid, and Olon Uls Sudlalyn Khürëelën (Mongolyn Shinzhlekhn Ukhaany Akademi), *Bogdo Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, the last king of Mongolia: Mongolia's national revolution of 1911 : research work* (Ulaanbaatar: Admon, 2009); Rupen, "Cyben Zamcaranovic Zamcarano (1880-?1940)"; Boryn Zhambal et al., *Tales of an Old Lama* (Tring, U.K.: Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1997); Morozova, *The Comintern and Revolution in Mongolia*; C Kaplonski, *Truth, History and Politics in Mongolia: The Memory of Heroes* (London; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004).

In addition to being lost in the Buddhist-modernist binary of Soviet-era historiography and post-socialist cultural revival, the revolutionary life of Mongolian Buddhist monastics is occluded by a more general lacuna in the study of Inner Asian Buddhism. Until recently, the post-17th century Buddhist culture of Mongolia has often been glossed in socialist and non-socialist scholarly literature alike as being a passive recipient and unremarkable, somewhat degenerate outpost for the Tibetan Géluk tradition under the careful, paternalistic (and deceptive) curatorship of the Qing formation.⁹⁷ For instance, Alan Sanders wrote that:

During the two hundred years and more of the Ch'ing rule, Mongolia was isolated from the outside world, the power of the Mongol khans was destroyed, and the Lamaist church became the focus of Mongolian identity.⁹⁸

Buddhological analysis has often remained merely a paraphrase of Tibeto-centric narratives drawn from normative primary sources. To date, the study of Buddhism in Mongolia has very often been marginalized *vis-à-vis* Tibet and Tibetan Studies.⁹⁹ To properly re-orient academic research on Mongolian Buddhist traditions, both past and present, Hildegard Diemberger and Uradyn Bulag have usefully called for a “critical cosmopolitanism” in its study.¹⁰⁰

It is not only a pervasive Tibeto-centrism that has limited scholarship on the circulation of Buddhist culture in Inner Asia. There has also been what Christopher Atwood calls an overdependence on “highly dubious first principles” in the study of Mongolian religion itself, stemming from nineteenth-century hierarchies of religious sophistication (which privilege

97 Crossley, Pamela Kyle. 1999. *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qīng Imperial Ideology*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

98 Sanders, *Mongolia : Politics, Economics and Society*, 14.

99 Elverskog, Carl Johan. 2003. Tibetocentrism, Religious Conversion and the Study of Mongolian Buddhism in Proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the IATS. Leiden-Boston: Brill University Press.

100 Diemberger, Hildegard G.M. and Uradyn E. Bulag. 2003. Towards Critical Studies of the Mongolian-Tibetan Interface in Proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the IATS. Leiden-Boston: Brill University Press. p. 9.

Buddhism over Shamanism, for example) and social evolutionist projections about nomadic culture issuing from both sides of the Iron Curtain.¹⁰¹

As such, the “places” of Mongolian Buddhism have often been circumscribed by what they are not: Tibetan monastic institutions, Qing political centers, Shamanist communities, progressive socialist institutions, and so forth. This is due to both the conceptual and geopolitical separation of Tibet and Mongolia in the twentieth century as well as the paucity of research “focusing specifically on the Mongolian-Tibetan interface, in terms of major political, social, cultural and religious histories.”¹⁰² Counter-intuitively, the strong demarcation between Tibet and Mongolia in the twentieth century has led to the cultural traditions of the latter largely being understood in terms of the former, especially when it comes to questions of history and religion.

¹⁰¹ Christopher P. Atwood, “Buddhism and Popular Ritual in Mongolian Religion: A Reexamination of the Fire Cult,” *History of Religions* 36, no. 2 (1996): 112–39.

¹⁰² Hildegard Diemberger and Uradyn Bulag, “Towards Critical Studies of the Mongolian-Tibet Interface,” in *The Mongolia-Tibet Interface : Opening New Research Terrains in Inner Asia : PIATS 2003 : Tibetan Studies : Proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Oxford, 2003*. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 1. For some notable exceptions, though still largely comprising studies which track the influence of Tibetan literature and religion in Mongolia, see: Manfred Taube and Helmut Eimer, *Studia Tibetica et Mongolica : (Festschrift Manfred Taube)* (Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica et Tibetica, 1999); Klaus Sagaster, KarÈnina Kollmar-Paulenz, and Christian Peter, *Tractata Tibetica et Mongolica : Festschrift F,r Klaus Sagaster Zum 65. Geburtstag* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2002); Seminar International Association for Tibetan Studies, Uradyn Erden Bulag, and Hildegard Diemberger, *The Mongolia-Tibet Interface : Opening New Research Terrains in Inner Asia : PIATS 2003 : Tibetan Studies : Proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Oxford, 2003* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007); Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (London: American Geographical Society of New York, 1940); J. Fletcher, “The Heyday of the Ch’ing Order in Mongolia, Sinkiang, and Tibet,” in *The Cambridge History of China*, ed. J.K. Fairbank, 1978, 351–408; David M. Farquhar, “Emperor as Bodhisattva in the Governance of Ch’ing Empire,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* ; 38.1, 1978. To these I would add several notable and more contemporary sources: Atwood, “Buddhism and Popular Ritual in Mongolian Religion: A Reexamination of the Fire Cult”; Johan Elverskog, *The Jewel Translucent Sūtra : Altan Khan and the Mongols in the Sixteenth Century*, Brill’s Inner Asian Library, (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2003); Johan Elverskog, “Tibetocentrism, Religious Conversion and the Study of Mongolian Buddhism,” in *The Mongolia-Tibet Interface : Opening New Research Terrains in Inner Asia : PIATS 2003 : Tibetan Studies : Proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Oxford, 2003*., ed. Uradyn E. Bulag and Hildegard G.M. Diemberger (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007); Johan Elverskog, “Mongol Time Enters a Qing World,” in *Time, Temporality, and Imperial Transition : East Asia from Ming to Qing*, ed. Lynn A. Struve (Honolulu: Association for Asian Studies and University of Hawai’i Press, 2005); Caroline Humphrey and Ujeed Hùrelbaatar, *A Monastery in Time: The Making of Mongolian Buddhism*, 2013; Sechin Jagchid, *Studies on the Historical Relationship Between Mongolia and Tibet* (Taibei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1978); Chen Qingying and Ding Shoupu, *The Great Series of the History of the Mongolian-Tibetan Relationship* (Beijing: Waiyu Jiaoxue yu Yanjiu Chubanshe, 2000); Chen Qingyin and Wang Furen, *A Brief History of the Mongolian-Tibetan Nationality Relationship* (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1985).

This shift must be understood in light of the aggressive stance taken against religion by the communist regimes who controlled (and continue to control, in the case of the People's Republic of China) Tibet and Mongolia. This is compounded by a history of professional disciplinary divisions between researchers of Tibetan and Mongolian cultural history. For instance, in North America today, many Tibetologists were trained and teach in Religious Studies programs, while the same certainly cannot be said for Mongolists, who more often work in departments defined by region (Central and Inner Asian Studies, Eurasian Studies, and even very commonly East Asian Studies). Diemberger and Bulag provide a concise gloss of the resultant body of research:

Mongol and Mongolist scholars have been interested in teasing out and consolidating a national Mongolian culture, forgetting, for better or worse, Mongolian imperial history and how that history might have shed light on the current cultural and religious as well as political processes. Tibetan [*sic.*] and Tibetologists are equally interested in delineating a crystal clear boundary. In so doing, their rhetorical target has been 'China', subsuming Manchu and Chinese under the same category... In this process, we detect a sense of Mongolian indifference to Buddhism that is matched by Tibetan hegemony over the Mongols which sees former Mongol rulers merely as instruments promoting Tibetan interest to the detriment of their own Mongolian interest.¹⁰³

Part of the tangle of new social imaginaries hotly contested in the post-imperium concerned the social organization of the production of knowledge. This was one based squarely in the Tibeto-Mongolian cultural interface, but we must remember that even those terms were only just being imagined and, as we shall below, were not actually reflected in the monastic works examined here. A closer analysis of not only categories of the social imagination, but of their generative practices, is required to further nuance our study of Inner Asian Buddhist like in the late-and post-imperium. This is the broad experiment of the current study: a holistic analysis on the narrative content and practice of history in the beleaguered monastic sites of revolutionary-era Mongolia.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 3.

I turn to my vision of such a holistic paradigm, drawn from the work of Michel de Certeau (and, more peripherally, Mikhail Bakhtin), at the end of this introduction. However, there are two more immediate problems that should be addressed as these relate to the study of Zawa Damdin's historiography before we might proceed: 1) the relative paucity of comparative scholarship on Tibetan-language sources in the study of late-imperial and revolutionary era Mongolian cultural history; and, more generally, 2) presumptions in the study of Inner Asian Buddhist historiography that have limited its treatment as a socially embedded practice of knowledge production.

3.2 Reconciling Buddhist Histories With Buddhist History

Euro-American scholarship has long struggled to adequately account for the historical traditions of Asian peoples, especially when these are oral and when they operate according to alternative models of causation and chronology.¹⁰⁴ Recent efforts at broad comparison between historical traditions (in the rubric of "Global Historiography") are a laudable and growing

104 Although there are several encyclopedias and dictionaries of historical writing, and numerous compendia, there is no full-coverage scholarly survey of the history of historical writing across the globe. Boyd's *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing* and Woolf's *A Global Encyclopedia of Historical Writing* go beyond the conventional Anglo-European accounts of historiography (Kelly Boyd, *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing* (London; Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1999); D. R Woolf, *A Global Encyclopedia of Historical Writing* (New York: Garland Pub., 1998). Both, however, are low-circulation library reference books, and the scope and quality of the major essays are limited by the need to spend a significant amount of space on very short biographical entries. Other survey works tend to be highly Eurocentric. Exceptions include the now forty-year old series of collections of essays on various oriental and Asian area historiographies, published by Oxford (for example: W. G Beasley and Edwin G Pulleyblank, *Historians of China and Japan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).), Cornell (for example: Soedjatmoko, Cornell University, and Modern Indonesia Project, *An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1965).), and Leiden (Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, Achim Mittag, and Jörn Rüsen, *Historical Truth Historical Criticism and Ideology Chinese Historiography and Historical Culture from a New Comparative Perspective* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005), <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=173718>). These are useful but somewhat dated, as are more recent collections which focus on Southeast Asia (Anthony Reid, David G Marr, and Asian Studies Association of Australia, *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Published for the Asian Studies Association of Australia by Heinemann Educational Books (Asia), 1979); D. G. E Hall, C. D Cowan, and O. W Wolters, *Southeast Asian History and Historiography: Essays Presented to D.G.E. Hall* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1976).

scholarly enterprise, but one that has not, to my knowledge, yet focused on Inner Asia.¹⁰⁵ The lateness and paucity of scholarship on non-European historical works and practices—indeed, the very problem such traditions pose for the “noble speech” of historical interpretation in the academy, as de Certeau would have it—is not surprising. As Marxist, post-colonial, and subaltern scholars have long pointed out, the project of European expansionism was founded in large part upon positioning European power as the necessary outcome of history itself; a process that involved occluding or cannibalizing alterior, regional historical traditions and which founded our academic disciplines of history, anthropology, and religious studies.¹⁰⁶

Histories produced by Buddhist communities often play a fascinating, paradoxical role in the normative operations of Buddhist Studies and the historiography of Asia more generally. This is so since they are often positioned as a fun-house mirror image of the Buddhologist (or related researcher); they at once appear to reflect a practice recognizable to our own historical operation, yet engaging their “mythic” content requires that they be overcome, mined, digested. Their very existence challenged earlier Orientalist and colonial researchers and their heirs, whose legacies are far from confined to the past. Historians of Buddhism have variously claimed that Buddhists have no history (or historical consciousness), or that their historical representations fall far short of empirical standards claimed by the professional researcher. They are the “other” which often functions as the pre-condition by which professional history can write (and claim) the “objective” history of Buddhism; to anticipate some of de Certeau’s language, they are the “raw” resources with which Buddhology largely continues with its

105 For example: Q. Edward Wang and Georg G Iggers, *Turning Points in Historiography: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2002); Eckhardt Fuchs and Benedikt Stuchtey, *Across Cultural Borders: Historiography in Global Perspective* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002); Jörn Rüsen, Universität Bielefeld, and Forschungsgruppe Historische Sinnbildung, *Western Historical Thinking: An Intercultural Debate* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002).

106 Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (London; New York: Routledge, 1990).

predominant mode of engaging and claiming Buddhist pasts: to exclude regional articulations, their generative practices, and the resulting organization of knowledge.

This maneuver requires first employing a cohesive, fairly stable and trans-historical category called “Buddhism” that could suit the intellectual and colonial requirements of its observers. The result, as Donald Lopez has noted, has been a, “Buddhism [which] could be construed as a trans-historical and self-identical essence that had benevolently descended on various cultures over the course of history, its instantiations, however, always imperfect.”¹⁰⁷ The inscription of Buddhist history by professional historians in academic settings over the last one-hundred-and-fifty years has, I argue, been a type of activity which at once gestures to indigenous historiography, yet which must move beyond those local articulations of the Buddhist past by means of a hermeneutic of gross suspicion and corrective co-option. This is the only way that the trans-historical and self-identical entity which occupied their studies (and which, over time, has come to name their institutional roles) could be claimed from local iterations for whom the “Buddhist history” of buddhology was almost always foreign (and as such, nobody’s past).

In the case of Inner Asia, it has often been noted that Tibetans differed sharply in their interest in writing the past—whether of history or (auto)biography—from India, the ostensible “source” of their Buddhist-inflected traditions.¹⁰⁸ Extensive South Asian historical or auto/biographical narratives are absent in high literary culture, with the exception of the Sri Lankan Buddhist *vamsa* materials, until the advent of a Kashmiri historical tradition in the

107 Donald S. Lopez, *Curators of the Buddha : The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 7.

108 For a representative survey of literary genres in Tibet, see: Smith and Schaeffer, *Among Tibetan Texts : History and Literature of the Himalayan Plateau*; Sopa Lhundup, José Ignacio Cabezón, and Roger R. Jackson, *Tibetan Literature : Studies in Genre* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion, 1996).

eleventh century.¹⁰⁹ China did have traditions of auto/biographical writing and historical writing, but the Tibetan development of these genres appears to have been independent.¹¹⁰ While the historical focus of Buddhist communities has been long noted, there has been a gross suspicion of the “religious imagination” of their monastic authors that has had to be ordered, overcome, or simply accepted without inquiry into the practice of historiography as a mode of knowledge production.¹¹¹ There are some recent exceptions to be sure,¹¹² and in light of new scholarship on other areas of Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist scholastic life that do focus on generative practices, it is hoped that monastic historiography will soon be examined more fully as so many social sites for the social production of knowledge.¹¹³

3.3 Turning to Tibetan Language Sources

Another stumbling block for the study of Buddhism during the imperial-socialist transition, and of the culture of late imperial Mongolian education more generally, is the supremacy of the Tibetan language. While administrative records and circulars existed in the Mongolian language, the dominant literary language across the Mongolian cultural sphere, with

109 Janet Gyatso, *Apparitions of the Self: The Secret Autobiographies of a Tibetan Visionary : A Translation and Study of Jigme Lingpa's Dancing Moon in the Water and Dākki's Grand Secret-Talk* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 114.

110 Ibid..., 115. For scholarship that highlights the formative religious exchanges that occurred between China and Tibet, often effaced in indigenous Tibetan literature, see: Matthew Kapstein, *Buddhism between Tibet and China* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2009); Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China*.

111 Giuseppe Tucci, “The Validity of Tibetan Historical Tradition,” in *India Antiqua; A Volume of Oriental Studies Presented by His Friends and Pupils to Jean Philippe Vogel* (Leiden: Brill, 1947); Dan Martin and Yael Bentor, *Tibetan Histories : A Bibliography of Tibetan-Language Historical Works* (London: Serindia, 1997); A.I. Vostrikov, *Tibetan Historical Literature*, trans. Harish Chandra Gupta (Richmond, England: Curzon Press, 1994).

112 Frances Garrett, “Critical Methods in Tibetan Medical Histories,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 66 (2007): 363–87.

113 For example, see the contributions by Kapstein, Schaeffer, and Gyatso in: Sheldon Pollock, *Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia : Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500-1800* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011).

only a few notable exceptions, was Tibetan.¹¹⁴ Johan Elverskog has shown that the social imaginary of late imperial Mongolia was very much founded in the notion of an inter-regional, Tibeto-Mongolian Géluk school Buddhist identity firmly under Qing patronage.¹¹⁵ Mongolian monks and pilgrims traveled to Eastern and Central Tibet to study in the major Géluk monasteries, returning to found monastic colleges carefully modeled on Tibetan courses of study. They created mirror monastic colleges (T. *grwa tshang*) based on the manuals (T. *yig cha*) of the major Géluk monasteries of central Tibet. Furthermore, at popular pilgrimage sites like Mt. Wutai in today's Chinese province of Shanxi, Mongols from various banners enjoyed a cosmopolitan environment that provided the generative conditions for both a nascent Mongol nationalism and a Tibeto-centric religious culture.¹¹⁶ As we shall see, Zawa Damdin's own religious career in the twilight of the Qing was exemplary in all these regards.

Tibetan Buddhist historiographic models came to Mongolia after the sixteenth-century centralization of authority of khans such as Altan of the Tümed and Abatai of the Khalkha. This began to solidify during the gradual subjugation of Mongol polities under the Qing beginning in the seventeenth century. Due to their quickly strengthening connection to Tibetan Buddhist religio-political cosmology and popular cultural memory, the foreign set of Tibetan and Qing *ur-*events had to be reconciled with pre-existent Mongolian narratives. This was done early on in Mongolian language composition, but by the nineteenth-century, as with most scholarly culture, Mongolian historians were working primarily in Tibetan and using Tibetan sources as their

114 On populist Mongolian prophecies and moral tracts, see the papers collected in: Rebecca Empson, *Time, Causality and Prophecy in the Mongolian Cultural Region: Visions of the Future* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2006). A unique, Mongolian-centric monastic tradition existed in Inner Mongolia at Mergen. On this fascinating tradition and the politics of a vernacular Mongolian Buddhism, see: Humphrey and Hülébaatar, *A Monastery in Time*.

115 Elverskog, *Our Great Qing : The Mongols, Buddhism and the State in Late Imperial China*, 2006.

116 Elverskog, "Wutai Shan, Qing Cosmopolitanism, and the Mongols."

primary interlocutors. As Johan Everskog puts it, "It was through the Manchu sponsored Tibetan religious 'language,' broadly conceived, that Mongol identification with previous narratives and rituals ultimately was destroyed and the Mongols became entirely ritualized into melding their identity with Qing identity."¹¹⁷ As we shall see, this occurred through a particular triumvirate of authority shared between the Qing emperor as patron, and the Dalai Lama and other Tibeto-Mongolian lamas of the Géluk school as priest; the primary subject of Zawa Damdin's historiography.

That the relations between the Qing and the Géluk sect in maintaining rule in Mongolia was efficacious is evident by the process of Tibetanization that proceeded nearly unhindered over the course of eighteenth to early twenty-first centuries. "The success of this process and its cultural implications," Elverskog notes, "were never seriously questioned."¹¹⁸ This is true of liturgical language, but also of most literary and scholastic pursuits, including the oral performance of debate, philosophical composition, and subsidiary scholastic pursuits such as poetics, medicine, astrology, and historiography. Ya. Vladimirtsov, a nearly contemporary observer of Zawa Damdin's Outer Mongolia, noted the pervasiveness of Tibetan literacy in the late-imperium:

Tibetan language is like a second literary language of the Mongols of the 18th and 19th centuries, throwing Mongolian literary language to a secondary position. In Mongolia, it is not the members of the Buddhist Order alone who are beginning to study Tibetan language, rite and conduct theological disputes in it, the secular society too is now taking up this language. The Mongolian princes and officials—in fact, everyone trying to become literate—are beginning to study Tibetan language.¹¹⁹

117 Elverskog, "Mongol Time Enters a Qing World," 2005, 156.

118 Ibid., 155. Exceptions were Mongolian Buddhist liturgies published by ICang skya Khutugtu I and Mergen Gegen (1783), though these seem to have never had more than a limited regional usage. On the latter's efforts to construct a Mongolian Buddhist tradition proper, see: Humphrey and Hülrelbaatar, *A Monastery in Time*.

119 Ya. Vladimirtsov, *Mongol'ski Sbornik Razkazov Iz Pancatantra* (Petrograd, 1921), 51. Vostrikov says that M.I. Tubyansky comes to the same conclusion in: Mikhael Tubyansky, "Nekotorye Problemy Mongol'skoi Literatury

Despite the apparent hegemony of Tibetan language intellectual life in late-imperial Mongolia—especially in relation to historiography—to date our scholarship has focused almost exclusively on Mongolian-language materials to the relative exclusion of Tibetan sources.¹²⁰ When the Tibetan influence exerted upon Mongolian monastic historians has been addressed, Shagdaryn Bira writes, these have been “exceedingly one-sided statements of certain writers concerning the borrowings by the Mongol historians from the Tibetans as though this were all a common ultra-Buddhistic tendency. It is time to repudiate such assertions and to look deeper into the problem.”¹²¹

Indeed, it is notable that Zawa Damdin, the last great Mongolian Buddhist historian, himself barely referenced the Mongolian-language histories which have so preoccupied our

Dorevolny-Utsionnogo Perioda [Some Problems of Mongolian Literature of the Pre-Revolutionary Period],” *Sovremennaya Mongoliya* 5, no. 12 (1935): 13–15.

120 As just a sample of the rather developed scholarship on Mongolian-language Buddhist histories produced during the Qing: Ssanang Ssetsen and Erich Haenisch, *Der Kienlung-Druck des mongolischen Geschichtswerkes Erdeni yin tobci von Saḡang Secen* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1959); Ssanang Ssetsen, Igor de Rachewiltz, and John Richard Krueger, *Erdeni-yin tobci = Precious summary: a Mongolian chronicle of 1662* (Canberra: Faculty of Asian Studies, Australian National University, 1990); Ssanang Ssetsen and Haenisch, *Der Kienlung-Druck des mongolischen Geschichtswerkes Erdeni yin tobci von Saḡang Secen*; Goncuḡjab and Johan Elverskog, *The Pearl rosary: Mongol historiography in early nineteenth century Ordos* (Bloomington, Ind.: Mongolia Society, 2007); Leland Liu Rogers, “The Golden Summary of Cinggis Qayan: Cinggis Qayan-U Altan Tobci” (Harrassowitz, 2009); John R. Krueger and Secen Sagang, *Poetical Passages in the Erdeni-Yin Tobci: A Mongolian Chronicle of the Year 1662 by Satang Sečen* (’S-Gravenhage: Mouton., 1961); Cyben Žamzaranovič Žamcarano and Rudolf Loewenthal, *The Mongol Chronicles of the Seventeenth Century* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1955); Joseph Fletcher, “The Erdeni-Yin Erike as a Source for the Reconciliation of the Khalkha, 1681-1688.,” 1965; Ssanang Ssetsen, Klaus Sagaster, and Elisabetta Chiodo, *Erdeni-yin tobči: a manuscript from Kentei Ayima[gamma]* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996); Haiying Yang and International Society for the Study of the Culture and Economy of the Ordos Mongols, *Subud erike: a Mongolian chronicle of 1835* (Cologne: International Society for the Study of the Culture and Economy of the Ordos Mongols, 2003); Dindub and John G. Hangin, *A brief history of Mongolia in the autonomous period* (Bloomington, Ind.: Mongolia Society, 1977); Rinchen, *Four Mongolian historical records* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1959); Rasipungsuḡ and Antoine Mostaert, *Bolor erike: Mongolian chronicle* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959); Ssanang Ssetsen and Antoine Mostaert, *Erdeni-yin Tobči, Mongolian chronicle* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956); Blo-bzañ-bstan-’dzin, *Altan tobči; a brief history of the Mongols*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952).

121 Bira, Sh., ed. Prof. Ts. Damdinsüren, trans. Stanley N. Frye. 1970. *Mongolian Historical Literature of the XVII-XIX Centuries Written in Tibetan*. Bloomington, Indiana: The Mongolia Society. pp. 1-3. [emphasis mine]

scholarship; he cites European scholarship on the Mongol past with much greater frequency, and translated any Mongolian-language correspondences or materials into Tibetan for posterity. It was Tibetan language materials to which he turned, as these had come to act as the authoritative record of South, Central, Inner and East Asian history over the course of the Qing formation; all this to the lament of socialist leaders and Buddhist reformers, who agitated for a de-Tibetanization of the Mongolian cultural and religious sphere in the early days of the revolution.¹²²

The relative exclusion of Tibetan language materials in favor of Mongolian histories has largely continued despite calls to attend to this rich literature by Mongolists such as Bira, Heissig, Klafkowski, Kitinov and Diemberger.¹²³ Indeed, apart from Piotr Klafkowski's problematic translation of Dharmatāla's *Rosary of White Lotuses*¹²⁴ and several references in footnotes to some of the most famous works of Mongolian Buddhist history, there has been to date, with only a few exceptions, little study of Mongol scholars' predominantly Tibetan language historical output.¹²⁵ A.I Vostrikov, the venerable early-twentieth-century Russian

122 Dugarava-Montgomery, "The Buriat Alphabet of Agvan Dorzhiev."

123 Walther Heissig, *Die Familien- und Kirchengeschichtsschreibung der Mongolen* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1959); Gu-śrī Dharmatāla and Piotr Klafkowski, *Rosary of White Lotuses : Being the Clear Account of How the Precious Teaching of Buddha Appeared and Spread in the Great Hor Country*, trans. Piotr Klafkowski, Asiatische Forschungen. ; (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987); B. U. Kitinov, *The Spread of Buddhism Among Western Mongolian Tribes Between The 13th And 18th Centuries : Tibetan Buddhism in the Politics and Ideology of the Oirat People* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2011); Diemberger and Bulag, "Towards Critical Studies of the Mongolian-Tibet Interface"; Sh Bira, T. S. Damdinsuren, and Stanley Frye, *Mongolian Historical Literature of the XVII-XIX Centuries Written in Tibetan* (Bloomington, Ind.: Mongolia Society : Tibet Society, 1970).

124 Dharmatāla and Piotr Klafkowski, *Rosary of White Lotuses: Being the Clear Account of How the Precious Teaching of Buddha Appeared and Spread in the Great Hor Country* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1987). Klafkowski prefaces his translation with the admission that he was not familiar with the Buddhist tradition or Tibetan or Mongolian history

125 Notable exceptions include: Elverskog, "Mongol Time Enters a Qing World," 2005; Blo-bzañ-tshe-'phel, Georg Huth, and 'Jigs-med nam-mkha', *Geschichte des Buddhismus in der Mongolei: aus dem Tibetischen des Jigs-med nam-mk'a* (Strassburg: K. J. Trübner, 1970); Dharmatāla and Piotr Klafkowski, *The Secret Deliverance of the Sixth Dalai Lama as Narrated by Dharmatāla* (Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien,

Tibetologist, already recognized the value of Tibetan language materials for historians of Central, Inner, and East Asia.¹²⁶ His magnum opus, *Tibetan Historical Literature*,¹²⁷ was completed in 1937 (the year of his execution, when he was only 35 years old).¹²⁸ Researched at the time Zawa Damdin was mining the received Tibetan-language historical record in order to historicize the imperial-socialist transition, Vostrikov urged scholars to attend to Tibetan-language works by Mongolian Buddhists in the following evocative terms:

The study of Tibetan historical texts is of interest not to the research student of Tibet alone. The history of the Tibetans is so closely linked to the fate of a number of peoples of Asia that its study is necessary for any research in the history of the Mongols, the Oirats, the Tangut kingdom, Khotan, and even India and China on the whole. Besides, for a fairly long time, Tibet was the spiritual center for several peoples of Asia. In the course of the last three centuries, the Tibetan literary language had acquired almost the same significance among the Mongols, Oirats, Tanguts and other peoples, as Latin in medieval Europe, for, as the language of the sovereign Buddhist order, it became a pre-requisite for feudal scholastic education and the language of religion, philosophy and science. Therefore, in creating an extensive and multifarious literature in Tibetan

Universität Wien, 1979); Dharmatāla and Klafkowski, *Rosary of White Lotuses : Being the Clear Account of How the Precious Teaching of Buddha Appeared and Spread in the Great Hor Country*; Georg Huth and International Congress of Orientalists, *Sur les inscriptions en langues tibétaine et mongole de Tsaghan Baishing: et sur le rapport de ces monuments avec "L'histoire du bouddhisme en Mongolie" composée en tibétain par 'Jigs-med nam-mka'* (Leide: E.J. Brill, 1896); A. P. Okladnikov et al., *Istorija Mongolskoj Narodnoj Respubliki* (Moskva: Nauka, 1983); Sh Bira and John Richard Krueger, *Mongolian Historical Writing from 1200 to 1700 : Shagdaryn Bira ; Translated from the Original Russian by John R. Krueger and Revised and Updated by the Author* (Bellingham, Wash.: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University, 2002); Sh Bira, *O "Zolotoi knige" Sh. Damdina [On Sh. Damdin's "Golden Book"]* (Ulan-Bator: Izd-vo Akademii nauk MNR, 1964); Thukten Losang Chökyi Nyima, *The Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems: A Tibetan Study of Asian Religious Thought*, trans. Geshé Lundub Sopa, vol. 25, *The Library of Tibetan Classics* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2009).

126 Vostrikov was, incidentally, the student of T. Scherbatsky, a Russian Orientalist scholar who had traveled to Mongolia and according to Bira, met and had a profound effect on Zawa Damdin. For a concise picture of the Buddhological scene in Russia leading up to and after the October 1917 revolution, see: "Appendix IV: Bibliographical Survey of Soviet Work Relating to Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam", in: James Thrower, *Marxist-Leninist "Scientific Atheism" and the Study of Religion and Atheism in the USSR* (Berlin; New York: Mouton, 1983); Rupen, "The Buriat Intelligentsia"; Rupen, "Cyben Zamcaranovic Zamcarano (1880-?1940)"; Bernstein, "Pilgrims, Fieldworkers, and Secret Agents: Buryat Buddhologists and the History of an Eurasian Imaginary."

127 A. I. Vostrikov, *Tibetan Historical Literature* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1994).

128 A. I. Vostrikov, *Tibetskaia Istoricheskaia Literatura*, Bibliotheca Buddhica, 32 (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1970); Vostrikov, *Tibetan Historical Literature*, 1994.

language including also the historical literature, a big role was played not only by the Tibetans themselves but also by the representatives of other peoples who often achieved exceptional fame and authority. The Tibetan language was so widely spread that various Tangut, Mongol and other non-Tibetan scholars wrote even the histories of their own countries in full or in part in Tibetan. Such works certainly deserve most careful study even in cases where they co-exist with the highly developed historical literature in their national language. This is so in respect of the sources for the history of Mongolia, for they can really give some additional information. [...] Unfortunately, the Tibetan literature on the history of other peoples is as little known as that on the history of the Tibetan peoples themselves.¹²⁹

In light of all this, we ought to counter the limited approach of scholars like Josef Kolmaš, who writes dismissively (here, in reference to the Mongol Gombojab's 1820 *History of Buddhism in China*):

At the most, [Tibetan language historical sources] may testify to what was known to the respective author from the field of Chinese historical literature, or what was available to him at the moment either in original or in translation, and how he had mastered and interpreted his sources.¹³⁰

While for Kolmaš these “testaments” of Tibetan language materials (in Tibet or Mongolia) preclude their usefulness in historical work, it is *precisely* what Zawa Damdin knew, what was available to him at the moment or in translation, how he had mastered and interpreted his sources, and the scholarly practices he employed that should occupy our scholarly attention.¹³¹

We can see the shortsightedness of Kolmaš' statement in a short passage from a letter about plans for a reformed monastic education between the ideological father of the Mongolian socialist movement, Tseween Jamsrano and Zawa Damdin. The latter writes:

If monk and lay students mix, it is like milk mixing with water, and there will be no shame and modesty amongst any of them. Looking down, condemning, disparaging, scorning and slandering (each other) etc. (will come about). These actions will emerge

129 Vostrikov, *Tibetan Historical Literature*, 1994, 9–11.

130 Josef Kolmaš, “Tibetan Sources,” in *Essays on the Sources for Chinese History*, ed. C. P. Fitzgerald (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1975), 131.

131 To be fair, Kolmaš writes his survey from the perspective of using various sources to write the history of China.

and will harm both religion and politics. Political leaders who control the Dharma and a Dharma leader who controls politics, both of them are great signs of the unfortunate. That is clearly mentioned in the *History of Buddhism in China*.¹³²

As a monk-scholar firmly embedded in a Buddhist lineage stemming from Tibet, why would Zawa Damdin reference precedents in an obscure history of China with a Buryat intellectual after the collapse of the Qing? Why and in what ways did such religious histories, and the particular religio-cultural logic they embody, remain sufficient sources of knowledge and authority to meet modernizing challenges, such as the threat to exclusivity in monastic education here? How do the historiographical-textual practices of elites such as Zawa Damdin and Jamsrano in and of themselves allow us to understand contested Buddhist pasts and futures in this period?

In light of all this, below I endeavor not only to summarize the content of Zawa Damdin's histories, nor to simply generalize about his historical practice during the revolutionary period. My larger hope is that by extensively summarizing his works as embedded in a particular Tibetan-language interpretative community extending across Inner Asia, and across the imperial-socialist transition, the real extent of such Tibetan-language historiography will become better known. This may hopefully contribute to a larger, more comparative analysis of such works during the late-imperium, and in a variety of post-imperial receptions of nationalism, socialism, and science. All this must be founded in an analytical perspective attentive the social history of historiography in the region; one that accounts for generative practices (or "operations") as well as textual products.

132 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "mKhyen Ldan Lo tsA Ba Tshe Dbang Gi Gros Lan Spos Shel Phreng Ba," in *gSung 'Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 1 (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 654–655.

4 Discerning Historiographic Operations in Inner Asian Buddhist Monasticism

4.1 Time and Space as Social Practice

Returning to Conrad's call for a social history of historiography in Asia, asking about the "time of revolution" in early twentieth century Mongolia looks to developments in social theory over the last forty years which has which Diane Owen Hughes writes has returned to "narrate and analyze the otherness of the past and the pastness of the other."¹³³ Lynn Struve, who has asked such questions so incisively of the Ming-Qing transition, argues that attention to the generative practices of time and space matter to historians because:

First, time and space are fundamental aspects of existence as we know it, so the ways in which people have functioned in, oriented themselves toward, experienced, and perceived those aspects should be primary data in our understanding of their histories—data at least as important as, say, their religious beliefs and practices, economic situations and values, or political behavior. Second is the need to heighten awareness of our own temporal biases, which may lead us to characterize the past inappropriately.¹³⁴

In both history and anthropology, there has been a theoretical push in recent decades to revisit time as a social phenomenon in ways that harken back the founding problematics of both disciplines. With an attention to culture focused on the generative possibilities and limits of production and reception, such questions of temporal and spatial plurality become foregrounded. As Johannes Fabian put it, "As soon as culture is no longer primarily conceived as a set of rules to be enacted by individual members of distinct groups, but as the specific way in which actors

¹³³ Diane Owen Hughes and Thomas R Trautmann, *Time: Histories and Ethnologies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 1.

¹³⁴ Struve, *Time, Temporality, and Imperial Transition*, 8–9.

create and produce beliefs, values, and other means of social life, it has to be recognized that Time is a constitutive dimension of social reality.”¹³⁵

The temporal turn in anthropology and some strands of history has produced a variety of theories of social action and structure that are useful in developing a more holistic study of Buddhist monastic historiography. These, however, stand in their place against much older traditions of inquiry attentive to temporal ontologies extending beyond Marx and Kant to Augustine. More recently, practice-based and processual models come to us from, among others, Bourdieu, who has staged an influential critique of both structuralist and objectivist methodologies for what he saw as their de-temporalized character.¹³⁶ Bourdieu proposed a model of human interaction, “inscribed in the current of time, and an analytical lens attentive to the (possibly uneven) ‘tempo’ of social lives and cultural production.”¹³⁷ Anthony Giddens has likewise critiqued functionalism, structuralism, and Historical Materialism for what he identifies as an exclusion of the spatial and temporal dimensions of social life.¹³⁸ This is a view David Gross argues must center “time-space relations” into modern social theory not simply because these are important contexts for human behavior, but “because they are *constitutive* elements of all social action and interaction.”¹³⁹ Time-space distancing in particular is always, for Giddens, an exercise of power, and is a particularly helpful concept in exploring the Inner Asia materials introduced below, where historical inscription in party institutes and Buddhist

135 Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 24.

136 Matt Hodges, “Rethinking Time’s Arrow: Bergson, Deleuze and the Anthropology of Time,” *Anthropological Theory*, 2008, 401.

137 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford University Press, 1990), 6–9.

138 Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure, and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

139 David Gross, “Time-Space Relations in Giddens’ Social Theory,” *Theory, Culture, and Society* 8, no. 4 (1982): 83.

monasteries was always exercised at the intersection of particular, power-laden, and competing scenes of subject formation and social imagination.

However, how are we to conceptualize the actual mechanisms of inscription and production by which time and space come to constitute social action as an exercise of power? What, in other words, are the actual productive conditions that ‘bind’ greater or lesser units of time and space? What roots temporalized and spatialized ‘social imaginaries’ to actual, power-laden sites of production, reception, and contestation?

The reflections of Michel de Certeau on the “historiographic operations” specifically, and on the socially embedded nature of the practices of knowledge production more generally, are helpful in foregrounding the social life of time at sites of historiography in the Buddhist monastery in revolutionary Mongolia. Exploring Zawa Damdin’s historiographic operation, as I intend to do below, can also be the basis for later comparative work on other, contemporaneous operations to set post-imperial Mongolia and its Buddhism into time and place; whether by Comintern agents, party historians, or Euro-Russian Orientalist scholars.

4.2 Michel de Certeau and the Historiographic Operation as Analytical Perspective

4.2.1 “History Is Never Sure”

While some have turned to other streams of post-structuralist theory in the study of Inner Asian religious historiography,¹⁴⁰ the present study finds a wealth of analytical possibility in the work of the Jesuit, psychoanalyst, anthropologist and historian, Michel de Certeau.¹⁴¹ Across the

140 Zeff Bjerken, “The Mirrorwork of Tibetan Religious Historians: A Comparison of Buddhist and Bon Historiography” (Ph.D., University of Michigan, 2001), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses (PQDT).

141 Michel de Certeau was evasive when it came to defining himself. He was a founding member of the Parisian psychoanalytic school, he was a Jesuit priest, he worked as an anthropologist, a historian, a professor and an activist. *La Prise de la Parole* was one of the few places where he described his own positioning with respect to his

breadth of his theoretical reflections on historiography especially, de Certeau made a point to connect the history of writing history with the legitimization of political power. He often pointed out that "Western" traditions of professional history have used the act of writing as a tool of colonialism; writing their own histories while un-writing the embodied traditions of indigenous peoples.¹⁴² Against those who described societies by evoking what he called their homogeneities and hegemonies—what unified and controlled them—de Certeau wanted to identify the creative and disruptive presence of “the other”—the outsider, the stranger, the alien, the subversive, the radically different—in systems of power and thought. He wrote about centralizing institutions of the past so as to show how they defined themselves either by excluding divergent voices and beliefs or by swallowing them up. Certeau understood the writing of history, and the scholarly techniques and interpretative strategies that such a practice entailed, as so many forms of contextualized social operation.

As such, his reflections and those of his prominent students (especially Roger Chartier), more than those of any other modern theorist of historiography, provide a dynamic resource with which to analyze the discourse, practice and products of Mongolian Buddhist scholasticism during the transition to its erasure in Soviet-era scholarship, Mongolian public life, and (less

analytical procedures (here in response to the May 1968 movements in France), where he self identifies simply as “a historian, a traveler and a Christian” (Michel de Certeau and Luce Giard, *The Capture of Speech and Other Political Writings* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 7.). Roger Chartier notes that for Certeau history was “the most apt, by its heritage or by its program, to represent difference and portray otherness” (Roger Chartier, *On the Edge of the Cliff: History, Language, and Practices* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 39.). In this regard, history as a practice retained for Certeau something of what Chartier describes as “the quest for the word of the other that was the passion, to the point of despair, of the ancient Christians whose historian he had become, and something of the encounter with foreignness he had felt with each discovery of a new world, from Brazil to California” (Ibid...). Such explorations occupied Certeau’s own historiography, as well as his related explorations of anthropology, psychoanalysis and theology, until his sudden death in 1986.

142 For example: Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley, European Perspectives (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 209–243.

dramatically) our own Tibeto-centric scholarship. However, an extensive summary of de Certeau's theorization of historiography and its applicability to Tibeto-Mongolian monastic historiography more broadly will have to wait for a future study. In what follows I intend only to summarize a few features of his delimitation of the historiographic operation, which I then use to broadly organize my analysis of Zawa Damdin's historical works in the chapters that follow. I will expand on specific theoretical issues as they arise in later sections, most notably in my elaboration upon his notion of the "place" of historiography as a literary construct supplemented by Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the real and empty chronotope. Because of space, only a few general remarks are necessary, especially given the prodigious amount of secondary scholarship on this area of de Certeau's thought.¹⁴³

Certeau became a Jesuit in 1950, and all of his historical inquiries centered on mystics and the mystical as complex expressions of specific historical contexts.¹⁴⁴ However, he did not look to universal theories of mystical experience in his explorations, nor to asserting the superiority of Christianity, and he never trusted ahistorical explanations rooted in the religious institutions

143 Maria Letizia Cravetto and Marie-Florine Bruneau, *A partir de Michel de Certeau: de nouvelles frontières* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1999); Daniel Bogner, *Gebrochene Gegenwart : Mystik und Politik bei Michel de Certeau* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 2002); Luce Giard et al., *Histoire, mystique et politique: Michel de Certeau* (Grenoble: J. Millon, 1991); Luce Giard and Stanislas Breton, *Le Voyage Mystique : Michel de Certeau* (Paris: Recherches de science religieuse : Diffusion, Cerf, 1988); Luce Giard, *Michel de Certeau, Cahiers Pour Un Temps* (Paris: Center Georges Pompidou, 1987); Ben Highmore, *Michel de Certeau : Analysing Culture* (London ; New York: Continuum, 2006); Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau : Cultural Theorist, Theory, Culture & Society* (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 2000); Christian Delacroix and Alain Boureau, *Michel de Certeau : Les Chemins D'histoire*, Collection "Histoire Du Temps Présent" (Bruxelles: Complexe : IHTP, CNRS, 2002); Jaques Revel, "Michel de Certeau Historien: L'institution et Son Contraire," in *Histoire, Mystique et Politique. Michel de Certeau*, ed. L. Giard (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1991), 109–27; Christian Delacroix et al., eds., *Michel de Certeau, les chemins d'histoire* (Bruxelles: Complexe, 2002); Marian Füssel, *Michel de Certeau: Geschichte, Kultur, Religion* (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2007); Chartier, *On the Edge of the Cliff: History, Language, and Practices*; François Dosse, *Paul Ricœur et Michel de Certeau : L'histoire, Entre Le Dire et Le Faire*, Glose (Paris: Herne, 2006); Iñigo Kristien Marcel Bocken and Titus Brandsma Instituut, eds., *Spiritual Spaces: History and Mysticism in Michel de Certeau*, 2013; Michel de Certeau and Graham Ward, *The Certeau Reader*, Blackwell Readers (Oxford ; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2000).

144 His early historical studies looked at the Jesuits Pierre Favre and Jean-Joseph Surin.

with which he was affiliated.¹⁴⁵ In the *Mystic Fable*, which Luce Giard calls “his life labour and a labour of love,”¹⁴⁶ Certeau analyzes the “disenchanted world” of early modern Europe, where God had “turned silent” for the majority of the people and where new, secular voices rooted in scientific rationality and political power began to speak in turn.¹⁴⁷ He read hundreds of texts that were traces of the believers in a few social circles who tried to restore communication with God. Yet even as a Christian, he began such studies of the Christian past with a particular insistence: the historian studies mysticism, but has no “special jurisdiction over its domain,” “no insider’s knowledge” of it, his book is written in the name of an Absent, “it stands exiled from its subject-matter.”¹⁴⁸ More importantly for my purposes here is to point out that Certeau approached the traces of these early-modern mystics, in the midst of the epistemological challenges to historiography associated with the linguistic turn, as the object of *both* a literary and a sociological analysis. Jeremy Ahearne points out that, for that reason, de Certeau deftly avoids a purely literary or sociological approach to his sources by providing, “a close linguistic analysis of the ways in which the mystics constructed their texts, beginning with the material at their disposal, and also to show how their reinstrumentation of this material points to a general sociohistorical set of circumstances... In the interstices created by generalized transitions and

145 For a wonderful treatment of Certeau’s work on the mystics, see Chapter 4 in: Jeremy Ahearne and Michel de Certeau, *Michel de Certeau : Interpretation and Its Other*, Key Contemporary Thinkers (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995).

146 Certeau and Ward, *The Certeau Reader*, 21.

147 Michel de Certeau, *La Fable Mystique : XVIe-XVIIe Siècle*, Bibliothèque Des Histoires. ([Paris]: Gallimard, 1982).

148 Giard, Luce. *Introduction: Michel de Certeau on Historiography*, in: Certeau and Ward, *The Certeau Reader*, 21.

mutations, Certeau discerns a proliferation of operations combining and recombining redistributed elements in unpredictable ways.”¹⁴⁹

While we cannot make too much of apparent similarities with the de-sacralization of post-imperial Mongolia in the works of Zawa Damdin, de Certeau’s life-long attention to the negotiation of such processes in early-modern Europe is invaluable. These are encapsulated in his famous formulation of the “historiographic operation.” In the midst of an intellectual climate in France that challenged the epistemic basis of any claims to historical objectivity, de Certeau was a sympathetic but corrective voice.¹⁵⁰ His subtle and dynamic reading of the historiographical operation, informed as it was by his prolonged engagement with psychoanalytic modes of analysis, rescued a particular literary truth in historical writings, but a truth nonetheless.¹⁵¹ De Certeau’s presentation and analysis of the archival material from the 1652-5 group possession at Loudon is telling: it begins with the statement that, “History is never sure”¹⁵² and ends by reflecting that, “The possession has no ‘true’ explanation, since it is never possible to know who is *possessed* and by whom.”¹⁵³

4.2.2 Thinking About Operations

As an interpretative operation, historiography constitutes for Certeau neither the contents of a text (*un trace*) nor its social context, for which the text stands merely as a signifier. Such

149 Ahearne and Certeau, *Michel de Certeau : Interpretation and Its Other*, 31.

150 In particular: Raymond Aron, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History; an Essay on the Limits of Historical Objectivity*, [rev. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961)]; Paul Veyne, *Comment on Écrit L’histoire : Essai D’épistémologie*, Univers Historique (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1971).

151 Thus, Luce Giard writes that, “Certeau’s conception of the historian’s task was far from the naïve picture popularized by historical novels (and movies), which presents it as a retrospective criminal investigation, the result of which will be to tell what actually occurred, who murdered the victim or misled the incredulous crowd” (Giard, Luce. “Introduction: Michel de Certeau on Historiography”, in: Certeau and Ward, *The Certeau Reader*, 18.).

152 Michel de Certeau, *La Possession de Loudun*, Collection Archives À Julliard. ([Paris: Julliard, 1970), 1.

153 Ibid., 227.

binaries represented for him two standard modes of contemporary historical interpretation: a literary/ideological mode where ideas were treated *as* ideas, and where the question of social context was often bracketed; and a sociological mode where documents and knowledge are not analyzed in their own right, or on their own terms, but as signs and effects of larger intellectual movements which “uses knowledge to make social classifications.”¹⁵⁴ In light of the limited approaches to Tibeto-Mongolian historiography critiqued above, the resonances should be clear.

How precisely could this notion of historiography as socially embedded operation open up new lines of inquiry into the materials at hand? Most basically, this could come about through an analytical attention to what de Certeau was fond of calling the “sounds” of historiographic production: “the interpreter’s own techniques, and the localized affiliations which these suppose.”¹⁵⁵ The intersection of rules, disciplinary conventions and interpretive techniques by which the ‘traces’ of the past are subjected to particular treatments, and then inscribed (re-written) into the textual products, ought to be enlivened alongside the narrative content of Inner Asian monastic historians (which has been so extensively and productively examined in our scholarship). We ought to work outside normative procedures in our own historical disciplines that, de Certeau often reminded his readers, have tended to obscure and erase their relations to the techniques (and contexts of use) upon which they are founded:

It is as though history began only with the ‘noble speech’ of interpretation. As though it was an art of discourse delicately erasing all traces of labour. In fact, there is a decisive option here: the importance that is accorded to matters of technique turns history either in the direction of literature or in the direction of science.¹⁵⁶

154 Ahearne and Certeau, *Michel de Certeau : Interpretation and Its Other*, 18.

155 Ibid., 13..

156 Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 69.

Our historiography on Inner Asian Buddhist life, and indeed, the historiographic procedures of those monks who labored to inscribe their past, is concrete and socially specific: a scene of relations of production, in other words, which is why de Certeau often evokes Marx in his reflections on historiographic practice.¹⁵⁷

For de Certeau, the various interpretative techniques that together comprise historiography are delimited into three primary “operations” or “procedures,” which I use very generally to organize my analysis of Zawa Damdin’s historical works in the study that follows. In relation to the operation of historical interpretation more specifically, he writes that, “The material is created through the concerted actions which cut it out from its place in the world of contemporary usage, which seeks it also beyond the frontiers of this usage, and which subject it to a coherent form of re-employment... Establishing signs offered up for specific kinds of treatment, this rupture is therefore neither solely nor first of all the effect of a ‘gaze’. It requires a technical operation.”¹⁵⁸ In relation to historiography, this requires accounting specifically for the history of operations as a, “relation between a *place* (a recruitment, a milieu, a profession or business etc.), *analytical procedures* (a discipline), and the *construction of a text* (a literature).”¹⁵⁹

4.2.3 The Place of Historiography

As for the first, de Certeau writes, “All historiographical research is articulated over a socioeconomic, political, and cultural place of production.” As such, it is, “ruled by constraints,

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 11-14.

¹⁵⁸ Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 73.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

bound to privileges, and rooted in a particular situation.¹⁶⁰ Essentially, for de Certeau the position of historians in Western Europe has been as “writers” of society,¹⁶¹ and it is the changing institutional affiliations and diverse technical procedures, permissions and prohibitions of this specialized group of writers that he marks as the “place” of historiographic labor. I suggest that the same is true of monastic historians such as Zawa Damdin, who similarly inscribed the past in order to subdue the iteration of dangerous social otherness. Importantly, “place” also designates particular sites or scenarios of the reception of historical “traces” and their fabrication into historical texts. As institutionally and socially embedded writers of historical “truths”, the interpretative operations which historians wield emerge in de Certeau’s view as types of social practices mobilized in the present of historical production.

However, it is important to note that de Certeau is not simply observing the truism that historians (and ethnographers, psychoanalysts etc.) do not engage their “raw” sources on their own terms. Rather, he is setting up a more expansive and decidedly social model by which to think about the place of historiography. This was an important component in developing a more critical practice as a professional historian, since, as Ben Highmore points out, Certeau was seeking to “produce a form of critical discourse that understands all knowledge (including his own) as situated (limited, interested, etc.).”¹⁶² The “site” of historiography is, thus, the locus where documents are manipulated and redeployed; for instance, from the archive to the historical text. “Raw” historical sources are themselves the products of past sites of interpretative operations and productive manipulations. While not necessarily a remarkable

160 Ibid., 58.

161 Though Certeau does note developments that displace writing as a defining feature of the historians craft, such as those influenced by related disciplines such as computer science and ethnography. See *The Writing of History* pp. 69-77.

162 Highmore, *Michel de Certeau : Analysing Culture*, 33.

observation in and of itself, I argue that the delimitation of historiography into a porous, localized “site” of interpretative activity and textual labor (or more specifically, *an interrelated series* of such sites) allows us to more adequately construct histories of such aggregated scenarios in Inner Asia; ones “circumscribed by the place that a connection of the possible and impossible defines.”¹⁶³ Even though Zawa Damdin was a sought after interlocutor of scientists and party historians, the “place” of his historiography was consciously shared with a small circle of cosmopolitan Géluk scholars of the Qing: their interpretative precedents and historiography allowed Zawa Damdin to render the crisis of the post-imperium into time in ways long occluded in our scholarship.

4.2.4 An Analytical Procedure

This notion of the place of interpretation leads to de Certeau’s second delimitation of the historiographic operation, an “analytical procedure”, which is equally useful in my study of these materials. Bluntly, de Certeau’s observation here is simple that “making history is a practice.”¹⁶⁴ As he noted elsewhere in an analysis of Freud’s engagements with the past,¹⁶⁵ “history” is a sign whose meaning shifts between that which is recounted (*racontée, Historie*), and that which is produced (*faite, Geschichte*). Performing the labor of transposing the first into the second, historians *generate* history, producing a “past that is taken up by but never reduced to their new discourse. Their labor is thus also an event.”¹⁶⁶ The “event” of their situated labor (an interpretive procedure or practice, the composition of a text, etc.) is thus also historical, in

163 Certeau, M. d. (1988). *The writing of history*. New York, Columbia University Press. p. 68.

164 Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 69.

165 Michel de Certeau, “Ce que Freud fait de l’histoire. À propos de « Une Névrose Démoniaque Au Xviie Siècle »,” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 25, no. 3 (1970): 654–67. Included as chapter 8 in *L’Écriture de l’Histoire*.

166 Ibid.

the sense that it is a particularly bounded scene of productive interpretation: “if it is true that the organization of history is relative to a place and a time, this is first of all because of its techniques of production.”¹⁶⁷ Interpretative practices is thus linked to, and defined by, disciplines whose research, “follows along this changing border between the given and the created, and finally between nature and culture.”¹⁶⁸ Of note here is the fact that de Certeau was apparently not interested in merely describing or problematizing contemporary historical methods, nor in adding his voice to the epistemic challenges to history *en vogue* in his time. Rather, he wishes “only to raise the type of theoretical problem that an examination of its “apparatus” and technical procedures can open in history.”¹⁶⁹

In the logic of contemporary Euro-American historical practice, research must necessarily transform sources into something new, something which functions differently, something classified according to new terms and new affiliations: sources cannot simply exist in a new cultural location on their own terms. Certeau argues that, “the transformation of “archivistic” activity is the point of departure and the condition for a new history.”¹⁷⁰ In the case of Inner Asian Buddhist historiography, while functionally also true, the explicit operational logic is reversed: sources are often established and manipulated so that “new” interpretations can be shown to already have been told. This is connected, I argue in chapter four, to the operational logic of the scholastic interpretative techniques such monastic historians brought to bear when ordering and writing the past.

167 Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 70.

168 Ibid.

169 Ibid., 72

170 Ibid., 75.

Historical discourse, by means of technical interpretative procedures such as citation, “rescues” and “re-assembles” the story of Buddhist expansionism, narrated already prior to the author’s intervention (for instance, in prophecy or prior authoritative historical texts). In the case of the historical interpretative activity of Zawa Damdin, we will see the limits of this interpretative and citational apparatus at play, especially so when radically alternative sources are included by means of his citational practice (such as those established in Finnish archaeological evidence, photography, French fiction and revolutionary newspapers). Such an analytical perspective clarifies the epistemological presumptions of Zawa Damdin’s historiography: his intervention, as we shall see, is to clarify a story already told or predicted by enlightened actors.

4.2.5 A Writing

In addition to place and interpretative operations, de Certeau also delimits the historiographic operation into “a writing.” Here, he follows the vanishing point between analytic procedures, textual product, and written trace: “an uncanny sort of passage,” in other words, from the theoretically interminable domain of research into the “servitude” of writing.¹⁷¹ In essence, de Certeau’s attention to writing in the historiographic operation is one that foregrounds the “signs of knowledge” implicit in an historical text: for example, primary sources and secondary scholarship: “even if we cast aside everything that deals, properly speaking, with a structural analysis of historical discourse, we must still envision the operation that turns the practice of investigation into writing.”¹⁷² This is surely true of the Inner Asian materials at hand, though we know very little of their actual practice of writing history, despite the regular

¹⁷¹ Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 86.

¹⁷² Ibid.

openness of figures such as the Dalai Lama V and our Zawa Damdin about the challenges and tactics of their inscription.¹⁷³

Importantly for what follows is de Certeau's exegesis on the types of distortions the voyage into historical discourse imposes retroactively on the interpretative practices that precede them, and by which they are fabricated: writing distorts, in other words. The point to note here is that these distortions imposed by inscription (and others besides) effectively obscure the relationship between "a writing" and its constitutive practices. However, as we shall see in the chapters that follow, there are unique distortions implicit in any historiographic operation: those that de Certeau noted in his French milieu sometimes resonate with Zawa Damdin's oeuvre (the organizing principle of an author's name, for instance), while others do not (for example, the oldest point being the beginning in every case). This all embeds a particular historiographic into place and time, and for that reason is so fruitful for elaborating a social history of historiographic production.

5 Conclusion

The sum of all this is to begin elaborating a "topography" of knowledge formation amongst Inner Asian Buddhist monastics during the imperial-nationalist-socialist transition. This topography is inextricably bound to particular interpretative operations, forms of alterity and processes of identity formation. It is a geography of historiographic interpretation, knowledge, and practice that constitutes a particular "place" of permissions and prohibitions. The place of Zawa Damdin during the revolutionary formation is the primary muse of this study (even if,

173 Important exceptions related to (auto)biography, which I reference extensively in the following chapter, include: Kurtis Schaeffer, "Tibetan Biography: Growth and Criticism," in *Editions, Éditions: L'Écrit Au Tibet, Évolution et Devenir* (München: Indus Verlag, 2010); Andrew Quintman, *The Yogin & the Madman: Reading the Biographical Corpus of Tibet's Great Saint Milarepa*, 2014; Gyatso, *Apparitions of the Self*; Janet Gyatso, "From the Autobiography of a Visionary," in *Religions of Tibet in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 369–75.

according to the logic of the theory I am adopting here, ultimately it will forever remain absent as part of my own historiographic operation). Even so, such an analytical perspective will allow me to not simply summarize the narrative contents of these works (which I will do), but will also help clarify Buddhist scholastic mediations of the very terms of the post-imperium by means of the practices of inscribing the past. Much of these, as we shall see, included European scholarly discourses and practices, from scientific empiricism to Altaic studies and Buddhology. As such, this study hopes to broach not only a more holistic analysis of Inner Asian Buddhist historiography. It also begins to plumb the Tibeto-Mongolian monastic record as an archive for the mediation and Occidentalizer characterization of European forms of knowledge about Asia (and Buddhism specifically). If nothing else, as a methodological experiment, perhaps its failures and successes can inform a more comprehensive and comparative field of study into these important intersections of religious, academic, and political discourse in the Inner Asian monastic archive.

6 Chapter Summary

This dissertation uses the delimitation of the historiographic operation to broadly organize its content. The first three chapters examine Zawa Damdin's construction of his authorial present: the "place" of his historical practice. The first chapter examines his autobiography, while the second and third examine his historiography (especially the versified *Dharma Conch* and its ostensible commentary, the *Golden Book*). In these three chapters I advance an argument that, even though he declined to offer extensive commentary on revolutionary events, Zawa Damdin's historical writing builds a polemic between a dystopian post-imperium and an utopian past of religio-political authority. In order to clarify this polemic, and to dissect the distinct operations required to produce its narrative content, in the second and third chapter I adopt Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope to distinguish between literary

constructions of the “real” space-time of the Mongols (ie. affected by narrative continuity) and the “empty” space-time of the enlightened authority of the Two Systems (ie. unaffected by narrative continuity). At the end of these three chapters, I dwell at length upon Zawa Damdin’s fascinating theorization of imperial decline (and, by extension, of the enlightened authority of the Two Systems).

The fourth chapter takes up de Certeau’s notion of interpretative procedure and writing to explore Zawa Damdin’s construction of his historical arguments and his reflections on writing the past. I will attempt to show how he, and presumably others in his Géluk interpretative community, used the categories from their extensive training in scholastic logic to “authoritatively” read expansive histories of Mongolia, the Mongols, and Mongolian Buddhism from the diversity of sources he had available to him in the post-imperium.

I conclude by reflecting on the utility of turning to the Inner Asian monastic archive in the imperial-socialist transition to answer Donald Lopez’s call for a critical history of the transit of European scholarship on Buddhism as a necessary addition to a cultural history of Orientalism; something Zawa Damdin’s historiographic operations requires be paired with a cultural history of Occidentalism as well.

Chapter 1

Zawa Damdin: The Self Written As Wandering Subject

While the tracks of fleeing insects may appear as letters,
The insect is not an author.
Likewise, an ordinary person's activity, however virtuous,
Is not a holy biography.¹⁷⁴

1 Wandering in Ruptured Time and Space

In 1936, the last year of his life and just a year before the socialist purges, Zawa Damdin crafted a narrative of his life as so many *yeng pa* (T. *g.yengs pa*) that unintentionally anticipated the ambiguities that have colored his memorialization over the last seventy-seven years. *Yeng pa* is a Tibetan word that usual refers to mental wandering, distraction, or agitation. In the context of his autobiographical writing, *yeng pa* evokes a level of humility expected in such Buddhist autobiography; the suggestion being that, rather than virtuous self-cultivation through single-pointed practice of the Buddhadharma, his entire life had been wasted through mundane distraction, mental wandering, and world emotion agitation. As we shall see, he did indeed wander through sundry intellectual, mystical and physical topographies in the twilight of the Qing, throughout the Bogd Khaan's autonomous theocracy, and during the first sixteen years of the socialist era (1921-1937). For example, he wandered intellectually by being embedded in both traditional monastic colleges and new party scientific institutes. He wandered spatially by undertaking extended pilgrimages across important sites in the late-imperial Mongolian Buddhist *imaginaire*, such as Kumbum monastery in eastern Tibet, Mt. Wutai in China, and even Beijing, the Qing capital. Alongside such spatial and intellectual peregrinations, he

¹⁷⁴ Blo bzang rta mgrin, "Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms 'Di Snang Za Zi'i Rjes Gco," in *gSung 'Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 11 (New Delhi, India: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 203.

wandered in time as well. As we shall see, his own religious biography was marked by mystical discoveries of artifacts that set his late imperial landscape to alternative visions of the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist dispensation into Inner and East Asia. Additionally, much of his intellectual and ritual labor in the post-imperium focused on setting revolutionary events (including himself) into visions of time compatible with his classical Buddhist sources.¹⁷⁵ In addition to spatial and temporal “wanderings” during the imperial-socialist transition, *yeng pa* as “agitation” describes the challenges and threats of violence increasingly leveled at monastic leaders as the Two Revolutions progressed. From the Qing collapse in 1911-12 until his death in 1937, Zawa Damdin’s classical scholastic education, pilgrimages, and administrative responsibilities in Ikh Khüree’s monastic system were first “distracted” and, as time went on, deeply “disturbed” by changing socio-political tides.

The previously unexamined auto/biographical writing analyzed below is a valuable historical source for the Buddhist reception of the terms, practices, and institutions of post-imperial modernity in Asia’s heartland, and for that reason are here examined alongside the histories examined later in this dissertation. In light of my aim to explore historical narratives and their generative practices in relation to Zawa Damdin, pairing autobiography and historiography makes even more sense. In both cases, the author is embedded in a particular religious and intellectual environment through the act and narrative content of literary self-stylization. Writing the past—whether of a self, of a people, or of a Buddhist transmission

175 While this dissertation primarily examines Zawa Damdin’s historiographic operations, a more expanded project would need to also consider his work to lead large-scale public rituals while the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party began to escalate its attacks on Buddhist institutionalism in the mid to late 1930s. Especially interesting is Zawa Damdin’s efforts to curate very large Maitreya Buddha processions at this time; Maitreya being the Buddha anticipated in classical Buddhist sources to arrive and revive the Dharma after a period of violence and degeneration. The connections between these Maitreya processions (and others that may have been taking place at this time) and the various Buddhist millenarian movements focused on Maitreya that challenged Qing and tsarist authority over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries requires further investigation.

lineage—is an activity that occurs in a place, by means of an analytical apparatus, and through writing. Because the narrative content of Zawa Damdin’s autobiographical writing will be of great interest to scholars of the Tibeto-Mongolian tradition, in the following chapter I survey the content of these works, and the way that the self is inscribed over the course of the imperial-socialist transition. I leave a fuller treatment of the sites, interpretative operations, and writing practices of Zawa Damdin’s historiographic operation for latter chapters, and in relation to his other major historical works.

This chapter focuses on narrative, and leaves consideration of generative practices to a later analysis of his historiography. In considering Zawa Damdin’s autobiographical works, however, I will resist becoming engrossed in recovering Zawa Damdin the man. In other words, I put little effort into solving the detective story of his actual life, or worse yet, painting a psychological or experiential portrait. Such a nucleus never rests at the center of social or cultural practice, even though it has defined so much scholarship on Buddhist historical writing to date. Instead, “the atomism of everyday life invents itself by *poaching* in countless ways on the property of others,” such that, “each individual is a locus in which an incoherent (and often contradictory) plurality of such relational determinations [socio-structural] interact.”¹⁷⁶ This is true of lived experience, and truer still of literary self-stylization. Here we might evoke one final meaning of *yeng pa*, which is as a compound-noun referencing an overly engrossed mind (T. *rnam shes g.yengs pa*), as in, “becoming engrossed in the objects of the six senses” (T. *phyi tshogs drug gi yul la rnam shes g.yengs pa*). Instead of becoming “engrossed” and “distracted” by a disciplinary impulse to reconstruct a unitary historical subject, in this chapter Zawa Damdin will be allowed to remain as “he” is: an organizing principle managing a variety of often wildly

176 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), xi.

divergent discourses of subjectivity, place, and time. It is Zawa Damdin in the plural—a subject written and written again, a site of implicated knowledge, and a dialogical ‘event’ or ‘ground’ for the construction of place and time—that this chapter posits.

2 (Auto)Biography in the Inner Asian Scholastic Tradition

2.1 Genre

For the sake of a non-specialist readership, before coming to a close examination of Zawa Damdin’s auto-biographical writing it will be helpful to provide an overview of the genre as it had come to be practiced by Géluk monks in late-imperial Inner Asia. In relation to religious life writing that had been practiced in Tibet since at least the twelfth century, in the two centuries leading up to our author’s lifetime this was a literary tradition that had developed to unparalleled heights. By this time, life writing largely took shape as “outer biography” (T. *phyi rnam thar*), “inner biography” (T. *nang rnam thar*), and “secret biography” (T. *gsang rnam thar*); each with its own stylistic conventions, rhetorical devices, and anticipated audiences and modes of reading. An outer biography would be narrated using forms from the received biography of the historical Buddha, or else from the life stories of other eminent Indian and Tibetan monks and tantric yogis like Padmasambhava, Milarepa, or Atiśa Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna.¹⁷⁷ The narrative template of the outer biography, “typically begins with an early renunciation of worldly life [...], followed by the protagonist’s meeting with teachers, taking

¹⁷⁷ In a biographical tradition that took shape in the so-called “renaissance period” of post-imperial Tibet (11th–12th century), Padmasambhava (T. *pad+ma ‘byung gnas*), the “Lotus Born”, was an Indian tantric master from the eighth century widely memorialized for having facilitated the transmission of Buddhist (especially tantric) traditions to imperial Tibet (For example, see: Ye-śes-mtsho-rgyal, Tarthang Tulku, and gter-ston O-rgyan-glin-pa, *The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava, Padma Bka’ Thang* (Berkeley, Calif.: Dharma Pub., 2007). Milarepa (T. *Mi la ras pa*, 1052–1135) was Tibetan meditator and lineage master of the bKa’ brgyud sect who continues to serve as the paradigmatic yogi in Inner Asian Buddhist traditions. Tsangnyön Heruka (T. *gtsang smyon he ru ka*, 1452–1507) assembled his biographical corpus in the late fifteenth century, which continues to serve as a template for writing the lives of so-called “mad yogis”. (See: Andrew Quintman, *The Yogin and the Madman: Reading the Biographical Corpus of Tibet’s Great Saint Milarepa* (Columbia University Press, 2013).

vows, entering retreat, acquiring students, teaching, and, finally, assuming institutional positions.”¹⁷⁸ While such templates are commonplace, Janet Gyatso has argued that these Tibetan materials ought to be considered as (auto)biography and not instances of what have been considered self-effacing genres such as epic or genealogy. Tibetan (and, as we shall see, Mongolian) Buddhist authors, she notes, often juxtapose formulaic religious narratives (“I took these vows, and built this monastery, and did this meditation retreat”) with a pronounced, “interest in the ordinary vicissitudes of the self.”¹⁷⁹ Similarly, “secret” (auto)biography, which provides accounts of internal meditative experience, also provides Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist authors with an opportunity to reflect on the constraints of the self or to adopt a uniquely individualistic posture.¹⁸⁰

As we shall see below, Zawa Damdin’s own autobiographical writing moves between outer, inner, and secret genres in the same text, shifting abruptly between esoteric visionary experience, bare accounts of religious transmissions given or received, and sober personal reflection on mundane affairs across the imperial-socialist transition. This is coupled, especially in later sections, with what appears to be calculated self-censorship on matters political or ideological as the purges of Buddhist monastics and his death drew near. Yet, beyond a set of established genres, what were the cultural and religious precedents for such life writing? What was the scholastic impulse to write the self (one’s own or others) that so preoccupied Zawa Damdin through his historical works?

178 Gyatso, *Apparitions of the Self*, 111.

179 Ibid..., 112.

180 For detailed studies of one such secret biography, see: Gyatso, *Apparitions of the Self*; Gyatso, “From the Autobiography of a Visionary.”

2.2 Expansion During the Qing

Coinciding with the seventeenth-century incorporation of Tibeto-Mongolian regions into the Qing Empire, it became expected for Buddhist masters and their disciples to write hundreds of pages of auto/biographical writing.¹⁸¹ As has already been noted, the Tibetan predilection for (auto)biography, like historiography, stands in stark contrast to the paucity of writing about the past amongst Indian Buddhists until well after the Buddhist dispensation into Tibet in the eighth century CE. While some scholars argue that there is not yet any clear historical evidence for a direct Chinese/Qing influence on Tibetan genres of writing the self, the substantial shift in the style and content of Tibeto-Mongolian auto/biographical writing by Buddhist scholars resident in the Qing court suggests such an influence may have indeed existed, and requires closer scholarly analysis.¹⁸² Kurtis Schaeffer has recently published fascinating preliminary research on the development of biographical writing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which he shows grew substantially in number, length, and depth of critical reflection, particularly amongst Géluk scholars. Alongside the evolution of this genre during the Qing, Schaeffer examines the concomitant growth of a literature dedicated to the, “critical evaluation of the form, style, and purpose of biography with what appears to be unprecedented liveliness.”¹⁸³ For example, Schaeffer contrasts twelfth-century Tibetan religious biographies that averaged in the tens of folios with seventeenth and eighteenth-century biographies that were regularly thousands of folios long. An example of this later development is Lozang Trinlé Namgyel’s (T. *blo bzang ‘phrin las rnam rgyal*, b. 19th century) prolific biography of the founder of Zawa Damdin’s

181 Gyatso, *Apparitions of the Self*, 112.

182 Ibid., 115.

183 Schaeffer, “Tibetan Biography: Growth and Criticism,” 263.

Géluk school, Tsongkhapa Lozang Drakpa (T. *Tsong kha po blo bzang grags pa*, 1357-1419).¹⁸⁴

These took various forms within the outer-inner-secret rubric, from supplicatory verse (T. *gsol 'debs*), stories of former incarnations (T. *rtogs brjod*; S. *avadāna*), collected biographies of masters from a particular religious lineage (T. *bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar*), stories of abbatial or royal succession (T. *ldan rabs* and *rgyal rabs*), and so forth. As we shall see, literary self-stylization in all these genres figured prominently in Zawa Damdin's prolific textual output.

It is clear that the connections between the growth of biography and autobiography in the Tibetan language cited by Schaeffer will need to be more closely connected to the growth of historiography in the same monastic contexts, and in terms of not only stylistics and criticism, but in terms of interpretative precedent as well. The following analysis of Zawa Damdin's biographical and historical writing, which share in an interpretative and textual community innovative reading of the works of those Monguor cultural intermediaries, might prove immensely useful in such a comparative endeavor. While Janet Gyatso has used the Tibetan example as a rich complication to the supposed exceptionalism of autobiography in the European march to modernity, my own interest here is far less ambitious. Comparing the scope and content of these auto/biographical works with other Qing-era works from the Géluk world will have to wait for a future project. Since Zawa Damdin's compositions represent a late continuation of the genre-pushing work of earlier Géluk biographers which have attracted some scholarly interest of late, let me briefly survey sites of biographical writing in Zawa Damdin's works before turning to a sustained examination of his autobiography.

184 bLo bzang 'phrin las rnam rgyal, "*Jam Mgon Chos Kyi Rgyal Po Tsong Kha Pa Chen Po*"i *Rnam Thar Thub Bstan Mdzes Pa'i Rgyan Gcig Ngo Mtshar nor Bu'i Phreng Ba* (Sarnath, Varanasi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1967).

3 (Auto)Biographical Sites in Zawa Damdin's Oeuvre

3.1 Dedicated Works

(Auto)biography pepper Zawa Damdin's seventeen-volume *Collected Works*, both as dedicated texts and as extended sections within other sorts of compositions. The biographies of Qing emperors, the Dalai and Panchen Lamas, and prominent Mongolian Geluk lamas are narrated alongside the life stories of Chinggis Khaan and his descendants, Chinese pilgrims, Indian Buddhist adepts, Central Asian monks and kings, and especially those Monguor Geluk intermediaries of the Qing introduced above. A few of Zawa Damdin's dedicated biographical works are of his own personal teachers, written in devotional verse (T. *rnam thar gsol* 'debs). An example is the supplicatory biography of one of Zawa Damdin's root teachers (T. *rtsa ba'i bla ma*) named Sanggyé Tsenchen (T. *Sangs rgyas mtshan can*), called *A Beautiful Ornament of the Mind of the Faithful*.¹⁸⁵ This predominantly follows the biographical template of the Buddha's own renunciation and enlightenment in the style of outer biography, though written as devotional verse. For example:

Totally giving up all the behaviour of regular children from a young age,
Your three doors remained at ease.
Building holy objects, teaching Dharma, building monastic assembly halls, and so forth;
Engaging in such amazing (childish) play,
To you I pray!

Even though young, you had awoken into the family lineage of the Noble Ones.
When you were seven years old, you took the lay and novice monastic vows
From Lhatsun Lopön Könchok Kyab (Lha btsun slob dpon dkon mchog skyabs).
Having entered the door of the Buddhist teachings,
To you I pray!

[...]

185 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "mKhan Chen Sangs Rgyas Mtshan Can Gyi Rnam Thar Gsol 'Debs Dad Ldan Yid Kyi Mdzes Rgyan," in *gSung 'Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 1, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 9–22.

In the meantime, you learned the rules concerning what one should adopt and abandon,
 As well as prayers and melodies, the manner of making offerings and tormas,¹⁸⁶
 How to translate between Tibetan and Mongolian, how to read and write, and so forth.
 Having acquired such a deep understanding,
 To you I pray!¹⁸⁷

In addition to this praise biography to Sanggyé Tsenchen, Zawa Damdin wrote similar works dedicated to some of his other teachers, such as Erdeni Paṇḍita.¹⁸⁸

Elsewhere in Zawa Damdin's oeuvre we find similar biographical praises and supplications dedicated to past Indian and Tibetan masters. These are sometimes directed to canonical characters, such as the youthful Sudhana (T. *gZhon nu nor bzang*) and the "Ever-Weeping Bodhisattva" Sadāparudita (T. *rTag tu ngu*).¹⁸⁹ In line with broad conventions in the Tibeto-Mongolian tradition, Zawa Damdin's oeuvre also contains biographies that account for the more dispersed construction of personhood in Buddhist traditions. For example, he writes biographical praises to the previous incarnations of his personal teachers and colleagues, such as the socialist sympathizer Darva Paṇḍita.¹⁹⁰ These all are catalogued alongside an abridged

186 Torma (T. *gtor ma*) are offering cakes that perform a variety of functions in Tibeto-Mongolian ritual life.

187 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "mKhan Chen Sangs Rgyas Mtshan Can Gyi Rnam Thar Gsol 'Debs Dad Ldan Yid Kyi Mdzes Rgyan," 8.

188 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "dPal Ldan Bla Ma Dam Pa Erteni paN+Di Ta Sprul Sku'i Rnam Thar Gyi Sa Bon Dpag Bsam Myu Gu," in *gSung 'Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 7, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975); bLo bzang rta mgrin, "rJe Btsun Ce tA Yan Gyi Rnam Thar Gces Btus Dran Thor Bsgyur Ba Chos Rnga'i Sgra Skad," in *gSung 'Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 3, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 515–26; bLo bzang rta mgrin, "rNam Thar Gces Btus Bdud Rtsi'i Bsang Gtor," in *gSung 'Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 7, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975).

189 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "rGyal Sras Gzhon Nu nor Bzang Gi Rnam Thar Las Brtsams Pa'i Bstod Pa," in *gSung 'Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 1, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 117–32; bLo bzang rta mgrin, "rGyal Sras Rtag Tu Ngu'i Rnam Thar Las Brtsams Pa'i Bstod Pa," in *gSung 'Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 1, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 135–46.

190 For example, Zawa Damdin's biographical praise to the previous incarnations of his colleague, the socialist sympathizer Darpa Paṇḍita: bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Bstan 'Gro'i Rtsa Lag Mchog Sprul Rin Po Che Dar Ba paN+Di Ta'i 'Khrungs Rabs Gsol 'Debs Dad Ldan Dga' Bskyed," vol. 6, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 259–64.

version Zawa Damdin produced of the paradigmatic Buddhist biography: Āryaśūra's *Garland of the Buddha's Previous Lives* (S. *Jātakamālā*; T. *sKyes rabs so bzhi pa*).¹⁹¹

In addition, there are several unusual and important examples of biography that I note here in passing, but in some cases will return to in later chapters. The first concerns Zawa Damdin's Tibetan translations of the biographies of Faxian (C. 法顯; T. *bTsun pa pha h+yin*, 337-422 CE) and Xuanzang (C. 玄奘; T. *Thang san bla ma*, c. 602-664 CE), the most famous early Chinese Buddhist pilgrims to India. Gönpö Kyap (T. *mGon po skyabs*, b. 18th century), cosmopolitan Mongolian polyglot and resident in the Qing capital, had already translated the latter's pilgrimage tale into Tibetan in the eighteenth century, providing new historical evidence on turn of the common era Central Asia for Qing-era Géluk historians.¹⁹² As did other Géluk historians from this interpretative community, Zawa Damdin drew heavily upon Gönpö Kyap's translation and his *History of Buddhism in China* in the *Golden Book*.¹⁹³ Zawa Damdin himself has the distinction of translating Faxian's pilgrimage tale into Tibetan in the early revolutionary period, though not from the Chinese as is sometimes supposed. In a circuit of translation and textual circulation that speaks to the new zones of contact that came with the collapse of the Qing in Inner Asia, Zawa Damdin did not translate Faxian's life from the Chinese directly, as is sometimes supposed; rather, he translated Dorji Bansaroff's Mongolian version into Tibetan,

191 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "mKhas Mchog Dpa' Bos Md zad Pa'i Skyes Rabs so Bzhi Pa'i Zab Bshad Kyi Bsdus Don," in *gSung 'Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 1, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 247–74.

192 mGon po skyabs, *Chen Po Thang Gur Dus Kyi Rgya Gar Zhing Gi Bkod Pa'i Dkar Chag* (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2006).

193 mGon po skyabs, *rGya Nag Gi Yul Du Dam Pa'i Chos Dar Tshul Gtso Bor Bshad Pa Blo Gsal Kun Tu Dga' Ba'i Rna Rgyan* (sDe dge: sDe dge par khang, unknown).

completed, according to Rinchen, while resident at the socialist party's Institute of Scripts and Letters in 1921.¹⁹⁴

Alongside these famous Chinese Buddhist biographies, Zawa Damdin also translated a wide swath of Mongolian biography (and associated historical literature, as we shall see later on) into Tibetan. For example, Mongolian histories, genealogies and royal biographies associated with Chinggis Khaan's descendants (the *Borjigin*) and pre-Chinggis peoples of the Mongol steppes are all translated and made available to the broad Tibetan speaking public.¹⁹⁵ While they do exist as dedicated works, these mostly are included as prolonged sections in the *Golden Book*, where they are paired with Tibetan Buddhist parables in an example of the "layered text" I examine in the last chapter of this study. A final instance of dedicated biographical writing in Zawa Damdin's oeuvre concerns the biographies of material objects, such as statues and temples. The life story (*rnam thar*) of a handful of holy objects, each thought to be critical to the Buddhist conversion and civilizing of Mongolia, are recounted and used as the basis for other historical arguments charting the spread of Buddhism to Mongolia. Re-occurring examples include the oft-mentioned Erdene Zuu (T. *erdeni jo bo*), Khalkha's first Buddhist temple, and various statuary housed in the author's time in Ikh Khüree's many temples.¹⁹⁶ As we shall see in the following chapter, the biography of these material objects and the temples that housed them

194 Faxian, Dorzhi Banzarov, and Rinchen, *Travels of Fa Hsian* (Ulanbator: ShUAKh, 1970). For Zawa Damdin's Tibetan translation, see: bLo bzang rta mgrin, "bTsun Pa phA H+yin Gyis 'Phags Pa'i Yul Du 'Grims Pa'i Rnam Thar Rje Nyid Kyis Gsar 'Gyur Mchan Dang Beas Pa/," in *gSung 'Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 1, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 147–246.

195 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Chen Po Hor Gyi Yul Gru'i Sngon Rabs Kyi Brjed Byang shAstra'i Zur Rgyan Du Sog Yig Las Bod Skad Du Bsgyur Te Bkod Pa/," in *gSung 'Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 2, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 491–550.

196 For example: bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Hor Gyi Yul Grur Ston Pa'i Sku Tshab Tu Bzhugs Pa'i Rten Rnying Ertini Jo Bo'i Rnam Thar Dang 'Brel Ba'i Dus Bstun Gsol 'Debs/," in *gSung 'Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 1, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 39–44.

were key factors in Zawa Damdin's complex theory of enlightened decline in nineteenth century Khalkha and the social upheaval of his revolutionary present.

3.2 Biographical Sections In Other Works

In addition to dedicated biographies, such narratives make up a substantial part of his other historical works. For example, in both the *Dharma Conch* and its ostensible commentary, the *Golden Book*, life stories of religious masters associated with the “three waves” of Buddhist dispensation into Mongolia take central stage. In the analytical language introduced in the following chapters, these comprise the “empty” time and subjecthood described by the author, and whose absence in the post-imperium is the subject of his lament. For example, narratives from the “early spread” (T. *snga dar*) of the Dharma into Mongolian territory is heavily supplemented by biographies of the Sixteen Arhats, the Buddha Śākyamuni and his predecessors, various Indian tantric yogis, and Buddhist monks from the Tibetan Yarlung empire (seventh-ninth centuries). Their biographies, in our author's interpretation, demonstrate an early Buddhist presence in Mongolian regions prior to the Mongolian empire in the thirteenth century. Similarly, narratives of the “middle spread” (T. *bar dar*) of the Dharma during the Mongol empire is recovered from the life stories of Tibetan masters who converted the Mongol court in the thirteenth century, such as Sakya Paṇḍita, Pakpa Lama, and Karma Pakshi, as well of Chinggis Khaan and his immediate descendants.¹⁹⁷ The later, most definitive spread (T. *phyi dar*) of Buddhism into Mongolia beginning in the sixteenth century, whose history makes up the bulk of both the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book*, is likewise told largely through the life stories of Tibetan and Mongolian masters, as well as “enlightened” Manchu emperors. The story

197 Sa skya paN+Di ta kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182–1251); 'Gro mgon chos rgyal 'phags pa (1235–1280); Karma pak+Shi (1204/06–1284).

of their intervention into the Mongolian sphere explains the proliferation of the tradition (and of civilization itself) in the region, as was already commonplace in the Qing-era Géluk Buddhist histories upon which Zawa Damdin relied so heavily. These include extensive biographies of the Dalai and Panchen Lamas,¹⁹⁸ Monguors such as Changkya Rölpé Dorjé Khutugtu and Tuken Lozang Chökyi Nyima (both preceptors to the Qianlong emperor),¹⁹⁹ and lines of Mongolian incarnate lamas such as the Jebzundamba Khutugtus and Dzaya Paṇḍitas. For Zawa Damdin, reading and ordering (T. *bkod*) the received, multi-lingual biographical record is a fundamental labor of his historiography; in his reading, as we shall see, their content “explains” both the proliferation of Buddhadharma into Mongolia and its decline during the revolutionary period.

For the remainder of this chapter I turn to two of Zawa Damdin’s autobiographies. The first is an expansive “record of teachings received” (T. *thob yig, gsang yig*) called the *Catalogue of Precious Treasures* (hereafter: the *Catalogue*), the second a shorter narrative work from the last year of his life (1936) called *Summary of My Gross Conduct* (hereafter: the *Summary*). To my knowledge, these two largely unexamined autobiographies constitute the last by any Mongolian Buddhist monastic prior to the mass purges that came just months after the latter work was completed.²⁰⁰

198 Especially those Dalai Lamas who forged direct links with the Mongols, such as the third, Sönam Gyatso (T. *bSod nams rgya mtsho*, 1543-1588), the fourth (a Mongol), Yönten Gyatso (T. *Yon tan rgya mtsho*, 1589-1617), the fifth, Ngakwang Lozang Gyatso (T. *Ngags dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho*, 1617-1682), and the thirteenth (whom Zawa Damdin meet on several occasions in Ikh Khüree), Tupten Gyatso (T. *Thub bstan rgya mtsho*, 1876-1933).

199 lCang skya rol pa’i rdo rje (1717-1786); Thu’u bkwan blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1737-1802).

200 It is not exactly true to say they are unexamined, as they have been treated in Mongolian language scholarship during the Soviet era and in the post-socialist period. To my knowledge, however, these comprise only partial translations into Mongolian or brief summaries, with no sustained analysis.

3.3 Autobiographical Sites in Zawa Damdin's Works

3.3.1 The Catalogue of Precious Treasures

While the *Summary* will occupy most of this chapter, small mention must first be made of the stunning *Catalogue*.²⁰¹ Its full title is, *The Record of Teachings Received Which Tastes Some of the Ambrosial Nectar of the Virtuous, Holy Dharma in the Beginning, End, and Middle: A Catalogue of Precious Treasures of Profound, Vast, and Secret Advice*.²⁰² It also has a secondary title: *The Manner By Which I Myself, Lozang Tayang, Entered the Religious Life By Gradually Listening, Receiving Vows, Transmissions, Commentaries, Initiations, and Subsequent Attainment*.²⁰³ This is a three-volume genealogical map of the hundreds of exoteric and esoteric Buddhist transmissions that Zawa Damdin received in his life, all set into history over one thousand five hundred folios. In addition to itemizing the minutiae of religious transmissions spanning training in the Tibetan alphabet to tantric initiation, the *Catalogue* also lists the lineage of each back to either the historical Buddha Śākyamuni or else some other founding figure. As a map to the intellectual and religious emplacement of Mongolian scholastics in post-imperial Mongolia, in the twilight of their tradition, this tripartite work must someday be at the center of a comprehensive, comparative study of late Mongolian intellectual and religious life. However, here I will only have space to survey the content of these three volumes selectively in terms of the broad emplacement paradigm I explore more fully in later chapters.

201 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Thog Mtha' Bar Du Dge Ba Dam Chos Bdud Rtsi'i Zil Mngar Cung Zhig Myang Ba'i Thob Yig Zab Rgyas Gsang Ba'i Gdams Pa Rin Chen Gter Gyi Kha Byang," in *gSung 'Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 15–17, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 7–502 (pod dang po), 7–508 (pod gnyis pa), 7–560 (pod gsum pa).

202 T. Thog mtha' bar du dge ba dam chos bdud rtsi'i zil mngar cung zhig myang ba'i thob yig zab rgyas gsang ba'i gdams pa rin chen gter gyi kha byang.

203 T. bLo bzang rta dbyangs rang nyid chos sgor zhugs te thos pa byed tshul gyi rim pa la/ sdom pa nod pa dang lung khrid dbang rjes thob tshul.

The *Catalogue* is part of a style of autobiographical writing that was not unique to the Qing period, but which, like other genres of (auto)biography introduced above, grew substantially at this time. “Records of teachings received” (*thob yig, gsan yig*) are a relatively neglected genre of historical writing from the Tibetan cultural sphere, despite the fact that they constitute, “veritable goldmines for anyone engaged in the study of Tibetan literature from literary, bibliographical, or historical perspectives.”²⁰⁴ The value of these records has long been recognized, even if systematic and comparative study has so far been lacking with only a few notable exceptions.²⁰⁵ Vostrikov noted that genealogical records are, “a quite distinctive class of Tibetan works” that serve to supplement prose autobiographies, but which “go far beyond the framework of autobiographies,” as “historico-literary works or records of oral and written traditions.”²⁰⁶ Leonard van der Kuijp has argued that this genre grew from the eleventh century onwards alongside nascent Tibetan genres of doxography and the like. Both genres indicate a

204 Jan-Ulrich Sobisch, “The ‘Records of Teachings Received’ in the Collected Works of A Mes Zhabs: An Untapped Source for the Study of Sa Skya Pa Biographies,” in *Tibet, Past and Present: Tibetan Studies I. PIATS 2000: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Leiden 2000*, vol. 1, 2 (Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 2002), 161.

205 For scholarship on *gsan yig/thob yig*, see: V.P. Vassilijev, “Die Auf Den Buddhismus Bezüglichen Werke Der Universitätsbibliothek Zu Kasan,” *Melanges Asiatiques* 2 (1856): 347–86; Manfred Taube, “Die Bedeutung Eiheimischer Bibliographien Für Die Erforschung Der Tibetischen Literatur,” *Studia Asiae, Festschrift Zum 70. Geburtstag von Johannes Schubert*, 1968, 277–99; Vostrikov, *Tibetan Historical Literature*, 1994; Sobisch, “The ‘Records of Teachings Received’ in the Collected Works of A Mes Zhabs: An Untapped Source for the Study of Sa Skya Pa Biographies”; Leonard W.J. van der Kuijp, “On the Life and Political Career of T’ai Si Tu Byang Chub Rgyal Mtshan,” in *Tibetan History and Language: Studies Dedicated to Uray Gèza on His Seventieth Birthday*. E. Steinkellner Ed., Wiener Studien Zur Tibetologie Und Buddhismuskunde 26, n.d.; Günter Grönbold, “Materialien Zur Geschichte Des Śaṅga-Yoga: III. Die Guru-Reihen Im Buddhistischen Śaṅga-Yoga,” *Zentralasiatische Studien* 16 (1982): 337–47; David Paul Jackson and Sa-skya Paṇḍita Kun-dga’-rgyal-mtshan, *The Entrance Gate for the Wise (section III): Sa-Skya Paṇḍita on Indian and Tibetan Traditions of Pramāṇa and Philosophical Debate* (Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien, 1987); *A History of Tibetan Painting: The Great Tibetan Painters and Their Traditions* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996); David P. Jackson, “Enlightenment by a Single Means: Tibetan Contrivances on the ‘Self-Sufficient White Remedy’ (dkar Po Chig Thub),” in *Beiträge Zur Kultur- Und Geistesgeschichte Asiens*, vol. 12 (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, n.d.); Martin and Bendor, *Tibetan Histories : A Bibliography of Tibetan-Language Historical Works*; Smith and Schaeffer, *Among Tibetan Texts : History and Literature of the Himalayan Plateau*.

206 Vostrikov, *Tibetan Historical Literature*, 1994, 199.

concern with authenticity, since at that time Indic texts were being introduced into Tibet, “in a fairly erratic and higgledy-piggledy fashion, without the support of any central authority, whether doctrinal or institutional.”²⁰⁷

Compared to the much-truncated records of teachings received from earlier Tibetan patriarchs such as Pakpa Lodrö Gyeltsen (1235-1280), the Géluk founder Tsongkhapa Lozang Drakpa (1357-1419), and his disciple Khédrup Gélek Pelzangpo (1385-1438), post-Qing records of teachings grew substantially in length and content.²⁰⁸ Once again, the evolution of this genre seems to have occurred largely in the hands of that small group of Tibetan and Mongol monks of the Géluk school who acted as cultural and political intermediaries between the Qing empire and its Inner Asian territories, what I have been calling Zawa Damdin’s interpretative community. An example of a much-expanded record of teachings received comes from the Great Fifth Dalai Lama Ngakwang Lozang Gyatso, the author of expansive narrative autobiographies introduced above. His 1670 record of teachings received, entitled the *Flow of the Ganges*, is nearly three thousand folios in length and lays out a particular vision of classical scholastic education connected to the centralization of Géluk authority in Tibet at this time.²⁰⁹ The Great Fifth’s disciple, Dzaya Paṇḍita Lozang Trinlé, was also a prolific author of records of teachings

207 Leonard W.J. van der Kuijp, “On the Life and Political Career of T’ai Si Tu Byang Chub Rgyal Mtshan,” 919. Cited in: Sobisch, “The ‘Records of Teachings Received’ in the Collected Works of A Mes Zhabs: An Untapped Source for the Study of Sa Skya Pa Biographies,” 163.

208 rJe rin po che blo bzang grags pa’i dpal gyi gsan yig, “Tsong Kha Pa’i Gsan Yig,” in *gSung ’Bum/ Tsong Kha Pa*, vol. 1, 27 vols. (New Delhi: Ngawang Gelek Demo, 1975), 253–313; ’Phags pa blo gros rgyal mtshan, “Lung Dang Brgyud Pa Sna Tshogs Thob Pa’i Gsan Yig,” in *Sa Skya Bka ’Bum*, vol. 15, 15 vols. (Dehra Dun: Sakya Center, n.d.), 742–85; dGe legs dpal bzang po, “mKhas Grub Thams Cad Mkhyen Pa Dge Legs Dpal Bzang Po’i Gsan Yig,” in *gSung ’Bum/ mKhas Grub Rje (zhol Par Ma)*, vol. 1, 12 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1980), 39–126.

209 Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, “Zab Pa Dang Rgya Che Ba’i Dam Pa’i Chos Kyi Thob Yig Gang+ga’i Chu Rgyun Las Glegs Bam Dang Po-Bzhi Pa,” in *gSung ’Bum/ Ngag Dbang Blo Bzang Rgya Mtsho*, vol. 1–4, 25 vols. (Beijing: Zhol par khang, 199AD), 1–2970.

received.²¹⁰ His 1702 *Clear Mirror*, translated into Mongolian and widely circulated in Inner Asia, follows closely behind his master's work at nearly two thousand five hundred folios in length.²¹¹

The biographies of both the Great Fifth Dalai Lama and Dzaya Paṇḍita figure prominently in Zawa Damdin's histories, and in addition to history and prose (auto)biography, the latter seems to have been influenced to record the minutiae of his religious training in rubrics set forth by the former. In the analytical language developed later in this study, it is especially noteworthy that the maps of genealogical imagination that make up the Catalogue of Precious Treasures conclude by landing on the "ground" of Zawa Damdin's inscribed self. By means of this literary arrangement of religious dispensation, exhaustive lists of lineage gurus are temporalized and spatialized in relation to entextualized subject of Zawa Damdin. Jan-Ulrich Sobisch has noted that the records of the Fifth Dalai Lama and Dzaya Paṇḍita were not only genre-changing due to their length, but also for offering narratives concerning the historical conditions of a particular lineage, thus shifting the genre from genealogy to prose history.²¹²

Zawa Damdin takes their venerable example to new lengths in the *Catalogue*, adding regular narrative supplements to the endless lists of lineage gurus whose history extends back through Tibet to ancient Central and South Asia. For example (in relation to the short transmission lineage of the hagiography of Longdöl Lama):²¹³

210 T. *Hal ha dza ya paN+Di ta blo bzang 'phrin las*; M. *Khalkin Zaya Bandida Luvsanperenlei* (1642-1708/1715). Dzaya Paṇḍita was, like our Zawa Damdn, a Khalkha Mongol who acted as a Géluk missionary amongst the Mongols during the early decades of the Qing. See: Elverskog, *Our Great Qing: The Mongols, Buddhism and the State in Late Imperial China*, 2006, 195.

211 bLo bzang 'phrin las, *ShAkya'i Btsun Pa Blo Bzang "Phrin Las Kyi Zab Pa Dang Rgya Che Ba"i Dam Pa'i Chos Kyi Thob Yig Gsal Ba'i Me Long*, 4 vols. (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1981).

212 Sobisch, "The 'Records of Teachings Received' in the Collected Works of A Mes Zhabs: An Untapped Source for the Study of Sa Skya Pa Biographies," 163.

213 kLong rdol bla ma, 1719-1794.

The reading lineage of the ornament of the activity of the Victor and his Sons, the biography of the Precious One Longdöl Lama, the great Bodhisattva who upholds, protects, and extends the pure biographies of the Kadam (Masters) at the end of time, is as follows: the author of [Longdöl Lama's biography] Nomon Khan, the noble son of the Tatsak (*rta tshag*), Yéshé Tenpé Gönpö; the Géshe of Drak ri (*brag ri*), the Pervasive Master Dewé Dorjé; the Geshé of Sera Mé, Kelzang Khédруп; the Incarnate Lama of Ganden té, Yeshé Tupten Gyatso; the Lharampa of Gomang, Ngakwang Mönlam; the Rabjampa Exponent of Pari, Lozang Chöpel; Nomon Khan Lozang Jikmé Tenpé Gyeltsen; Udzé Lama Jikmé Dorjé; the Kachu Noble Renunciate, Lozang Tendzin Dargyé; the Initiation Masters Lozang Dorjé and the Tutor Whose Kindness is Unequalled, Lozang Migyur Dorjé. I received (this transmission) from them.²¹⁴

Grounding lineal imagination in the subject, space, and time of entextualized Zawa Damdin also occurs in a more explicit fashion by means of the autobiographical framing given for clusters of transmission. For instance, from the introductory section to the entire three-volume catalogue:

Through chance, (I) acquired just once a precious human life in the north of the north of the world in the land of Khalkha, on an auspicious day of the month in the fire rabbit year (1867) at the start of the fifteenth rabjung. I was named Lozang Ngakwang, the 'Lazy Person in Yellow Robes'. Because of my own previous karmic latencies and the blessed causes and conditions of my Spiritual Friend(s), since the earliest stage of my life I entered the gateway of the Dharma through: 1) gradually (engaging in the) activity of hearing (*thos pa byed tshul gyi rim pa*); 2) taking vows (*sdom pa nod pa*); 3) (receiving) transmissions and instructions (*lung khri*); 4) (receiving) initiations (*dbang*); and properly engaging in the 'subsequent attainment' (ie. post-meditation) (*rjes thob tshul*).

From amongst these, the first is as follows: When three years had passed in the manifestation of my life, (my) "connection lama" (*'bral ldan gyi bla ma*) who possessed the name of 'Sanggyé' caused me to take refuge (in the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha), which is to enter the door of the teachings, by means of giving me the vows of the lay practitioner [...]²¹⁵

From this first opening narrative, the *Catalogue* maps the grounding of the expansive reaches of the Tibeto-Mongolian scholastic world, the normative exoteric transmissions, and all manner of esoteric initiation, into the subject, space, and time of Zawa Damdin. Unfortunately, due to space I will have to leave a more detailed survey of the *Catalogue* to a future study, and move

214 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Thog Mtha' Bar Du Dge Ba Dam Chos Bdud Rtsi'i Zil Mngar Cung Zhig Myang Ba'i Thob Yig Zab Rgyas Gsang Ba'i Gdams Pa Rin Chen Gter Gyi Kha Byang," 87.

215 Blo bzang rta mgrin, "Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms 'Di Snang Za Zi'i Rjes Gco," 5.

now to a more comprehensive analysis of Zawa Damdin's narrative autobiography for the remainder of this chapter.

3.4 The Summary of My Gross Conduct of This Life

In addition to the *Catalogue*, Zawa Damdin wrote another dedicated autobiographical work. This is a thirty-five folio work written in nine-meter prose entitled, *Summary of My Gross Conduct: What Appears as Following After Food and the Necessities of Life (Alone)*.²¹⁶

Completed in 1936 on the very eve of Zawa Damdin's death and the mass purges of Buddhist monasticism that began in earnest in 1937, to my knowledge it constitutes the most mature autobiographical statement by a Mongolian monastic prior to the long silence of the Soviet-era. The *Summary* is organized into six "wanderings": 1) "Wandering Without Thought During Childhood"²¹⁷; 2) "Wandering by Means of Study During Youth"²¹⁸; 3) "Wandering by Means of Textual Instruction During Youth"²¹⁹; 4) "Wandering by Means of Religious Teaching

216 Blo bzang rta mgrin, *Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms 'Di Snang Za Zi'i Rjes Gcod*. Oddly, this work is hidden deep inside both editions of his collected works that I have available to me, and not in the first volume as is more customary for autobiographies. The Summary of My Gross Conduct is included in the middle of the eighth volume of Zawa Damdin's Collected Works. Mislabelled as a "mind training" in the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center's catalogue (<http://www.tbrc.org/#!rid=W13536>), this work is filed alongside a miscellany of tantric commentaries, actual mind training (T. *blo sbyong*) texts, and ritual manuals such as the Army Averting rituals (*dmag zlog*) and the infamous (though as yet unstudied) Dorjé Shukden ritual collection (*be 'bum*), which became the basis for the standardized collection of these rituals over the course of the twentieth century across the Tibetan diaspora. (See: '*Jam mgon rgyal ba gnyis pa'i bstan srung thun mong ma yin pa rgyal chen rdo rje shugs ldan rtsal gyi chos skor be bum du bsgrigs pa'i dkar chag gnam lcags 'khor lo'i mu khyud 'phrin las 'od 'bar*). We would expect to see the autobiography in either the first or last volume of his *Collected Works*, and indeed, the first volume is filled with narrative and prose biographies and biographical praises to a variety of Indian, Tibetan and Mongolian masters. We might assume that the half-hazard placement of this work stems from its late composition amid fraught times in Mongolia, and the history of the compilation of his collected works in the diaspora communities of the 1970s for which I have, as yet, little evidentiary basis to include here.

217 Byis pa'i dus su bsam med du g.yengs pa'i byed. Ibid..., 170–175.

218 gZhon nu'i dus su slob gnyer gyis g.yengs pa'i byed. Ibid..., 175–178.

219 Lang tsho'i dus su dpe khrid kyis g.yengs pa'i byed. Ibid..., 178–82.

During Middle Age”²²⁰; 5) “Wandering by Means of Protecting the Monastery During Old Age”²²¹; and 6) “Wandering by Means of Uncertainty at the End of Life”.²²²

Though relatively short compared to the Qing-era Géluk (auto)biography and the *Catalogue*, the *Summary* incorporates elements from both outer and inner/secret genres. It does not include any sustained reflection on what it meant to write one’s self into history (as Schaeffer has noted in similar works by his broad interpretative community), nor does it ruminate at any length on the profound socio-political changes our author witnessed during the imperial-socialist transition. It does not even provide consistent dating for the events described; at times providing seasonal and yearly dating with an almost chroniclesque precision, and at others providing no dating whatsoever, or else interrupting narrative continuity entirely to summarize events from his life thematically. In this, the *Summary* reads as a muted literary self-stylization, one that seems guarded in relation to the stinging critiques of the imperial-socialist transition found in the *Golden Book*, completed just five years earlier. Despite all this, the previously unexamined *Summary* will be of great interest to scholars interested in both the development of autobiographical writing amongst Qing and post-imperial Buddhist monastics, and in their literary representations of the Qing collapse and early revolutionary period.

3.4.1 Contexts of Production

According to the *Summary*’s prefatory statement, Zawa Damdin wrote the story of his life, “an object of mockery for scholars and the stupid,” in response to the requests of his, “narrow-minded followers.”²²³ They had entreated him, we read, saying, “Old monk, whatever

220 *Dar yol ba’i dus su bka’ chos kyis g.yengs byed*. Ibid., 182–191.

221 *rGa ba’i dus su dgon skyong gis g.yengs pa’i byed*. Ibid., 191–199.

222 *rGa ba’i dus su dgon skyong kyis kyi [sic.] g.yengs pa’i byed*. Ibid., 199–203.

223 Ibid.

of the rough history of all this life's activity, whatever you remember, please tell us!"²²⁴ A concise and explicit expression of how he situated his own life's "wanderings," and where he hoped they would lead, come later in the colophon. The preceding autobiographical narrative, Zawa Damdin humbly writes, describes a lifetime that may have been virtuous, but was certainly not holy (T. *dam pa*), just as, "when an insect makes marks on the ground it can become letters, but the insect is not an author (*yig mkhan*)."²²⁵ While Zawa Damdin hopes that some of his inscribed life might ripen as causes for accomplishing enlightenment, he urges his readers to be discerning: "if, in this long paper, you see a very ridiculous story, it would be appropriate to keep it in mind that I was lying and to simply offer this whole text to the fire god [ie. burn it]!"²²⁶

As was mentioned above, Zawa Damdin completed this rather modest, thirty-three folio autobiography in 1936, when he was seventy years old. Just a year before his death, this was also well into the economic, judicial, and military crackdown on Mongolia's Buddhist institutions by an emboldened, and increasingly hard-lined, Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party. 1936 was just months away from the Stalin-inspired purges that would destroy the entire monastic edifice Damdin labored to protect his entire life. As mentioned already, Zawa Damdin died of natural causes that same year, just weeks before the people's army arrived at his Gobi monastery and killed his abbatial successor and eight hundred of his monks. While the state violence against monastics was already underway in 1936, Zawa Damdin surely could not have anticipated the scale and zeal of what was to come. Even so, a guarded pessimism and

224 Ibid.

225 Ibid. p. 203. I have chosen "author" here, but *yig mkhan* means more generally someone who is well versed in reading and writing.

226 Blo bzang rta mgrin, "Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms 'Di Snang Za Zi'i Rjes Gco," 204.

disorientation begins to permeate the later of the six “wanderings” of his life: an accomplished religious passage through late-imperial space and time had become, by the author’s present, one without a clear destination, something our author seems to gesture towards as he titled the closing section, “Wandering by Means of Uncertainty at the End of Life.”

4 Inscribing The Self: Zawa Damdin’s Autobiography

4.1 Entering the Door of the Religious Life in the Late Nineteenth Century

Our author writes that he was born in 1867, the fourth of ten siblings born to “ethical and intelligent parents,” whose family lineage was, “well-behaved, long-lived, wealthy, and devoted to the Dharma.”²²⁷ His childhood home was a place “free from the two extremes”; presumably neither too wealthy nor too poor. Zawa Damdin recounts that when he was born his mother had a dream where she was visited by a lama wearing a paṇḍit’s hat, clothed in religious robes, and carrying many Buddhist texts. In her dream, his mother requested blessings and the lama touched his texts to her head. These unusual signs attracted some attention to the infant Zawa Damdin: “non-Buddhist and Buddhist scholars,” even before the customary protective rituals had been done three days after a birth, determined that, “this son will certainly become a Dharma practitioner.”²²⁸

In his literary self stylization, well-worn signs that Zawa Damdin would become a great Buddhist practitioner and scholar continued to surface during his infancy. For example, he recounts that as a toddler he had a proclivity to stare for extended periods of time at the sky “towards the gods.” While his mother was concerned that this was a sign of stupidity, an elderly

227 Ibid., 171.

228 Ibid.

local nun, while offering the young Zawa Damdin a butter lamp, interpreted instead that, “this son is always looking at the sky, and so forth- surely he is a fortunate one!”²²⁹ His disposal to staring at the sky also excited his great-grandmother, who brought him a cherished Buddhist scripture, saying “Even though I have many great-grandchildren, to this son I want to give my ancestors’ Dharma objects.”²³⁰ Later, an uncle who was a lama in the nearby banner monastery took him to see a certain “Master Teacher” (T. *slob don pak shi*) (most likely Sanggyé Tsenchen, whom we have already met in the opening lines of the *Catalogue*), since the infant Zawa Damdin was suffering from a cold. Trying to diagnose the illness, the master carried out a divination and, upon seeing the results, exclaimed, “this boy is amazing!” before giving him a protection cord. Apparently these were all stories recounted to him later in life, since Zawa Damdin writes that his own memories begin only during his third year. This was a time spent swimming in the summer and playing with siblings in the spring and winter in his “very wide and smooth” Gobi desert homeland. As we saw above with the *Catalogue*, Zawa Damdin’s third year was also when he “entered the door of the teachings” (*chos sgo la ’jug pa*) through receiving the precepts of a Buddhist lay practitioner (S. *upāsaka*; T. *dge bsnyen*).

The early sections of the *Summary* describe further examples of an unusual proclivity for the religious life as Zawa Damdin grew a little older. We read that while on family visits to the local banner monastery, he would climb the throne, use the ritual bell and drum, and even bring offering scarves to try and offer to people in the manner of a high lama blessings his followers. Further signs of a penchant for renunciant life come from the account of his younger sister’s birth, which he witnessed in his family’s yurt. The young Zawa Damdin was so repulsed by the

229 Ibid., 172.

230 Ibid.

whole affair that he ran away to stay with his uncle in the monastery, an episode his family remembered fondly and would often bring up over the course of his life. When he was four years old, Zawa Damdin saw “a pupil” (*slob ma*, presumably a monk) reading and writing. Fascinated, Zawa Damdin begged his lama-uncle to teach him to write. In Zawa Damdin’s re-telling, he learned the “headed” (*dbu can*) and “headless” (*dbu med*) Tibetan scripts from his “master teacher” in just three days, and after that memorized several prayers by having his uncle read them aloud. Soon enough he could read on his own, and began to work through the core liturgical texts of the local banner monastery. Apparently anticipating his later career as a prominent monastic scholar in the capital, he did not confine himself to the local litany, but as a four year old memorized, “all the prayers of [Ikh] Khüree” as well. Zawa Damdin’s early absorption of monastic culture did not end with reading or writing. The young prodigy quickly learned Buddhist astrological systems, basic scholastic and ritual terminology, and the vast pantheon of Buddhas and deities whose representations would have filled both monastic halls and altars in family yurts. He writes that his quick familiarity with sacred iconography especially was something that “everyone thought was amazing” and produced karmic seeds able to protect the young boy from regular bouts of measles and small pox.

Despite all these unusual religious abilities, Zawa Damdin had not yet formally entered the local monastery. His entrance into the scholastic spaces that would occupy his entire life’s work proceeded by means of a series of prescient declarations in the re-telling of the Summary. The first followed upon what he refers to obliquely as “something terrible” which had happened in his local area when he was six. In its wake, the local monks did a ritual during which his mother offered a hat, new shoes, a sword, necklaces and some cloth. Noticing the fabric being given away, the young Zawa Damdin cried out, “When I go to the prayer assembly [ie. when I

become a monk] I will need a shawl. Please don't give away this cloth!"²³¹ Zawa Damdin writes that he remembers this event, and that his especially virtuous request caused everyone to be very happy, and that some people even cried. Also when he was six, he saw two Kachu scholars (T. *bka' bcu pa*)—the very rank of scholastic distinction he himself would eventually attain—debating in front of the monastic assembly. Zawa Damdin writes that he was fascinated, and played at clapping his hands and stomping his feet in imitation of their formal debate gestures. A related and especially predictive episode from his childhood “wanderings” came during a childhood trip to the great monastic city of Ikh Khüree with his father. He writes that at the time, “I said spontaneously that ‘I will become a Géshé Kachupa!’”²³² His father playfully responded, “You will be the Lama of the Dharma Retreat (T. *chos mtshams bla ma*),” bragging to their companions that, “if he joins the monastery, he might possibly become the Géshé of (Ikh) Khüree!”²³³ Still while six years old, he and another unusually religious friend (who goes unnamed) would play at building temples and holy objects, such that the other children named Zawa Damdin, “The One Who Does Meditation” and his friend “The Highest Doctor Du ha”: both monikers which aptly anticipated their later careers, muses Zawa Damdin.²³⁴

Our author joined the local banner monastery at seven, charged with cleaning the monastery and helping to decorate ritual offering cakes (*gtor ma*). Able to follow orders very well, Zawa Damdin recalls that he served his lama and and th chant-leader during monastic assemblies, connections that offered him protection from, “higher, middling and lower people.” A childhood dedication to his new monastic milieu is also expressed in the *Summary* in stories

231 Ibid., 173.

232 Ibid.

233 Ibid.

234 I am unclear who this doctor-acquaintance might have been.

of renunciation of mundane responsibilities. For example, we read that he refused occasional obligations to look after his family's herd, paying off relatives to look after them in his place so he could focus on his monastic obligations.

These representations of youthful religious curiosity and discipline provide intimations of the later historical and archival practices that interest me later in this study. Zawa Damdin writes that as a young monk he became pre-occupied with identifying and collecting rare holy objects (such as statues and paintings) and recording pilgrimage tales and history. He recalls that whenever he would visit a new household, regardless of whether they were rich or poor, to everyone's amazement he would ask what holy objects they had, and whether he could see them. Also, whenever he encountered people who looked like pilgrims, he would interrogate them (much to the consternation of his mother), barraging them with questions such as, "how do you go there, how did you come here, what holy objects did they have [there]?"²³⁵ There is a tender resonance with this recollection of childhood wonder at Buddhist sacred objects and Zawa Damdin's latter emphasis on interpreting artifacts to discern an early spread of Buddhism to Mongol lands in his *Golden Book*: "When very holy object, new or old, is found in the center or borderlands, people will say that they have good qualities; the knowledgeable must research and determine it it is indeed important!"²³⁶

Already curious of the past and of the sacred topographies of the late-imperium (in the tender reminiscences of old age, at least), we read that Zawa Damdin came to hear stories of the holy sites of central Tibet, such as those in the capital Lhasa and the surrounding "mother

235 Blo bzang rta mgrin, "Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms 'Di Snang Za Zi'i Rjes Gco," 174.

236 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 130.

monasteries” (*ma dgon*) of the dispersed Géluk tradition.²³⁷ Zawa Damdin recounts how upon hearing of those distant religious centers as a young monk he was so amazed he began to cry. Interrupting the chronological continuity of the Summary, the authorial voice intrudes to pine that, “because of the meager power of my previous life’s karma, I didn’t get a chance to see these [holy sites] once I became older.”²³⁸

Bursting with religious potential and a voracious intellectual appetite for scholastic learning, the first “wandering” of Zawa Damdin’s autobiography ends with the thirteen year old monk longing to journey north to the monastic city of Ikh Khüree to begin his studies in earnest. His uncle-lama dissuades him, however, saying that he is too young. For another two years the teenaged Zawa Damdin toiled in his studies deep in the Gobi, passing oral examinations in his banner monastery. Bored and impatient, Zawa Damdin recalls passing his time reading sacred biographies and meditative instructions from the “mind training” (*blo sbyong*) tradition until the time came for him to enter the monastic colleges of Khüree, an episode which marks the transition to the second wandering of his youth in the Summary.

This second “wandering” chronicles a measured, successful ascension through the ranks of Géluk dialectic education in Ikh Khüree beginning in his fifteenth year in 1883, when Ikh

237 There are three great Géluk monasteries located in Central Tibet, all of which were founded by the Géluk founder Tsongkhapa himself or by his direct disciples. These were some of the largest monastic universities in the world until the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s, and at times housed a monastic population drawn from as far away as Rome, Siberia, Korea and Japan. Sera monastery (T. *Se ra dgon pa*) is located some five kilometers north of Lhasa’s central temple complex, and was founded in 1419 by one of Tsongkhapa’s disciples. Ganden Namgyal Ling monastery (T. *dGa’ ldan rnam rgyal gling dgon pa*) was founded by Tsongkhapa himself in 1409, is located some thirty-five kilometers northeast of central Lhasa. To the west of Lhasa was Drepung (T. *‘Bras spungs dgon pa*). Founded in 1416, it was the largest of the three with a maximum population of some 10,000 monks in the 1930s. For this reason, it was often cited by European travelers as the largest monastery in the world (For example: Frederick Spencer Chapman, *Lhasa, the Holy City* (Concept Publishing Company, 1939), 195.). The Gomang college (T. *sGo mang grwa tshang*) of Drepung seems to have been the preferred monastic home for Mongol, Buryat, and Tuvan pupils over the course of the Qing.

238 Blo bzang rta mgrin, “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ‘Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” 174.

Khüree was its height as a major monastic center in Inner Asia.²³⁹ Having shown such promise in his Gobi homeland, and having waited until he was old enough to undertake the journey, we read that Zawa Damdin was finally excused from his local monastery and free to fulfill his wishes to join one of the great colleges in Ikh Khüree. There, he joined the Losel Ling College²⁴⁰ and began a standard Géluk course of study by first learning valid cognition (*tshad ma*).²⁴¹ This was a preliminary subject in the logical formulation of arguments (*rtags rigs*), epistemology (*blo rigs*), and dialectics (*rtsod sgrub rig pa*). His instructor was named Mawang Jikjé,²⁴² a prominent scholar of Ikh Khüree who would become one of Zawa Damdin's primary teachers. According to the *Summary*, the young intellectual began to create a name for himself, quickly moving through monastic classes and passing the requisite exams with ease. With a requisite amount of humility, Zawa Damdin recalls being especially adept at memorizing texts, an essential ability that to this day functions as the very foundation of Géluk monastic education.²⁴³ For example, "I would read a large folio three times, and then I could memorize it. Although I was proud of myself, later I thought about it and realized that my ego had increased and that I had (in fact) adopted the actions of demons!"²⁴⁴ We read at this point that Mawang Jikjé, Zawa Damdin's beloved teacher of five years, died to the young monk's great sadness, but

239 Though, as we shall see in the following chapter, in the purview of his Golden Book, Zawa Damdin theorized that a failed settlement project in Ikh Khüree some thirty years prior had already set karmic forces in play that would guarantee the decline of enlightened authority in Mongolia and the later rise of revolutionary barbarism. This theory, made so explicit in the 1931 Golden Book, is not mentioned here however, perhaps because of the danger associated with such polemics as the 1930s progressed.

240 *bLo gsal gling grwa tshang*.

241 This is a topic that includes logic (*rtags rigs*) and epistemology (*blo rigs*).

242 *sMra dbang jigs byed*.

243 Memorization is also a central exercise in the monastic education of the other Tibetan Buddhist schools. On the rigours of memorization and its place in the Géluk curriculum, see: Georges B. J. Dreyfus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk* (Berkeley, Calif. [u.a.]: Univ. of Calif. Press, 2008).

244 Blo bzang rta mgrin, "Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms 'Di Snang Za Zi'i Rjes Gco," 175.

not before seeing him graduate into the study of the Five Great Treatises²⁴⁵ under the tutelage of other prominent teachers.²⁴⁶ Zawa Damdin reminisces, rather unabashedly, about the esteem he attracted from peers and teachers for his intellectual abilities: for instance, “at that time, if I wanted to say that I was an intellectual, I could”. Ever careful to leverage his success with humble self effacement, we read regularly to the effect that, “(despite this), because of having a poor support of accumulated merit and purified negative karma, today amongst the six beings I have only a name (and no intellectual ability).”²⁴⁷

4.2 Early Interpretative Creativity

Excelling in his formal studies in the halls and courtyards of his monastic college, Zawa Damdin also recalls that, “whatever (additional) texts I could acquire, I studied.”²⁴⁸ These included meditation manuals and mind-training texts such as the *Scriptures of the Kadampas*, *Fathers and Sons*²⁴⁹ and various works from the graduated “stages of the path” (*lam rim*) soteriological scheme. This extra-curricular material also included, notably, Nāgārjuna’s *Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way*²⁵⁰ and its “great commentary.”²⁵¹ Zawa Damdin

245 Tib. *gzhung lnga*. These are the five primary Indian Buddhist treatises which form the core of Géluk monastic education (and are important in all other Tibetan Buddhist traditions): Maitreya’s *mNgon rtogs rgyan* (Skt. Abhisamayālaṃkāra, “The Ornament of Clear Realization”); Dharmakīrti’s *Tshad ma rnam ’grel* (Skt. Pramāṇavārttika, “Commentary on Valid Cognition”); Candrakīrti’s *dBu ma la ’jug pa* (Skt. Madhyamakāvatāra, “Introduction to the Middle Way”); Vasubandhu’s *Chos mngon pa’i mdzod* (Skt. Abhidharmakośa, “The Treasury of Abhidharma”); and Guṇaprabha’s *’Dul ba’i mdo*; (Skt. Vinayasūtra, “Scripture on Discipline”). These five treatises were studied sequentially, usually over a curriculum of fifteen classes, and successful students would receive one of three ranks of dGe shes degrees, and would then usually either pursue esoteric studies in a tantric college, assume teaching responsibilities, or else engage in meditative retreat. On general Géluk scholasticism, see: Dreyfus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk*.

246 Such as dGe rgan blo bzang bkra shis, dPal ldan rdo rje, and Ngag dbgang rin chen (see p. 175).

247 Blo bzang rta mgrin, “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ‘Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” 177.

248 Ibid.

249 *bKa’ gdams glegs bam pha chos bu chos*.

250 S. *Mūlamadhyamakārikā*; T. *dBu ma rtsa ba’i tshig le’u byas pa shes rab ches bya ba*.

remembers that he was encouraged to tackle these classics of the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition outside of other class requirements on the advice of an otherwise unmentioned teacher named Samundra.²⁵² That he did so outside the requirements of a monastic class is important, since it left room for an interpretative encounter outside the normative hermeneutic prescriptions of a particular college textbook (*yig cha*). This is conjectural, but still an interesting background when we consider that Zawa Damdin's most famous, enduring and radical scholastic work was precisely an unorthodox interpretation of Middle Way philosophy (*dbu ma*).

The *Summary* recounts how, half a year after tackling his independent study of the *Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way*, the still youthful Zawa Damdin penned two of his own compositions: one a work on epistemology²⁵³ and the another on the Géluk interpretation of the “grounds and paths” (*sa lam*) of the Middle Way philosophical school. The latter apparently refers to the 1899, *Essence of the Ocean of Profound Meaning: A Discussion of the Concise Presentation of the Grounds and Paths of the Three Vehicles According to the System of the Perfection Vehicle* (hereafter: the *Essence*).²⁵⁴ This commentary undertakes a somewhat

251 This could refer either to Candrakīrti's classic seventh-century verse-by-verse commentary *The Clear Words* (S. *Prasannapadā*; T. *dbu ma rtsa ba'i 'grel pa tshig gsal ba*), or else perhaps Tsong kha pa's *rTsa she tik chen rigs pa'i rgya mtsho*.

252 Blo bzang rta mgrin, “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ‘Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” 177.

253 Apparently, this was: bLo bzang rta mgrin, “bLo Rig Gi Mtha’ Dpyod Ngo Mtshar Legs Bshad ’Phrul Gyi Me Long,” in *gSung ’Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 5, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 429–648. This text is considered in two scholarly works of which I am aware, both by Leonard van der Kuijp: L. W. J. Kuijp, “Phya-Pa Chos-Kyi Seng-Ge’s Impact on Tibetan Epistemological Theory,” *J Indian Philos Journal of Indian Philosophy* 5, no. 4 (1978): 355–69; L. W. J. van der Kuijp, “Tibetan Contributions to the ‘Apoha’ Theory: The Fourth Chapter of the Tshad-Ma Rigs-Pa’i Gter,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 99, no. 3 (1979): 408–22.

254 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Phar Phyin Theg Pa’i Lugs Kyi Theg Pa Gsum Gyi Sa Dang Lam Gyi Rnam Par Bzhag Pa Mdo Tsam Du Brjod Pa,” in *gSung ’Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 4, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 67–142. The 1899 date given in the colophon of this text does not fully line up with this period in the autobiography, which describes events earlier in the 1890s. However, since the *Essence* is to my knowledge

heterodox reading of the standard Géluk interpretation of Nāgārjuna's position on the Middle Way. For that reason, this work more than any other continues to provide Zawa Damdin with some notoriety in the transnational Tibetan and Mongolia Géluk exegetical tradition.

Specifically, the *Essence* offers an unusual analysis of the presentation of “grounds and paths”; metaphors that describe Buddhist soteriological visions of gradual release from bondage and suffering towards liberation and enlightenment.²⁵⁵ The interpretive angle of this piece²⁵⁶ has earned it a place in several works of secondary scholarship in recent years as well, most notably as a primary source for a 1994 University of Virginia Ph.D. dissertation by Jules Levinson.²⁵⁷

Levinson writes that the presentation of the grounds and paths of Zawa Damdin (whom he knows as Lo-sang-ta-yang), “is unusual in that it presents a Consequence School [Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka] view on this subject and is especially valuable for its identification and citation of many passages in Indian and Tibetan texts that collectively argue the Consequence School's position.”²⁵⁸

the only major composition by Zawa Damdin on this topic, it may be that he began his composition in the mid-1890s and it was only edited and published at the end of the decade.

255 For an introduction to “grounds and paths” in relatively modern Géluk contexts that touches upon Zawa Damdin's work, see: Levinson, “Metaphors of Liberation: Tibetan Treatises on Grounds and Paths.”

256 It ostensibly follows the authoritative interpretation given in the monastic textbooks of Panchen Sönam Drakpa (T. Pan chen bsod nams grags pa, 1478-1529) of the Loseling college of Drépaṅ monastery in Central Tibet.

257 For example, see: Hopkins, “A Tibetan Perspective on the Nature of Spiritual Experience”; Kensur Yeshey et al., *Path to the Middle : Oral Madhyamika Philosophy in Tibet : The Spoken Scholarship of Kensur Yeshey Tupden Commenting on Tsong-Kha-Pa's Illumination of the Thought, Extensive Explanation of (Candrakīrti's) "Entrance to (Nāgārjuna's) 'Treatise on the Middle Way'" : (dbu Ma Dgongs Pa Rab Gsal), the Sixth Chapter, "Perfection of Wisdom" Verses 1-7*; Levinson, “The Metaphors of Liberation : A Study of Grounds and Paths according to the Middle Way Schools”; Napper, *Dependent-Arising and Emptiness : A Tibetan Buddhist Interpretation of Madhyamika Philosophy Emphasizing the Compatibility of Emptiness and Conventional Phenomena*.

258 Levinson, “The Metaphors of Liberation : A Study of Grounds and Paths according to the Middle Way Schools,” 5.

While the philosophical intricacies of this work cannot detain us, Zawa Damdin's mobilization of interpretative practices from his scholastic tradition to produce new knowledge is important to note in light of his historiography examined in later chapters. The *Essence* represents a late and radical departure from standardized Géluk scriptural positions, which traditionally approached its study of the grounds and paths of sūtra from the Yogic Middle Way Autonomy School.²⁵⁹ While Levinson does not explore these topics at all (his thesis stays firmly fixed on this one text and its use of "metaphors of liberation" in comparison with exegetical works by other Géluk scholars), he does briefly reflect on Zawa Damdin's interpretative operation:

(After having completed his Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka presentation), Blo bzang rta dbyangs [ie. Zawa Damdin] presents thirty-four pages of dialectical discussion in which he differentiates the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka school's view from that of the other schools, and offers extensive support, both scriptural and logical, for the radical position taken by the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka school.²⁶⁰

Importantly for my later examination of the Zawa Damdin's practice of historical interpretation, the heterodox analysis of the *Essence* is thus authorized by evoking legitimizing Géluk interpretative procedures related to scripture, logic, and exegesis: all practices of knowledge production used to write his innovative histories during the revolutionary period.

4.3 Entering the Monkhood and Graduating From Study

Zawa Damdin continues the narrative of his "Wandering by Means of Study Through Youth" by describing his absorption during the early 1890s in receiving textual transmissions, memorizing texts, debating, and taking tantric initiations from the major prelates of his day. Towards the end of this section, our author ruptures the temporal continuity of the narrative to

259 S. *Yogācārasvātantrikamādhyaṃika*; T. *rNal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma rang brgyud pa*.

260 Levinson, "Metaphors of Liberation: Tibetan Treatises on Grounds and Paths," 265.

describe how he entered into the Buddhist monkhood over some two decades by receiving the three primary “precepts of individual liberation”.²⁶¹ It is as if the gravitas of Buddhist ethics were important enough to disturb the rest of the chronology of the autobiography, or were required to be addressed outside of, or as fundamental to, the rest of the story of his life. Just as we read earlier in a citation from the *Catalogue*, here our author recalls how he first received the male lay-practitioner’s vow when he was seven years old from the master Sanggyé, and then the male novice-monastic vow some time after.²⁶² Later, when he was studying in Ikh Khüree, he writes that he again received the lay, novice monastic and full monastic vows all together²⁶³ during the holy month of Saka Dawa²⁶⁴ from Gonsar the Great Abbot of Ikh Khüree.²⁶⁵ Having extracted these biographical details, our author muses that his ethical life had amounted only to an, “an example of ants chimpanzee”: in other words, that he had lost his precepts later in life like the example of a chimp who grabs at individual ants will loose all except the last one in his hand.²⁶⁶

Again asserting his authorial voice into the narrative continuity of the autobiography, Zawa Damdin concludes this “wandering” by noting that, “nowadays I think about what I did

261 S. *prātimokṣasaṃvara*, T. *so thar gyi sdom pa*. These refer to the graduated monastic precepts, and are one of three sets of precepts (S. *trisaṃvara*; T. *sdom pa gsum*) a practitioner of the Vajrayāna (tantric) Buddhist tradition would commonly take at this point in Inner Asian Buddhist history. The other two are the “bodhisttva precepts” (S. *bodhisattvasaṃvara*; T. *byang sems kyi sdom pa*) and the “secret mantra precepts” (S. *guhyanmantrasaṃvara*; T. *sngags kyi sdom pa*). See: Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 924.

262 The first refers to the five precepts (S. *pañcasīla*; T.) of a male lay Buddhist (S. *upāsaka*; T. *dge bsnyen*) and the second to the ten precepts of a novice monk (S. *śrāmaṇera*, T. *dge tshul*).

263 S. *bhikṣu*, T. *dge slong*.

264 *Sa ga zla ba*. The fourth month of the Tibetan lunar calendar, identified as the time when the Buddha was born, later became enlightened and finally passed into nirvāṇa in Lumbini.

265 *Hu re mkhan chen dGon gsar*. Blo bzang rta mgrin, “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ‘Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” 177.

266 I thank Khenpo Kunga Sherab for clarifying the meaning of this common Tibetan metaphor.

when I was young, and think that I did great things!”²⁶⁷ Describing a few final transmissions, feats of memorization, and notable commentaries received in his youth, he concludes that, “when I was young I wandered and studied, and this is whatever I remember!”²⁶⁸

4.4 Assuming Teaching Responsibilities in Ikh Khüree and a Pilgrimage to Tibet

The next “wandering” of the *Summary* details Zawa Damdin’s transition from a gifted student to an active instructor within the late-imperial scholastic scene of Ikh Khüree. It also contains an account of what would be the first of a series of extended study and pilgrimage expeditions across the wider Qing topography of the late nineteenth and early-twentieth century.

He begins this section by writing that for eight years, while he was studying and debating the different texts required for the defense exam (*dam bca*) that would lead to the *Ka ram* and *Ka chu* degrees,²⁶⁹ he began to teach debate to students and also began instructing lower monastic classes. Overextended by his new pedagogical responsibilities, Zawa Damdin recalls that he had to limit his study of the monastic code and the Abhidharma based on the *Four Divisions of the Vinaya Scripture* and its Indian commentaries.²⁷⁰ In the midst of this hectic schedule of teaching and study, and without providing any other context or background information, we read that, “suddenly, the condition came about that I could go to Tibet.”²⁷¹ This would be one of several trips abroad in the final years of the Qing, which as we shall see where all formative journeys filled with mystical experiences, intense study and prolonged devotional

267 Blo bzang rta mgrin, “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ‘Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” 178.

268 Ibid.

269 T. *bKa’ rams* and *bKa’ bcu*.

270 ‘*Dul ba lung bzhi*. The Four Divisions are commonly listed as: 1) ‘*Dul ba rnam ’byed*, 2) ‘*Dul ba lung gzhi*, 3) ‘*Dul ba phran tshegs*, 4) ‘*Dul ba gzhung dam pa*.

271 Blo bzang rta mgrin, “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ‘Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” 179.

practice and pilgrimage. In this first, undated journey (it must have been just around the turn of the twentieth century), Zawa Damdin recalls proceeding towards the major Géluk centers of eastern Tibet by way of the “southern monastery belonging to Alaksha,” in Inner Mongolia.²⁷² There, Zawa Damdin met the “supreme incarnation of Jamyang Zhépa”²⁷³ and a local Alaksha incarnate lama, from whom he drank “the nectar of Dharma”²⁷⁴ in the monastery and in the local *yamen*, the office of the Qing bureaucrat.²⁷⁵

Soon enough, he arrived at that major Géluk outpost on the Sino-Tibetan-Mongolian border, Kumbum Jampa Ling.²⁷⁶ This area was Monguor country, home to the many Géluk intermediaries of the Qing court who, as we saw above, had pushed (auto)biography, philosophy, and historiography to new heights. This was, in other words, the cosmopolitan homeland of Zawa Damdin’s Qing-era Géluk interpretative communities, in whose monasteries he would study with their later incarnations. Zawa Damdin went first to Kumbum monastery,

272 *Alag sha*. This refers to the Alagsha district (C. 阿拉善; Mb. *Alaša*; Mc. *Alshaa*) of Inner Mongolia, nearby contemporary Yinchuan in Ningxia province. Alagsha was home to several important Géluk monasteries and lines of incarnate lamas, foremost of which may have been Ngakwang Tendar (*Ngag dbang bstan dar*, 1759-1831).

273 This would have been the fourth ‘Jam dbyangs bzhad pa, bsKal bzang thub bstan dbang phyug (1856-1916), a Géluk prelate enthroned at bLa brang Bkra shis ‘khyil monastery who meet the Guāngxù (光緒) Emperor in Beijing in 1898.

274 bLo bzang rta mgrin (1975-1976). “Rang gi byed spyod rags bsdoms ‘di snang za zi’i rjes gcod/.” In *gsung ‘bum/_blo bzang rta mgrin*. 11: 169 - 203. new delhi: mongolian lama gurudeva. pp. 178.

275 Zawa Damdin spells *yamen* (C. 衙門) as *yā man* (T. *yA man*). It may be of interest to historians of late Qing imperial administration that these religious proceedings apparently happened in the confines of the local Qing *yamen*. John Watt described the nineteenth-century Qing *yamen* as, “one of the most conspicuous institutions in Ch’ing society, for it was the principal vehicle of political administration in a civilization that placed great emphasis on administration... The country *yamen* served also as the main center for negotiation between bureaucratic government and informal local authority... In short, the county-level *yamen* served both as the leading government instrument of public authority and as the primary arena of political exchange” (John R. Watt, “The Yamen and Urban Administration,” in *The City in Late Imperial China*, ed. George William Skinner (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1977), 353.

276 *sKu ‘bum byams pa gling*. Located near Xining city in the eastern Tibetan cultural region of Amdo (in what is today Qinghai province in the People’s Republic of China), this monastery was founded by the third Dalai Lama in 1583 at the putative birth-site of the fourteenth-century founder of Zawa Damdin’s Géluk school, rJe Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa (1357–1419). By the end of the nineteenth-century, it was had long been a favored pilgrimage site for devotees from Inner Asia to the north and east of the Tibetan cultural region, as well as for occasional imperial patronage from Qing centers.

where he engaged in devotional practices towards its many holy objects, especially the golden stūpa that housed relics of the Géluk founder Tsongkhapa until the mid-twentieth century. Alongside his devotional exercises, he received religious transmissions from prominent local scholars.²⁷⁷ He then traveled on to nearby Gönlung²⁷⁸ and Chuzang monasteries²⁷⁹—both smaller Géluk institutions in the region—where he formed a master-disciple relationship with several lamas, including the incarnation of Changkya Rolpé Dorjé. He then returned to Kumbum in order to take tantric initiation from Sertok Dorjé Chang.²⁸⁰ There, his teacher Drotsang divined that Zawa Damdin ought to visit a cave called “Master” (*slob dpon*) and then return to Mongolia and continue his duties in Ikh Khüree. Zawa Damdin followed this advice and left for his homeland, recalling that, “on the way, whatever fearful situation happened, when I made requests to the Lama and the Triple Gem, it immediately disappeared, which caused people to be amazed.”²⁸¹

Back in Ikh Khüree and busy as ever with study, debate, and instruction, we later read of Zawa Damdin taking an opportunity to travel south to his Gobi homeland for what would be his last visit with his parents. He writes that while there he used his ritual resources for acts of filial piety, performing purification rituals for one month. His parents said to him, “You are our son, now go (back) to Khüree! Since you reside there in order to study, and since the Triple Gem are

277 For example, he writes of receiving transmissions from the “Lord of the Red Hat” (*Zhwa dmar rje*) and a lama named Dro tsang (*Gro tshang*). Zawa Damdin also studied grammar, poetics and astrology with Gyayak Tulku (rGya yag sprul sku), an incarnate lama from whom he copied an eye witness account of a failed conversion of a local lama, the Māyang Paṇḍita, at the hands of the English missionary Cecil Polhill. For a detailed study of various Tibetan and English accounts of that failed conversion, see: Matthew King and Pamela Klassen, “Suppressing the Mad Elephant: Missionaries, Lamas, and the Mediation of Sacred Historiographies in the Tibetan Borderlands,” *History and Anthropology*, forthcoming.

278 *dGon lung byams pa gling*, in contemporary Haidong district, Qinghai province.

279 *Chu bzang dgon dga' ldan mi 'gyur gling*, also in contemporary Haidong District, Qinghai province.

280 *gSer gtog rdo rje chang*.

281 Blo bzang rta mgrin, “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ‘Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” 179.

not biased, (your residence there) is also very beneficial for our virtue as well!”²⁸² With this memory, Zawa Damdin inserts his own authorial present into the text, writing, “today, as I think about this final testament [of my parents], I am very sad and tears come from my eyes.”²⁸³ He duly left his homeland and returned to his studies in Ikh Khüree. Some time later that same winter, Zawa Damdin writes that he first learned of his mother’s death, a sad event for which he did the necessary post-mortem rituals from afar. Our author recounts somberly that he soon had to repeat the entire funerary program again that spring when his father died as well. That summer, Zawa Damdin returned to his homeland, now bereft of his parents who had urged him since childhood to pursue his scholastic career. Despite what we might assume would be an occasion for Buddhist reminiscence on the impermanence of life, this trip receives the barest description in his autobiography. Zawa Damdin writes simply, “I replaced the holy objects and did service at my local monastery. And then I came back to [Ikh Khüree].”²⁸⁴

While it receives little narrative elaboration, Zawa Damdin’s loss of his parents marks a turning point in the trajectory of the *Summary*: the pupil now occupies senior administrative and pedagogical duties of various monasteries (in Ikh Khüree and in his Gobi homeland), working also to some renown as an exegete and ritualist. This is most evident at points in the narrative that describe his prominent role in the reception of high incarnate lamas who visited Ikh Khüree in the first few years of the twentieth-century. For example, here we read about the Darva Paṇḍita, who had invited Zawa Damdin to see him in Ikh Khüree, and with whom Zawa Damdin became “Dharma friends” over the winter of 1902. Darva Paṇḍita would soon become one of the most active leaders in the early Mongolian socialist movement, writing populist tracts extolling

282 Ibid., 180.

283 Ibid.

284 Ibid.

the Buddhist virtue of Marxist-Leninism.²⁸⁵ Zawa Damdin recounts taking periods of rest at this time with Darva Paṇḍita, residing at times upon the “King Mountain”—which we must assume was Holy King Mountain²⁸⁶—very near to Ikh Khüree, in order to make offerings and circumambulations. Other prominent interlocutors of Zawa Damdin described in these sections of the *Summary* include the Tibetan lama Déyang Büldü,²⁸⁷ Doram Néten,²⁸⁸ Kachu Yidrak,²⁸⁹ and Chögyel Sertö.²⁹⁰

Despite what seems to have been a busy administrative and pedagogical schedule, we are here reminded that Zawa Damdin himself was not yet finished his studies. The details of which not only provide insight into the scholastic scene of the late imperium, but also of the prominence enjoyed by this rising monastic intellectual. For example, in the autumn of the Water Rabbit year of 1903, one of his principle teachers in Ikh Khüree offered him the

285 Zawa Damdin mentions Darpa Paṇḍita in several colophons, having dedicated works to him, or else citing the later as inspiration. In some cases, Darva Bandida and his monastic milieu were the primary topics, such as in “The Pleasant Voice of the Cuckoo: A Song in Praise of the Sacred Place of the Monastic Seat of bKra shis dar rgyas gling, From the Mouth of the Refuge of Northerly Beings and the Teachings, the Incarnate Lama, Precious One, Darpa Paṇḍita” (bLo bzang rta mgrin, “bKra Shis Gling Gi Gnas Bstod Khu Byug Skad Snyan,” in *gSung ’Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 1, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 637–40.). Elsewhere we come across several texts written by Zawa Damdin according to Darpa Paṇḍita’s instruction or inspiration, such as one on monastic discipline, composed “In accordance with the desire [...] of the matchless friend of the teachings and beings, the Precious Emanation Body, Darpa Paṇḍita.” In addition to these, we find a brief biography of Darpa Paṇḍita’s previous lives (*’khrungs rabs*) entitled “Reverential Verses Producing Faith and Joy Enumerating the Previous Lives of the Friend of the Teachings and Beings in [this] Northerly Direction, the Supreme Incarnation, Precious One, Darva Paṇḍita” (bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Bstan ‘Gro’i Rtsa Lag Mchog Sprul Rin Po Che Dar Ba paN+Di Ta’i ’Khrungs Rabs Gsol ‘Debs Dad Ldan Dga’ Bskyed.”). For an introduction to the incarnation line of the Darpa Paṇḍitas in India, Nepal, Tibet and Mongolia, see: L. Chaloupkova and D. Dashbadrakh, “About the Biography of Darpa Pandita Called The Beautiful Jewel Rosary of Victorious Teaching,” *Archiv Orientalni* 71 (2003): 285–92.

286 T. *rGyal po ri*; M. *Bogd Khaan Uul*.

287 *bDe yangs ’bul sdud*.

288 *rDo rams gnas brtan*.

289 *dKa’ bcu yid grags*.

290 *Chos rgyal gser stod*.

opportunity to do a short-cut degree²⁹¹ and then embark on a series of scholar tours²⁹² in and around the great monastic capital. In Zawa Damdin's retelling we read of the difficulties the author encountered in trying to fast-track his monastic education, perhaps since up until this point he had indulged his interests in travel, pilgrimage, meditation, and the study of traditionally marginal subjects in the Géluk system (such as poetry and astrology). He recalls that when he joined the advanced classes on vinaya (monastic discipline) and Abhidharma at the start of the Wood Snake year of 1905, "I couldn't compare to those (other) Géshes who were studying the vinaya and Abhidharma, and who had been studying for many years. I was a little embarrassed and friends used shameful words (about me)."²⁹³ Focusing more exclusively on his studies, he soon caught up with his peers to such an extent that he writes, "I was very happy and others were also amazed."²⁹⁴ Indeed, such was his success that he was soon charged with judging the debates of those very colleagues who had been studying full-time and who had previously been the source of intimidation and mockery.

4.5 The Dalai Lama XIII in Ikh Khüree 1904-1906

In 1904, as part of the escalating politico-economic race of the Great Game between Russia, the Qing Empire, and the British Empire, the British invaded Tibet under the leadership of Sir Francis Younghusband. Under the advice of his Buryat confidant Agvan Dorjiev, the Dalai Lama XIII Tubten Gyatso²⁹⁵ retreated nearly twenty-five hundred kilometers from Lhasa city, taking refuge for over a year in Ikh Khüree. There has been a small body of scholarship on

291 *'phar ma dge shes*.

292 *grwa skor*.

293 Blo bzang rta mgrin, "Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms 'Di Snang Za Zi'i Rjes Gco," 182.

294 Ibid., 183.

295 Thub bstan rgya mtsho, 1876-1933.

the Dalai Lama XIII's time in Ikh Khüree, his supposedly divisive relationship with the Jebzundamba VIII, and his desperate political scramble to recruit help from Russia against both the British and Qing.²⁹⁶ In Zawa Damdin's *Summary*, however, the Dalai Lama's stay in Khüree was simply a time when, "the most knowledgeable of Tibet, China and Mongolia gathered here as if at a monastic assembly."²⁹⁷

Even though there is a growing body of scholarship on the contentious politics of this period from the Tibetan and Mongolian perspective, there are no accounts drawn from eyewitness monastic records. For that reason, I offer several longer translations of passages from both the *Summary* and the *Golden Book* that describes the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's stay in Khüree. Of the Dalai Lama's flight from the British forces to Mongolia, we read in the *Golden Book*:

In the Wood Dragon year of the fifth rabjung [1904], the army of foreigners from Gya Sér [Europe] invaded Central Tibet. Because of that, The Lord of Refuge Gyalwa Rinpoche [the Dalai Lama XIII], along with some of his attendants, secretly escaped and passed along the northern route. They came to Chinese Sa gyu through Upper Sok and then arrived in the region of Khalkha Mongolia. At that time, many individual bannermen welcomed him along the path as he arrived. In the last month of winter, they arrived at Gadenthgchenling Monastery at the center of Ikh Khüree. The Spiritual Master with the Karap Jampa (degree) (*bka' rab 'byams pa*) and (his) students were divided and began teaching, and also debated Buddhist texts. The Dalai Lama came to both colleges, and they held Answerer's examinations, which he attended again and again. The Lord himself and the (Tibetan) disciples, trülkus, and masters (in his entourage), all stood up and debated. The higher and lower lamas and leaders of the center and borderlands of Mongolia, along with faithful laypeople and monastics, gathered every day like a raincloud. They visited him and asked him for divinations, initiations, transmissions, blessings, and he fulfilled the wishes of all higher, lower, and middling beings. Like rivers gathering into the ocean, he received donations from different directions, (such as various material) objects, animals, etc.

296 For example: Zhambal et al., *Tales of an Old Lama*; Charles Alfred Bell, *Portrait of a Dalai Lama : The Life and Times of the Great Thirteenth* (London: Wisdom, 1987); Sampildondov Chuluun and Uradyn E. Bulag, *The Thirteenth Dalai Lama on the Run (1904-1906): Archival Documents from Mongolia* (BRILL, 2013).

297 Ibid., 182.

At (the monastery) of Kunga Choling, he gave the bodhicitta precepts principally to Tibetan and Mongolia lamas, reincarnated masters, and to over three thousand monks.

At his yellow encampment, he gave the great initiation of Avalokiteśvara three times, and widely spread the tradition of the fully ordained monks vow. He gave five thousand silver coins to both monastic colleges in order to begin an allowance (*gsol phogs*) (system for the monks).

During the winter of the wood snake year [1905], he went to the encampment of Chin Wang and he received teachings from Jamyang Lama Tendar. During the summer of the fire-horse year [1906], he went to the monastery of Dzaya Pandita. During the autumn, he went to the monastery of Erdeni Jowo. He offered a *gser chab* [lit. ‘water-mixed with gold’, ie. saffron water] and then he did a consecration. He offered tens of thousands of butter lamps. Continuously day and night, he carefully made requests, prayers and auspicious chanting, and so forth. People recount that he said, “That Jowo (statue) is, in terms of blessings, no different than Lhasa’s own Jowo.”

After that, he turned the reins of his horse towards the encampment of Sayain Noyin. From there, he arrived in Chinese Gansu (province) by using the “iron path” [*lcags lam*, ie. the railway]. Then he went to Mt. Wutai and Beijing. He visited the (Qing) Emperor Sibar [T. *srid ‘bar*; C. Guangxu, 光緒, r. 1875-1908]. Again, he left via that railway to Kumbum, and so forth.

In the Earth Monkey year [1908], he returned to Tibet where he stayed, protecting and increasing the Buddhist teaching through the (actions of the) three wheels.

One day in the Ox year [1913], the politicians of Central Tibet had an internal feud. Because of that, along with a few attendants, that Lord of Refuge once again secretly escaped via the northern route through Upper Sok and planned to come to the Khalkha place. However, when he (again) arrived in the region of Sa gyu, the Yellow Chinese deceitfully directed his horse’s direction in the Lanchou area. Because of that, they went (instead) along the railway to Mt. Wutai, Beijing, Mukden, etc. These days, he is staying in the land of the Forty Nine Sok Groups [ie. Inner Mongolia], in order to benefit the teachings and sentient beings.²⁹⁸

In this way, when there is a mishap (*jus nyer*) in politics or religion in Tibet, both the Victor [the Dalai Lama] and his Son [the Panchen Lama] hasten to the Oirot and Khalkha [Mongol] regions. The reason for this is as it says in Welmang (*dbal mang*) Rinpoche’s chronicle: ‘The Victorious Father and Son have expressed their respect, (saying), ‘the seat of Oirot is (the same as that of King) Songtsan (Gampo). Khalkha is the seat of Chinggis.’ These are places which attract the attention of the Two Systems.”

298 The fact that Zawa Damdin here refers to the authorial present as being congruous with the Dalai Lama’s time in Inner Mongolia in the early nineteen teens, when this section of the *Golden Book* was written in 1931, offers some small insight into the patchwork of notes, reminiscences, and citations from long stretches of the author’s life that he and/or his disciples must have hastily patched together to produce these works.

Although I need to explain many subjects related to this topic, I am not interested in being biased. People do not like an honest expression (of a biased point of view), and so I will leave it all unsaid.²⁹⁹

We read in the *Summary* that Zawa Damdin received teachings and vows from the Dalai Lama and held brief personal discussions with him as well. In the midst of the flurry of devotionism and patronage in Ikh Khüree on the occasion of the Dalai Lama's visit, he recalls that, "I received without any difficulty tea, money, butter, and so forth from individuals from nearby regions," and that, while on a scholarly tour during the Great Prayer Festival:

My knowledge and reputation were very successful. The non-biased Realized Ones, and others besides, praised me as successful, but this was just talk (*ca ca*)! I understand that (this success) was due to the power of karma, prayer and the ripening of virtuous deeds."³⁰⁰

The highly politicized presence of the Dalai Lama in Ikh Khüree attracted all manner of diplomats, visitors, and devotees from across Russia, East Asia, and Europe. Resident scholar-monks seemed to have profited from the cosmopolitan environment, and we read in the *Summary* about Zawa Damdin's encounter with the Russian Buddhistologist Th. Shcherbatsky while the Dalai Lama was still in the city: "In the spring, it so happened that I had an audience with the Russian Shcherbatsky,³⁰¹ and (we) joyfully conversed about non-Buddhist and Buddhist doctrine."³⁰² This would be one of several formative encounters with European scholars from a tradition well beyond his Géluk scholastic world, and the ways that these encounters impacted his practice of historiography will be treated below. Later in 1905, Zawa

299 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 411–413.

300 Blo bzang rta mgrin, "Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms 'Di Snang Za Zi'i Rjes Gco," 182.

301 *rGya ser shra wA skhi*.

302 It is of interest how the actual quote above stands against Bira's assertion in *O "Zolotoi knige" Sh. Damdina*, where he claims that Zawa Damdin's meeting with Fedor Ippolitovich Shcherbatsky was recorded in the lama's autobiography as the grand event of his life. See: Bira, *O "Zolotoi knige" Sh. Damdina*, 6.

Damdin had the opportunity to hold a private audience and attend several teachings given by the Dalai Lama, once even serving as chief ritualist during a monthly monastic confession and vow-purification ceremony.³⁰³ Zawa Damdin writes that following that ritual performance and his recitation of both of the *Individual Liberation Sūtras*:³⁰⁴ “He showed that he was very happy with me. He placed both of his hands on my head and he said ‘wonderful,’ before then giving me a very blessed statue of Jamgon Lama [Tsongkhapa].”³⁰⁵

This is the last time we encounter the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in the *Summary*, who would soon leave Ikh Khüree for sites in Eastern Tibet and China, such as Kumbum monastery, Mt. Wutai and Beijing—all places that Zawa Damdin himself would visit—before returning to Lhasa in 1908.³⁰⁶ The *Summary* makes no mention of having met with the Dalai Lama’s tutor and confidant, Agvan Dorjiev, whose undated letter-correspondence with Zawa Damdin concerning the legitimacy of the latter’s interpretative strategies in his historiography will be examined in some detail below.³⁰⁷ Reflecting on his time spent with the Dalai Lama XIII, the

303 *gso sbyong*.

304 S. *Prātimokṣasūtra*; T. *So sor thar pa'i mdo*.

305 Blo bzang rta mgrin, “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ‘Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” 183.

306 See: Bell, *Portrait of a Dalai Lama : The Life and Times of the Great Thirteenth*; Melvyn C Goldstein and Gelek Rimpoche, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951: The Demise of the Lamaist State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

307 In addition to this letter, further (though meager) evidence for a relationship between Zawa Damdin and Agvan Dorjiev is a very short supplicatory prayer apparently written for the former by the latter. This text is part of a series of commissioned supplications to various important Buddhist teachers written by Zawa Damdin. Each poetically riffs off of the name of the lama concerned, and also contains the name mantras (*mtshan sngags*) of each. Here, we encounter a few verses playing off of “ngag”, “dbang”, “blo”, “bzang”, and “rdo rje”, Agvan Dorjiev’s name (Ngag dbang rdo rje). In both the title and the short colophon, the object of these supplications is identified as the “Dalai Lama’s Dharma Master Lama” (T. *sang gi ta la’i chos rje bla ma*). A final confirmation is given by the Sanskrit name of the lama in the name mantra itself, which is here “*wa gAi n+dra*” (interestingly, inserted as an interlinear note into the rest of the mantra: *om am: gu ru pa (sic. ba) dz+ra dha ra wa gAi n+dra ma ti ba dzra si d+d++hi hum hum*). See: bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Ngag Dbang Blo Bzang Rdo Rje”i Mtshan Gsol Smon Tshig Dang Bcas Pa,” in *gSung ‘Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 6, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 292–93.

highest prelate in the Géluk world, Zawa Damdin writes, “while thinking of these things now, I am very nostalgic.”³⁰⁸

4.6 A Mystic Pilgrimage to Mt. Wutai and Beijing in the Twilight of the Qing

Just as his parent’s death marked a turning point in his literary self stylization from student to teacher, so too does the Dalai Lama’s departure from Ikh Khüree precipitate a narrative shift to esoteric experiences while on pilgrimage to Mt. Wutai and Beijing just before the Qing collapse. The *Summary* tells us that before beginning a summer scholastic tour to his Gobi home monastery in 1905-06, he developed the intention to go on pilgrimage to the holy sites of Central Tibet. However, since divination had predicted a journey to the Tibetan heartland would be filled with obstacles, Zawa Damdin abandoned his plans and instead sent money with other pilgrims to make several offerings on his behalf, each of which are duly listed in the text. While his plans to go to Central Tibet were not fulfilled, it seems that Zawa Damdin’s appetite for travel and pilgrimage would still need to be assuaged. He recalls that in the middle of his scholastic tour at his home monastery, “I sold my felt tent and other things and went from my homeland to Mañjuśrī’s Pure Land, Mt. Wutai.”³⁰⁹

So begins a fascinating account of Mongolian devotional travel through the Géluk-inflected topography of the late Qing, switching genres from outer to inner/secret autobiography by focusing on religious experiences undocumented elsewhere in the *Summary*. Mt. Wutai and the urban space of Beijing were sites that induced a series of esoteric reactions and treasure revelations in Zawa Damdin’s recollection, such as mystical experiences, treasure revelations,

308 bLo bzang rta mgrin (1975-1976). "Rang gi byed spyod rags bsdoms 'di snang za zi'i rjes gcod/." In *gsung 'bum/_blo bzang rta mgrin*. 11: 169 - 203. new delhi: mongolian lama gurudeva. pp. 183.

309 Blo bzang rta mgrin, “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ‘Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” 183.

and visions. In terms of genre, the few folios which describe this journey through late-Qing cultural topography are much more aligned with “secret” (auto)biography genre introduced earlier this chapter. We will recall that that, by the turn of the twentieth century, this popular subgenre of Tibeto-Mongolian religious (auto)biography that recounted, “primarily [...] meditative experiences, visions, and realizations.”³¹⁰

The *Summary* tells us that after departing from his Gobi homeland, Zawa Damdin traveled first to the holy Mt. Wutai, the “Five Peaked Mountain” located in contemporary Shanxi province.³¹¹ This was a place of absolute centrality in the late-Qing Mongolian religious imaginary, as many scholars have noted of late.³¹² According to Isabelle Charleux, “since the beginning of the Qing dynasty, Mongols have viewed Wutai Shan as a substitute for Tibet pilgrimages”; something which Zawa Damdin’s own life story shows very clearly.³¹³ In his 1883 memoir *Among the Mongols*, James Gilmour supports this claim in particularly evocative terms, writing:

All over Mongolia, and wherever Mongols are met with in North China, one is constantly reminded of this place. It is true that the mania which possesses the Mongols for making pilgrimages carries them to many other shrines, some of which are both celebrated and much frequented, but none of them can be compared to Wu T’ai.³¹⁴

310 Gyatso, “From the Autobiography of a Visionary,” 369.

311 C. 五台山; T. *Ri bo rtse lnga*.

312 For instance: A special issue dedicated to Tibetan and Mongolian relations with Wutaishan during the Qing in *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*, no. 6 (December 2011); Wen-Shing Lucia Chou, “The Visionary Landscape of Wutai Shan in Tibetan Buddhism from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century” (University of California, Berkeley, 2011), /z-wcorg/, http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/etd/ucb/text/Chou_berkeley_0028E_11545.pdf; K’hle Natalie, “Why Did the Kangxi Emperor Go to Wutai Shan?: Patronage, Pilgrimage, and the Place of Tibetan Buddhism at the Early Qing Court,” *Late Imperial China* 29, no. 1 (2008): 73–119.

313 Isabelle Charleux, “Mongol Pilgrimages to Wutai Shan in the Late Qing Dynasty,” *JlATS*, no. 6 (December 2011): 275.

314 James Gilmour, *Among the Mongols* (New York: Praeger, 1970), 141.

Tibetan, Mongol, Chinese and (later) Manchu fascination with Mt. Wutai as an object of religious reverence, a site of commercial and ethnic transit, and as a potent symbolic resource to be manipulated as part of state-craft was much older even than the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). For instance, there are tenth-century maps of Wutai's pilgrimage points preserved in Cave 61 at the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang,³¹⁵ and Christopher Beckwith has identified references to an early eighth-century visit to the mountain by an imperial Tibetan contingent.³¹⁶ Even before this, its status as a cult-center for Chinese Buddhists derived from being identified with one of five mountains associated with individual bodhisattvas as these are presented in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*.³¹⁷ Mt. Wutai was also a relatively significant site during the Mongolian Empire, once Tibetan Buddhism had penetrated the imperial court. Despite all this, Gray Tuttle has observed that:

Only with the advent of the Manchu Qing empire did Tibetan Buddhism establish a continuous institutional presence on the mountain. During the Shunzhi reign period (1644-61) a Tibetan Buddhist was put in charge of the entire mountain. This trend continued in the Kangxi period (1662-1722), with the conversion of Chinese Buddhist temples to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. By 1667 the first guidebook for Tibetan Buddhists had been printed. Both the Kangxi and Qianlong emperors went on pilgrimage to Riwo Tsenga [Wutaishan] numerous times.³¹⁸

Not only was it of exceptional religious importance for Mongols, Tibetans, Manchus and Chinese at this time, but as Johan Elverskog reminds us, it was also by then a cosmopolitan locus where goods and ideas were exchanged, and where new, more expanded *communitas* were

315 Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 123.

316 Christopher Beckwith, "The Tibetans in the Ordos and North China: Considerations on the Role of the Tibetan Empire in World History," in *Silver on Lapis: Tibetan Literary Culture and History* (Bloomington, IN: Tibet Society, 2006), 9n30. Cited in Gray Tuttle, "Tibetan Buddhism at Ri Bo Rtse Inga/Wutai Shan in Modern Times," *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 1, no. 2 (2006): 2n2.

317 S. *Mahāvaiṣṇava buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra*; T. *mDo phal po che*.

318 Tuttle, "Tibetan Buddhism at Ri Bo Rtse Inga/Wutai Shan in Modern Times," 3–4.

seeded and affirmed.³¹⁹ Importantly, it was also a site where the minority identities of Qing groups like the Khalkha and Chahar could develop and inhabit larger ethnic and national imaginaries; indeed, Elverskog argues that Wutaishan was a site which helped foster trans-banner Mongol identities within the particularly complex socio-political climate of the nineteenth century. The cosmopolitanism of the Qing, he argues, were articulated most prominently in multi-ethnic sites like Mt. Wutai, providing an imperial association that would soon be attacked by Mongolian and Chinese communists and nationalists, as well as conservative Tibetan monastics.³²⁰

Returning to the *Summary*, Zawa Damdin's shift into narrating mystic experiences is swift. He writes that promptly upon arriving at Mt. Wutai, just prior to the important Géluk festival of Ganden Ngachö,³²¹ he "saw the face of Mañjuśrī." This direct communion with the very embodiment of enlightenment said to reside upon Mt. Wutai was an experience which, he writes, "changed my perspective, produced tears and (caused me) to recite the Three Praises out loud."³²² It is an autobiographical scene referenced elsewhere in Zawa Damdin oeuvre, sometimes in greater detail than the autobiography under investigation here. In the *Golden Book*, for example, our author ruptures a narrative describing Sakya Paṇḍita's thirteenth century visit to Wutaishan to describe some more details of his own early-twentieth century pilgrimage:

After that, on his way the Dharma Lord [Sakya Paṇḍita] went to Mt. Wutai in China on pilgrimage. One night he stopped and prayed to the Venerable One. He saw Mañjuśrī "Lion of Speech" along with four retinue deities. Among those four retinue deities, one was an Indian sādhu, one was a Mongol Sky-Goer (S. *dāka*; T. *mkha' gro*). Sa-pan wrote a sadhana about them and also gave the transmission of this meditation.

319 Elverskog, "Wutai Shan, Qing Cosmopolitanism, and the Mongols," 246.

320 Ibid., 262.

321 T. *dGa' ldan lnga mchod*. A ritual celebration commemorating the anniversary of the death of the Géluk founder, Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, in 1419.

322 Blo bzang rta mgrin, "Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms 'Di Snang Za Zi'i Rjes Gco," 184.

When I went to Mt. Wutai, I (also) had a vision of Mañjuśrī Tsam Goma with four retinue deities. I asked an older Chinese monk, “Who are these retinue deities (from my vision)?” He said, “I have heard that monks from bygone times said that the *sādhū* holding the lion’s nose (*thur sna*) is the Indian master Phadampa [Sanngyé]. The Hero holding the sword close (to Mañjuśrī) is Mongolia’s Chinggis Khaan.” Other than this, I have never heard who they are.

Everyone knows that Phadampa (Sanggyé) came to Mt. Wutai (so I’m not surprised he is in the retinue). But Chinggis Khaan as a retinue deity? I’m shocked!³²³

Following this vision, Zawa Damdin gives just one line to his ensuing tour through the many holy sites on the five mountains (“I also visited nearby holy sites in stages”), before again focusing his autobiographical narrative on his mystical experiences on Mt. Wutai.³²⁴ This comes first in a narrative describing some archaeological work that our author and his anonymous companions were, for reasons that are left unmentioned, intent upon while on pilgrimage. We read that they set out to locate a buried reliquary³²⁵ that supposedly contained some of Mañjuśrī’s hair. He and his companions successfully located the reliquary, Zawa Damdin recalls, and, “announced (our discovery) to devoted monks and laypeople.”³²⁶ Further,

323 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” in *gSung ’Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 2 (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 187–188.

324 Ibid. 184.

325 S. *stūpa*; T. *mchod rten*: A domed reliquary whose many different forms are symbolic of Buddhist soteriology, the historical Buddha’s life, and so on. In general, in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition stūpas represent the Buddha’s enlightened mind as one of the ‘Three Supports’ (*rten gsum*) whose presence in a particular region actually comes to mark that site as “Buddhist” (the other two being texts as a symbol of Buddha’s speech, and statues of Buddha’s body). Indeed, it is the establishment and patronage of the ‘Three Supports’ that largely acts as the basis for the histories of Buddhism which are explored later in this dissertation. In other words, against the much derided Eurocentric associations of religion as internal, private, faith based, etc. the ‘Three Supports’ instead points to a “religious” spatiality defined by an almost architectural metaphor: support (*rten*) for offerings (*mchod*). These types of challenges to Eurocentrism in the study of non-Western religion, and religious historiography more particularly, are explored in some depth on the basis of Zawa Damdin’s histories in the following chapters. Finally, as we shall see in the last sections of Zawa Damdin’s autobiography, protecting the much beleaguered ‘Three Supports’ in Mongolia at the end of the 1930s is actually how Zawa Damdin defines the final years of his life, even as he does not otherwise explicitly address the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party campaigns against the Buddhist institution.

326 Ibid.

from inside a cavity in the Perfection of Wisdom Temple, Zawa Damdin and company unearthed “two amazing stūpas, made by magic, from a place that had been destroyed by some circumstance.”³²⁷ Pulling such sacred objects from the earth itself, we read, enticed devotion and financial donations from other pilgrims and residents at Mt. Wutai: “In one month we received about ten thousand ounces of silver [as offerings].”³²⁸

True to this turn to the esoteric, the secret, and the internal in these journeys through Qing centers, Zawa Damdin later relates another hunt for sacred treasure on the slopes and beneath the temples of Mt. Wutai. This was an ultimately failed attempt to find the funerary stūpa of fifteenth-century paṇḍit named Śrī Aśraka on the site of what seems to have been the All-Pervading Temple.³²⁹ The site of Zawa Damdin’s pious excavation was a major temple at Wutai that Gray Tuttle writes had been associated with the spread of the Géluk school in China for over five hundred years, since the time that Jé Tsongkhapa, the fifteenth-century founder, sent his disciple Chöjé Shākya Yeshe³³⁰ to accept an invitation to the Ming court in his stead. It is indeed curious that Zawa Damdin was so pre-occupied with locating the “lost” stūpa of this paṇḍit, since already in the eighteenth-century Changkya Rölpé Dorjé had identified the All-Pervading Temple as having Paṇḍit Śrī Aśraka’s stūpa in its central courtyard.³³¹ This may

327 Ibid.

328 *dNgul srang*: could refer either to an ounce measure of silver (*dngul*), or an actual silver coin (*srang*). Blo bzang rta mgrin, “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ‘Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” 184.

329 *Kun tu khyab pa’i lha khang*.

330 *Chos rje shA kya ye shes* (1354-1435).

331 “Changkya Rölpé Dorjé’s guide to Wutai shan gives a brief description of this temple, including its Tibetan name: Kuntu Khyappé Lhakhang. Rölpé Dorjé’s guide says that this temple was the home of an “Indian” by the name of “Shri Ashraka” during the Yongle reign period (1403-1425) of the Ming dynasty. Hoong Teik Toh has argued that often those called Indians in Ming China were actually Tibetans. In any case, this siddha was apparently invited by the Chengzu emperor, and he is said to have given the emperor and his retinue many esoteric teachings. His reliquary stūpa still exists within the courtyard of the prayer hall of this temple. At present, the hall behind the stūpa contains statues of the “Three: Father and Sons” (yapsé sum), referring to Tsongkhapa and his two principle disciples. Although these images are almost certainly of fairly recent provenance, they clearly indicate the Buddhist

explain why Zawa Damdin was unsuccessful in his dig, but his efforts were not in vain; the *Summary* records that he accidentally unearthed a quadra-lingual white stone tablet from beneath a mud wall. Without elaborating, or recording what was inscribed upon the tablet, our author moves again to note that all these discoveries awed and inspired many Mongolian, Tibetan and Chinese pilgrims at Mt. Wutai. In his recollections at least, Zawa Damdin attracted quite a following for his feats of sacred archaeology. Whatever the actual context of their reception, in this later literary representation such excavations reference the well-worn narratives of the “treasure” traditions (*gter ma*) common to some Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist traditions (though not usually to the Géluk school, who often derided such practices as superstitious or deceptive).³³²

After these fantastic visions and subterranean extractions, Zawa Damdin writes that he turned his attention from digging in the “thick earth” of Wutai to more traditional pilgrimage pursuits, such as circumambulation, prayer, mantra-recitation, and meditative retreat. These were all carried out upon the advice of a local lama he identifies only as the Teacher Doram.³³³ Zawa Damdin recalls how, his attention tuned to devotional and meditative practice, marvelous

tradition with which this temple has been aligned for many centuries” (Tuttle, “Tibetan Buddhism at Ri Bo Rtse Inga/Wutai Shan in Modern Times,” 16. (Tuttle, G. (2006)). The passage reads: kun tu khyab pa'i lha khang tā ywon jo'u zi ni/ ming gur gyi yung lo'i dus rgya gar gyi shri ā shraka zhes pa'i grub thob zhig gdan drangs te bzhugs pa'i gnas yin zhing des rgyal po 'khor bcas la gsang sngags kyi chos kyang mang du gnang/ sku gdung mchod rten kyang lha khang 'di nyid na bzhugs so (lCang skya rol pa'i rdo rje, *Zhing Mchog Ri Bo Dwangs Bsil Gyi Gnas Bshad Dad Pa'i Padmo Rgyas Byed Ngo Mtshar Nyi Ma'i Snang Ba* (Xining: mTsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1993), 39. Cited in Tuttle, “Tibetan Buddhism at Ri Bo Rtse Inga/Wutai Shan in Modern Times,” 16n.42.).

332 For a description of the tradition of the “treasure revealers” (T. *gter ston*) and a relatively ecumenical Géluk critique by a master embedded in the Qing cosmopolitan scene, see Tuken Chökyi Nyima's discussion: Nyima, *The Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems: A Tibetan Study of Asian Religious Thought*, 25:77–96. We should remember here that the last sections of both the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book* argue that the Nyingma Buddhist tradition (proponents of the validity of the treasure tradition) is unsuitable for Mongolian territories.

333 *rDo rams bak shi*.

signs continued to arise, such as a solar and lunar eclipse, and lights in the sky: all, we are told, witnessed by local Tibetans and Mongolians who “were amazed”.

These religious experiences on Mt. Wutai inspired Zawa Damdin to compose a short praise (*gnas stod*) to the five mountains. This text exists in his Collected Works under the title “A Flower Offering to Mañjuśrī: A Praise to the Sacred Place of the Superior Pure Realm Mt. Wutai”.³³⁴ Sometime after this, Zawa Damdin writes that as part of prayers during the first month of the lunar new year, he participated in a debate-examination on the perfection of wisdom at Pusading Monastery,³³⁵ where, in the haughty tone of this section of the autobiography, he writes that he, “debated best... [using] logical reasons and scriptural sources.”³³⁶

After this successful pilgrimage to Mt. Wutai, Zawa Damdin then describes his journey to the royal court of Beijing, the center of Qing religio-political theatre. Zawa Damdin recalls being awestruck upon arriving in the city on what he refers to as a “fire-chariot” (presumably the newly constructed Tianji-Lugouqiao railway line).³³⁷ Zawa Damdin recalls that once in Beijing

334 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Ri Bo Rtse Lnga’i Bstod,” in *gSung ’Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 1, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 625–28. From scanning through the colophons to Zawa Damdin’s many works, it is clear that he wrote at least one other text while at Mt. Wutai, though this is not mentioned in his autobiography. This was the “*Rosary of Pundarika Flowers: A Praise Based on the Biography of the Victor’s Child* gZhon nu nor bzang” (bLo bzang rta mgrin, “rGyal Sras Gzhon Nu nor Bzang Gi Rnam Thar Las Brtsams Pa’i Bstod Pa.”).

335 C. 菩薩頂; T. *Byang chub sems pe por*. A major Géluk monastery at Wutai and the residence for both the Kangxi and Qianlong emperors while on pilgrimage at Wutaishan. Karl. Debreczeny, “Wutai Shan: Pilgrimage to Five-Peak Mountain,” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*, no. 6 (2011): 44.

336 Blo bzang rta mgrin, “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ‘Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” 185.

337 Given that Zawa Damdin writes obliquely that he left for Beijing from the fort (*mkhar*) of Tengu (*Teng ju*), this “fire chariot” may very well have been the Tianji-Lugouqiao Railway, the city’s first railway built between 1895–1897 with financial backing from the British. See: Linda Pomerantz-Zhang, *Wu Tingfang (1842-1922): Reform and Modernization in Modern Chinese History* (Hong Kong University Press, 1992), 87.

he headed straight to the Yunghe Temple, the central Géluk monastery of the Qing capital.³³⁸ Apparently basing himself there (later in the autobiography we read that he conducted his monthly monastic confessions with the assembly at Yunghe), Zawa Damdin writes that he wondered out into the city and “saw the amazing design of the Outer and Inner Palace,”³³⁹ before setting out to visit the Miaoying Temple, which houses to this day a large white stūpa constructed by his Mongol ancestors during their reign during the Yúan dynasty in the thirteenth-century.³⁴⁰

In the purview of the *Summary* at least, the mystical would not confine itself to Mt. Wutai, but would accompany Zawa Damdin on his journey to Beijing, the center of Qing sovereignty, as well. For example, our author recalls that his outing to the Miaoying Temple was interrupted when he “arrived at a very old temple called Kong je ji, in the center of the city.”³⁴¹ Upon arriving at this temple, “a very pure monk with seven or eight of his students welcomed me and let me see the old holy objects.”³⁴² He was informed that the sixteen Arhats had each visited the site in ancient times, and one had planted a shoot from the Bodhi tree in India.³⁴³ The Chinese monks offered our Mongol traveler seven of its holy leaves, before sending him on his way. Just as earlier in the *Summary* he had legitimated his mystical experiences at Mt. Wutai by describing the public recognition these events had attracted, here too we read:

338 C. 雍和宮; T. *lGa' ldan byin chags gling*; M. *Nairalt Nairamdakh Süm*. Established under the supervision of Chankya Rolpé Dorjé during the Yongzhen period (1722-1732 CE), and then granted imperial status following the latter's death in the middle of the eighteenth-century under the Qianlong emperor, by the time Zawa Damdin reached Beijing this complex was the central residence for visiting Tibetan and Mongolian monastics and devotees.

339 Ibid.

340 C. 妙應寺; T. *mchod rten dkar po*. Also known as the "White Stūpa Temple" (白塔寺).

341 Blo bzang rta mgrin, “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ‘Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” 185.

342 Ibid.

343 Ie. The tree under which the Buddha himself had become enlightened at Bodhgaya, which Buddhists believe still grows there today, and whose shoots have been replanted all around the Buddhist world.

(Those of my party) who stayed on in Beijing during the summer and spring tried to research this tree (and the temple). Many of them said they could not find it (even though they set out to find it)! Somebody said that maybe this was a magically emanated temple.³⁴⁴

This question is left hanging in the autobiography. As such, in Zawa Damdin's description he had unwittingly traveled beyond the normative time and place of Beijing into a sort of parallel Buddhist space, an alternative topography, just as he had on Wutai's peaks.

However, just as when he had been digging for Śrī Aśraka's "lost" stūpa, here too it seems that a lack of information was taken by this Gobi monk and his companions for the miraculous (perhaps made all the more likely because of the potency of these sites in the Mongolian religio-political imagination at this time). If one looks at a map of Beijing, even today, on the route between the Forbidden City (the 'Inner and Outer' palace) and the Miaoying Temple, there is an ancient and famous Chinese Buddhist temple with the name Guangji (remember, Zawa Damdin had called his miraculous temple "Kong ji ji").³⁴⁵ This monastery dates to the Jin and has, to this day, a very prominent association with the Sixteen Arhats. While I haven't been able to find any information about a Bodhi tree on site, it may have been possible that, while wandering through what must have been an awe-inspiring metropolis for our Gobi monk, happenstance was interpreted with a mystical lens in an autobiography written decades later in the midst of a socialist purge wherein the alternative topography of Qing Buddhist space must have seemed especially distant, or better yet, especially worth evoking. After this experience at this "magically emanated temple", Zawa Damdin writes that he soon left Beijing to return to Mt. Wutai, where he planned to stay for another year. However, because of an unexplained "condition", he returned to his Mongolian homeland.

344 Elverskog, *Our Great Qing: The Mongols, Buddhism and the State in Late Imperial China*, 2006, 185.

345 廣濟寺.

Absent in the record of these Mongol travels through Qing religio-political topography—which was at this point under extreme duress from internal and external pressures—is any sort of explicit political or social critique or reflection. The density of the mystical experiences induced in him by the urban-center of Beijing and the pilgrimage sites on Mount Wutai occlude any such record, and might give us pause. Whereas elsewhere in his earlier writings (most notably his histories), the topic of good governance according to the Two Systems is explored consistently in terms of past regimes, when it comes to events in his own milieu, we only encounter the religious (*chos lugs*), and then, arguably not as a model of rule. Perhaps somewhat counter-intuitively, what proves this point even further is the fact that no such visionary experiences filled the narratives of his time elsewhere on pilgrimage, even as he visited the birthplace of the founder of his Géluk tradition at Kumbum monastery in eastern Tibet. Nor does the esoteric and the visionary fill up the pages describing his life during the Two Revolutions.

Did the degeneration of Qing imperial authority, the nascent Mongolian nationalist movement and the perilous political situation at home and abroad challenge the boundaries of Tibetan-inflected religious writing? Were the marvelous experiences of Zawa Damdin in some ways a response to, or a compensation for, such declining Qing authority by a conservative monk who still held the aura of Qing rule in high regard? While it may be too early to conclusively characterize these marvelous narratives, we may at least note that the potency of the Qing capital and Mt. Wutai is refracted in these narratives at a very late point in Qing imperial history, at a time when everywhere their authority and sacredness was being challenged, and by an author who had already witnessed their dissolution.

4.7 The Absence of Violence of Political Critique

Zawa Damdin's return to his Mongolian monastic seat marks a return to the rather dry and reserved "outer" autobiographical style of the earlier portions of the text. There are no

longer traverses across, into, and beneath the sacred Buddhist topography of Qing religio-political space as we saw during the pilgrimage narrative described above. From this point in the narrative on, he largely recounts the teachings he gave or received, season by season, in and about the scholastic centers of Ikh Khüree and his Gobi homeland, a period in his life he introduces simply, writing “(After returning to my monastery), I began to study, teach and listen.”³⁴⁶ The remainder of the *Summary* is a dry accounting of scholastic transmission for the remainder of his life’s “wanderings,” rarely referencing the drastic changes in Mongolian society during the imperial-socialist transition, with which he had dealt with some candor just five years earlier in his historical *magnum opus*, the *Golden Book*. Once back in Khalkha, he is no longer a wandering student chasing religious transmission, but rather a lineage custodian, actively building and renovating temples and philosophical schools, inaugurating ritual cycles such as the Maitreya procession at the monasteries now under his care, funding printing projects, renovating temples and furnishing them with holy objects, and also extensively teaching and giving public tantric initiations.³⁴⁷ Zawa Damdin’s return from these Qing centers at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century was also when he began to produce the majority of what would become, in its later published versions, over four thousand folios of writing on all varieties of classical fields of Buddhist learning. In terms of style, in the remaining “wanderings” the author adopts a more rigid chronological structure, explicitly mentioning the

346 bLo bzang rta mgrin (1975-1976). "Rang gi byed spyod rags bsdoms 'di snang za zi'i rjes gcod/." In gsung 'bum/_blo bzang rta mgrin. 11: 169 - 203. new delhi: mongolian lama gurudeva. pp. 186.

347 One of these initiations which he gave and extensively commented up was the Kālacakra, a sort of millenarian esoteric tradition whose place, along with its attendant Śambhala mythos, in the geo-politics and community imaginaries of Inner Asia, as well as in the administrative strategies of conquering or meddling foreign regimes (such as the imperialist Japanese in the 1930s), is a fascinating topic whose place in the life and historiography of Zawa Damdin will be revisited later.

year (which is done only half-hazardly up to this point), and then arranging the narrative according to season.

Of note here is that in the steel dog year (1910), Zawa Damdin begins describing the circumstances wherein he received the extensive transmissions of the Kalācakra tantric cycle.³⁴⁸ Zawa Damdin's extensive exegetical works on this tantra constitute one of his most famous scholastic accomplishments alongside his histories, Madhyamaka commentaries and his Dorjé Skukden ritual collection. He writes in the *Summary* that in the autumn of 1910, he received the initiation and great commentary of the Kalācakra from an unspecified Ngak Ramjé.³⁴⁹ Also of note here is the appearance of Darpa Paṇḍita in recollections from the winter of the steel pig year (1911) and in the spring of the Water Mouse year (1912); just when Mongolians separated from the ailing Qing state under the Jebzundamba VIII (who goes unmentioned entirely in this autobiography).

The nearly annalistic style of the entries for 1911 to 1918 make no mention of any of the political movements then occurring in Ikh Khüree, the military activity of the White Russians and Chinese, nor even a word of the enthronement of the Jebzundamba as the Holy King of an independent Mongolian nation-state. Of a time when the autonomous Buddhist theocracy was being established in Mongolia, the *Summary* recounts only that, “the Paṇḍita came to Khüree and gave profound instructions on the “Three Terrifying Instructions”³⁵⁰ and some other transmission.”³⁵¹ Instead of socio-political commentary, the *Summary* simply records short travels Zawa Damdin made to and from various monasteries, the initiation and teachings he gave

348 T. *Dus kyi 'khor lo*; M. *Tsogt Tsagiin Khürden*.

349 *sNgags rams rje*.

350 *'Jigs mdzad man ngag gsum*.

351 Blo bzang rta mgrin, “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ‘Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” 187.

or received, the meditation retreats he performed, and of new compositions, as when he writes of completing another series of Madhyamaka commentaries in 1916 at the behest of Ngak Ramjé. Zawa Damdin notes in passing that he passed his Kachu degree requirements in the Wood Tiger year (1914), a transition that explains the very active role he recalls playing in instructing not just monastic classes, but also visiting scholars and incarnate lamas. He concludes this section of his autobiography, characteristically, at a seemingly random moment in time: in the midst of listing seasonal travels to teach between his monastic seat in Ikh Khüree and in his home monastery in the Gobi.

The formal structure of these latter sections of the autobiography read as if the narrative had been hurriedly wrestled from pre-existing lists of scholastic activities and a separate, more narrative documentation of his visionary experiences in China that are more in line with the “secret” biographical style discussed above. The partitioning of narrative fragments, done as they were in 1936 at a very late point in his life, resist interpretation and hang as an opaque type of literary practice. They do not at first suggest any sort of meta-narrative or grand trajectory as autobiography. For instance, consider how he concludes this section and begins the next:

In the spring of the Earth Horse Year (1918), I received the Dor treng initiation (*rDor phreng*) from Denma Gégen (‘*Dan ma ge rgan*), and then I went to my birthplace. During my middle age, I wandered receiving many teachings. Whatever I remember, that is all. I [then] gave instruction on moving the Monastic College. We founded it at the lower part of a place called ‘The Glorious Mountain of Gégyé *sdGe rgyas*.’ [There], I drew the line on the earth, purified [the ground], erected, (drew) the line and did the wheel of actions for collecting monks.³⁵²

However, as the *Summary* moves to the latter wanderings of his life, a critical meta narrative does become apparent when read in light of the socio-political history of this period. Consider for instance the very names of the sectional partitions he assigns these later autobiographical

352 Ibid., 191.

sections: “Wandering by Means of Protecting the Monastery During Old Age”³⁵³ and “Wandering by Means of Uncertainty at the End of Life”.³⁵⁴

4.8 Protecting Monasticism Against Revolutionary Uncertainty

While the title of this second-to-last “wandering” references Zawa Damdin’s work to protect the monastic institutions with which he was affiliated from an unmentioned threat, the bulk of the actual entries describe work to construct new additions to their architectural, ritual and scholastic infrastructure. In addition to these construction projects, Zawa Damdin also describes the circulation of material culture through his two most prominent monastic seats, such as Tibetan redactions of the Buddhist canon, several large statues, the requisite holy material for filling and consecrating statuary and sūpas, as well as money and clothing. The *Summary* also describes Zawa Damdin’s central role in curating a more esoteric sort of transit; identifying and enthroning incarnate lamas. In light of the critique of the incarnate lama system he had laid out in the *Golden Book* a few years earlier (examined at the end of the following chapter), it is somewhat surprising to read uncritical narratives of his personal involvement in the process in the *Summary*. During narratives on the latter years of his life, the *Summary* revolves most prominently around four archival and ritual foci: 1) the Kālacakra tantra; 2) the Dorjé Shukden “Calf’s Nipple” (*be’u bum*) ritual collection; 3) Maitreya Buddha processions; and 4) large-scale Mani prayer festival. That so much public ritual performance and Buddhist devotionism was being invented (not just practiced) in the midst of the socialist advance on Buddhist institutionalism after 1930 gestures to the complexity of these times, as well as the paucity of our current historical paradigms on this era. Without comparative data from other

353 *rGa ba’i dus su dgon skyong gis g.yengs pa’i byed.*

354 *rGa ba’i dus su dgon skyong kyis kyi [sic.] g.yengs pa’i byed.*

monastic sources, it is difficult to glean too much from these later narratives in the *Summary*; hopefully in the near future such sources will be identified and a better picture of public Buddhist life in late revolutionary Ikh Khüree will begin to present itself.

For now, let us continue to follow Zawa Damdin's inscription of his life as he draws nearer and nearer to his authorial present in 1936. It seems that by the end of the Bogd Khaanate (1911-1919), Zawa Damdin had come to occupy senior monastic positions. For example, the *Summary* tells us that in the winter of 1918, while preparing to head on a scholastic tour of north-eastern Khalkha, the Noyon Wang sent the following order to our author, "the abbot abandoned the monastic college [in Ikh Khuree], you have to go there! You have no choice!"³⁵⁵ Zawa Damdin recalls that he resisted the order at first, consulting with his lama (presumably Ngak Ramjé) who advised him "for the benefit of the monastic college, you must go!"³⁵⁶ Concluding that this difficult task was the result of his own karma, Zawa Damdin writes that he, "did this difficult job for many years, which included newly building the college, and so forth."³⁵⁷ As part of a general shift in tone and style in these concluding sections of the *Summary*, one wonders at the ambiguous and curt language being used ("abandoned the monastic college"); does it perhaps represent a cautious, politically sensitive twilight-language? The absence of any sustained commentary on contemporary events in these later sections seems to suggest that it does, but again, without comparable sources it is difficult to come to any definite conclusions at this time.

Even if it can't provide much in terms of socio-political commentary, the late sections of the *Summary* do describe a very active Buddhist life in and about Khüree right up until 1936.

355 Blo bzang rta mgrin, "Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms 'Di Snang Za Zi'i Rjes Gco," 191.

356 Ibid.

357 Ibid., 192.

For example, Zawa Damdin recounts that the Master Lha tsun³⁵⁸ (one of Zawa Damdin's teachers who inspired at least three of his works on ritual) traveled to China, and returned in 1920 bringing scriptures and other Dharma objects. Just what was a Buddhist prelate doing going to and from China in the midst of what was a violent re-occupation of Ikh Khüree by Chinese forces and then their expulsion by the White Russians? The very fact that prominent Mongolian Buddhist figures of any sort undertook such travel points to the fact that, as our sources become more and more available, we will be able to nuance the types of transit and creative responses possible by Buddhist monastics at this time.

While the Bogd Khaanate was absorbed by the occupying Chinese and then White Russians between 1919-1921, the *Summary* speaks only of Zawa Damdin's labor to collect, order, and archive various ritual and philosophical traditions. In the entry from the *Summary* for 1920, Zawa Damdin recalls that he set out to compile a ritual collection (*be'u bum*) of the Dharma Protector Dorjé Shukden, acquiescing to Ngak Ramjé's final testament.³⁵⁹ This text and several other related works have situated Zawa Damdin post-humously in the violent intrigues of a trully global, late twentieth century Géluk schism that continues to this day. Zawa Damdin actually composed six dedicated works on Dorjé Shukden, spanning histories to army repelling rituals (*dmag lzog cho ga*), which are scattered throughout his seventeen volume *Collected Works*.³⁶⁰ Of these, a relatively short and unassuming preface by Zawa Damdin to his collection

358 *sLob dpon lha btsun*.

359 The result was: bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Jam Mgon Rgyal Ba Gnyis Pa'i Bstan Srung Thun Mong Ma Yin Pa Rgyal Chen Rdo Rje Shugs Ldan Rtsal Gyi Chos Skor Be Bum Du Bsgrigs Pa'i Dkar Chag Gnam Lcags 'Khor Lo'i Mu Khyud 'Phrin Las 'Od 'Bar,” in *gSung 'Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 11, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 395–414.

360 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Dam Can Chos Rgyal Dang Rgyal Chen Shugs Ldan Gnyis Kyi Nang Gzhug Dkar Chag Bdud Dpung Zil Gnon,” in *gSung 'Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 6, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 409–14; bLo bzang rta mgrin, “rGyal Chen Rdo Rje Shugs Ldan Rtsal Gyi Bskang 'Phrin Mdor Bsdus Don Chen Myur Grub,” vol. 11, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 385–92; bLo bzang rta

of rare Shukden rituals has circulated most widely. This is the *Splendorous Buddha Activity of the Thunderbolt Rim of the Maṇḍala: An Index to the Compilation of the Cow's Udder Cycle of Teachings of the Powerful Great King Dorjé Shukden, the Uncommon Dharma Protector of the Second Buddha, Jamgön [Tsongkhapa]* (hereafter: the *Splendorous Buddha Activity*).³⁶¹ In circumstances that are currently unknown to me, the *Splendorous Buddha Activity* was widely circulated amongst the Tibetan diaspora and incorporated into the Shukden corpus assembled by Phabongkha Rinpoche³⁶² and Trijang Rinpoche³⁶³ (the current Dalai Lama's junior tutor).³⁶⁴ In that textual and ritual context was been widely circulated amongst Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhists and converts around the world, and points once again to the importance of Tibetan language materials from Mongolian in twentieth-century Buddhist history in Inner Asian and its diasporas.³⁶⁵

mgrin, “rGyal Ba Dge ‘Dun Rgya Mtsho’i Gsung Gsang Dpal Mgon Zhal Bzhi’i Bstod Pa Byin Rlabs Can Rgyal Chen Rdo Rje Shugs Ldan La Zhal Bsgyur Ma,” in *gSung ‘Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 11, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 393–94; bLo bzang rta mgrin, “‘Jam Mgon Rgyal Ba Gnyis Pa’i Bstan Srung Thun Mong Ma Yin Pa Rgyal Chen Rdo Rje Shugs Ldan Rtsal Gyi Chos Skor Be Bum Du Bsgrigs Pa’i Dkar Chag Gnam Lcags ‘Khor Lo’i Mu Khyud ‘Phrin Las ‘Od ‘Bar,” in *gSung ‘Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 11, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 395–414; bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Khro Rgyal Rdo Rje Shugs Ldan La Brten Pa’i Kl K’lo’i Dmag Bzlog Gi Zur Rgyan ‘Don ‘Grigs Dang Bcas Pa ‘Phrul ‘Khor Skor Byed Rdo Rje’i Lde Mig,” in *gSung ‘Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 14, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 37–46; Ibid...

361 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “‘Jam Mgon Rgyal Ba Gnyis Pa’i Bstan Srung Thun Mong Ma Yin Pa Rgyal Chen Rdo Rje Shugs Ldan Rtsal Gyi Chos Skor Be Bum Du Bsgrigs Pa’i Dkar Chag Gnam Lcags ‘Khor Lo’i Mu Khyud ‘Phrin Las ‘Od ‘Bar,” 1975.

362 *Pha bong kha pa bde chen snying po*, 1878-1941.

363 *Khri byang blo bzang ye shes bstan ‘dzin rgya mtsho (Khri byang III)*, 1901-1981.

364 For example: bLo bzang ye shes bstan ‘dzin rgya mtsho (Khri byang rin po che), “*Jam Mgon Rgyal Ba Gnyis Pa’i Bstan Srung Rgyal Chen Rdo Rje Shugs Ldan Rtsal Gyi Chos Skor Be Bum Du Bsgrigs Pa*, 2 vols. (Lha sa: Brag g.yab blo bzang brtson ‘grus, 1991).

365 The historical significance of this ritual collection for the contentious politics around this Dharma Protector (S. *dharmapāla*; T. *chos skyong*) in the Tibetan and Mongolian community today is something that deserves comprehensive and un-biased study in its own right, as does the Shukden issue more generally. Once such a study actually proceeds, Zawa Damdin will prove to be a crucial historical intermediary for extending the historical scope from Central Tibet to Outer Mongolia. The ban on Shukden practice issuing from the current Dalai Lama and the

Another example of Buddhist public ritual and building projects during the revolutionary period comes when the *Summary* describes Zawa Damdin's return to his Gobi monastery, Chöying Ösel Ling, to attend to a newly built Mañjuśrī temple and inaugurate a new program of reciting a hundred thousand "mani" mantras.³⁶⁶ This narrative scene provides a very rare occasion for our author to include any kind of overt socio-political reference in the *Summary*. Zawa Damdin records that, "Although I wanted to stay (at Chöying Ösel Ling) until winter, a battle broke out between China and Mongolia, and I removed whatever holy things I had in my own room and left."³⁶⁷ This battle was most likely connected to the successful campaign to expel Republican forces from Central Mongolia south towards the Chinese border, through the general area of Chöying Ösel Ling monastery. Zawa Damdin writes that he sent a companion named Jamsang Kachu³⁶⁸ to offer a white scarf to the Wang (local prince), presumably for successfully routing the Chinese forces. He then reflects:

[As a result of these battles], two wicked people and three thousand Chinese were killed, and because of this everybody (else) escaped death. During both the winter and spring, in dependence upon the compassion of the Triple Gem, [both] the monastery [ie. the

Tibetan Government in Exile alleges that this was a sectarian cult originating in the zeal of a contemporaneous lama from Central Tibet named Phabongkha Rinpoche. This position is simply untenable in light of Zawa Damdin's extensive, 1920 Shukden ritual collection, which we must remember was compiled by a lama who never visited Central Tibet nor had any demonstrable connections with Phabongkha Rinpoche's circle. This historical fact alone seems to disprove not only the anachronistic history of the contemporary debate amongst Inner Asian Buddhists, but also the central thesis of George Dreyfus' *The Shugden Affair*, the only monograph on the topic to date (Dreyfus, *The Shuk-Den Affair : Origins of a Controversy ; Nachdruck Eines Artikels Aus: Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, Vol. 21, Number 2, 1998.*). This has not been lost on the very active, transnational defenders of Shukden practice today. Their counter-historicization of the Shukden tradition counts as one of the primary contemporary sites wherein Zawa Damdin's historical works circulate, as I explore in the conclusion of this study (for example: Trinley Kelsang, "Lobsang Tamdin (1867-1937)," *Dorje Shugden History*, 2010 2008, <http://www.dorjeshugdenhistory.org/among-shugden-texts-1867.html>).

366 This refers to perhaps the most popular mantra in Inner Asian Buddhism, that of the Buddha Avalokiteśvara: *om mani padme hum*. See: Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 83.

367 Blo bzang rta mgrin, "Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms 'Di Snang Za Zi'i Rjes Gco," 192.

368 *Jam bsang bka' bcu*.

monastics] and the population that dependent upon them [laypeople] were able to abide without misfortune.³⁶⁹

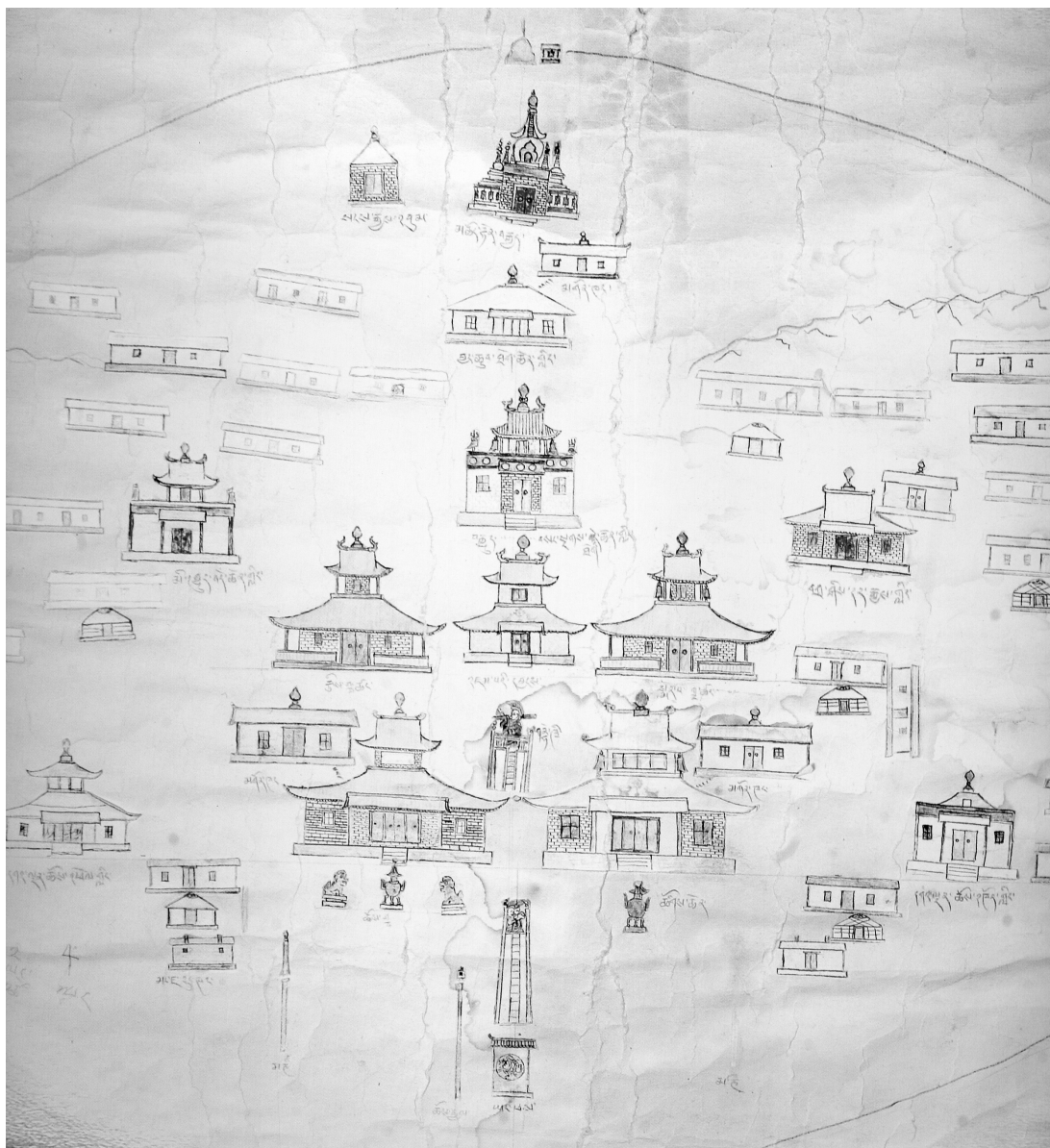
This return to normalcy would be a short lived, however. Zawa Damdin writes that just one year later, he had to hurry from Ikh Khüree to his quarters at his vulnerable Gobi monastery to, “take away whatever I had in my room, (such as) texts etc., and then came back (to Ikh Khuree).³⁷⁰

In terms of the literary self-stylization I am exploring in this chapter, what is interesting in all this is that foreign enemies, at least in some small measure, seem alterior enough to be included in the autobiographical entries. This is in direct contrast to intra-Mongol political, economic and military developments are utterly excluded; perhaps because of the political climate that informs its composition? As always, more sources are required before such a conclusion may be drawn.

What is so remarkable about the remainder of this second-to-last “wandering” —and tragic, in light of events soon to come—is how committed Zawa Damdin was to building up his Gobi monastery during the revolution. Nearly every entry for the 1920s and 1930s describes his activities to found, fund, build and consecrate all manner of monastic infrastructure; from medical and tantric colleges, to astrological institutes, primary assembly halls, and hermitages. If we look at what is to my knowledge the only hand-drawn and labeled map of his Gobi monastery just prior to its destruction in the late 1930s, we can appreciate how much of the monastic compound was built by Zawa Damdin’s own efforts in just a few years during the late-teens and early-twenties of the twentieth century.

369 Blo bzang rta mgrin, “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ‘Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” 192–193.

370 Ibid., 196.



Hand drawing of Zawa Damdin's Gobi monastery, Chöying Ösel Ling (*Chos dbyings 'od gsal gling*), known today in Mongolian as *Delgeriin Choir*, in Central Gobi Province (*Dungov Aimak*).³⁷¹

According to the *Summary*, more than half of the temples and scholastic colleges represented in this drawing (all the buildings in darker shades) were built and opened under Zawa Damdin's initiative between 1918 and at least 1926. Spanning both of the Two

³⁷¹ This drawing is in the personal possession of the current incarnation of Zawa Damdin, a Khalkha Mongolian lama known as Zawa Rinpoche Luwsandarjaa (1976-) who currently inhabits the partially rebuilt Chöying Ösel Ling with a small monastic and lay community. Photograph by the author.

Revolutions (nationalist and socialist), this rebuilding occurred as White Russian and Chinese forces were battling to solidify claims on Mongolia territory, and as the Mongolian People's Party was gaining power in Ikh Khuree with substantial Soviet backing. One marker of the success at these building initiatives, which he chooses to include in the otherwise sparsely-narrated record in the *Summary*, is that “We gathered objects, donated wealth, and many animals from nearby and afar into the treasury of our monastery’s administrator.”³⁷² In the year of the wood ox (1925), due to unknown circumstances, Zawa Damdin’s position at Chöying Ösel Ling was elevated and he “had to take over responsibilities as abbot.”³⁷³ As we saw earlier in the *Summary*, when another Abbot suddenly abandoned his post and Zawa Damdin was forced to take over in his stead, just why this abbatial position suddenly became open is left unstated.

Even as his labor became more focused on his home Gobi monastery in the latter years of his life, the *Summary* also tells us of Zawa Damdin’s active schedule in and about Ikh Khüree. There, as a consequence of his high profile in the scholastic scene and his apparently open intellect, he once again had the occasion to meet a foreign academic who would directly influence his own scholarly activities. Zawa Damdin writes that in the year of the earth dragon (1928), he was visited by Mikhael Tubyansky³⁷⁴ (1893-1943), a student of the Russian Buddhistologist Shcherbatsky with whom our author had met while the Dalai Lama was in Ikh Khüree nearly twenty five years earlier in 1904. Of great interest, in light of the use of some of Bakhtin’s ideas later in this dissertation, Tubyansky was a member of the Bakhtin Circle in

372 Blo bzang rta mgrin, “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ‘Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” 197.

373 Ibid., 194.

374 Transcribed in the *Summary* as: *Thu wE skhi*.

Russia.³⁷⁵ Shagdaryn Bira, writing from within the Soviet academy in the nineteen-sixties, claimed that Zawa Damdin cherished these meetings with Russian academics, “as the grand event in his life”.³⁷⁶ Of this meeting in 1928, Zawa Damdin writes that the Russian Tubyansky offered him “Indian texts” (possibly in Sanskrit), such as Dharmakīrti’s *Drop of Reasoning*.³⁷⁷ Of note here is that, according to the *Summary*, it was Tubyansky who urged Zawa Damdin to complete the Golden Book, which the latter had begun to write in 1919, but which he had left unfinished after just two chapters. We can perhaps imagine the excitement of this Russian Orientalist scholar’s anticipation for such a text, and indeed the purpose of Tubyansky’s trip to Mongolia seems to have been at least in part focused on assessing and documenting pre-revolutionary Mongolia literature. This resulted in a 1935 journal publication tellingly entitled, “Some Problems of Mongolian Literature in the Pre-Revolutionary Period.”³⁷⁸

Of the many large scale, public events that the *Summary* describes in these later sections, many were connected to the Kālacakra tantric cycle. There is little explicit evidence in the *Summary* that Zawa Damdin’s turn to the Kālacakra so late in the revolutionary period was related to its long-standing connection to Tibeto-Mongolian millenarian traditions. We should not negate such a response, however, for the increasingly intense pressure from the nascent

375 M. M. Bakhtin and Michael Holquist, *The dialogic imagination : four essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), xxiv.

376 Bira, *O “Zolotoi knige” Sh. Damdina*, 6.

377 S. Nyāyabinduprakaraṇa; T. *Rigs pa’i thig pa zhes bya ba’i rab tu byed pa*. One of Dharmakīrti’s (circa seventh-century ‘Seven Treatises on Valid Cognition’ (Skt. *Pramanavartikadisapta-grantha-samgraha*; Tib. *Tshad ma sde bdun*). The quality of scholarship on these sorts of Sanskrit treatises on logic and epistemology had made the Russian (and then Soviet) Buddhologists famous around the world, and established a remarkably continuous trajectory of scholarly inquiry from Tsarist Russia, through the USSR-period, to today. Indeed, it was Shcherbatsky who “organized a massive display in Petersburg of Buddhist exhibits, and leading buddhologists delivered lecture. Soviet as opposed to Russian study of Buddhism had begun” (James Thrower, *Marxist-Leninist “Scientific Atheism” and the Study of Religion and Atheism in the USSR*, Religion and Reason 25 (Berlin ; New York etc.: Mouton, 1983), 421.).

378 Tubyansky, “Some Problems of Mongolian Literature of the Pre-Revolutionary Period.”

socialist movement at home, and tremendous danger on Mongolia's border to the north in Russia and the south in China, was being met elsewhere at this time by evoking the Kālacakra *imaginaire*. For instance, in Buryatia at the turn of the twentieth-century, Agvan Dorjiev and other Buddhist leaders cast the Tsar into Shambalist narratives of Buddhist political ascendancy using Kālacakra imagery. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama had performed a mass Kālacakra initiation in China while in exile after the British invasion in 1904, and the Ninth Panchen Lama also would perform the initiation in Beijing to one hundred thousand devotees in 1932. Indeed, in addition to Buddhist responses to the geo-politics of the late eighteenth and early-twentieth centuries, much of what we know (which is, admittedly, very little) of the Buddhist reception and dialogue with socialism in Inner Asia after the October 17th revolution seems to have been filtered through the Kālacakra, and specifically, the Śambhala myths.³⁷⁹

Whether this was Zawa Damdin's own motivation or not remain unclear, but he did very actively take up the Kālacakra at the end of the Mongolian autonomous period (c. 1919). He received transmissions of various ritual cycles and exegetical traditions from visiting lamas in Ikh Khüree and his Gobi homeland, and he did various preparatory retreats in anticipation of what soon became large public initiations to thousands of people. He also undertook his many Kālacakra archival and exegetical projects; collecting and ordering rare ritual systems and composing many commentaries. These commentaries would circulate widely in Géluk scholastic circles over the twentieth-century down to today, standing alongside his unusual Madhyamaka commentaries and Dorjé Shukden ritual collections as his most famous works.³⁸⁰ Zawa Damdin comments in several places in his autobiography that the Kālacakra system became increasingly

379 Sarkisyanz, "Communism and Lamaist Utopianism in Central Asia."

380 For example: bLo bzang rta mgrin, "dPal Dus Kyi 'Khor Lo'i Sa Lam Gyi Ngos 'Dzin Rags Rim 'Phros Dang Bcas Pa," in *gSung 'Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 9, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 9–80.

central to his own work to “protect” the monasteries under his charge, which included public initiations as late as 1935, building specially-dedicated temples, undertaking long retreats focusing on this deity, initiating separate “Kālacakra Scholar’s Tours” (T. *dus ‘khor gyi grwa ‘khor*) in 1931 and 1933, and publishing his own commentaries as late as 1934.

Despite commanding the ritual arsenal of his tantric Buddhist traditions as a defensive tool, as the *Summary* transitions into the immediate past of its author’s present in 1936, its tone seems distracted and uncertain of events to come. For example, he concludes this second-last section of his autobiography by writing soberly that, “During all this, as I became older I simply protected the monastery and wandered. Whatever I remember, this is it!”³⁸¹

4.9 Autobiographic Subject Without Place

The muted style of the end of the *Summary* stands in the sharpest of contrasts to the extravagant, mystical descriptions of his visit to Mt. Wutai and Beijing. Reduced to a nearly annalistic narrative of sparse entries organized by seasons, these entries—which cover the four years leading up to, and including 1936—provide minimal details about only a few scholastic tours, his ill-health, and in one case, his intervention into the immoral behavior of two unnamed politicians. Just as in the previous “wandering,” here we are given reading cues by means of the title itself: “Wandering by Means of Uncertainty at the End of Life.” Knowing how difficult the situation was becoming for Mongolia’s Buddhist institutions and monastic leaders at this time, contemporary readers of the *Summary* are left wondering just how Zawa Damdin was constricted, or else actively persecuted, at any point prior to his death in 1937. His death hangs ominously just beyond the text alongside the purges which we know resulted in the total annihilation of all of his monastic affiliations, the destruction of the very architecture he had

381 Blo bzang rta mgrin, “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ‘Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” 199.

worked so hard to erect, and the execution, imprisonment or de-froking of his various monastic communities. This is the sad conclusion excluded from the text, but which frames any later reading of entries describing his opulent, seemingly tireless efforts to build-up and maintains Buddhist scholastic spaces.

This is most evident in the final “scene” of the autobiography, an entry where Zawa Damdin writes of being a year into a solitary retreat in his yurt, apparently without monastic affiliation or duty. The tent itself, as opposed to a monastic residence, is a powerful literary sign of his times. An interlinear note inserted by a third party states that this seclusion was part of Zawa Damdin’s final testament (*kha chems*) to undertake a six-year retreat.³⁸² It is hard to not imagine that perhaps this was a “retreat” in both the religious and more normative use of the English term; there was a very real danger for him at this time, since just weeks after his death his own monasteries were the subject of intense state violence.

Alongside short entries describing efforts to publish his own works, give textual transmission, receive long-life offering ceremonies and engage in devotional practices, Zawa Damdin, now in his late-sixties, concludes the *Summary* by writing regularly about his degenerating health. We will remember that oral history interviews with Zawa Damdin’s living disciples in the early days of the post-socialist period revealed that Zawa Damdin died in 1937 due to illness, in the company of his siblings in Ikh Khüree (by then renamed Ulaanbaatar). In the final lines of the *Summary*, illness and becoming de-based from the scholastic infrastructure which had been the site of his life’s work—and by whose interpretative tools he emplaced Mongolian religio-political space more generally in hundreds of compositions—add a tragic but poetic conclusion to the autobiography. Earlier, while describing what were “more sensible”

382 Perhaps by his student Gonchigdorj, in whose possession so many of Zawa Damdin’s written survived the early part of the socialist period, according to Bira.

times for our subject, the autobiography had included elaborate stories describing movements through the wonders of Qing-Géluk-Mongol religio-political space. He then held the course by assuming responsibilities to protect the ascendancy of Mongolian Buddhist scholastic following the Qing collapse and the ensuing violence and uncertainty. However, he was finally untethered in old age and left truly wandering about with uncertainty; stripped of Buddhist place and waiting for death.

In the colophon to the *Summary*, Zawa Damdin situates his life explicitly in Buddhist institutional and doctrinal space: he had been born “in the last five hundred years of Śākyamuni’s teachings”; he had come to “hold the signs of a monk [ie. be ordained) and joined the monastery”; and he had spent his time “studying, teaching, [and] building holy statues,” even if, in his own words, such piety was simply “a common activity, so who cares?”³⁸³ It is notable, I think, that of the hundreds of colophons Zawa Damdin penned, the *Summary*’s is the only one of any narrative length to exclude a place of composition and dedication of merit. There simply was no monastic place left, it seems.³⁸⁴ This is in the starkest of contrasts to his hundreds of other works, where he concludes by offering a dedicatory prayer aimed, for example, at increasing the Buddhist religion in Mongolia, the thriving of one of his monastic abodes, or for the welfare of all sentient beings and the Buddhadharma. In the *Summary*, written on the eve of mass purges and well into a heightened surge of party aggression towards Buddhist institutionalism, our author ends with an uncharacteristically personal focus, writing:

383 Blo bzang rta mgrin, “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ‘Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” 203.

384 This must prompt us to wonder what types of “places” are generative of other types of authorial activities in this scholastic tradition (and others besides, such as yogic texts perhaps), and which are not.

When my consciousness goes to the next life, may it separate from non-virtue, illusion, and fear. May messengers of Maitreya Buddha show me the path, and may I be born without difficulty in Tushita!”³⁸⁵

Perhaps his prayers worked, for as I described in the introduction, for as I explained in the introduction to this study, Zawa Damdin died just before socialist forces descended upon his monastic establishments and brought them to a bloody end. His lifetime of “studying, teaching, [and] building holy statues” had not culminated in sustaining the ideal religio-political arrangement (the Two Systems of Religion and Politics) in Mongolian society that is so widely explored in his earlier historical works, to which this study now turns.

5 Conclusion

The absence of explicit reference or sustained reflection on contemporary social and political events, even as these infringed with increasing pressure to undermine the very scholastic milieu with which his autobiography is primarily concerned, is something I have already pointed to. As we work through Zawa Damdin’s autobiography, written in 1936 on the eve of the socialist purges, we easily discern resolute commitment to narrative disengagement from many of the new possibilities and drastic restructuring of Mongolian society which followed the establishment of an independent theocracy under the Bogd Gegeen in 1911. Consider Zawa Damdin’s entry for this pivotal and momentous year:

In the spring of the Steel Pig year (1911), having gone to the monastery of Brak ri Lama and having had an audience with Lord Néten (*gNas brtan*), I requested experiential explanations of many ‘Stages of the Path’ and ‘Mind Training’ [texts].

Also, from the ‘heart-son’ (*thugs sras*) [disciple] who possesses the name Mi ‘gyur, I principally received explanations of the ‘Perfection of Wisdom in Eight-Thousand Verses’, and many [other] teachings for nearly one month.

385 Ibid.

During the summer, they built a silver statue of Mañjuśrī Lama (Jé Tsongkhapa) at the local monastery in my [Gobi] birthplace, and so I offered the gzung-ritual and accomplished the consecration. From there, I came back to my monastic seat [in Ikh Khuree].

That winter, the Master Paṇḍita came to Ikh Khuree and gave profound instructions on the ‘Three Terrifying Instructions’ (‘*Jigs mdzad man ngag gsum*’).³⁸⁶

It is not enough to assume that description and reflection on the social and political simply did not have its place in the genre of ‘sacred biography’ we are dealing with here. Nor is it simply anachronistic to identify content that addresses something we recognize as ‘social’, ‘political’ or, for that matter, ‘historical’. There were many precedents in the Tibetan and Mongolian auto/biographical tradition with which Zawa Damdin was intimately familiar, and we know from other sources that he was indeed deeply engaged with new intellectual currents and political tides as these developed after 1911.

An obvious counter-example of a contemporaneous Géluk autobiography that deals explicitly with contemporaneous Inner Asian social and political developments is that of Agvan Dorjiev (who we have had occasion to met already, and whose letter correspondence with Zawa Damdin on points of historiographic interpretation will be examined in a later chapter). One version of Agvan Dorjiev’s untitled, Tibetan-language autobiography was included as part of a collection of his writings published by the exiled Drepung Loseling monastery (T. ‘*Bras spungs blo gsal gling*’).³⁸⁷ In Dorjiev’s autobiography, this accomplished scholar and personal tutor to the thirteenth Dalai Lama extensively narrates the many political, religious and military upheavals of his day, from the British invasion of Tibet in 1904, to the court of Tsar Nicholas

386 Blo bzang rta mgrin, “Rang Gi Byed Spyod Rags Bsdoms ‘Di Snang Za Zi’i Rjes Gco,” 187.

387 Ngag dbang blo bzang rdo rje, *gSung Thor/ Ngag Dbang Blo Bzang Rdo Rje*, vol. 1, 1 vols. (Mundgod: ‘Bras blo gling gtsung lag gter mdzod ’phrul spar khang, n.d.). An English language critical edition of several Tibetan, Mongolian and Russian versions is also available: Thubten J. Norbu, Dan Martin, and X. Institute for the Comprehensive Study of the Lotus Sutra, *Dorjiev: Memoirs of a Tibetan Diplomat* (Tokyo: Rissho University, 1991).

and the October 17th Revolution, and time spent in Ikh Khuree, Beijing, and even Paris. As vital pieces of autobiographical information, Dorjiev also includes his own assessments of the beleaguered position of monastic institutionalism in Buryatia, Mongolia and Tibet in the face of quickly changing social current- most notably socialism. He reflects on some of the modernist movements in certain elite Buddhist intellectual circles to re-fashion Buddhist doctrine and institutional structure as it stood in order to make it more palpable to new Inner Asian modernities and emergent power-structures. For instance, in a passage from the concluding section of the text:

We Buddhist monks have few desires and are content, even when we need assistance. But, especially in later times in Mongolia, as the groups of monks keeping Buddhist disciplines grew larger and larger, small numbers did as they pleased and became extremely attached to wealth and leisure. Some accumulated homes, furnishings and clothing with an even greater sense of attachment than ordinary worldly people. Some monks, acting shamelessly and without conscience, did not even consider the rules set down by the Buddha in the corner of their thoughts. When outsiders saw them, they found it easy to confuse their actions with the Buddha's teachings. The patrons were especially misled by the teachings of lamas who mixed in shamanism. Many criticized monks saying, "All they think about is how happy they will be when the donations for the religious services are collected."

With these things in mind, the Bandido Hambo Lama of the Buriats, the Dorampa Geshe and Guru, Dharma Pelzangpo, convened a great congress for the reorganization of Buddhism. When he let it be known that monks would not be allowed to accumulate wealth and that all donations would have to be kept in a shared account, some of the wealthy monks left to become householders. There was a lot of moaning. They put the happiness and comfort of this short life above all improvement in the future life and in the Buddhist religion. So sad. What is best to with these monks who disgrace their profession like this?³⁸⁸

While Dorjiev is not to be considered a mainstream exemplar of autobiographic writing, other biographical sources about him are, such as *The Melodious Tone of the Right-Turning Dharma*

388 With some correction based on the Tibetan: Norbu, Martin, and Institute for the Comprehensive Study of the Lotus Sutra, *Dorjiev : Memoirs of a Tibetan Diplomat*, 46–47.

*Conch: The History of Buddhism [Connected to] Trashi Gomang Monastic College.*³⁸⁹ There we read about the core socio-political events which both shaped Agvan Dorjiev's life (and death in a Soviet Gulag).

In contrast, Zawa Damdin's literary self-stylization focused squarely on matters scholastic and soteriologic, shifting between received genres of autobiographical writing shared with his Qing-era interpretative community. Yet, in the muted tones and sparse content of the latter wanderings of his life, we detect a sense of extreme caution, if not fear, of shifting socio-political currents. We are left, in the end, with a picture of a monk without place, and without certainty about the future of the scholastic tradition he had labored his entire life to preserve and extend. It is in his historiography, completed just a few years before but in very different socio-political circumstances, that we can detect more of Zawa Damdin's literary construction of the social reversals and degeneration he saw in the post-imperium. It is to those extensive inscriptions that the following two chapter turn: first to his delimitation of the history of "everyday Mongols" and Mongolian territory, and then to rise and decline of the enlightened authority of the Two Systems.

389 bsTan pa bstan 'dzin, *Chos Sde Chen Po Dpal Ldan 'Bras Spungs Bkra Shis Sgo Mang Grwa Tshang Gi Chos 'Byung Dung G.yas Su "Khyil Ba"i Sgra Dbyangs*, 2 vols. (Mundgog, North Kanara, Karnataka: dPal ldan 'Bras spungs bkra shis sgo mang spe mdzod khang, 2003).

Chapter 2

“From the Perspective of Everyday Mongolian Peoples”: Real Chronotopes and Zawa Damdin’s Histories

1 “Finding” Mongols and Mongolian in History

1.1 Mongols of the Qing

In this chapter I explore Zawa Damdin’s operation to recover the history of a vast Mongolian people and territory. This would serve as the ever changing, mundane, and Mongol historical context for his other primary historical subject: the unchanging, abstracted, and enlightened Two Systems of religio-political authority. The former was a historical project that developed extensively amongst Mongolian Géluk scholastics over the course of the Qing, which Johan Elverskog labeled a turn to, “narratives of ethnoreligious primordialization.”³⁹⁰ In the sixteenth century, prior to the ratification of Qing rule in Inner Asia, Mongolian Buddhist histories found the origin of their ethnogenesis and Buddhist genealogy in the person of Chinggis Khaan. Beginning in the seventeenth century, all religious histories produced by Mongolian Buddhists bound visions of ethnoreligious history to imperial and Tibetan Buddhist calendars and sacred sites, such that, “the Mongols were socialized as members of the Buddhist-Qing imperium.”³⁹¹ This involved displacing Chinggis Khaan as the sole wellspring of the Mongolian Buddhist and ethnic dispensation, with the grand spatio-temporal narratives of the Qing. Specifically, in Mongolia the, “Qing formation, its radical social and cultural disruption, and the three centuries of Manch domination came to be seen as simply the natural progression of Buddhist history [...] And it was within this dynamic wherein imperial success clearly

390 Elverskog, “Mongol Time Enters a Qing World,” 2005, 156.

391 Ibid.

resided.”³⁹² Thus, after the seventeenth century until the Qing collapse in 1911/12, Mongolian Buddhist historians sought the origin of Mongol identity not with Chinggis Khaan and the Mongol Empire, but with the *long durée* of the Buddhist dispensation in our world; the drama of religio-political rule on this “Rose-Scented Apple Continent” of Jambudvīpa, as recorded in Indo-Tibetan canonical materials, and taken up by the rituals, poetics, and histories of Qing imperial authority in Inner Asia.³⁹³

Yet, how did this play out in practice, and by this, what were the Géluk interpretative and historiographic templates “of the Qing” inherited by Zawa Damdin in the post-imperium? As I will show over the following chapters, while it is not debatable that Zawa Damdin suffered from acute Qing nostalgia for over twenty five years after the Qing collapse, and while he turned to the Monguor-Mongol Géluk cosmopolitan scholars of the Qing as his primary interpretative community, he did simply transplant their visions of ethnoreligious primordialism to the

392 Elverskog, *Our Great Qing : The Mongols, Buddhism and the State in Late Imperial China*, 2006, 8.

393 Of course, it is a historical fallacy to imagine that poetics, ideas, and religious ritual alone brought the Mongols into the Qing fold for three centuries. As Pamela Crossley, Mark Elliott and others have recently shown, the Qing formation was as much a military and administrative marvel as it was a clever orchestration of various imagined communities in its multiethnic empire. See: Lynn A. Struve, *The Qing Formation in World-Historical Time*, Harvard East Asian Monographs ; (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center : Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2004); Patricia Ann Berger, *Empire of Emptiness : Buddhist Art and Political Authority in Qing China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003); Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror : History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton, *Empire at the Margins : Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, Studies on China ; (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Pamela Kyle Crossley, “Making Mongols,” in *Empire at the Margins : Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Pamela Kyle Crossley, *Orphan Warriors : Three Manchu Generations and the End of the Qing World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990); Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Manchus*, Peoples of Asia (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1997); Mark C Elliott, *The Manchu Way : the Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001); James A. Millward, *Beyond the Pass : Economy, Ethnicity, and Empire in Qing Central Asia, 1759-1864* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998); Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West : The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); Elverskog, *Our Great Qing : The Mongols, Buddhism and the State in Late Imperial China*; *The History of Mongolia 3, The Qing Period Twentieth-Century Mongolia* (S.l.: s.n.], 2010); Evelyn Sakakida Rawski, *The Last Emperors a Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); K’hle Natalie, “Why Did the Kangxi Emperor Go to Wutai Shan?: Patronage, Pilgrimage, and the Place of Tibetan Buddhism at the Early Qing Court,” *Late Imperial China Late Imperial China* 29, no. 1 (2008): 73–119.

revolutionary context. Rather, he synthesized newly available European scholarship in Altaic philology and Mongol archaeology with a particular redaction of Qing-era Buddhist primordialism. The result was a rather novel vision of Mongol history that still privileged the Two Systems (as manifested under the Qing) and still found “Mongols” across Asia as catalysts in the Buddhicization of Tibet and China. It also looked past Chinggis Khaan and the Mongol empire as the Ur-Mongol event, but it is here that Zawa Damdin departed from his Qing-era interpretative community by finding the Mongol past in Turkic peoples, as argued in newly available European scholarship. It was for this reason that Shagdaryn Bira and other Soviet era scholars applauded Zawa Damdin’s historiography as somewhat scientific and nearly modern (though it still deployed a lamentable amount of feudalism ideology).³⁹⁴

While the temporal boundaries of the Mongol nation (M. *ulus*) was thoroughly absorbed into the Qing formation after the sixteenth century, Mongol identity was negotiated through practices of differentiation like that of the four other “nationalities”: Manchus, Tibetans, Han, and Hui.³⁹⁵ Elverskog has shown that part of this process of Mongolian identity assertion was through Mongolian Géluk historiography, one that found a Mongol-Buddhist spatio-temporal narrative that existed in ambiguous relations to the eighteenth-century, imperial mandated Manchu ethnicity project.³⁹⁶ For example, Elverskog turns to a primary figure in Zawa Damdin’s interpretative community, Gombojab’s Mongolian language *Flow of the Ganges*,³⁹⁷

394 Bira, *O “Zolotoi knige” Sh. Damdina*.

395 For an extended examination of the maintenance of Manch “ethnic sovereignty” by means of the Eight Banner systems, see: Elliott, *The Manchu Way ; the Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China*.

396 Elverskog, “Mongol Time Enters a Qing World,” 2005, 152.

397 Mgon-po-skyabs and Coyiji, *Gangga-yin urusqal* ([Kokeqota]: Obor Monggol-un Arad-un Keblel-un Qoriya, 1999).

and the Tibetan language *History of Buddhism in China*³⁹⁸ and the *Catalogue of the Layout of India During the Great Tang Dynasty* (the biography of Xuanzang introduced in the previous chapter).³⁹⁹ In those works, the polyglot Mongol author used his residency in Beijing to access Chinese sources, and on that basis reaffirm the *long durée* of Mongol-Buddhist history. The primary conclusion of Gombojab in those works was that, “all nomadic peoples north of the Great Wall are identified historically as Mongol; more important, since the Han dynasty they have been Buddhist.”⁴⁰⁰ This drastically expanded the spatio-temporal scope and interpretative precedents for later Mongol Buddhist historians down to Zawa Damdin, and through him, to present day Inner Asian scholars (as I show in the conclusion). These Chinese narratives, reinterpreted as evidence for a vast Mongol-Buddhist imagined community into prehistory, were transplanted precisely into many later Mongolian Buddhist histories, including Zawa Damdin’s revolutionary-era *Dharma Conch* and *Golden Book*. For example, Gombojab reads a Mongol story from: the *History of the Former Han*, where Chinese troops report seeing a gold statue (presumed to be of the Buddha) at the court of the Xiognu Khan; Tang-dynasty histories that describe an Indian Buddhist master and disciples at the “Mongol” Turkic courts; and Xuanzang’s odyssey on route to Buddhist India in the seventh century amidst thriving “Mongol” Central Asian Buddhist kingdoms.⁴⁰¹

Gombojab’s creative philology and careful study of the Chinese historical record produced a vision of Mongolian history that essentially spanned the transmission of the Dharma

398 mGon po skyabs, *rGya Nag Gi Yul Du Dam Pa’i Chos Dar Tshul Gtso Bor Bshad Pa Blo Gsal Kun Tu Dga’ Ba’i Rna Rgyan*.

399 mGon po skyabs, *Chen Po Thang Gur Dus Kyi Rgya Gar Zhing Gi Bkod Pa’i Dkar Chag* (Pe cin (Beijing): Krung go’i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2006).

400 Elverskog, “Mongol Time Enters a Qing World,” 2005, 153.

401 Ibid., 152–153.

itself across Central and Inner Asia, north of the Great Wall. This narrative was picked up by the many Mongol Buddhist historians who came after, especially those writing in Tibetan from the Sino-Tibetan-Mongol borderland who were read so closely by Zawa Damdin. In their works, the interpretative precedent set by Gombojab, in addition to his historical narratives, allowed these Qing-era Géluk historians to discover an even vaster “Mongol” spatio-temporal spread (tied inextricably to Buddhism’s arrival in Inner Asia) from the Tibetan and Chinese record. For example, Rashipungsug argued in the *Crystal Mirror* that the Mongols had fought the Zhou dynasty in the first millennium BCE, Mergen Gegen’s *Golden Summary* found Mongols in the preservation of the monastic code in Tibet during Langdarma’s persecution of Buddhism in the ninth century.

At the root of many of these creative, Mongol-centric readings of Tibeian record was linking *hor* and *sok*—both common ethnonyms for Turkic-Central Asian peoples in earlier Tibetan sources—with Mongols. In this way, Mongols were found with even more confidence in narratives describing Buddhist civilizations in antiquity (such as in Khotan) and in central folk-Buddhist traditions across Inner Asia (such as the Gesar epic). The effect of all this was that Mongols (whose own community formations were in constant flux) could claim the longest Buddhist history in relation to those “others that mattered” during the Qing: Tibetans, Chinese, Manchus, and increasingly, foreigners (*phe ring gi*).

Outside of the post-seventeenth century Mongolian language histories examined by Elverskog, Zawa Damdin also looked to other Tibetan language cartographic histories produced within his interpretative community that sought to map the eastern Tibet region of Amdo in important new ways in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Géluk scholars, whom we will remember also extended genres of Géluk (auto)biography and historiography, also begun to write of their homeland as a compact territorial unit and, in that way, initiated a genre of Inner

Asian monastic geography. As Gray Tuttle notes in his study of the most expansive geography ever written by a Géluk Amdo scholar, Drakgön Zhapdrung Könchok Tenpa Rapgyé's *The Oceanic Book* (1865),⁴⁰² influenced by their involvement in Jesuit-lead projects to map the Qing Empire, "Tibetan Buddhists started to write geographic texts that treated space not according to the stylized schematics of Indian tradition, but according to a conception of contiguous blocks of ethno-state territory."⁴⁰³ Cosmopolitan Géluk scholars from eastern Tibet such as Drakgön, Sumpa Khenpo Yeshé Peljor,⁴⁰⁴ and Mindröl Nomonhan IV⁴⁰⁵ all began to produce works that attempted to synthesis spatial description from Indian Buddhist canonical presentations (such as those in the Abhidharma and Kālacakra tantric cycles) with Qing mapping projects and Jesuit-mediated presentations of world geography and cosmology.⁴⁰⁶ The effect of the latter, which suggested a round earth, proved particularly vexing at the time; a debate Zawa Damdin revives in relation to his critique of scientific positivism that opens the *Golden Book*, which I examine in some detail in the final chapter of this study.

402 Brag dgon zhabs drung dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas, 1800/1-1869. The 1865 date refers to the supplemented version. The original was completed in 1833. See: Brag dgon zhabs drung dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas, *Yul Mdo Smad Kyi Ljongs Su Thub Bstan Rin Po Che Ji Ltar Dar Ba'i Tshul Gsal Bar Brjod Pa Deb Ther Rgya Mtsho*, 3 vols., Satapitaka Series (New Delhi: Sharada Rani, 1975).

403 Gray Tuttle, "Challenging Central Tibet's Dominance of History: The 'Oceanic Book', a 19th-Century Politico-Religious Geographic History," in *Mapping the Modern in Tibet*, ed. Gray Tuttle ([Andiastr, Switzerland]: IITBS, International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies GmbH, 2011), 138.

404 Sum pa mkhan po ye shes dpal 'byor, *'Dzam Gling Spy'i Bshad Dang Rgyas Bshad* (Lha sa: Bod ljong bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2011).

405 'Jam dpal chos kyi bstan 'dzin 'phrin la, *"Dzam Gling Chen Po"i Rgyas Bshad Snod Bcud Kun Gsal Me Long* (Gangtok: Dzongsar chhentse labrang, 1981).

406 For a study of the earliest of these geographies, see: Matthew Kapstein, "Just Where on Jambudvīpa Are We? New Geographical Knowledge and Old Cosmological Schemes in Eighteenth-Century Tibet," in *Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500-1800*, ed. S. Pollock (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011), 336–64.

1.2 Mongols of the Qing After the Imperial Collapse

Yet, we must remind ourselves that Zawa Damdin's reception of all these Qing-era, Tibeto-Mongolian Géluk historical narratives occurred after the Qing. This was a drastically different socio-political and intellectual context that was fused with new political and scholarly discourses of nationalism, secularism, scientism, and so on. These were the foundations of Mongol national autonomy, whose political ideologies depended on identifying a fixed and consensual Mongol national community that had been repressed under Chinese and Manchu imperial domination since the dissolution of the Mongol Empire in the thirteenth century. This was, in other words, a time rife with social imagination (though our scholarship to date has largely ignored Tibetan language Mongolian sources on this development).⁴⁰⁷ Delimiting this post-imperial vision Mongolia and the Mongol people depended on the mediation of European political and scholarly discourses of nationalism, ethnicity, and very importantly, a nascent Euro-Russian Buddhology. As we have seen, revolutionary leaders (especially the Buryat Intelligentsia) transposed this latter tradition—whose presumptions came from a colonial-era Romantic Orientalist construction of an original, pure Indian Buddhism owned by the European scholar⁴⁰⁸—from the Russian academy as the basis for Buddhist reforms in Mongolia.⁴⁰⁹ As I have shown elsewhere, Zawa Damdin was deeply suspicious of these reforms, which he saw as corrupting lay-monastic differentiation by introducing science into the monastic curriculum and

407 Lattimore, *Nationalism and Revolution in Mongolia*.; Atwood, "Revolutionary Nationalist Mobilization in Inner Mongolia, 1925- 1929"; Bulag, *Nationalism and Hybridity in Mongolia*; Kaplonski, *Truth, History and Politics in Mongolia : The Memory of Heroes*; Elverskog, *Our Great Qing : The Mongols, Buddhism and the State in Late Imperial China*, 2006; Bernstein, "Pilgrims, Fieldworkers, and Secret Agents: Buryat Buddhologists and the History of an Eurasian Imaginary"; Sneath, "Political Mobilization and the Construction of Collective Identity in Mongolia"; Lhamsuren, "The Mongolian Nationality Lexicon," 2006.

408 Lopez, *Curators of the Buddha : The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*.

409 Bernstein, "Pilgrims, Fieldworkers, and Secret Agents: Buryat Buddhologists and the History of an Eurasian Imaginary."

allowing non-monastic students to study topics like the Vinaya monastic code.⁴¹⁰ Yet, despite his distrust of “modernizing” Buddhist monasticism in revolutionary-era Mongolia (and, by extension, the presumptions of European Buddhology upon which they rested), Zawa Damdin did deeply engage the newly available fruits of European scholarship on Mongolian history. In this way, even as he operated using the interpretative and narrative products of Qing-era Géluk historians who had “found” an extensive “Mongol” ethnoreligious genesis from Chinese, Tibetan, and Mongol sources, and even as he constructed the Two Systems as it had manifested during the Qing as the ideal form of religio-political authority in Inner Asia, Zawa Damdin’s spatio-temporal vision of Mongol history operated outside of the multi-ethnic discourses of Qing sovereignty which had so influenced earlier visions of the Mongols and Mongol Buddhism.

I do not have the space here to extensively compare the intricacies of Zawa Damdin’s transposition and departures from the extensive Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist historical tradition he inherited (and which I introduced above), though I do hope that this might be the basis of a future study. Instead, my aim here is primarily to survey Zawa Damdin’s extensive spatialization and historicization of the Mongols and Mongolia in the context of the holistic analytical paradigm I am trying to develop in the study of historiographic operation in Inner Asian monastic sites. In this chapter and the next, I will query the literary construction of the site of Zawa Damdin’s authorial present by borrowing from Mikhail Bakhtin’s work on real and empty chronotopes in literature. By this, I differentiate two narrative foci in these works that helps clarify the literary construction of the site of Zawa Damdin’s own historiography operation, and of Buddhist life in revolutionary Mongolia more broadly. In the context of the discussion above,

410 On Zawa Damdin’s letter correspondence over monastic reform with Jamsrano, a prominent Buddhist reformer, see: Matthew King, “Like Giving Milk to a Snake: A Socialism of the Buryat-Mongol Buddhist Imaginary,” in *Buddhist Socialisms in Asia: An Historical Perspective*, ed. Patrice Ladwig (London; New York: Routledge, forthcoming).

this helps untangle the ethnoreligious primordialism” of these works into two distinct historical objects discerned through distinct historiographic operations: “real” Mongol history and “empty” enlightened intervention into that history. In the remainder of this chapter I will first introduce these concepts from Bakhtin, and then turn to a general survey of Zawa Damdin’s construction of the “real” chronotope of Mongolian history, territory, and subjectivity. In order to highlight the distinct intellectual and social site of his historiography, I conclude this chapter by foregrounding his synthesis of European scholarship and literature as authoritative sources alongside the Tibeto-Mongolian Géluk scholarship of the Qing.

This oscillation between real and empty time describes much, if not all, of the historiographic operations undertaken by the Qing-era monastic scholars introduced above, and, via Zawa Damdin’s works, further Buddhist historiography over the course of the twentieth century. In the context of my analysis of Zawa Damdin’s histories and historical practice below, attention to the interplay between real and empty chronotopes helps especially to discern the polemical thrust of the *Golden Book*—against the degeneracy of the post-imperium, the decline of enlightened authority in Inner Asia, and the lamentable degeneracy of Buddhist intuitionism—which is nowhere explicitly referenced in these works, but which is instead built by accretion in short asides, tangents, reflections, and narrative ruptures throughout.

2 Thinking About the Real and Empty Chronotopes of Inner Asian Buddhist Historiography

2.1 Mikhail Bakhtin and the Chronotope

Mikhail Bakhtin’s analysis of foundational and enduring chronotopes in Greco-European literature is a rich resource in our study of Inner Asian Buddhist historiography, especially in the late imperium and during the imperial-socialist transition. In Bakhtin’s interpretation, the chronotope is a basic unit of analysis of literary texts attentive to, “the intrinsic connectedness of

temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature.”⁴¹¹ In what follows here, I add “subjecthood” as a third element of analysis that is an aggregate of, but is analytical distinct from, such ‘artistically expressed’ relationships of space and time. I justify this addition since at any intersection of space and time in historical writing, the subject is a specific literary construction that occurs in the places where the “knots” of the chronotope are tied and untied (to co-opt one of Bakhtin’s more well-known formulations of the chronotope).⁴¹² In other words, in historically manifested narrative forms—“generated,” in Michel de Certeau’s formulation, from a social site, analytical operation, and writing practice—literary constructions of space and time are combined to inscribe absent agents in a historical text.

2.2 Empty Time, Place, and Subjectivity

The varieties of such literary combinations come not only from the chronotopes of lived experience that make up the contexts of their production and reception.⁴¹³ As I will show, the wedding and later unwinding of the enlightened and unenlightened in the *Golden Book* essentially narrates two forms of subject and agency, and thus, two recurring combinations of space and time. The first is reminiscent of what Bakhtin called the “empty” time and place of Greek romance. In this analysis, such literary time is empty because, “events are not connected to each other in any causal relation; none of the events is linked in a sustained consequence.”⁴¹⁴ How, we might wonder, could enlightened subjects (buddhas, bodhisattvas, Dharma protectors,

411 Bakhtin and Holquist, *The dialogic imagination : four essays*, 84. In what follows I use a much simplified

412 “The chronotope is the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied” (Ibid... See also: Michael Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World* (Routledge, 2003), 109–110.

413 The logic of dialogism—a post-humous philosophy of signs and experience extracted from Bakhtin’s works—precludes the text-context distinction. In the view of the Bakhtinian exegete Michael Holquist, this is tied to Bakhtin’s position as a neo-Kantian and as a close reader of Einstein’s theory of relativity. For example: Holquist, *Dialogism*, 115–118.

414 Ibid., 109.

and so forth) be empty, according to that definition, given the very logic of karma and “enlightened activity” (*phrin las*) that directs historical change according to these works? This is because, as literary constructs, the “enlightened” places, times, and subjects who occupy so much of Zawa Damdin’s historical attention are unaffected by the very chronology he inscribes: “these hours and days leave no trace, and therefore, one may have as many of them as one likes,” as Bakhtin would say.⁴¹⁵ The enlightened figures that are the primary subjects of these histories—such as the triumvirate of Qing authority made up of the buddhas Avalokiteśvara (e.g. the Dalai Lamas), Mañjuśrī (e.g. Tsongkhapa, Sakya Paṇḍita, the Qing emperors), and Vajrapāṇi (e.g. Chinggis Khaan, the early Jebzundambas)—are unaffected by the historical changes narrated in the text. While enlightened agents act, in the context of the historical narrative they are unchanged by, for example, the collapse of the Mongol empire, the nomadic movements of Mongolian groups across Asia, or the translation of the Buddhist canon into Mongolian under the Kangxi emperor. For Zawa Damdin and Tibeto-Mongolian historians of the Qing writ large, Avalokiteśvara is no wiser, older, weaker, or stronger during his sixteenth century intervention into Mongol space as the third Dalai Lama Sönam Gyatso (at the court of Altan Khaan) than during his early twentieth arrival into Khalkha at the Dalai Lama XIII Tubten Gyatso. The most iconic of such empty chronotopes in Zawa Damdin’s works, like those of his broad Qing-era interpretative community, is the Two Systems of religio-political authority.

Such empty historical subjects are constructed at the intersection of empty spaces and empty times; Avalokiteśvara has his pure land and his own biography, to be sure, but in the narrative architecture of these histories, these are entirely abstracted and unaffected by narrative continuity. Enlightened time, place, and subject are empty because they represent “an abstract

415 Bakhtin and Holquist, *The dialogic imagination : four essays*, 94.

pattern of rearrangeable events,” ever in stasis in relation to patterns of development narrated extensively throughout the *Golden Book* and his other historical works.⁴¹⁶ Mongols and Mongolia changed between the Mongol Empire and the socialist period, according to these histories, but the enlightened figures who periodically became present in that ethnoreligious genesis do not.

2.3 Real Time, Place, Subjectivity

The former pattern of development makes up the second, “real” times, places, and subjects of these narratives. These are the everyday people and places affected by the narrative continuity constructed in the text, the contours of which occupy Zawa Damdin throughout. For example, the changing space of Mongol polity and ethnicity that our author so carefully delimits from his reading of South, Central, Inner and East Asian Buddhist sources alongside European scholarship and literature. Unlike the “empty” characters of Greek romance examined by Bakhtin and the enlightened subjects described by Zawa Damdin, a “real” subject in these histories accepts “some responsibility for the changes in his life.”⁴¹⁷ Real time, place, and subjecthood in Zawa Damdin’s works are historical objects that arise, grow, die, learn, fight, obey, journey, settle, and live with greater or lesser ethical constraint; it is the vicissitudes of “the real” over time, recovered from a prolific archive available to him in the post-imperium, that provides periodic context for the manifestation of the empty enlightened authority of the Two Systems.

Contra Avalokiteśvara and the many other “empty” times, places, and subjects of these works, real times, places, and subjects of the Mongol religious and newly nationalized ethno-

⁴¹⁶ Holquist, *Dialogism*, 110.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

political past create a pattern of development whose moral/karmic consequences, in Zawa Damdin's interpretation, explains the adversity to Buddhist institutionalism of his authorial present. The unenlightened descendants of Chinggis Khaan, the leaders and subjects of various "Mongol" groups (which, as we shall see in the next chapter, at times encompass most of Buddhist Asia and even pre-Islamic Mecca), some late Qing emperors, and even some later Mongolian incarnate lamas (including even the 6th-8th Jebzundambas) are all real subjects occupying real spaces and times in these works. They are affected by narrative continuity, in other words. These are absent dead whose recovered and inscribed lives are the warp and weave of historical development, and are the stage upon which enlightened presence emerged in three waves, unchanging, merely reflecting into the real. The latter live and die, rather than merely "manifest" as empty subjects when karmic circumstances align, like the sun occasionally shining through parted clouds.

2.4 The Changing Real and the Immanent Empty

The result of all this, as we shall see in some depth below, is that Zawa Damdin's histories (like any text, including this dissertation) contain an heteroglossia of inter-related chronotopes, a tile-work of mutually constituting literary representations of time and space. The social time and polemic constructed in Zawa Damdin's works come from narrating an interpenetration of empty time, place, and subjecthood into the real time, place, and subjects of Mongolia. In Zawa Damdin's historicization, the abstracted, static, empty chronotopes of "enlightened" beings have intervened into real Mongolian time and space because of changing karmic currents in the latter. As the karmic causes (S. *hetu*; T. *rgyu*) of the Mongol masses were ripened through the constellation of helping conditions (S. *pratyaya*; T. *rkyen*) in particular

places and times, enlightened figures intervened into the real time of the Mongolian stage.⁴¹⁸

The import is that, in the literary environment of these works, historical causation emerges from the real time of everyday Mongolian subjects; as such, the particular historical contours of a given manifestation of enlightened subject comes from the real time, place, and subjects of the work. In Zawa Damdin's re-telling, in continuity with much later Qing-era Buddhist historiography, this occurred in three broad "waves" (*dar gsum*): 1) in Central and Inner Asian antiquity; 2) during the thirteenth century Mongol empire; and most fully 3) during the first two centuries of the Qing era, ending sometime in the mid-nineteenth century.

I turn now first to a summary of Zawa Damdin's dispersed construction of his dystopian present, before examining his historical construction of the real time, place, and subjectivity of Mongolia and the Mongols in light of other concurrent visions of pan-Mongolism and pan-Buddhism (to which these works show an ambiguous relationship at best). I conclude with a summary of what evidence we have of Zawa Damdin's engagement with movements to reform Mongolia's Buddhist institutions on the basis of new discourses of ethno-nationalism and the Orientalist presumptions of a nascent Buddhology.

418 "The process of causality [in classical Buddhist philosophy] is provisionally divided between *hetu* and *PRATYAYA*, "causes and conditions": *hetu* designates the main or primary cause of production, which operates in conjunction with *pratyaya*, the concomitant conditions or secondary, supporting causes; these two together produce a specific "fruition" or result (*PHALA*): thus, the fruition of a tree is the result of a primary cause (*hetu*), its seed; supported by such subsidiary conditions as soil, sunlight, and water; and only when all the relevant causes and conditions in their totality are functioning cooperatively will the prospective fruition or effect occur" (Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 348.).

3 The Dystopia of the Post-Imperium: The Polemical Target of the *Golden Book*

3.1 A Critique in Accretion: Authorial Asides, Tangents, and Reflections

In the previous chapter, we encountered Zawa Damdin's muted, perhaps even self-censored, autobiographical description of the social and political climate in Mongolia just prior to the purges that began in earnest in 1937. As I mentioned, Zawa Damdin's literary self-stylization was not limited to the *Summary* or the *Catalogue*. His hundreds of other works on philosophy, logic, ritual, and meditative technique are peppered with autobiographical references, whether as narrative interludes into the text or as contextual notes in colophons. This is especially true of his historiography, the subject of the remainder of this dissertation. For example, the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book* heavily feature the historian and his present. These mainly come as short asides, laments, tangents, or reflections on matters as diverse as historical method, oral tradition, or the decline of enlightened presence in the late-and post-imperium. Recovering these dozens, if not hundreds, of authorial interventions and setting them alongside one another provides us with a general picture of Zawa Damdin's literary construction of the site of his scholarly pursuits. From this, a particular construction of the "social time" of revolutionary transition emerges, one long obscured by the purges, Soviet-era anachronisms, and the revisionism of the post-socialist Buddhist revival in Mongolia after 1990.

This social time of the post-imperium in Zawa Damdin's conservative monastic imagination was inflected by Qing nostalgia, the temporal expectations of his increasingly threatened Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist scholastic culture, and the newly circulating insights of Euro-Russian scholars. The interventions of the authorial present, when read alongside some of the historical content of the *Golden Book*, have the effect of drawing a regular utopian-dystopian contrast between the heights of religious and secular authority under the Qing and the

disappearance of such authority by the beginning of the Two Revolutions in 1911. Throughout his histories (especially the 1931 *Golden Book*), Zawa Damdin carefully juxtaposes the moral degeneracy, violence, social reversals, and enlightened absence of the revolutionary period with the legalist-ethical solidity, peace, social organization, and enlightened presence of the pre-revolutionary period, especially during the height of the Qing formation. This latter utopian vision is centered squarely on the growth and decline of the Two Systems of religio-political rule already summarized in the introduction to this study, which I will explore in some depth in the following chapter.

As we attempt to better understand Buddhist monastic experience of imperial deterioration and modernist reform in Inner Asia, it is important to note that the *Golden Book* does not mark the Qing collapse of 1911 as the boundary between an idealized imperial past and the flawed revolutionary period; instead, Zawa Damdin cites a series of events in the mid-nineteenth century that caused the decline of enlightened authority in Khalkha Mongolia. In Zawa Damdin's account, the violence and degeneracy of the revolutionary period only filled the lacuna left by that earlier retreat of enlightened authority. So great was this rift for Zawa Damdin, that even lines of incarnate lamas as revered as the Jebzundambas were fractured: in his history, the Jebzundambas had been enlightened before the nineteenth century disenchantment of Mongol space, but thereafter had operated only as worldly saboteurs of the Buddhadharma in Mongol lands. I argue that this dystopian-utopian contrast—even though it is not cohesively argued in any one section of Zawa Damdin's writings—defines the polemic of the 1931 *Golden Book* and not the earlier *Dharma Conch*. At its core, the former text is a polemical narrative of the decline of enlightened presence in Mongolia and across Inner Asia more widely. Its many historical narratives culminate, in small authorial asides, in the unwinding of the empty chronotope of enlightened lamas and emperors and the real chronotope of common Mongol

disciples and subjects. All this points to the ambiguities of the Buddhist reception of post-imperial modernity in Inner Asia outside of the agitprop of party cadres and Soviet-era narrative.

In the previous chapter on “Self as Historical Subject,” I argued that in his 1936 autobiographical writing Zawa Damdin seems to be censoring any explicit address of the escalating violence against institutional Buddhism that would reach its peak in 1937. In the quickly shifting and revolutionary terrain of post-Qing Mongolia, attention to year (and even month and week) is vital. The undated *Dharma Conch*, either written during the Bogd Khaanate (1911-1919) at the behest of the Bogd Khaan himself or else earlier in the twentieth century, was a project undertaken in very different times than, for instance, his 1936 autobiography, written twelve years after the Jebzundamba’s death and twenty-five years into the socialist period. Additionally, the 1919 polemic against the intrusion of empiricism and European science (so labeled) that opens the four-hundred folio *Golden Book* (examined in the final chapter of this study) was an emboldened and assured scholastic attack, staged from a very different vantage point than its final chapters completed only in 1931, “due to difficult circumstances.” The first two chapters, do indeed periodically refer to the author’s present, but mostly to reference particularly scholarly encounters or research work that had influenced his historiography. For example, during an early section on the “Mongol” identity of the ancient Central Asian city-state of Khotan, Zawa Damdin supports his argument with reference to an “amazing” photograph of Buddhist ruins at Khotan shown to him by an “European scholar” (*rGya ser mkhan po*).⁴¹⁹ That is not to say these earlier sections are devoid of the usual Buddhist constructions of degenerating time and prophecies of decline. Rather, it is to point out that authorial intrusions into the text do not, in those earlier sections, regularly lament social upheaval, moral depravity, and the absent

419 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 121.

Two Systems as they do in the later four chapters completed in 1931. Instead, they rupture the chronological continuity of the narratives by recalling research moments or scholarly encounters.

Overwhelmingly, Zawa Damdin's later construction of his dystopian present comes in the form of dispersed interjections or tangents as part of other historical narratives. Often reading as tenuous, or even random, ruptures of the chronology of his histories, these veins of the authorial present are nestled in between fissures of other historical narratives. In dozens, if not hundreds, of authorial asides, laments, or reflections, these presentist constructions generally come in three inter-related rubrics: 1) diagnosing the moral-karmic-social degeneracy of the present from prophetic record; 2) on that basis, prescribing pious behavior; and 3) lamenting social reversals and violence.

3.2 Diagnosing the Degeneracy of the Post-Imperium With Prophecy

Prophetic interpretation as historical explanation had long been, and continues to be, common practice in Inner Asian Buddhist scholasticism, and was a well-worn mode of temporalization put to broad use in the histories under examination here.⁴²⁰ Indeed, all of Zawa Damdin's late-Qing interpretative community constructed their works on the basis of the karmic geologies exposed by their reading of prophetic enunciations. Zawa Damdin interpreted the post-imperium in light of, among others, the prophetic enunciations and inscriptions from the historical Buddha, seventh-ninth century Tibetan kings and Indian tantric adepts, later Central and Inner Asian monks and royalty, and Chinggis Khaan himself. These all had the effect of setting revolutionary events into time in ways quite alien to the contemporaneous historical-

420 For a collection of papers that examine Mongolian language prophetic texts in circulations leading up to, and during, the Two Revolutions, see: Empson, *Time, Causality and Prophecy in the Mongolian Cultural Region*.

materialist schema of party historians, Comintern agents, and Soviet ideologues. In terms of generative practice, the difference is worth highlighting: turning to prophecy was hardly to “do history for history’s sake”; rather, it was an appeal to the clairvoyant vision of a now absent enlightened presence to understand the causal mechanism of the revolutionary crisis. It was diagnostic, in other words, and so sets Zawa Damdin’s practice of monastic history into a mode which uses literary constructions of the past to prescribe remedial karmic activity in the present.

Zawa Damdin regularly turns to a small corpus of canonical materials for his prophetic sources, supplemented in places by prophetic pronouncements attributed to some of the important Géluk lamas of the Qing period from his interpretative community. These sometimes come in the form of statements attributed to the Buddha or “ancient lamas” without any specific textual reference. At other times, the authority of a statement is connected to specific textual sources, especially the Kālacakra tantric corpus, the *Root Tantra of Mañjuśrī*, and the Vinaya⁴²¹ and Abhidharma⁴²² canonical collections of the Buddha’s teachings.

For example, Zawa Damdin regularly connects classical Buddhist theories of degenerating time to his revolutionary present. Jan Nattier’s extensive survey of such literature from across South, Inner and East Asia shows that Buddhist theories of degeneration involve an external cause (such as foreign invasions and extensive state control) and an internal one (laxity within the monastic order).⁴²³ Zawa Damdin does regularly define and historicize outside forces that have, over the vast history he narrates, threatened the Buddhist dispensation and the Two Systems specifically. This often takes the form of circumscribing a barbaric or heretical “other”:

421 S. *vinaya*; T. *‘dul ba*; M. *binai*.

422 S. *abhidharma*; T. *chos mngon pa*; M. *abidharm-a*.

423 Jan Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time: Studies in a Buddhist Prophecy of Decline* (Jain Publishing Company, 1991).

whether non-human, non-Buddhists, or even uncivilized Mongols.⁴²⁴ In terms of the references to his own revolutionary present, Zawa Damdin occasionally mentions barbarity, but no other more specific reference: this, despite the most immanent threat to his tradition lying precisely in foreign-backed state coercion. Rather, throughout the presentist references of his histories he instead turns his critical attention to lax monastic ethics (sometimes expanded to include lay Buddhists as well). Moral degeneration within the tradition is ultimately the karmic culprit for Zawa Damdin, even if the interference of outsider barbarians intermittently emerges as a karmic result. In these works, such internal degeneration within the Buddhist tradition—either locally in the Mongol dispensation or else in the vast framework of Qing-er Géluk imaginary—is the primary karmic cause of the collapse of the Qing and of the revolutionary upheaval.

For example, Zawa Damdin concludes chapter two of the *Golden Book*, entitled “The Manner By Which the Teachings (Came to Mongolia) From India During the Earlier Spread,” with a characteristic warning about ethical laxity and its consequences:

In that way, as for how someone enters the monkhood once the time of the final degeneration age⁴²⁵ has arrived, after the results and accomplishments of the Buddha’s teachings are complete, it is as follows. (From) the remainders (*phro*) of former prophesies (of the Buddha):

At that time, the Subduer’s teaching
Will completely disappear.
Monks, novices, and
Nuns will become miserly and
Will forever engage in
Wrongdoing and deception.
That time will be thoroughly impure.
My teachings will no longer remain.
(Monastics) will seek out a house and a wife.
At that time, the laity will scrutinize other’s wives
And have affairs.

424 S. *tīrthika*, T. *mu stegs pa*, or else simply “barbarian”, *kla klo*.

425 S. *kali-yuga*; T. *rtsod ldan*.

At that time, only the signs and names (of practitioners) will exist.
 All of their resentment will come from habit.
 They will harm one another, and
 Heretics will suppress most (of them).
 All the gods will also cause harm.

As this says, the four-fold assembly⁴²⁶ will break their respective ethical discipline and disagree with one another, which will in turn become the cause for heretical barbarians to overpower (them) and for the gods and Dharma Protectors to punish (them). [...] After I depart for nirvāṇa, many sentient beings will arise and most ordinary beings, by their nature, will follow teachers (who preach) harming others as religion. In that way, they will cut the root of their virtue (and) the noble system [ie. the buddhadharma] will disappear.

This all describes our present situation.⁴²⁷

In the *Golden Book*, as we will come to expect, such prophetic diagnosis is often connected to the vitality and authority of the absent Two Systems. A characteristic example comes during a long summary of the biographies of Tibetan Buddhists from the Sakya school,⁴²⁸ credited with converting the court of the Mongol empire in the thirteenth century:

Those three [Sakya Paṇḍita, Phakpa, and Chana Dorjé] all acted with similar loyalty to the Two Systems. Ancient lamas prophesied, “When political authority⁴²⁹ is lost in China, Tibet, and Mongolia, all three countries will also lose the Buddhadharma.”

If you consider this, (it is clear that) the time (anticipated in) this prophecy is now approaching. The knowledgeable should be careful and make effort in virtuous activity!⁴³⁰

Another characteristic example from the *Golden Book* comes while summarizing the biographies of later Qing emperors, a regular feature of late-imperial Mongol historiography.⁴³¹ There, Zawa

426 *‘khor rnam bzhi*: ie. the entire Buddhist community, divided according to gendered precepts: nuns, monks, lay women, and lay men.

427 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 133–134.

428 *Sa skya pa*.

429 *rgyal srid*.

430 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 202.

Damdin reconstructs the *long dureé* of Qing rule from prophecies found in the canonical *Root Tantra of Mañjuśrī*,⁴³² supplemented by an interpretation of a more recent prophecy attributed to Trülku Drakpa Gyeltsen:⁴³³

(The meaning of that prophecy is as follows:) While he [the Manchu emperor] is alive, the strong political system of the previous Manchu emperors and the pure teachings of the Jamgön Lama [ie. the Géluk school] will be united. Sentient beings from the center and borderlands will happily enjoy a festival of religion and politics. How do we know this? From the prophecy of Trülku Drakpa Gyeltsen:

To the east, in the land where everything is done in accord with the Dharma, an emperor who is the manifestation of Mañjuśrī will newly emerge. By legalizing the ten virtuous actions, all sentient beings will become happy and peaceful.⁴³⁴ This emperor will respect the reddish-yellow wish-fulfilling jewel [the monastic community] on his crown.

Also in that case, because of the nature of (this degenerate) time, sixty years after Emperor Sisel,⁴³⁵ the ‘house of political and religious law’ began to become looser and looser in both the center and borderland.⁴³⁶ Eventually, loyalty to the connection of the

431 For example: Dharmatāla and Klafkowski, *Rosary of White Lotuses*, 108–123.

432 S. *Āryamañjuśrīmūlatantra*; T. *’Phags pa ’jam dpal gyi rtsa ba’i rgyud*. For example, see: “’Phags Pa ‘Jam Dpal Gyi Rtsa Ba’i Rgyud,” in *bKa’ ’Gyur (sTog Pho Brang Bris Ma)*, vol. 102, 109–2 vols. (Leh: Smanrtsis Shesrig Dpemzod, 1975), 109v–476a.

433 *sPrul sku grags pa rgyal mtshan*, 1619–1656. As an aside, Trülku Drakpa Gyeltsen was a contemporary and, in some accounts, rival of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, who after being murdered took form as the wrathful deity Dorjé Shukden. As we saw in the previous chapter, Zawa Damdin has post-humously become connected to contemporary schisms in the Géluk school over the propitiation of this deity, something I return to in the conclusion of this study.

434 These are the opposite of the “ten non-virtuous actions” of body, speech and mind. In the context of Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist historiography, newly converted rulers are remembered to have outlawed the ten non-virtues as part of their patronage (for example, Altan Khaan of the Tümed and Abutai of the Khalkha, and here the Qing emperors). It is, in other words, a legal marker of the full presence of the Two Systems in a particular place and time. In this Buddhist context, the ten non-virtues of body, speech and mind are counted as: killing (*srog mcod*), taking what is not giving (*ma byin len*), impure sexual behavior (*mi gtsang spyod*), false speech (*rdzun smra ba*), divisive speech (*phra ma*), harsh words (*tshig rtsub*), idle talk (*ngag ’chal*), covetousness (*brnab sems*), maliciousness (*gnod sems*), and wrong view (*log lta*).

435 *Srid gsal*, ie. the Daoguang Emperor (C. 道光, r. 1821–1851). This is also how the nineteenth century Inner Mongolian Géluk historian Dharmatāla listed this emperor’s name (Dharmatāla and Klafkowski, *Rosary of White Lotuses: Being the Clear Account of How the Precious Teaching of Buddha Appeared and Spread in the Great Hor Country*, 483.). For a very useful list of equivalent titles for the Qing emperors in Chinese and Tibetan, see: Tuttle, “Tibetan Buddhism at Ri Bo Rtse Inga/Wutai Shan in Modern Times,” 194–196.

436 Ie. the Two Systems of religio-political rule.

Teachings and political authority will be severed in China, Tibet, and Hor. Then, (the Two System) will transform into fragrant food for the barbarians of the ends of the earth.⁴³⁷

This (situation) was (described in a) quote above from the *Root Tantra of Mañjuśrī*.

After that, the Two Systems will be destroyed, and those other beings⁴³⁸ will make (their own) supplications.

It is certain that all this has (now) come to fruition!⁴³⁹

As the concluding lines of Zawa Damdin’s discussion of “The Manner By Which the Yellow (Géluk) Teachings Came to Mongolia”), this quote makes it abundantly clear how prophetic diagnosis—dispersed across the *Golden Book*’s hundreds of pages—is used to construct a dystopian vision of the author’s revolutionary present: “sixty years after the reign of the Daoguang Emperor,” was 1911, after all, the year of Mongol autonomy under the Jebzundamba VIII’s theocratic rule, and the start of the long revolutionary upheaval.

3.3 Prescribing Virtue as Historical Practice

More than simply excavating the karmic geology of his authorial present by interpreting the received prophetic record, Zawa Damdin regularly uses the opportunity to prescribe virtuous activity to his readers. As with connections drawn between prophetic utterances and his revolutionary present, so too with prescriptions of pious practice do we glean the dystopian picture of the revolutionary present constructed in the *Golden Book*. As above, just a few examples of this regular authorial commentary will suffice for now. Sometimes such injunctions consist of simple injunctions to pay attention to karma and ethics. A typical, though particularly

437 *Phyogs mtha'i kla klo dag*.

438 *Phyi rol skye dgus*.

439 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 240–241.

evocative, example comes once again from the concluding lines of the *Golden Book*'s section on how the "Yellow Hat Teaching" (ie. the Géluk school) came to Mongol lands under Qing patronage (where the end of the chapter narrates the the lamentable end of the Qing itself):

From the prophecy of Trülku Drakpa Gyeltsen, it is said:

Later, during the aeon of degeneration, deceptively there will arise a non-virtuous spectacle.⁴⁴⁰ The senile-elderly [ie. the simple minded] will be confused; How worthy of compassion are those (confused beings) who will not realize their situation? At that time, they will be truly crippled on the plains of cyclic existence. They will be unable to find a protector, and they will fall into the abyss of the lower realms. Even though they will walk, they will do so 'with a stagger' [ie. they won't know how to follow the right path].

May I show the path to those miserable ones! Red-faced demons will arise as kings of the borderlands, and will destroy the Dharma law and the miserable ones will wander everywhere. At that time, may I emanate as a Dharma Minister and influence the (demon) king's power (to safeguard the Two Systems)!

This has all come exactly true, just as it was said.

For this reason, what should we do now that the Reviving Hell has transferred into the land of humans, here and now? It is as Welmang Paṇḍita has said:⁴⁴¹

E Ma Ho!

The Triple World is impermanent like an autumn cloud.
Beings are born and die as if they were attending a dance.
The life of sentient beings is like lightning in the sky,
And moves swiftly like a waterfall on a steep mountain face.
Whatever is gathered is dispersed and whatever is collected is lost.
In the end, whatever is higher becomes very weak.
Whoever is born will eventually die.

At that time, Dharma is the only protector, so be careful, accept and reject the white and black activities (respectively)!

440 *stad mo*.

441 dBal mang paṇḍita dkon mchog rgyal mtshan (1764-1853) was a prominent Géluk incarnate lama from eastern Tibet who became the twenty-fourth throne holder of Labrang (*bLa brang*). His *History of India, Tibet, and Mongolia* was a widely circulated historical work in nineteenth and twentieth century Inner Asia, and was an important secondary source for Zawa Damdin. See: dKon mchog rgyal mtshan, *rGya Bod Hor Sog Gi Lo Rgyus Nyung Ngur Brjod Pa Byis Pa "Jug Pa"i Bab Stegs*, vol. 4, 11 vols. (New Delhi: Gyalten Gelek Namgyal, 1974).

We should think carefully about the excellent meaning of this advice, and we must be careful with karma and its result.⁴⁴²

Elsewhere in the *Golden Book*, such advice takes the form of a slightly more elaborate prescription: for example, while reflecting on the life of the Jebzundamba V (whose centrality in Zawa Damdin's theory of enlightened decline in Mongolia we will encounter in the following chapter):

Nowadays, all of us who follow his [the Jebzundamba V's] advice must practice and protect the Dharma. [...] we should not live by means of wrong livelihood, make effort (in virtuous practice) and increase the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna teachings of the Jamgön Lama.⁴⁴³ In this way, we can repay the kindness of the Revered Father.⁴⁴⁴

As we move further into the *Golden Book's* later sections, however, ways out of the dire state of affairs in the post-imperial via virtuous Buddhist practice seem to have become less and less sure for Zawa Damdin. We might remember that the colophon of Zawa Damdin's autobiography examined above did not dedicate the merit accrued from its authorship to a particular monastic site or the flourishing of Buddhism in Mongolia. In the same way, many of the later intrusions of the authorial present in the *Golden Book* offer little or no remedial action to revive the Two Systems. Here, we wonder whether Zawa Damdin himself anticipated the erasure of his Buddhist institutions, or else feared aligning himself too closely with their "counter revolutionary" projects? If not, why would he stop dedicating the merit of his compositions to their flourishing (as in his autobiography), and why did he start declining to prescribe piety amongst his faithful readers as the years passed?

442 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 241–242.

443 i.e. The turn of the fifteenth-century founder of the Géluk school, Tsongkhapa Lozang Drakpa (T. *Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa*; M. *Bogd Zonkhaw*), 1357–1419.

444 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 397.

As just one telling example from the concluding lines of the second-to-last section of the *Golden Book*, on “The Manner By Which the Two Systems Came to Abide in the Center of Hor [ie. Khalkha]”:

Glorious Nāgārjuna said that:

If one correctly practices the system of human law,⁴⁴⁵ it is not a long way to travel to the god realm! If you climb the latter from the human realm to the god realm, liberation is not far off!

That being said, nowadays all high and low beings, monastics and laity alike, in general practice the Ten Non-Virtuous Actions, and especially their actions reverse the yoke of oxen of Dharma and Politics. We can see with our own eyes⁴⁴⁶ the suffering that is uninterruptedly experienced because of the turning of the wheel of disease, weapons, and famine (as a result of abandoning the dual system). This is like experiencing the sufferings of the Three Lower Realms.⁴⁴⁷

As for this, it is a reality that the distinguishing feature of the karma of the world’s inhabitants is that the results of actions are infallible and that the three true meanings of the Buddha’s instructions and prophecies really come true!

Of this, it is also said in the *Transmission of the Vinaya*:⁴⁴⁸

As for what was previously not custom or Dharma, today it has become famous as (our) customs and (our) Dharma.

This is said again and again (in the scriptures). As it says in the *Sūtra on the Application of Mindfulness*:⁴⁴⁹

445 *mi chos*.

446 lit. “(it is) a perceivable phenomenon” (*mtshong ba’i chos*).

447 In the Buddhist cosmological schema of Zawa Damdin’s post-imperial Géluk tradition (and most other Mahāyāna Buddhist schools in Central, Inner, and East Asia besides), ordinary beings are understood to be reborn in six realms of “cyclic existence” (S. *samsāra*; T. *khōr ba*): the three “higher realms” (with comparatively less suffering) of the divinities (S. *deva*), demigods (S. *asura*), and humans (S. *manuṣya*), and the three “lower realms” of animals (S. *tiryak*), hungry ghosts (S. *preta*) and hell beings (S. *nāraka*).

448 I believe the *Transmission of the Vinaya* (T. ‘*Dul ba’i lung*) refers to a late-fifteenth century work by the Tibetan Sakya scholar Jamyang Kunga Chözang (1433-1503) (“Jam dbyangs kun dga” chos bzang, ‘*Dul Ba Lung Rigs Gter Mdzod* (New Delhi: sDe dge par khang, 1974).). However, I have been unable to verify this quote as of yet.

449 S. *Ārya-Saddharmasmṛtyupasthāna-sūtra*; T. *Dam chos dran pa nye bar bzhag pa’i mdo*. See: “Dam Chos Dran Pa Nye Bar Bzhag Pa’i Mdo,” in *bKa’ ’Gyur (Li Thang)*, vol. 70, 103 vols. (Li thang: ’Jang sa tham gyi par khang, 17th century), 3–755.

Because of actions that function as a condition to split the customary and Dharma traditions—(such as when) the living beings of the world: do not respect rulers or chieftains; do not respect father or mother; do not respect virtuous protectors or Brahmins; and do not respect gods or lamas, and so forth—the demons of the black side of the world and the force of the humans and non-humans of the demonic abodes spread, and the gods of the white side of the world and the power of humans and non-humans of the godly abodes decrease.

This is said many times (in the scriptures).⁴⁵⁰

In all these ways, the *Golden Book* contains a dispersed characterization of the social, religious, and political degeneration of the post-imperium. These draw on prophetic interpretation as a sort of karmic geology, whereby his authorial present is set into a social time whose degeneracy was anticipated (in his creative reading of the prophetic record) by various enlightened figures. We have seen, however briefly, that Zawa Damdin's *modus operandi* in performing such diagnosis at first led to prescriptions of virtuous activity amongst his readers in order to obviate the full force of negative karma just revealed. However, in sections of his histories completed later in the revolutionary period, coinciding with increased state pressure and violence against leading “counter revolutionary” Buddhist leaders, such prescriptions slowed to a trickle: just what a pious Buddhist reader of history ought to do in the face of state coercions, and in light of an absent enlightened source of authority, remains unresolved in these late polemics.

3.4 Social Reversals and the Problematic Visibility of “a People”

In addition to setting the post-imperium into this particular dystopian social time, Zawa Damdin also turned to the well-worn discourses of degeneration from his classical Buddhist tradition. In the first case these rested on describing the consequences of moral laxity within the

450 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 324–325.

monastic community, however they departed from the standard narratives in another sense. As Jan Nattier has described, the second rubric of degeneration in classical Inner and East Asian Buddhist sources comes from: 1) control of Buddhist populations by alien, barbaric peoples; and 2) excessive state coercion.⁴⁵¹ In Zawa Damdin's analysis, both are founded in a problematic social mobility for the Mongol masses, newly set loose from the "golden yoke" of the religious and political authority of the Two Systems. Apparently grappling with the newly visible, Mongolian masses—whose "national liberation" were central narratives in the official social imaginaries of both the Autonomous Period (1911-1919) and the socialist period—here Zawa Damdin ambiguously produces an expansive historical vision of the Mongol people, but seems to lament their empowerment in the revolutionary period. With the decline of enlightened authority, the lowly, decidedly unenlightened Mongol laity and commoners not only occupied positions of power, but even crossed into monastic space. These all stand in the sharpest of contrasts to the socio-political and religious order represented by the Qing, before the enlightened authority of the Two Systems retreated in the face of monastic and lay degeneracy in the mid-nineteenth century (examined at the end of this chapter). I examine this in much more detail in the following chapter, but provide a brief overview here since the social reversals represented by the empowerment of the Mongol masses (and, in places, their efforts to reform Buddhist institutionalism) produced a variety of social of reversals that also define Zawa Damdin's construction of the dystopia of the post-imperium.

For example, the increased social mobility of the Mongolia masses is set into history in the *Golden Book* by being derided for its collective moral degeneracy. For example, quoting a prophecy from the Buddha, he writes:

⁴⁵¹ Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*.

When the Buddha's teaching has almost completely degenerated,⁴⁵² all monastics will behave badly [...] They will find a house and take a wife. At that time, the laity will follow after another's wife and have affairs. The monastic saṅgha will just have the sign and name (of renunciants), that is all!"⁴⁵³

Zawa Damdin is careful to draw attention to the final line of this prophecy, and so connect his present with the fullest degeneration anticipated in the Buddhist canon: "(At that time), barbarians will control the (Buddhist) dharma."⁴⁵⁴

But of course, it was not only the sex lives of monastics or a newly mobile population of moral deviants that set the degeneration of the nationalist formation into history for this conservative monk. Instead, his problem was primarily connected to the location of Buddhism in the new secular public sphere. For example, interpreting a passage from the canonical *Root Tantra of Mañjuśrī*,⁴⁵⁵ he writes:

Because of the nature of the times, in both central and peripheral countries, political and religious authority and law has become looser and looser. Eventually, in China, Tibet, and Mongolia religion and politics will loose their connection. Then their own barbaric countrymen will 'eat (their land) as if it was food.

In case his readers missed his thinly veiled point, he writes emphatically, "Nowadays, this has all come to fruition!"⁴⁵⁶ Returning again to the dire consequences of the reversal of social hierarchies, Zawa Damdin quotes a warning given by the Jebzundamba V during the mid-nineteenth-century resettlement of Ikh Khüree:

452 Tib. *rtsod ldan gyi dus*; Skt. *kaliyuga*.

453 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 133–134.

454 Ibid., 134.

455 *S. Ārya-mañjuśrī-mūla-tantra*; T. 'Jam dpal rtsa rgyud.

456 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 241.

You all (must listen)! (In the future), the understanding of higher persons will become lower, and the understanding of lower persons will become higher. Also, higher persons will become scared of lower persons.⁴⁵⁷

Reading revolutionary events through this prophecy, Zawa Damdin writes that in Ikh Khüree, “since ancient times, they united religion and politics. If today and in the future we are changing this, then higher and lower beings will misunderstand each other,” and “our religion will become killing.”⁴⁵⁸

The quotation given just above, for example, comes after a long section on the genealogy of the head of Zawa Damdin’s banner, Tusheyetu Khan. “The sovereign Mañjuśrī Emperor,” we are told, “praised the successive Tusheyetu Khaans as the rulers of Khalkha.”⁴⁵⁹ However, as the noble blood of Chinggis Khaan flowed nearer the authorial present, via the generations of the Tusheyetu Khan lineage, a problematic blurring of human lineage manifested. Zawa Damdin returns again and again in the *Golden Book* to the problematic ambiguity between nobility and commoners, and between monastics and the laity, in the post-imperium. For example:

Nowadays, as it is said in Lhatsün Jangchup Ö’s *Letter Which Reverses Mantra*:⁴⁶⁰

Increasing copulation creates disorder in human lineages; Increase liberation, and by this, stop sleeping (*nyal thag*) (with) goats and sheep!

Because it is the case that nearly everyone, beginning with lamas and leaders down to everyday monks and lay people, are rapists/adulterers (T. *byi bo byed mkhan*). Consequently human lineages have become confused in both the center and borderlands. Of this, it is said, “The father’s sons are only a very few, (while) the mother’s sons are everyone!

457 Ibid., 403.

458 Ibid.

459 Ibid., 322.

460 T. *Lha btsun byang chub* ‘od, 1186-1259. The king of mNga’ ris in the west of the Tibetan cultural region, he was partly responsible for inviting the Bengali master Atiśa Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna (the founder of the bKa’ gdams school) to Tibet. Unfortunately, I am unable to locate any bibliographic information about the “Letter Which Reverses Mantra” (T. *sNgags log springs yig*) at this time.

Because the faulty deeds (referenced) in this saying have now descended upon us, we should all feel very shameful!

The rulers of ancient India, China, Mongolia and Tibet made very strict rules (concerning sexual misconduct). The purpose of this was not to kill children, but rather was a way to stop the (people) entering the door of copulation that is sexual misconduct. As it says here, (to do this) is to sever the tradition of the Pure Human Dharmic Laws.⁴⁶¹ From this, do not disparage the laws of kings as the lower actions of misbehaving humans. [...]

In earlier times, rulers together with their ministers and subjects generally abided by the ten virtuous actions, and in particular by the Sixteen Pure Human Laws. As such, (they maintained) the glorious Two Systems, and this was the means by which, from the point of view of what seemed merely like a diversion, they traveled in stages along the right path to truly high and definite goodness [ie. higher rebirth and liberation].⁴⁶²

For Zawa Damdin, an embattled Buddhist abbot two decades into the socialist period, a generation of heedless Mongolians had re-organized Ikh Khüree, and so had re-organized Mongolian society away from Buddhism towards the coarse embrace of unenlightened political leadership and broad social empowerment. The new authority of the “barbaric”, “degenerate” Mongolian masses, which had until the nationalist turn been safely controlled by monastic estates and enlightened political authority, signaled the end of the Buddhist dispensation and civilization itself. These monastic sources stand in the sharpest contrast to the triumphant, emancipatory rhetoric of progressive Buddhist leaders extolling the liberation of the Mongolian masses and the return to original, pure Buddhism.

461 The “Sixteen Pure Human Laws” (T. *mi chos gtsang ma bcu drug*) are commonly attributed to the seventh-century Buddhist King of imperial Tibet, Songtsen Gampo (T. *Srong btsan sgam po*, c. 607-650). Though their number and content often differ, Zawa Damdin provides the following list in the *Golden Book*: Venerate the Three Jewels and Practice Holy Dharma; (Come to) Possess Merit and Respect (Your) Father and Mother; Respect Those of High Lineage and the Elderly; Maintain Friends and Government and Health for your Countrymen; Be Straightforward of Mind as If (You Had) One Eye Only; Be Competent in (Amassing) Food and Wealth Free of Deceit; Refrain from Envy, and Equalize (Yourself) With Everyone; Do Not Base Your Mind on Women, and; (Make Your) Great Vehicle Pleasant; and (practice) Wise Speech.

462 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 323–324.

4 Real Time, Place, and Subjectivity in Zawa Damdin's Histories

4.1 Delimiting Mongolia and the Mongols

For the remainder of this chapter I examine Zawa Damdin's extensive narratives of a real (ie. affected by narrative chronology) Mongolian history, territory, and subjecthood that had led to the dystopia of the post-imperial present he so lamented. As we shall see, in his histories Zawa Damdin circumscribes a vast geographic space and a field of everyday Mongolian actors ("barbarian" and Buddhist alike) that both engages and circumscribes the "empty time" of the enlightened drama of the Three Waves (the subject of the following chapter). For example, from an introduction to the "Early Dispensation of Buddhism into Mongolia," Zawa Damdin writes:

Like this, that which is called the "continent of Asia"⁴⁶³ is otherwise known as the "Mongol Country of the Northeast."⁴⁶⁴

From where did the first settlers⁴⁶⁵ (come to) the territories of upper, lower, and middle Hor?⁴⁶⁶ As for the ancestral proliferation⁴⁶⁷ and origins of the (Mongol) laity and farmers, from the sayings of the great Sakya patriarchs:⁴⁶⁸

In the north of the north of the world there is (what is) called the "Kingdom of Great Hor." (This kingdom) has three hundred and sixty different races,⁴⁶⁹ and seven hundred and twenty different languages. [*Interlinear note: (The) country]

463 *A tsi ya 'i gling.*

464 *Byang shar mong gol gyi yul ljongs.*

465 *Khod pa 'i mi rnams kyi thog mar.*

466 According to the spatial conventions of these Tibeto-Mongolian sources, "upper" (*stod*) generally refers to "west" and "lower" (*smad*) to "east".

467 *mched pa 'i rigs brgyud.*

468 As we shall see in the next chapter on the "three waves" of Buddhist dispensation into Mongolia, it was representative of the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism (*Sa skya*) who acted as imperial preceptors to Khubilai Khaan and his immediate descendents. The most prominent examples are Sakya Paṇḍita and his nephew, Chögyel Phakpa Lōdro. For Qing-era Mongolian historians, the Sakya patriarchs thus "converted" the Mongol court of the Yuan dynasty in the thirteenth century. See: *The History of Mongolia Vol. 2, Yuan and Late Medieval Period* (S.I.: s.n.], 2010).

469 *mi rigs.*

resembles a bird-net.⁴⁷⁰ Their hats resemble a white hawk.⁴⁷¹ Their boots resemble pig's snouts. They sustain themselves by means of tending the four types of livestock⁴⁷² and agriculture.

(Other) earlier and later prophecies say the same thing.⁴⁷³

Having provided a vast, quantitative vision of the Mongolian people's in this way, Zawa Damdin moves to distinguish a singular Mongolian people (*hor sok mi rigs*) from their linguistic and territory plurality. It is particularly notable that our author explicitly identifies his historical object as "everyday Mongolian people,"⁴⁷⁴ which builds on precedents from his interpretative community introduced above, but which also seems to exist in an ambiguous relationship with the nationalist rhetoric of Mongolian revolutionary politics:

Furthermore, the biography of the great scholar of Lhotrak⁴⁷⁵ says that:

Human genealogy has its source in the gods.
(Just as) the waterways have their source in snow.

Just as this says, many of the earlier and later royal lineages of Hor have come from divine pedigree.⁴⁷⁶ Because the explanation of this is (already) well known everywhere in our own and other's lands, here I am going to show the perspective of everyday Mongolian people who possess the divinely-originated paternal 'bone' lineage⁴⁷⁷ and maternal lineage^{478 479}.

470 *bya rgya*.

471 *khra dkar*.

472 *phyugs rigs bzhi*: cattle, sheep, camels, and horses.

473 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 67.

474 *Hor gyi mi byings kyī dbang du byas na*.

475 *Lho brag mkhan chen*. There are two incarnations to whom this may refer, both of whom were thirteenth century Sakya masters in the Géluk graduated path tradition (*lam rim*): Senggé Zangpo (*Seng ge bzang po*) and Namka Gyelpo (*Nam mkha' rgyal po*). Both of their biographies are included in: Ye shes rgyal mtshan, *Lam Rim Bla Ma Brgyud Pa'i Rnam Thar*, 2 vols. ('Bar khams: rNga khul bod yig rtsom sgyur cus, 198AD).

476 *lha'i gdung brgyud*. Here our author is surely referring to the *borjigin* aristocratic descendents of Chinggis Khaan, who were still assigned administrative positions in Mongol banners throughout the Qing.

477 *rus*.

478 *cho 'brang*.

Zawa Damdin's literary construction of the real chronotope of the Mongols and Mongolia comes in a characteristic form from the earlier section of the *Dharma Conch*:

As for how people settled here in this land of Hor,
 In olden times a goddess split from the heavenly realms
 And was banished to Mt. Meru.
 The curse of the other Gods transformed her
 Body into that of a demon-ness, and for that reason she and
 Five hundred other demons came to this place of Hor.
 Later, a great leader of men came to Mt. Meru
 From the Noble Land of India in search of gold.
 He came to be called the great bodhisattva "Obagcan",⁴⁸⁰
 And gathered around him a group of five hundred merchants.
 This was the manner by which they came to possess the name "Gold."
 From what is said in the *Prophecy of Khotan Sūtra*,
 These were called "Hor peoples."
 According to an ancient story,
 The Mutkal people⁴⁸¹ came to Hor from the
 Noble Land (of India) with loaded camels.
 These camels came from the right side of a snow mountain and
 Stayed in this country.
 Then, eventually, the lands of upper, middle and lower Hor became divided.

(‘Mutkal’) was the basis for what later became the corrupted name (*ming zur chag pa*)
 ‘Mongol’ (*mon kol*).⁴⁸²

Anticipating my analysis of Zawa Damdin's practice of history, notice in the above quotation his use of philology to recover a "Mongol" history from the "corrupted names" of his sources; an interpretative move we have seen had long been in use beginning with Gombojab's eighteenth-century reading of Chinese sources to produce the influential *History of Buddhism in China*.

479 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 68.

480 'Od bag can.

481 Mut+ka la'i rigs.

482 *Dharma Conch*, p. 11-12.

The real chronotope of Mongolian space, time, and subjectivity is laid out most explicitly and extensively in the first section⁴⁸³ of the *Dharma Conch*, entitled the “Sarga Which Reveals the Arrangement of the Regions.”⁴⁸⁴ Zawa Damdin provides his commentary in the first hundred pages or so of the *Golden Book*, in a section entitled “An Explanation of the Source of the Arrangement of the World and Its Contents, Along with Its History.”⁴⁸⁵ As mentioned above, this opening section of the *Golden Book* is prefaced with a fascinating Occidentalist refutation of “European” scientific positivism, which I examine in some detail in the final chapter on our author’s historical practice. For our purposes here, it is enough to cite Zawa Damdin’s summary of his spatialization of the Mongol imagined community:

It is said that the abode of India is a precious land like a canopy of silk, Tajik⁴⁸⁶ and Khotan⁴⁸⁷ are desirable realms in the shape of a chariot, the land of Hor and China are amazing lands similar to a blossoming flower, and the snowy region of Tibet is like a demon(ess) laying on (her) back.⁴⁸⁸

483 *Sa+rga*.

484 *Yul gru’i bkod pa bstan pa’i sa+rga*.

485 *sNod bcud gyi bkod pa ‘byung khungs lo rgyus dang bcas pa te bshad pa*.

486 *Ta zig*. I wish to thank Dr. Vesna Wallace for clarifying this and several other naming conventions which Zawa Damdin derived from the Kālacakra system. In what follows I will not have space to try and reconcile the perplexing ethnic naming conventions of the Tibeto-Mongolian scholastic tradition with their more recognizable English language forms. Since my analytical point in this chapter is to show that Zawa Damdin’s historical practices was focused equally on discerning the development of a vast Mongolian social imaginary as the basis for his expansive history of the Two Systems in Mongolia, for the most part I leave aside the important, but momentous, project of comparative analysis of the ethnonyms he uses for a latter study. I am at peace with this decision, since it is precisely the ambiguity of ethnonyms found in the Tibeto-Mongolian archive that allowed for Zawa Damdin and his interpretative community to interpret “Mongol” histories in their contents, and which provided fodder for their fascinating historiographic debates. Since they may be of some interest to scholars of comparative Inner Asian history, however, I include the transliteration of Zawa Damdin’s usage in footnotes and simply insert the most common English translation in my quotations, or else a transcription when these are not available. For a list of some of the most common “others that matter” in the context of Tibetan medical histories, see: Garrett, “Critical Methods in Tibetan Medical Histories.”

487 *Li yul*.

488 For an interesting reflection on enduring legend of the subjugation of a female demon as the founding act of bringing Buddhism to Tibet, see: Janet Gyatso, “Down with the Demoness: Reflections on a Feminine Ground in Tibet,” in *Feminine Ground: Essays on Women and Tibet*, ed. Janice Dean Willis (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 1995), 33–51.

The essential and brief meaning of all this is that in the world⁴⁸⁹ (there are) central, easterly, westerly, southerly, and northerly parts. In the “central composite part”,⁴⁹⁰ are Tibet, Khotan, Upper Hor, and so forth. In the easterly part are the lands of China, and⁴⁹¹ Great China, the Mentsi,⁴⁹² the Manchus,⁴⁹³ and so forth. In the southern part is (made up) principally of India, which (may) include or exclude many other subcontinents.⁴⁹⁴ In the westerly part are many barbarous lands, such as the lands of Persia,⁴⁹⁵ Tukhara,⁴⁹⁶ and many lands of foreigners and Timdus,⁴⁹⁷ such as the Yiwes,⁴⁹⁸ Arabs,⁴⁹⁹ and so forth. In the northerly part are many Hor and Sok lands, such as the Land of Great Hor⁵⁰⁰ and many lands of different types of barbarians,⁵⁰¹ such as the Hwasak,⁵⁰² Khotsak,⁵⁰³ Kygyrz,⁵⁰⁴ and so forth. To the north of all these is supreme land of Śambhala, which includes the Ninety Six Great Lands, (such as) the land of Tsampaka,⁵⁰⁵ the Land of the Monkey, the land of Those Possessing Golden Eyes, Rugma,⁵⁰⁶ Burama,⁵⁰⁷ the one called “Gold,” and so forth.

489 S. *Jambudvīpa*; T. ‘*Dzam bu gling*. “In Sanskrit, “The Rose-Apple Continent”; corresponding to India. Jambudvīpa is the southernmost of the four continents where humanbeings reside in this world, along with VIDEHA (to the east of the world’s axis mundi, MT. SUMERU), GODĀNĪYA (to the west), and UTTARAKURU (to the north). [...] At the center of Jambudvīpa is found the VAJRĀSANA (“diamond seat”), the spot where the buddhas realize their enlightenment; hence, Jambudvīpa is always the continent where buddhas spend their final lifetimes establishing their dispensations and is therefore the most auspicious site beings to take rebirth” (Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 377–378.

490 *byas pa’i dbus kyi char*.

491 “And” (*dang*) inserted as an interlinear note.

492 *Man tsi*.

493 *Man ju*.

494 *gZhan de’i char gtogs pa dang mi gtogs pa’i gling phran mang po*.

495 *Par sig*.

496 *Tho gar*. “Tukhara, n. of a place and people in the north-west of India” (Sarat Chandra Das, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary: With Sanskrit Synonyms* (Asian Educational Services, 1902), 589.

497 *Tim du*.

498 *Yi wes*.

499 *A+rbi sa*. It is admittedly an interpretative leap to assume this means “Arabs”, since it could also be transliterated as “Arbisa”.

500 *Chen po hor yul*.

501 *kLa klo rigs mi gcig pa’i yul*.

502 *Hwa sag*.

503 *Kho tsag*.

504 *Khiri ki si*.

505 *Tsam+pa ka*.

506 *Rug ma*.

507 *Bu ras+ma*.

Furthermore, it is explained that there are the many abodes of the gods, demi-gods, kinnaras,⁵⁰⁸ gandharvas,⁵⁰⁹ Nöjen,⁵¹⁰ and rakśa demons. (There are also) many wondrous, such as (those) exclusively replete with fearful plains, isolated wilderness, jewels, snow, ice, and so forth.⁵¹¹

In the *Dharma Conch*, Zawa Damdin continues to clarify this revolutionary-era Mongol spatial imaginary by appeal to the work of the twelfth century Sakya patriarch, Kunga Nyingpo,⁵¹² using the citation to raise the problem of an effaced Mongol history and spatiality:

According to Sachen Kunga Nyingpo,
 “The expanse of the land of Hor [possesses] the
 Three hundred and sixty different human races,
 And the seven hundred and twenty different regional dialects.”
 Any explanation similar to this is true.
 For example, in the Noble Land (of India)
 [Where] previously there had been many Hor and Sok people,
 They were called “Sukhapāna,”⁵¹³
 Also, [in] barbarian lands such as Kashmir, Persia, Turkistan and so forth,
 As well, in Tibet, Khotan and the Land of China,
 Mixed Hor and Sok people also have abided.
 Also, in the land of Russia, there are a great many
 Kazakhs, Tartars, Khalmyks and Kyrgyz peoples and so forth.
 In this way, (Mongol peoples) span from the east to the west, reaching the edge of the
 ocean.⁵¹⁴

508 *Mi 'am ci*. “A class of wondrous celestial musicians in the court of KUBERA, ranking below the GANDHARVA” (Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 436.).

509 *Dri za*. Literally, “smell eaters”, these are understood to be the form samsaric beings take in the intermediate state, after death in one lifetime, but prior to the following rebirth. Their bodies are thought to be so subtle that they can only subsist on smell, and not more solid substances. See: *Ibid.*, 311–312.

510 *sNod sbyan*.

511 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 52–53.

512 *Sa chen kun dga' snying po*, 1092-1158. Kunga Nyinpo was the third of the five patriarchs of the early Sakya school (*Sa skya gong ma*), immediately preceeding Sakya Paṇḍita and Chögyel Pakpa Lodro, who resided in the Mongol Yuan court.

513 *Su kha pA na*.

514 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Hor Gyi Yul Du Dam Pa'i Chos Rin Po Che Byung Tshul Gyi Gtam Rgyud Bkra Shis Chos Dung Bzhad Pa'i Sgra Dbyangs/,” 9–10.

Zawa Damdin elaborated upon his vision of real Mongolian history by extensively engaging in a creative sort of philology, discerning “Mongolia” (ie. *hor sok yul*) and the Mongols (ie. *hor sok mi rigs*) by means of clarifying their names from the eclectic archival and secondary sources he had available. One further example comes from the *Golden Book* will suffice here, which comes in the prefatory statements on the early spread of Buddhism into Mongol lands. Of note is how this philological analysis embeds “the Mongols” still further into the varieties of “others that matter” from his Inner Asian monastic position (Indians, Chinese, Tibetans, and European “foreigners”):

From amongst all these places, (we are known) to those of the Noble Land (of India) as “Sukapāna,” to the Chinese as “Tātsi,”⁵¹⁵ and to the Tibetans as “Hor” or “Sokpo.”

(Our land) is very famous to Westerners⁵¹⁶ such as the “Foreigners”⁵¹⁷ as “Dharadhana,”⁵¹⁸ or “Tartary.”⁵¹⁹ Across our own and others’ lands, (we) are known as “Mongol”.⁵²⁰

Embedding the Mongols into these linguistic-cultural frameworks is followed in both the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book* by an extended dialogical narrative that effectively circumscribes what Mongolian space *is* by means of summarizing what it is *not*. The sources for this exercise draw heavily upon geographical works produced by cosmopolitanist Monguor and Mongol Géluk scholars with whom we are now becoming quite familiar. For instance, from the *Golden Book*:

⁵¹⁵ *TA tsi*.

⁵¹⁶ *Nub phyogs pa*.

⁵¹⁷ *Phe ring gi*.

⁵¹⁸ *D+ha ra d+ha na*.

⁵¹⁹ *Tha tha ri*.

⁵²⁰ *Mon gol*. bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 53.

As for the districts of Great Hor: On its southern borders are the land of Thukara, the Noble Land (of India), Khotan, Tibet, China, and the land of Kali.⁵²¹ In the east (it borders) the great ocean. In the west (it extends) up until the “Ever Cool Lake,”⁵²² and Turkey’s Black Sea.⁵²³ (On its) northern limits are some very vast and extensive lands connected with Kelasha,⁵²⁴ such as Russia,⁵²⁵ and so forth.

Foreigners call (this) “the Continent of Asia.”⁵²⁶

What a stunning conclusion! It is one that surely sets Zawa Damdin’s participation in the cosmopolitan, Qing-era interpretative community in the post-imperium, when such European categories were in great circulation (as we shall see in greater detail later in this chapter).

In both the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book*, our author’s circuitous, methodical construction of the vast Mongol spatial *imaginaire* then becomes the basis for honing a more focused, negative hermeneutic. This marks a transition to delimiting Mongol lineages and customs; a more explicit focus on clarifying the “contents” (*bcud*) and not just the “vessel” (*snod*) of real Mongolian time, space, and subjectivity. For example, from the *Golden Book*:

Indeed, most of the lands (of Hor) have fearsome sandy deserts with very little mountains, forests, or rivers. Because it is very cold, no one except those (who live) close to the border with China, Thokara, and so forth can cultivate fields and so forth. There are few walled cities. Most people are nomads who possess felt tents⁵²⁷ and sustain themselves by means of horses, sheep, camels, and cattle.⁵²⁸

521 *K.wa li*.

522 *mTtsho ma dros pa*: Lake Manasarovar near Mt. Kailash, major Himalayan pilgrimage points for Inner Asian Buddhists, Bön practitioners and South Asian Hindus alike. For Buddhists, both are part of the twenty-four sacred sites associated with the tantric Buddha Heruka Cakrasamvara. See: David B Gray, “The Cakrasamvara Tantra: Its History, Interpretation, and Practice in India and Tibet,” *REC3 Religion Compass* 1, no. 6 (2007): 695–710.

523 *Tu ru Sh+ka’i mtsho nag po*.

524 *Ke+E la sha*.

525 *O ru su*.

526 *Phe ring dag gis a tsi ya’i gling zer*. bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 53–54.

527 *Phying gur*.

528 *Ibid.*, 54.

In the *Dharma Conch*, Zawa Damdin summarizes his general delimitation of the real Mongol chronotope into three ethnic-state units, just as earlier Monguor Géluk scholars such as Drakgön Zhapdrung Könchok Tenpa Rapgyé had done in their eighteenth-century cartographic histories of eastern Tibet. Of interest are his methodological reflections on the trouble associated with recovering such a dispersed people from the available sources (though not the trouble of projecting a fixed and consensual Mongolian community across Asian history!):

In this land of Sok, even though
The three divisions of 'Upper, Lower and Middle'
Are well known from previous ages,
Since in general (the residents of) each division
Have wandered and forgot from whence they came,
(When one tries) to identify them, it proves difficult.

Therefore, ancient Tibet, Upper Hor, and the
Yihe Mongols⁵²⁹ this land
Were known according to the districts (*yul gru*) of Hor and Sok.
Yanchang Upper Sok,⁵³⁰ the Four Clans of the Oirat,⁵³¹
The Seven Khalkha Clans,⁵³² the Bhata Hor,⁵³³ the Urāng-hé,⁵³⁴ and so forth, Make up
Middle Sok.

Outer and Inner texts⁵³⁵ strongly correspond
In saying that the name “Middle Sok” designates
“Pargopuryāda”⁵³⁶ and the Great Forty-Nine Clans of the Solon Chahar.⁵³⁷

Across the vast expanse of Hor’s regions, in ancient times
Glaciers covered the upper part,
Ice covered the middle, and

529 *Yi he mon kol*.

530 *Yan chang stod sog*.

531 *Os rong tsho bzhi*.

532 *Hal ha tsho ba bdun*.

533 *B+ha Ta hor*.

534 *U rAng has*.

535 I.e. “Buddhist” and “Non-Buddhist.”

536 *Par go pur yA da*.

537 *So lon cha har*.

In the lower part there were only rivers and oceans.⁵³⁸

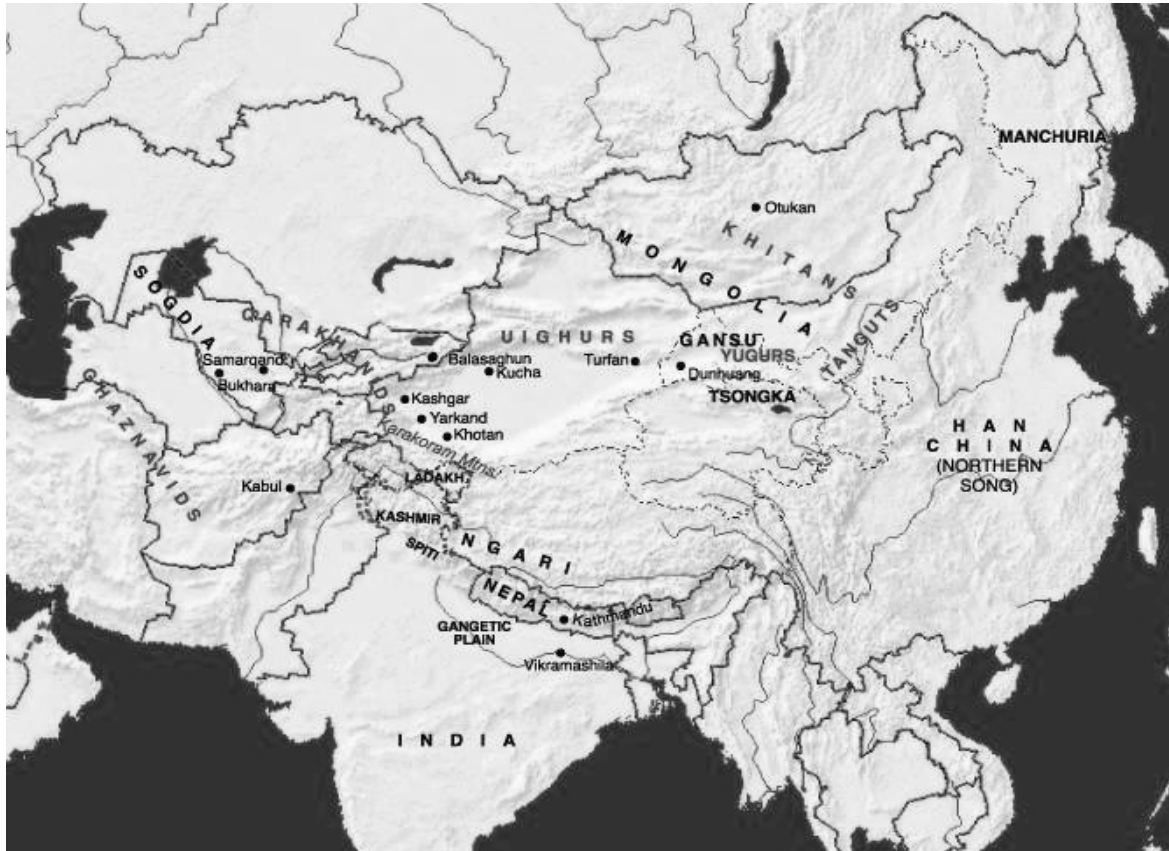
4.2 Claiming a Mongol Khotan

By way of concluding Zawa Damdin's vast literary construction of the real Mongol chronotope, mention must be made of two recurring topics that underpin his construction of the empty chronotope of enlightened authority examined in the next chapter. The first claims the ancient Central Asian city-state of Khotan as "Mongol," in direct ethnoreligious continuity with Zawa Damdin's own Khalkha milieu at the beginning of the twentieth century. In this, our author wades into a longstanding debate in the Tibeto-Mongolian scholastic tradition as to the providence of Khotan.⁵³⁹ The second is a negative hermeneutic meant to differentiate Mongol peoples from other groups represented in his Tibeto-Mongolian sources, including "barbarians" (T. *kla klo*), Tibetans, Chinese, and Indians.

In extended, repeated sections from both histories, Zawa Damdin builds upon his delimitation of a vast Mongolian geography (that, as we have seen, includes at times all of Asia!) by examining the living 'contents' (*bcud*) of the 'vessel' (*nod*) of Khotan, which in turn selectively collapses or highlights differences with those "others that matter" whom we have already met in the citations above (ie. the Tibetans (*bod mi rigs*), Indians (*rgya gar mi rigs*) and Chinese (*rgya nag mi rigs*). By this, the real spatial, temporal, and subjective chronotope of Mongolia is clarified in order to narrate the periodic appearance of the empty enlightened authority of the Two Systems, the subject of the following chapter.

538 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Hor Gyi Yul Du Dam Pa'i Chos Rin Po Che Byung Tshul Gyi Gtam Rgyud Bkra Shis Chos Dung Bzhad Pa'i Sgra Dbyangs/," 9–10.

539 For a survey of occurrences of "li yul" in Tibetan canonical and exegetical literature by two contemporary Tibetan scholars, see: rGyal mo 'brug pa, "Li Yul Zhes Pa'i Yul Ming Las 'Phros Pa'i Gtam," *Bod Ljongs Zhib 'Jug* 89, no. 1 (2004): 8–14; Kha sgang bkra shis tshe ring, "Bod Kyi Yig Rnying Du Gsal Ba'i Li Yul Gyi Lo Rgyus Khag Cig La Dpyad Pa," *Krung Go'i Bod Rig Pa* 70, no. 2 (2005): 49–62.



Central and Inner Asia (including Khotan), Approximately 1000 C.E.⁵⁴⁰

Khotan was a Buddhist city-state that existed for the first millennium of the Common Era on the edge of the Taklamakan desert in the Tarim basin. The centrality of Khotan⁵⁴¹ (*li yul*) in Zawa Damdin's *imaginaire* of the Buddhist past cannot be overstated. It is the subject of, and evidence for, dozens of his arguments across all three dispensations. Khotan and Khotanese

540 *Central Asia at the Time of the Qarakhanid Invasion of Khotan, Approximately 1000 CE.* (http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/ebooks/unpublished_manuscripts/historical_interaction/pt3/historical_cultures_15.html). Retrieved July 30, 2012.

541 Translating “the land of Li” so simply as Khotan done with some reservation, since by doing so I claim some sure knowledge about its identity (a territory now part of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region in the PRC). I do so because I am not concerned with judging who of these authors of history were correct and who were not, nor am I concerned with synthesizing the sum of their mythological imagination to come up with some conclusion of my own as to just what Li yul was. It is as a fluid referent, claimed in a breadth of Buddhist canonical literature, that makes its identity such a coveted topic for these authors. I use “Khotan” here for simplicities sake (since this is the standard definition of ‘li yul’ in most dictionaries), but in fact I am very happy to let it float as simply a referent that helps us track modes of making historical arguments intelligible. Additionally, it so happens that the Khotan of Xinjiang roughly matches Zawa Damdin's own geo-historical position, compared earlier historians who identified it with Nepal.

actors surface again and again as he seeks to both define the geographic and ethnic parameters of the Mongol community and describe their ancient migrations. Khotan also underpins many of his most radical propositions concerning not only the early diffusion of Buddhism into Hor-Sok territory, but also his identification of Mongol actors in the well-worn narratives of the Buddhicization of Tibet and China that had long been forwarded by his interpretative community. Khotan is, in a most fundamental sense, a historic “event” whose capture by means of his mobilization of various interpretative strategies allows Zawa Damdin to begin what are explicitly texts about Buddhist history in Khalkha with a Hor-Sok “contact point” between Khalkha Mongol Buddhists in the early twentieth century and actors from the cherished early Indian dispensation into Central Asia, and beyond that, with the historical Buddha himself. It also allows our author to recover a hazy Hor-Sok Buddhist history not only prior to the Buddhicization of China and Tibet, but also (in its most radical articulation), the history of Hor-Sok actors as catalysts for the Buddhist conversion of China and Tibet. As we shall see in the final chapter on his historical, Zawa Damdin’s somewhat radical claim on Khotan was not without controversy; Agvan Dorjiev challenged Zawa Damdin on his position, and the latter’s defense is a rare insight into just what was at stake in terms of the broad social *imaginaire* of these works, should Khotan be allowed to fall out of the fold of the real Mongol chronotope of these works.

While all the extensive narrative details cannot detain us here, an extended passage from the *Golden Book* will allow us to get a good sense of this late Mongolian Buddhist claim on Khotanese place. Of note especially in the narrative below is the insertion of the authorial voice (which claims to have reconciled the debate over Khotan), and the author’s present (the encounter with a Russian scholar):

Furthermore, the region of Hor is divided into three sections; upper (right), lower (left) and center. ‘Upper (Hor)’ is itself divided into two sections; east and west. Near the west is Tibet, and to the northwest of Tibet are Ngari⁵⁴² and Ladakh.⁵⁴³ Not far to the north of there, if you pass through the place (which has) a great chain of snowy mountains and a fearsome sandy desert, there is Gosathānte,⁵⁴⁴ (which is) the “Land of Li Possessing Virtue”,⁵⁴⁵ [ie. Khotan, in this reading]. (This place) exists nowadays and is called Hwétheng.⁵⁴⁶ That country is also called “Little Thukara.”⁵⁴⁷

The *Prophecy of Ox-Horn Mountain Sūtra*, Xuanzang’s *Pilgrimage Guide*, and the *History of the Sandalwood Jowo*,⁵⁴⁸ and so forth, (all) only refer to one thing: that which is called the “Land of Li” [Khotan].

Even though this Land of Li is very famous like the wind in our times, people variously recognize it.⁵⁴⁹ Except (for me), (no one) clearly “finds (this) land (with their) index finger” [ie. no one can definitively point to it]!

Quite a few Upper Hor regions are part of that country (of Khotan). There, in ancient times, the Buddha’s teachings extensively spread. In the south-east of that (place), to the east close to the Snowy (Mountains), they have (a place called) “Kasikārate.”⁵⁵⁰ Nowadays this is called “Kashgar.”⁵⁵¹ To the northeast of Yi li⁵⁵², in a nearby place is Léyül Khusennam of the land of Lé,⁵⁵³ which exists nowadays under the name of Kuchen.⁵⁵⁴ The Sandalwood Jowo (statue) of the Chinese palace was brought to China from that place. From Kuchen to the east, there is a barbarian fortress called “Harshār.”⁵⁵⁵ Near that place, the King of Torkö⁵⁵⁶ has his winter residence.

542 *mNga’ ris*

543 *La d.wags.*

544 *Go sa thAn te.*

545 *Li yul dge ba can.*

546 *H.we theng.*

547 *Tho dkar chung ba.*

548 *Tsan+dan jo bo’i lo rgyus.*

549 *Ngos ‘dzin mi ‘dra ba sna tshogs byed pa.*

550 *Ka si kA ra te.*

551 *Ha sha har.*

552 *Yi li.*

553 *Le yul khu sen nam.*

554 *Ku chen.*

555 *Har shAr.*

556 *Thor kwod rgyal po.* Perhaps the sultans of the Ottoman Empire?

The Hor land of Yili, Adumchi,⁵⁵⁷ and Tharbakte⁵⁵⁸ are all included as part of Li yul.

To the west of that land of Khotan, if you cross the huge range of snowy mountains, there is a southern group of Sok people [ie. Mongol] people called the “Hekukhānte”,⁵⁵⁹ who are nowadays known as the “Khohan”,⁵⁶⁰ whose origins are in northern India. In that country, Indians have mixed with Hor-Sok peoples. In ancient times, they extensively established the Buddha’s teachings.

Not far to the west of Ngari and Ladakh is Kashmir⁵⁶¹ and Muslim lands. To the south of there, near the west side of the river Kamkara,⁵⁶² they have a huge savage city called “Seemānha.”⁵⁶³ To the east of there is “Mogeldhesa”,⁵⁶⁴ and also a great land known (simple as) a “land of Sok peoples.”

Some time ago, a Euro-Russian scholar⁵⁶⁵ showed me an image⁵⁶⁶ of some of that country’s important people, such as the king, ministers, and so forth, and the royal palace, and some temples and some stūpas. Of those, he said (to me), “This is the homeland of you Mongol peoples,⁵⁶⁷ which is today connected to India!” He showed me by comparing the co-ordinates from both an atlas⁵⁶⁸ and a globe.⁵⁶⁹ If we investigate, based on the (images of) temples and the stūpa, I think (that those Mongol peoples) are still Buddhists (today)!⁵⁷⁰

557 *A du+M chi.*

558 *Thar bag the.*

559 *He khu khAn te.*

560 *Kho han.*

561 *Ka smir.*

562 *Kam ka ra.*

563 *Se+e mAn ha.*

564 *Mo gal d+he sa.*

565 *rGya ser gyi mkhas pa.*

566 *‘Dra ris.*

567 *khyed rang sog po’i tsho’i rtsa ba’i yul.*

568 *‘dra ris kyi kha byang.*

569 *sa’i go la’i kha byang.*

570 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 54–55.

Here we are presented with Zawa Damdin's expansive literary construction of the real Mongol chronotope, the basis for the Buddhist dispensation via the empty chronotope of the Two Systems, and all drawn from Qing-era Géluk geographic reckoning and the newly available European sources of his revolutionary era.

4.3 Differentiating Virtuous (Buddhist) and Barbaric Mongols

On the basis of the ethnic connection drawn between Indians and Mongols (via Khotan), the *Golden Book* extends and nuances the ethnoreligious primordialism Johan Elverskog has noted in Qing-era works. It does, as we have just seen, by adopting interpretative precedents from those cosmopolitan Géluk scholars to materials newly available in the post-imperium, such as European scholarship. Before briefly surveying five primary sites where Zawa Damdin mediates European scholarship and literature at the end of this chapter, mention must be made of an interesting and recurring interpretative procedure used throughout the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book*. This seems to address some of the negative consequences of the expansive ethno-religious genesis Zawa Damdin narrates in these works, which as we have seen, at times associated Mongols with all of Asia and with the Buddhist dispensation writ large. This is a conclusion Zawa Damdin anticipates some of his readership making that would tie Mongols not only with Buddhist civility in Central, Inner, and parts of East Asia, but also with its demise in many of those locals in the millennia since the Buddha's death. While it is not an entirely unique procedure in the context of his interpretative community (for example, he finds an ally in sections from Mindröl Nonomhan's geographical work), it does position Zawa Damdin as a historian taking stock of Qing-era Buddhist historiography in the post-imperium. For that reason, I briefly summarize it here.

Defending against such a conclusion, Zawa Damdin turns to his sources in order to carefully differentiate virtuous from barbaric (*kla klo*) "Mongols" (ie. the Hor-Sok ethno-spatial

complex), often by means of systematizing typologies of barbarism more generally. Indeed, the danger Zawa Damdin perceives in claiming “hor” and “sok” references in the Tibetan record is that, in those texts, which he otherwise turns to as authoritative sources, Hor and Sok “others” were often used as a gloss for the very enemies of the Buddhadharma (such as Turkic Muslim invaders into north India, long credited in with destroying the famed Buddhist centers, such as Nālandā monastery, in the twelfth century). Zawa Damdin thus mounts a sustained polemic against such conclusions, squaring off against some of the most popular Tibetan-language Buddhist histories, such as Tāranātha’s famed 1608 *History of Buddhism in India*. For example, we read in the *Golden Book*:

From the Khohan to the north, there are barbarians called Bhalak⁵⁷¹ (*b+ha lag*) or Bhokār.⁵⁷² There are Mongolian peoples called Khelkpak⁵⁷³ to the east and west banks of Lake Manasarovar, to the west of great Tukhara. These peoples have very short bodies and very thick torsos. They cut the hair on their crown and their beards, and keep the sides very long. Their clothes look like those of the Tukhara, and their bodies look like those of the Goto.⁵⁷⁴ They are shameless, survive only on blood and meat, and look like demons.

To the east of Lake Manasarovar and to the north of the land of the Mūsik⁵⁷⁵ of the Southern Tukhara, there are two great, related Upper Hor groups: the “Barkhergi”⁵⁷⁶ and the Hasak.⁵⁷⁷ Those peoples are of the Sok [ie. Mongol] lineage and adhere to the religious tradition of the (One) named either “Honey of Intelligence”⁵⁷⁸ or “Makhamati”.⁵⁷⁹ They stay in tents and subsist using animals.

571 *B+ha lag*.

572 *B+ho kAr*.

573 *Khal pag*.

574 *G+ho To*.

575 *Mus sig*.

576 *Bar kher gi*.

577 *Ha sag*.

578 *sBrang rtsi blo gros*.

579 *Ma kha ma ti*; alias *S. Madhumati*, as found in the Kālacakrantra. I thank Dr. Vesna Wallace for this clarification.

To the southeast of the land of the Hasag, on the southern bank of the great lake called Hoshi [ie. Lake Baikal],⁵⁸⁰ which is ten times bigger than Lake Kokonor [ie. Lake Qinghai],⁵⁸¹ and so forth, there is a great Sok group called the “Buryat.”⁵⁸² Those people subsist in clans⁵⁸³ and tents, and survive by using cows, similar to the above (groups). In Khohan, “Black” Kelpag,⁵⁸⁴ Hasak, Purang,⁵⁸⁵ and Kherké,⁵⁸⁶ if visitors from other lands lose their family lineage [ie. if one’s parents die], then their wealth is taken away and they are made into slaves, or else they are killed, and so forth. They do unbefitting (sorts of activities), which is why people do not go there.⁵⁸⁷

Of great interest in all this is the fact that while such differentiation is carefully drawn, our author is at great pains to still include such varieties of barbarians into the grand, singular Mongol ethno-imaginary. Such selective differentiation and association had not always been part of the Tibeto-Mongolian historiographic tradition. For instance, identifying the Mongols with the Mughels was the conclusion of the famous Tibetan historian Tāranātha (1575-1634), whose positioning of Hor-Sok peoples in his famous 1608 *History of Buddhism in India*⁵⁸⁸ stands in opposition to Zawa Damdin’s own propositions. Such contrary views required reconciliation, and in this Zawa Damdin finds an ally in Mindröl Nomonhan’s *Geography of the World*,⁵⁸⁹ whose polemic against Tāranātha is incised *in toto* into the *Golden Book*:

The great *Geography of the World* says:

580 *Ho shi*.

581 *mTsho sngon*.

582 *Bur rAd*.

583 *sbra*.

584 Here Zawa Damdin writes *khar khal pag*, which seems to differentiate this group from the Khelpak people just mentioned by transcribe the Mongol word for “black”, *khar*.

585 *Pu rang*.

586 *Kher ke*.

587 *Golden Book*, p. 55-56.

588 Tāranātha, *Dam Pa'i Chos Rin Po Che "Phags Pa"i Yul Du Ji Ltar Dar Ba'i Tshul Gsal Ston Dgos 'Dod Kun 'Byung* (Khreng tu'u: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1994).

589 'Jam dpal chos kyi bstan 'dzin 'phrin la, *"Dzam Gling Chen Po"i Rgyas Bshad Snod Bcud Kun Gsal Me Long*.

In general, India's population was formerly both Hindu⁵⁹⁰ and Muselman.⁵⁹¹ These (two groups) are equivalents⁵⁹² in the Indian language. They are categorized according to (the following) well known four (castes): the kingly caste; the brahmin caste; the merchant caste; and the commoner caste.

Later, the names of barbarians⁵⁹³ were classified into four: Moghuls⁵⁹⁴ in the lineage of lords; Pathānas⁵⁹⁵ in the lineage of the military; Sayeetas⁵⁹⁶ in the lineage of gurus; and Seśas⁵⁹⁷ in the lineage of serfs.

According to Tāranātha, the Sok [ie. Mongol] peoples of India were called "Muselmans," "Moghuls," and so forth, and were barbarians. Their caste came from the direction of China, and they were called Kilmak.⁵⁹⁸ Furthermore, although (Tāranātha) says they were barbarians and explains (his position), all those Muselmans who were of Hor and Sok lineage were (actually) called "Halmik,"⁵⁹⁹ in the Persian language. Because of this, (Tāranātha) commits "the fault of not having knowledge."⁶⁰⁰

As for the "Moghuls," because this is (simply) the name of a (particular) human lineage [ie. not a religious group], (the proposition that they) are equivalent⁶⁰¹ to the "Muselman" [ie. a religious group], there is thus⁶⁰² "no pervasion,"⁶⁰³ [ie. his conclusions do not not logically follow his evidence]. As for the Muselman, because this

590 *Hind+hu*.

591 *Mu sAl man*, with "man" inserted as an interlinear note. Later in this long quote, "Muselman" is spelt *mu sAl mAn*.

592 *dod yin*.

593 *kla klo'i ming*.

594 *Mo+o gal*.

595 *Pa thA na*.

596 *Sa ye+e ta*.

597 *Se Sha*.

598 *Kil mag*.

599 *Hal mig*.

600 *rGyus med kyi skyon du gyur yin*. This is an example of precisely the sort of standardized reasoning derived from other arenas of scholastic inquiry and dialectics (as are the *la yang*, *de*, *khyab med*, and *khas lan*) put to use in Tibeto-Mongolian historiography, that I return to in the next chapter.

601 *la yang*.

602 *de*.

603 *khyab med*.

is not the name of a product of Sunita,⁶⁰⁴ assertions⁶⁰⁵ such as these⁶⁰⁶ by (Tāranātha) are improper⁶⁰⁷ and questionable.⁶⁰⁸

Nowadays, because of not differentiating⁶⁰⁹ between the distinguishing features⁶¹⁰ of Moghuls and Mongols, there are many illusions (that they are the same). As such, we must know the particular distinguishing features between the Moghuls, (with their) barbarian teacher “Honey of Intelligence” [Mohammed]⁶¹¹ and (their lowly) physical skills,⁶¹² and Mongols, (with their) Great King Temujin [Chinggis Khaan] and their Mongol armies.

As for the distinguishing features of Hindus and Muslims, there are ten particular dissimilarities called *dashakarma*⁶¹³ that (define) Indian religious adherents:

In greater or lesser detail, these are:

One keeps their hair in braids and one does not.
One pierces their ears and one does not.
One is circumscized one is not.
One cuts their beard and mustache and one does not.
The Musulman cannot go without eating killed flesh, (Hindus) do not eat (flesh).

(I) am not sure what to think (of all this)!

In general, barbarism is explained in the Kālacakra tantra, the sūtras and the Vedas as being of three types:

- 1) “Those Who Consider Harming Others as an Act of Faith,” which includes: Persians, Durushka, Tukharans, the Pashana Moghuls of India, the Sayet, the Sesha, etc., the Hushus⁶¹⁴ of China, and so forth.

604 *Su ni ta.*

605 *khas lan.*

606 *ltar.*

607 *mi rung.*

608 *snyam.*

609 *ma phye ba.*

610 *khyad.*

611 *kla klo'i ston pa sbrang rtsi'i blo gros.*

612 *rtal lag.*

613 *Da sha ka+rma:* ie. the ten ritual observances of Hindus.

614 *Hus hus.*

- 2) “Those Who Do Not Care To Know the Difference between Virtue and Negativity,” such as: the Gharo of India, the Lowakatra of Tibet, the Khoryāgkha,⁶¹⁵ and so forth.
- 3) “Those Without the Four Pure Types (of Buddhists),” such as: the Yellow Chinese; the Sok of Tibet, the Drodingwa,⁶¹⁶ and so forth, the Kémipa,⁶¹⁷ the Janglingpa,⁶¹⁸ those of Uddiyanna⁶¹⁹ and also Musalman, and so forth.

These are (all) called “barbarian.” If some of these (were to) enter the Buddhadharma by means of their actions, they would no longer be called a ‘barbarian.’”⁶²⁰

Zawa Damdin then picks up on Mindröl Nomonhan’s polemic by evoking another prominent Tibetan historian, Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa () (1504-1566).⁶²¹ In Zawa Damdin’s reading, the section on “Hor” from the latter’s famous history, the *Scholar’s Feast*⁶²² provides an excellent citation “proving” his spatial propositions that Hor-Sok peoples (barbarians and Buddhists) are of one single, expansive lineage. even if these differ quite substantially from the Tsuglag Trengwa’s own broader conclusions:

Furthermore, as for those who are called “Moghul” in the direction of India and those that are today called “Mongol,” it has occurred merely from a corrupted name.⁶²³

In order⁶²⁴ to clarify the general names of the individual streams of human lineages, Pawo Tsuklag Trengwa’s History of the Dharma called the *Scholar’s Feast* says that:

615 ‘Khor yAg kha.

616 ‘Gro lding ba.

617 Kas mi pa.

618 Jangs gling pa.

619 U rgyan pa. Another of the twenty-four sacred sites associated with the Cakramsavara tantric cycle.

620 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 57–59.

621 dPa’ bo gtsug lag ‘phreng ba, 1504-1566. This may seem at first a somewhat surprising choice of textual authority, given how derided Tsuklak Trengwa’s work had become in Géluk circles beginning with the Fifth Dalai Lama and his regent, Sanggyé Gyatso.

622 dPa’ bo gtsug lag phreng ba, *Dam Pa’i Chos Kyi “Khor Lo Bsgyur Ba Rnams Kyi Byung Ba Gsal Bar Byed Pa Mkhas Pa”i Dga’ Ston*, 2 vols. (Pe cin (Beijing): Mi rigs dge skrun khang, 1986).

623 ming zur chag tu song ba tsam.

Moreover, while it is not clear whether a land with the explicit name “Hor” can be found in the scriptures because they correspond⁶²⁵ with the behaviour, appearance, and so forth of the Persian barbarians,⁶²⁶ they are to be grouped together with those called “Turks”⁶²⁷ or “Persian/Afghani.”⁶²⁸ As for the primary object of the Persian/Afghani peoples,⁶²⁹ it is in Mecca⁶³⁰ and Moughal⁶³¹ to the west of India.

Hülegü Khaan captured the land of Upper Baté,⁶³² which is known as “Upper Hor.” His armies assembled in the west, (in places) such as Uddiyanna, and so forth. From becoming known as the “Mogul” army, it is extremely clear that (his Mongol forces) became (known as) Persians/Afghanis.

As for the categories that became known in Hor: In the north of all India,⁶³³ there are many great lands, (such as those of) the Tanguts⁶³⁴ and Tibet. While these are differentiated into many, (such as) those called Hor, Sok po, and what today is known as “Middle Chakar,”⁶³⁵ in general, all together these come to describe one kingdom called “Hor.”⁶³⁶

624 *te*.

625 *rjes su mthun pa*.

626 *kla klo'i ltag gzig*.

627 *Tu ru Sha+k*. This may be an interpretative lead to read “Turks” from this, but given the context it seems plausible that this is who Mindröl Nomonhan refers to.

628 *sTag gzig*. This spelling differs from that given for “Persian” just above (here there is a *-sa* instead of a *-la* prefix). Both spellings differ from that given in an earlier citation, where “Persia/Iran” is spelled *ta zig*.

629 *sTag gzig pa'i yul gyi gtso bo*.

630 *Ma kha*.

631 *Mo'u gal*.

632 *'Ba' tad*.

633 Simply reads *rgya*, and so could refer to either India (*rgya gar*) or China (*rgya nag*). Given the context, it seems that Mindröl Nomonhan is referring to India here.

634 *Mi nyag*.

635 *Cha dkar bar*.

636 *hor gyi rgyal khams zhes gcig tu brjod pa*.

From what (Mindröl Nomonhan) has said (in this citation), Persian/Afghani and Sok peoples are of one progeny.⁶³⁷ Yet, how could there be any pervasion⁶³⁸ that they are barbarians,⁶³⁹ since even lands such as Mecca and so forth, were Buddhist?

Also, (this is true) because of the manner in which the barbarian religion later came to increase during the “Middle Dispensation” (of the Buddhist Teaching into Mongolia), as is clarified in the words of the sūtras, tantras, commentaries, histories of Buddhism, and so forth. For example, this is just like (what occurred) with the Muslims of India, and the Nyothön⁶⁴⁰ of Khotan.⁶⁴¹

Unfortunately, we must leave aside the amazing claim that Mecca itself was originally Mongol territory, populated by “Hor-Sok” peoples, and previously Buddhist! For the moment, we must also look past the plethora of examples from this citation that fully display modalities for producing valid historical arguments drawn straight from Géluk scholastic debate culture and formal logic (S. *pramāṇa*; T. *tshad ma*; M. *kemjiyen*). I will return to this in the final chapter, which examines the interpretative operations evidenced in Zawa Damdin’s historical practice. The point here is simply that both the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book* continue the venerable Qing-era tradition of Zawa Damdin’s interpretative community. As we have seen, this was one that began, in the seventeenth-century, to read a Mongol ethnoreligious primordialism from available Chinese, Indian, Central Asian, Tibetan, and Mongol sources. Working in the post-imperium, Zawa Damdin does not simply transpose those narratives, however, but picks up on their interpretative precedent to read such a history even more deeply into his available

637 *rigs rus gcig pa*.

638 *khyab ste*.

639 *kla klo*. Here, the genitive *-sa* is added to *kla klo*, apparently indicating a thesis and not agency, as is usual in scholastic literature. This speaks once again to the pervasion of hermeneutical practices from a broader scholastic “site” and interpretative operation employed in these Inner Asian scenes of historiography, to which I return in the final chapter.

640 *Li yul gyi nyo thon*.

641 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 59–60.

archive, which had begun to include European scholarly products. He also, with some of his interlocutors (such as Mindröl Nomonhan) reflects upon the consequences of such a history, and by differentiating virtuous from barbaric Mongols, betrays the fact that he shared in their imperial-era commitment to recover a vast, “pure” Mongol-Buddhist genesis.

At the end these initial sections in both the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book*, Zawa Damdin begins to outline his general ethnic topography of Mongolian peoples, such as the Four Oirat Tribes, the Seven Khalkha tribes, and so forth. These were individual groups that, in the decontextualized words of Tsuglak Trengwa, ‘all together [...] come to designate (*brjod pa*) one kingdom called ‘Hor’.’ As mentioned above, these were ‘real’, everyday Mongols (ie. characters affected by temporality, to evoke Bakhtin), which Zawa Damdin finally begins to describe in both works at this point in some detail. These act as the culmination of the Hor-Sok space that circumscribes the ‘empty time’ that characterizes the enlightened drama that constitutes the ‘Three Dispensations of Buddhism into Mongolia’.

Since there is simply no space here to summarize the extensive inscription of ancient, ‘everyday Mongolian’ diversity as this is elaborated in the *Golden Book*. A concise summary from the *Dharma Conch* will have to suffice. These are the closing verses from the first chapter (*po ti*) on the arrangement of the physical universe:

Furthermore, more than seven hundred years before the time of Chinggis Khaan, Thakna (*thag na*), Hangké (*hang kas*), Hengti Han (*heng thi han*), and so forth, As well as Zilengki (*zi leng ki*), Orhong Thaula (*or hong thAu lai*) etc., (resided) (At the) native mountain ranges and rivers of Khalkha country. (As did) Uighurs (*u gur*), Sokdians (*Sok thak*), Turks (*tu ru ka*), Tartars (*tha thA ri*), the Chig (*chig*), Harlogkbha (*har log b+ha yad*), Bhisamala (*b+hi sa ma la*), Kyrgyz (*khir ge ze*), and the Haryag Khitan (*har yag khi dan*) [*interlinear note: “Nowadays, the Manchus are the same as the Chinese.”] etc. (all also) resided (there).

(All these inhabitants of) Hor-Sok are the peoples of the felt-tent (*phying gur can*), Who subsist (*sdod cing yod tshul*) by tending the four types of livestock and Pursuing game (*rid wags bshor*).

This is made clear in all manner of Chinese (*rgya*) and Hor writings (*yig tshang*),
And from the stone-pillar (*rdo rengs [sic.]*) inscriptions (*yi ge*) of this land.

From that time (seven hundred years before Chinggis Khaan),
We can still see the ruins of the building of towns and cities
Of the so-called ‘White’ and ‘Black’ royal palaces (*rgyal mhar dkar nag*) etc.
And also the traces (*lag rjes*) of fields which were cultivated.
Even today, the traces of this in this central land are evident (*gsal*).

Alas! (*kya ma*) These days we do not find even the name or traces
Of these former ‘vessels’ and (their living) ‘contents’!
We do not have anything to say about their outer or inner history.
Having thought about this, one who has wisdom eyes
Can see that one should seek a path to liberation from cyclic existence!⁶⁴²

And with that final, rather abrupt soteriological note, Zawa Damdin turns to narrating a history of enlightened drama, played upon the ‘place’ of a vast, ever changing stage composed of the Hor-Sok geographic and ethnic imaginary which he has by now adequately rescued (ie. constructed) from his sources.

5 Conclusion

However, even as Zawa Damdin “found” Mongols in nearly all corners of northern Asia and, as we shall see more fully in the following chapter, in nearly all stages of the Buddhist dispensation from India over the last two thousand years, he himself was not operating within the ethnic sovereignty paradigms of the multiethnic Qing formation. Rather, his was a time of ethno-nationalism and modern statehood. Here, progressive intellectuals (with whom he worked at times) used European political and scholarly discourses to delimit a Mongolia nation and people into history, whose triumphant national autonomy after centuries of foreign imperial domination was the ideological framework of political legitimacy during the Two Revolutions.

⁶⁴² *Dharma Conch*, p. 12-13.

Chapter 3

Absence and Enlightenment: Empty Time, Place, and Subjectivity in Zawa Damdin's Histories

Unable to rout their cruel enemies,
The Mongols invented legends
About heroes—omnipotent and wise—
Who fearlessly fought and defeated
The dangerous enemies...
In those legends lived the people's dreams.

~ Ts. Damdinsuren⁶⁴³

In the past, many famous scholars and practitioners
From the center and borderland gathered here.
There was a festival of both religion and politics.
That is (was) amazing!
When I think that suddenly it has all disappeared, it makes me very sad.

~Zawa Damdin⁶⁴⁴

In this chapter and the two that have preceded it, I explore Zawa Damdin's inscription of the site of his historiographic practice: the Mongolian Buddhist monastery in the decades following the collapse of the Qing. In the first chapter, I examined his work to render himself into an historical subject, in both dedicated autobiographical texts and as authorial asides in other works. In the second chapter I introduced the real chronotope of the Mongol people and of Mongol territory in his major histories. Alongside a summary of his vast vision of Mongolia and the Mongols, I also showed how, in accretions, the *Golden Book* develops a polemical contrast between a dystopian revolutionary present and a utopian past disciplined by the Two Systems.

The present chapter builds on that latter point by examining Zawa Damdin's historical vision of a utopian age of religio-ethical possibility and security. The subjects of those utopian

643 Ts. Damdinsuren, "A Message to the Soviet People," in *Selected Works*, n.d., 53. Quoted in: Shirendyub, *By-Passing Capitalism*, 11.

644 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 471.

narratives—the buddhas and bodhisattvas who have manifested as Buddhist kings, lamas, generals, and more—function in these works as an empty chronotope. In the Qing-era Géluk historiographic tradition he had inherited, such enlightened presence was abstracted into the Two Systems: a sacred matrix that had washed onto the shore of the real chronotope of Mongolian history in three disseminations (*dar gsum*). Turning to the construction of an empty chronotope of the Two Systems in this work will allow us to better discern Zawa Damdin's scholastic practice of historiography across the imperial-socialist transition. Additionally, it will allow foreground this monk's theory of the desacralization of Mongolian space just prior to the revolution (how he rendered the absence of enlightened presence in the site of his historiographic composition, in other words); and through that, create a better understanding of the content of his polemical characterization of his authorial present in the post-imperium.

1 The Buddhist Dispensation and the Two Systems in the Post-Imperial Imaginaire

1.1 The Two Systems and Qing-era Visions of Mongolian Ethnoreligious History

Central to most, if not all, Buddhist community formation has been constructing and protecting a system of teachings traceable to the historical Buddha (S. *Śāsana*; T. *bsTan pa*; M. *Sasin*). Indeed, the authority attributed to lineage in Buddhist traditions is often credited with inspiring genres of Buddhist historical writing; a means to define and defend religious purity and continuity. As we have seen, many Qing-era Géluk scholars drastically expanded historical visions of the Mongolian Buddhist dispensation, finding a story of ethnoreligious genesis in India and Tibet centuries, even millennia, before Chinggis Khaan. They do so by synthesizing newly available historical sources, such as Chinese dynastic records and pilgrimage accounts, with their own Indian and Tibetan materials. As Johan Elverskog has shown, their construction

of a pure Mongolia-Buddhist transmission fit quite well with narratives of the multiethnic Qing formation, and helped project the empire as the very expression of Buddhist legitimacy, patronage, and enlightened presence.

We will remember from the introduction to this study that the most enduring formulation of that enlightened expression during the Qing was the Two Systems. This was an idealized, abstracted matrix of religious and political authority, embodied by an enlightened Buddhist master and his enlightened Buddhist patron. In all Mongolian Buddhist historiography after the mid-seventeenth century until the imperial collapse in 1912, the Buddhist *sāsana* was itself conceptualized in the rubric of the Two Systems. There, visions of the soteriological possibilities represented by the transplantation of Buddhist doctrine became paired inextricably with visions of ethico-legal restraint, military security and patronage represented by the Manchu Emperor. With the collapse of the Qing in 1911-1912, those previously distinct spheres of religio-political authority (which had been shared between the Dalai Lamas and the Manchu Emperor, for example) were united into the singular authority of the Bogd Khaan during the Autonomous Period (1911-1919). When the Mongolian socialist movement rose to power in 1921, and especially as hardline elements began to take control in the decade afterwards, notions of a privileged authority for Buddhist masters and “enlightened” hereditary emperors became the very paradigm of feudalist exploitation.⁶⁴⁵ For that reason, as I suggested at the start of this study, the *Golden Book* must be included alongside these Qing-era works for its extension of their content, but also for its theorization of the crisis of an absent Buddhist authority in Asia’s heartland on the very eve of the socialist purges. This is the topic of the present chapter, which

645 While this may be generally true, especially during the socialist fanaticism of the “Leftist Deviation” and the Stalin-Choibalsan purges of the late 1930s, Caroline Humphrey has shown that a persistent belief in the sanctity of enlightened authority (specifically related to the Bogd Khaan) persisted in state histories well into the MPRP. See: Humphrey, “Remembering an Enemy: The Bogd Khaan in Twentieth Century Mongolia.”

our author “clarifies” in relation to the real chronotope of Mongolian space and history examined in the previous chapter.

1.2 The Two Systems After the Qing

Across nearly a century and with the violence of the purges that came on the heels of these histories in plain sight, it is difficult to avoid characterizing Zawa Damdin’s lauding of the Two Systems (and, by extension, the Qing formation) as either out of touch with prevailing socio-political winds or as an implicitly tragic expression of Buddhist imagination in the face of impending socialist terror. However, oral history interviews conducted by Mongolian scholars with some of Zawa Damdin’s still-living students and colleagues after the democratic transition in 1990 helps complicate this picture. This is because, against the anachrinisms of Soviet-era historiography and the post-socialist cultural revival, the Two Systems seems to have remained an relevant object of historical inquiry and political template even in early party-sponsored scholarship. Very interestingly, Zawa Damdin was himself on staff in such endeavours, as the scholarship of L. Khureelbaatar and G. Luvsantseren has shown:

In the early years of the People’s Parliament, Zawa Damdin Gajch was a loosely affiliated member of the Mongolian Institute of Script and Letters. He took part in (examining) the unity (*khos*) of the tradition (*ulamjalal*) of religion and state, how this could be adopted in the new age of the state (*shie tsagiin töriin butshed*)...⁶⁴⁶

There is surely much more to learn about the after-life of the Two Systems in Inner Asia following the Qing collapse, which apparently persisted across the Two Revolutions, and as such was not tied so simply to Qing projections of authority.

As such, my central argument in this chapter is that, in addition to a more general critique of the dystopia of the revolutionary era, the *Golden Book* was ultimately an attempt to

⁶⁴⁶ Khurelbaatar and Luvsantseren, *Ogtorguin tsagaan gardi*, II:239.

render the decline of enlightened authority and presence in Mongolia sensible by appeal to the authority of the past. As we shall see, the desacralization of Mongolia—the uncoupling of the real and empty chronotope—did not occur with the Qing collapse in 1911 for our author. Rather, as I show at the end of this chapter, the revolutionary upheaval was simply an after-effect of a decline in the Two Systems following a failed mid-nineteenth century project to permanently settle Ikh Khüree, the Mongol capital.

1.3 Two Systems in Three Waves

In many ways, as we shall see below and in the following chapter on Zawa Damdin’s interpretative operation, such a capacious vision of a Mongolian Buddhist past rested on an ever more inclusive definition of Mongolian territory and ethnic identity. In a post-imperial period marked by new nationalist social imaginaries, where the fruits and practices of Euro-Russian political and academic forms of knowledge were being put to use to define the contours and content of a Mongolian nation and people, Zawa Damdin’s histories represent a congruous but outlier corpus. More on this in later sections of this study, but for now let us follow his expansive inscription of an “empty” enlightened authority into Mongolian territory in three waves, before coming to his theory of nineteenth century enlightened decline as the prelude to early twentieth century revolutionary upheaval.

The tripartite template of enlightened manifestation into Mongol space that organizes both of Zawa Damdin’s histories are as follows: 1) an early, rather fleeting dispensation directly from India well before the the Mongol Empire in the thirteenth century (and, in some cases, before even the historical Buddha Śākyamuni himself); 2) a middling dispensation from Tibet during the Mongol Empire period in the thirteenth century; and 3) a final, more comprehensive

dispensation from Tibet beginning in the sixteenth, tied completely to the Géluk school and, by the seventeenth century, to Qing imperial patronage.⁶⁴⁷ Such periodizations of the Buddhist dispensation into Mongolia were far from original, but as in his construction of the real chronotope of Mongolian history, here too Zawa Damdin extends the narrative content and interpretative operations of his interpretative community to produce perhaps the most expansive of such visions of enlightened presence in Mongolian space.

2 The Early Spread of Buddhism into Mongolia

2.1 “Mongols” as Catalysts in the Buddhist Dispensation Across Asia: Extending a Qing-era Vision

Following the arrangement of the *Dharma Conch*, the *Golden Book* follows its initial clarification of Mongolian ethno-genesis (which we will remember was seen to have pervaded Asia itself at times) by describing an antiquarian (*gna’ dus*) dispensation of Buddhism into “Mongolia” directly from India. It is interesting, in light of my analysis of Zawa Damdin’s historical practice later on, that our author prefaces this section of the *Golden Book* of this early spread with some methodological reflection:

If (one were to) analyze by comparing the words of the Victor [the Buddha], the outer and inner [Buddhist and non-Buddhist] commentaries, and the earlier and later writings of the greatest kingdoms, this region of Great Hor has existed for thousands of human years, similar to the age of the world itself. As for this, everyone, even the wise and foolish of our own and other’s directions, cannot deny (that this is true). Though indeed it is like that, nevertheless, (here I will explain only) the manner in which political authority⁶⁴⁸ (*rgyal srid*) became connected to the arrival of the Victor’s teaching at a certain point here in this region.

647 A general outline of the *Golden Book*, that provides an index to all of its major sections within this tripartite division, is appended at the end of this study.

648 *rgyal srid*.

(This) is not evident in the ancient writings of the everyday Hor-Sok (peoples), which are not explicit⁶⁴⁹ (on the matter). Even now, because of this situation of searching and (such writings) being rare, it is also intrinsically difficult to (provide) a clear and detailed description.⁶⁵⁰

As we would expect, Zawa Damdin's summary of the early spread soon makes it clear that, from its initial appearance on the Mongolian stage, contact with the Buddhadharma involved establishing a particular form of religio-political authority:

In any case, from ancient times the powerful regional kings of all the sections of Upper, Middle, and Central Hor arose uninterruptedly. They also held partial dominion⁶⁵¹ over an uncountable number of not only Hor-Sok descendents, but also among the varieties Indians, Chinese, Tibetans, Khotanese, and so forth, as well as the general populations⁶⁵² of Hor, Sok, India, China, Khotan, etc. Indeed, just how all sorts of political authorities and royal dynasties abided for greater or lesser (amounts of time), in our own or other's directions, by means of continuously wandering through the wheel of cyclic existence, sometimes amicably and sometimes in strife, is a limitless (topic)!

As a consequence of there being scant (mention of all this) in the Kangyur, Tengyur, (or) the chronicles,⁶⁵³ the importance of not missing (what details are there) and to write (about these) has been neglected.

(In order) to write out merely those illustrative examples of what occurred in (relation to) only those many (kings) who protected the "Unity of the Dharma and Politics,"⁶⁵⁴ (I will here) thoroughly investigate primarily the origins of the progeny of this region of Hor, and whatever (*gang gi*) political authorities (guarded) the Victor's teaching.

In general, (I) will describe only the origins of the connections between the Noble Land (of India) and chiefly (*sgos*) Khotan, and its related oral traditions, in turn.⁶⁵⁵

649 *yod med kyi gsal kha*.

650 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 98.

651 *khol bur dbang bsgyur*.

652 *mi sde*.

653 *deb ther*.

654 *chos srid zung 'brel*.

655 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 99.

Thus begins the explicit oscillation between real and empty chronotopes that, by means of various sorts of authorial intervention, develops the narrative content of the *Golden Book* and underpins its critique of the post-imperial developments. In the above citation, we are reminded that for Zawa Damdin, Khotan and other Central Asian Buddhist states described in Chinese, Tibetan, and Indian sources were clearly Mongolian, in direct continuity with his own Khalkha environs at the start of the twentieth century.

Such an oscillation between “real” Mongolian space and people to “empty”, enlightened intervention is made even clearer in the opening verses of the *Dharma Conch*:

The natural radiance that is itself of the activity of all the Victors,
The dance of the spontaneous birth of the Stainless Goddess,
By the splendor of the compassion of the Venerable Noble Tārā,
(Please) let rain the flowers of virtue!

In what manner did the precious Dharma
Arrive, spread, and increase here in this land of Mongolia?

As for the first of the earlier, later, and middling (spread),
It was prophesized in the *Ox Horn Sūtra*⁶⁵⁶ that:

By the power of the prayers and aspirations of the Buddha together with his Sons,
Once a hundred years have passed since the Teacher’s nirvāṇa,
The teaching (will) spread into the land of Khotan,
At the same time as the holy Dharma spreads into Upper Mongolia.⁶⁵⁷

The consequence of the extensive historical delimitation of the real Mongolian chronotope now becomes clear: via Khotan and Uighur “Mongolian” intervention, Zawa Damdin (like Mindröl Nomonhan and other Qing-era Géluk historians before him) is able to identify Mongolian actors—real and as manifestations of enlightened presence—as primary agents in the

656 S. *Āryaśaṅgavyākaraṇanāmahāyānasūtra*; T. ‘*Phags pa glang ru lung bstan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po’i mdo*. “‘Phags Pa Glang Ru Lung Bstan Pa Zhes Bya Ba Theg Pa Chen Po’i Mdo,” in *bKa’ ’Gyur (Urga)*, vol. 76, 104 vols. (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1990), 442–65.

657 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Hor Gyi Yul Du Dam Pa’i Chos Rin Po Che Byung Tshul Gyi Gtam Rgyud Bkra Shis Chos Dung Bzhad Pa’i Sgra Dbyangs/,” 13–14.

Buddhicization of those “others that matter” in his particular geography of knowledge: China and Tibet. It is to a brief synopsis of this move that I now turn.

2.1.1 Khotan and the Case for Mongol Arhats

As I have already mentioned, the extensive claims on Khotanese space and time in the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book* provide the basis for a radical Mongol claim on some of the earliest, well-worn stories of the Buddhist dispensation out of India. For instance, from the *Dharma Conch*:

During the time of his abiding in this world, the Teacher Buddha
Went atop Khotan's Ox Horn Mountain along with his entourage.
After one hundred years had passed,
People populated this blessed place of Virtuous Khotan,
And built wood towns and villages.
Dharma practitioners, kings and ministers
And all sorts of different powerful and wealthy people arose (there).

Chiefly, both Śāriputra and Vaiśravaṇa prophesied that numberless
Emanations of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas would appear in this land,
And that assemblies of Venerable Arhats⁶⁵⁸ would also gather,
From whom the lamp of the Holy Dharma would be kindled.⁶⁵⁹

Great repositories of water (eventually moved into the northerly oceans,
[And so] Gomasālagandha Stūpa,⁶⁶⁰ Oxhorn Mountain,⁶⁶¹ and Khotan Became visible.
Then, similarly, rain actually produced all of Hor's land.
Because of that, the traces of Khotan's lakes and the fearful deserts of the Land of Hor
are related as a continuum.

However, it is possible that the mountain ranges and connected highlands
From long ago were not under the water,
Because the peoples of Hor and Sok existed there in those high places

658 T. *dGra bcom pa*; M. *Arkhad*. “In Sanskrit, a ‘worthy one’; one who has destroyed the afflictions (KLEŚA) and all causes for future REBIRTH and who thus will enter NIRVĀṆA at death [...] Although arhats also achieve enlightenment (BODHI), the Mahāyāna tradition presumes that they have overcome only the first of the two kinds of obstructions.” Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 62.

659 Śāriputra was one the historical Buddha's most prominent disciples, and Vaiśravaṇa (*rnam thos sras*) is understood in many Indic traditions to be a guardian deity of the north.

660 *Go ma sa la gan+d+ha mchod rten*.

661 *Ri glang ru*.

When the Buddhas arrived in this world.
We have trustworthy sources that clarify this.⁶⁶²

The histories (and futures) described in the canonical prophecies related to Khotan are ones ripe with Buddhist lore, and populated by a swath of important founding figures from the classical Indic Buddhist tradition. The Khotan of canonical sources was a location formed by, and later a visited by, a litany of figures in the late Mahāyāna and Tantric imagination of Inner Asian Buddhists. These include—as in the short passage quoted above—the historical Buddha, the Sixteen Arhats, various prominent Bodhisattvas, and indeed, even the previous Buddha of this universal age, Kaśyapa. The *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book* dedicate a substantial amount of narrative to explaining how the progeny of the archetypical Indian Buddhist king Aśoka and various Chinese Emperors became connected with Khotan, how all this had been prophesised by the Buddhas Kaśyapa and Śakyamuni, and how temples were built to commemorate their many deeds there.

One extended example concerns the supposed visit to Khotan by the Sixteen Arhats, that group of famous enlightened disciples the historical Buddha who were enduring presence in the stories of the spread of Buddhism across Inner and East Asia (present even in the magical temple visited by Zawa Damdin in Beijing). This connection is introduced innocently enough in the *Golden Book*, broached by a historical claim that that after time spent in Khotan, the Sixteen Arhats also visited China during the reign of an unnamed Tang Emperor, as well as the Tibetan region of Narthang. The import of this chronology for what follows becomes apparent enough for the larger narrative arc of the *Golden Book* when our author states: “As such, they came *first*

⁶⁶² bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Hor Gyi Yul Du Dam Pa’i Chos Rin Po Che Byung Tshul Gyi Gtam Rgyud Bkra Shis Chos Dung Bzhad Pa’i Sgra Dbyangs/,” 10–11.

to Khotan, then China, and then Tibet.”⁶⁶³ Immediately following this statement, Zawa Damdin again provides a passage that strategically collapses differences between Khotan and Hor. This allows him to inscribe a contact point between the “empty” chronotope of the Sixteen Arhats and the real chronotope of Hor-Sok. As just one of many examples:

At Alasha mountain in the land of Hor⁶⁶⁴ there is both a cave where the Sixteen Arhats once did the rainy season retreat, and also where there is the footmark of one of the Arhats imprinted into the rock. Because of the blessing of the Arhats, Light Yellow Capsicum⁶⁶⁵ grows on this mountain. Many Tibetan scholars say this is because of the blessings of the Arhats. Also, the Nechung Protector gave a prophecy that confirmed this.⁶⁶⁶ Moreover, the Alasha Mountain is where the Sixteen Arhats came to Khotan and did their summer retreat, after which they went to China and did summer retreat.⁶⁶⁷

Here, the authorial voice intervenes into the impersonal description of historical traces. Zawa Damdin reflects upon an Alashan claim to the laymen Dharmatāla (one of the Sixteen Arhats) as kin:

Then I thought that the laymen Dharmatāla could be a person of Liyul (ie, Sokpo). Some scholars say that part of his last name is Tala, which is Mongolian, and which is translated into Tibet as ‘Ocean of Wisdom’. So, this is a reason that he could be Hor person. In general, people believe different things, but in the end only Buddhas know everything. Also, (these sixteen) have the appearance of arhats, but in reality they are bodhisattvas and so it is hard to know their activities since we are mere human beings.⁶⁶⁸

663 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 116. This implicit foreshadowing is seemingly repeated earlier in the *Golden Book*, while Zawa Damdin is describing the Buddhist history of Khotan (temple building, religious festivals, enlightened figures, etc.). As he recounts the deeds of an emanation of Mañjuśrī who taught a prince the Khotanese language and script, Zawa Damdin abruptly states that, “In general, the Khotanese language is not similar to the Chinese language, the script is slightly similar to Chinese, and the Dharma system and terminology is almost the same as the Indian language” (Ibid., 104.).

664 We will recall that Zawa Damdin himself visited Alasha, in Inner Mongolia, on pilgrimage to eastern Tibet.

665 *A kar dkar ser*. This is an important ingredient in traditional Tibetan medical practice.

666 The “Nechung Protector” refers to the Protective Deity known as Pehar (*Pe har*), whose oracle has lived at Nechung (*gNad chung*) monastery in Central Tibet since the seventeenth century reign of the Dalai Lama V, when Neching became state protector of the Tibetan Government (*dGa’ ldan pho brang*). See: Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 321.

667 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 116.

668 Ibid., 117.

An interlinear note by an anonymous editor in both versions of the *Golden Book* available to me affirms this point. It reads, “From the story of the Sixteen Arhats that was translated from Chinese into the Sok language (it is clear that) the Sixteen Arhats have a strong connection with Khotan.”⁶⁶⁹ Some time later, Zawa Damdin cites the oral tradition of Alasha to tentatively conclude that, “people have thought that this person [prophesised by the Buddha in a passage just above] was the Laymen Dharmatāla, in which case that laymen is a person of the virtuous land of Khotan. This clearly makes sense.”⁶⁷⁰ In this profoundly relational fashion, the timeless characters of the Sixteen Arhats are both explained by, and explain in turn, the temporalized Hor-Sok spatial *imaginaire*.

2.1.2 Connecting Mongolia and Buddhist India

India, the birthplace of the Buddha and the early saṅgha, the ‘Noble Land’ (T. ‘*phags yul*) from which the Buddhist dispensation came in waves through trading routes to China, over the Himalayas into Tibet, and eventually onto the Mongol steppes, is not only a place of great potency in the Inner Asian Buddhist imagination, but also a great organizational feature in scholastic articulations of that identity.⁶⁷¹

669 Ibid., 117.

670 Ibid., 134.

671 Toni Huber, *The Holy Land Reborn Pilgrimage & the Tibetan Reinvention of Buddhist India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). This is also true of polemical doxographical literature (*grub mtha*), where the doctrinal positions of different schools of Buddhist and non-Buddhist thought are described and ordered in various hierarchical schema. Here, later sectarian positions are arranged following upon, and in a dialectic with, an (anachronistic and largely fabricated) presentation of Indian doctrinal positions. Indeed, Zawa Damdin himself wrote such doxographical literature to great effect, as did the members of his Qing-era interpretative community. Two of the most influential of such texts exist in English translation: ‘Jam-dbyaṅs-bṣad-pa Ṣag-dbañ-brtson-’grus et al., *Maps of the Profound: Jam-Yang-Shay-Ba’s Great Exposition of Buddhist and Non-Buddhist Views on the Nature of Reality* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 2003); Nyima, *The Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems: A Tibetan Study of Asian Religious Thought*.

India, in this pervasive genre of scholastic literature across the Tibetan and Mongolian cultural world, is not simply a particular community bounded by a ethnicity or state as such, but rather a series of spaces attached to a cluster of founding events relevant to written manuals on clarifying valid or invalid doctrinal positions. In the case of the historiographic literature at hand, India plays the same role. While there is some attention paid to describing physical boundaries, waterways, major cities and so on, India is better understood for our purposes as an organizing principal. India is a site of various ‘events’ which at once initiates the story of Mongolian Buddhism for Zawa Damdin, while also (more interestingly) requiring a series of interventions and manipulations. India, Indian religions and Indian peoples as a cluster of historical subjects had long occupied Tibetan and Mongolian historical debate⁶⁷² What is fascinating is that Zawa Damdin resists offering an extended narration of important events of Indian Buddhism as the inaugural section of either the *Dharma Conch* or the *Golden Book*. Instead, what we find is a rather radical reversal, where the ‘real’ and ‘empty’ time of the wellspring of Buddhism in India is evoked only to explain the early Buddhist dispensation into ‘Mongolia’, and only a quarter of the way into these works (arriving in any sustained form only

672 For instance, Sonam Gyaltzen’s (*bSod nams rGyal mtshan*, 1312-1375) 1368 *Crystal Mirror of Royal Genealogies* (*rGyal rabs gsal ba’i me long*) begins with a section entitled “On the Basis of How the Dharma King’s of India Gradually Appeared and How the Teacher Śākyamuni Appeared in the World, An Explanation of How the Holy Dharma Disseminated”. Following a section on the genealogy of the mythic first king in this world, Mahāsammata (*rGyal po mang pos bkur ba’i gdung rabs*), Tselpa Kunga Dorjé’s (*Tshal pa kun dga’ rDo rje*, 1309-1364) 1363 *Red Annals* (*De ther dmar po*) provides its readers first with a narrative account of the Buddha’s life, then the period of the Three Councils, and finally a summary of Indian royal succession. Likewise, Go Lotsawa Shönnu pél’s (*Gos lo tsa ba gzhon nu dpal*, 1392-1481) immensely influential c. 1478 *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*) begins with the genealogy of Mahāsammata, and then details the deeds of the Buddha, provides an “Explanation of the Transmission of the Teaching,” and then an account of “The Division Into Eighteen Schools” which occurred following the Buddha’s death. The pattern repeats across hundreds of historical works, many of which became important sources for Mongolian monk-historians. This is true, of course, in those few cases where Tibetan authors focused almost exclusively on Indian Buddhist history, such as Butön’s 1322 *Precious Treasury of Sayings* (*bDe bar gshegs pa’i gsal byed chos kyi ‘byung gnas gsung rab rin po che’i mdzod*) and Tāranātha’s 1608 *History of Buddhism in India* (*rGya gar chos ‘byung*). It is also largely true in more expansive historical surveys, such as Pawo Tsuglag Trengwa’s influential 1564 *Scholar’s Feast* (*Dam pa’i chos kyi ‘khor los bsgyur ba rnams kyi byung ba gsal bar byed pa mkhas pa’i dga’ ston ces bya ba’i legs par bshad pa*) and the Great Fifth Dalai Lama’s 1643 *Song of the Spring Queen* (*Bod kyi deb ther dpyid kyi rgyal mo’i glu dbyangs*).

on folio 117 in the *Golden Book*, for instance). This is even a somewhat radical presentation in relation to his interpretative community, who otherwise prove so influential in the content and practice of his history.⁶⁷³

That said, claiming the Indian Buddhist dispensation for Mongol actors is still a central thesis of the both the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book*, and indeed Zawa Damdin extends such narratives even further based on his vast vision of Mongolian space and history. We saw above how constructing Khotan as Mongol positioned Mongol actors in the prophesied early dispensation of Buddhism out of India, but here Zawa Damdin looks to make a further connection: tracing the transit of Indian enlightened figures into Mongol proper, a well-worn move in much of the Buddhist world. In line with classic scholastic polemics used to legitimize his historical arguments which are examined in the next chapter, an opponent position to his claims are evoked and the refuted:

In general, most earlier and later Tibetans and Sok peoples have both thought and proclaimed that it was never the case that arhats, paṇḍitas etc. ever came to the land of Hor from India in the beginning in order to ensure the everlasting welfare (of the people here).⁶⁷⁴

Having presented this contrarian view, the authorial voice proceeds to introduce a refutation and its evidence:

This (assertion) has happened only because of the mere fault (*lan pa ma gtogs*) of not finding the written records (*'khod pa*) (of this) in the texts on the earlier spread of the

673 Of note here are Gompo Kyab's (*mGon po skyabs*, 18th century) 1736 *History of Buddhism in China* (*rGya nag chos 'byung*), Sumpa Khenpo Yeshe Peljor's (*Sum pa mkhan po ye shes dpal 'byor*, 1704-1788) 1748 *Wishfulfilling Tree* (*Chos 'byung dpag bsam ljon bzang*), Changkya Rölpai Dorjé's (*lCang skya rol pa'i rdo rje*, 1717-1786) 1747 *Great Treatise on the Establishment of Philosophical Systems* (*Grub pa'i mtha'i rnam par bzhag pa'i thub bstan lhun po'i mdzes rgyan*), and Thuken Chokyi Nyima's (*Thu'u bkwan chos kyi nyi ma*, 1737-1802) 1802 *Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems* (*Grub mtha' shel gyi me long*).

674 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 121.

Dharma into the land of Hor. (If we avoid this fault) it is clear that many Indian gurus have come here to the land of Hor.⁶⁷⁵

Because of space, the details of his argument need not detain us here. Briefly, Zawa Damdin primarily turns to evidence from the Chinese record (presumably lifted from Gombojab's *History of Buddhism in China*) in order to highlight the sojourn of Indian Buddhist masters in Central and Inner Asia on their way to China in the early centuries of the Common Era. Since Uighurs, Khotanese, Sogdians, Thukarans, and other Central Asian Buddhist people of that period have already been "clarified" as Mongol, such a move is intuitive for our author. For that same reason, not only does Zawa Damdin recover the history of Indian masters in Mongol territory, he is also able to describe Central Asian Buddhists (ie. "Mongols") who traveled to the great sites of Buddhist India to study:

Those Indian scholars and paṇḍitas came to Hor and benefited the teachings and beings, but more than simply this, in the past Hor and Sok scholars also went to India and studied the five topics of knowledge and became great panditas and again came back to China, Tibet and Hor and did much to benefit the Buddhadharma. For example, among those panditas who went to China were the Liyul pandita Shiruphel and the Uighur pandita Dzajadasa.⁶⁷⁶

2.1.3 Mongols as Catalysts in the Buddhicization of China: Gombojab's Vision in the Post-Imperium

Mongols at the intersection of the Indian Buddhist dispensation into Central, Inner, and East Asia was, as we have already seen, was part of the Qing-era historiographic conventions inherited by Zawa Damdin. Characteristically, however, the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book* not only transpose those historical narratives but also identify and extend their foundational interpretative strategies. The result is a legitimized, much more expansive reading of the Hor-Sok Mongol Buddhist past in relation to China and, as we shall see just below, Tibet

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid., 123.

as well. In both cases, it is Zawa Damdin's Mongol crucial claim on Khotan that allows for his expansion of Mongol "ethnoreligious primordialism."⁶⁷⁷ Here Zawa Damdin extrapolates upon the repeated references to China and Chinese royal intrigue in affairs of state and religion in Khotan in his Tibetan, Chinese, and Mongol sources. The result is a strategic collapsing of the Hor-Sok social imaginary into China itself. For example:

Some Tibetan and Sok scholars have claimed that the entire land of Hor is identified as Khotan. This must be analyzed further because if it is so, Khotan (*li yul*) is one of the six countries mentioned in the Kālacakra tantra; as such, Khotan is included in the land of Hor. This (proposition) is close with what is said in the great Mañjuśrī Emperor's Abhidharma commentary, which says:

All subsequent Hor and Sok peoples, such as the Oirat and Khalkha etc, are included exclusively as part of the Hothon peoples."⁶⁷⁸ It is only described in this way.

In his *Guide to Śambhala*,⁶⁷⁹ the All-Knowing Panchen Lama said that:

The lands of the Manchus and Great Hor are to be identified as one of the six divisions of the land of Great China.⁶⁸⁰

With the co-ordinates now set between Hor-Sok space and the empty time of the Buddhist dispensation, our author now introduces what had already become a standard historical position in late Qing Monguor-Mongol historiography:

From whatever (is mentioned in these texts), it is clear that Buddhism was established in Hor before Great China and Tibet. Since it is widely known how the teachings spread into China before Tibet, (I will) explain the manner in which the teachings spread to the land of Hor even before China.⁶⁸¹

677 Elverskog, "Mongol Time Enters a Qing World," 2005.

678 I have been unable to identify which text to which this refers.

679 See: bLo bzang dpal ldan ye shes, "Grub Pa'i Gnas Chen Po Sham+b+ha La'i Rnam Bshad 'Phags Yul Gyi Rtogs Brjod Dang Bcas Pa Ngo Mtshar Bye Ba'i 'Byung Gnas," vol. 10, 13 vols. (New Delhi: bKra shis lhun po'i par khang, 1975), 9–108.

680 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 108.

681 Ibid.

There are several primary sorts of evidence, provided in quick succession, given for this position that seems to draw on the oral tradition. The first, “explained in the ‘Emanated Mirror’ history (*‘phrul kyi me long*) and what is said in the writings of the Chinese, Hor peoples, and Manchus,”⁶⁸² describes the military exploits of a certain “Lord of the Chen”⁶⁸³ whose “Chinese army destroyed (Hor) holy places, and obliterated, burnt and so forth the supports of the Body, Speech, Mind. They did many very cruel actions.” Next, we are informed that, “At the time of the Lord of the Han (dynasty), the Chinese robbed some land from Hor. Even nowadays, the continuity of some of those (old Hor) monasteries have become Chinese monasteries.”⁶⁸⁴

Since the rest of these details largely follow Gombojab’s conclusions in the *History of Buddhism in China*, which have been described elsewhere, there is not need to cover them any more here. What is notable, however, is how Zawa Damdin uses his vision of a Mongolian Khotan to further Mongolize the Buddhist dispensation to not just China, but also Tibet; thus, in places, reversing the narrative arc of the later spread of Buddhism to Mongolia from Tibet during the Mongol Empire-Yuan dynasty and during the Qing. I briefly turn to that here, before continuing on to examine his more elaborate theory of the full expression of empty, enlightened religio-political authority in Mongolia and its decline.

2.1.4 Mongols and the Conversion of Tibet

The oscillation between the vast Hor-Sok spatial imaginary and the chronology of an earlier dispensation of Buddhism into ‘Mongol lands’ prior to China allows the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book* to continue narrating the the first connections between political authority

682 Ibid.

683 The short-lived southern Chen dynasty (陳朝), 557-589 C.E..

684 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 108.

and the Buddhism by means of making some novel claims on the religio-political history of Tibet. Here, the Hor-Sok spatial imaginary shifts to include more explicitly the Uighurs and Kashmiris of Central Asia, all in relation to the catchall of Khotan. By means of this, the well-worn foundational myths of Tibet's Buddhist tradition can be 'legitimately' read not simply to reference an already Buddhist Hor-Sok (as a pan-Mongol imaginary shared with early twentieth century Khalkha), but also to count Hor-Sok actors as prime catalysts in the Buddhicization of Tibet itself. Here, the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book* move in to rather unique historical terrain, which to my knowledge was never elaborated upon so explicitly even in the Monguor-Mongol historiography of the Qing (which had made many of the propositions related to Hor-China connections described above). We are reminded of the contours of this interpretative leap in the *Golden Book*:

Like that, it is clear that a Political System (*rgyal srid*) connected to the Victor's Teaching spread and increased in the lands of central and lower Hor slightly before the (lives of the) Chinese Emperor of the Tang dynasty, Taizong,⁶⁸⁵ and the Tibetan Dharma King Songtsen Gampo, and so forth, (who lived) thirteen-hundred years after the parinirvāṇa of the Buddha.

At that time, the Buddha's teaching had not yet spread to Tibet, and since it is not known that Hor-Sok received the constituent parts of the tradition of holy Dharma from China in the earlier or later (period), the earlier arrival of the Holy Dharma in all of Upper, Lower, and Middle Hor came about because of connections with Khotan.

On the basis of that circuitous, well-worn argument in the *Golden Book* that Hor-Sok enjoyed lasting affiliation (if not complete unification with) Khotan, we are then presented with several arguments identifying Hor-Sok catalysts in the Buddhist conversion of ancient Tibet. This position is encapsulated in a summary passage on the early dispensation from the *Golden Book*:

The Chinese monk Faxian made his pilgrimage (to India) three hundred years before (King) Songtsen Gampo. Then, at the same time as Songtsen Gampo, Xuanzang went to India. On the way (to India), they (both) saw that the Victor's teaching had already been

685 T. *Thang rgyal thang thAs tshung*; C. 太宗, 626-649.

established in Hor. (This is also shown from the fact that) the Great Sandalwood Jowo (statue) came from India to China via Hor.

If you look at Hor in those stories, there is no doubt that Buddhism establishes itself in Hor before China and Tibet!⁶⁸⁶

Much of the Mongol claim on the well-worn narrative of Tibet's Buddhization come from sources on the Buddhist ruler of the seventh-ninth century Yarlung empire,⁶⁸⁷ who as we saw above were tied anachronistically to Tibetan, Mongolian, and Manchu theories of Buddhist government in the rubric of the Two Systems. Prior to these three, however, was the legendary King Thothori Nyentsen,⁶⁸⁸ whose Mongol reinterpretation starts this narrative in the *Golden Book*. According to later standardized accounts, Thothori Nyentsen was the first king of the Tibetan empire, and Zawa Damdin rehearses the usual story that during his reign he received two foreign Buddhists at his court: one named Paṇḍit Losem Tso,⁶⁸⁹ the other a translator named Litésé.⁶⁹⁰ Realizing that their visit was in vain because the Tibetan court was illiterate and they could not understand each other's language, they returned to their homeland, but not without leaving some holy objects behind, which were stored and made into offering objects by the Tibetan court. In the context of its inscription into the *Golden Book*, this well-worn narrative takes on an entirely novel meaning by riffing on the fact that these two foreigners were from Khotan, and as such are here Hor-Sok actors who shared a vast spatial imaginary with Zawa Damdin's own twentieth-century Khalkha milieu.

686 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 117–118.

687 Ie. "The 'Three Ancestral Kings' (*mes dpon rnam gsum*).

688 *Tho tho ri gnyan btan*.

689 *bLo sems 'tsho*.

690 *Li the se*.

The same claim is made on the Buddhist texts that were said to have miraculously fallen on the palace roof at another time during Thothori Nyentsen's reign, and which according to later Tibetan historical tradition, represents the Tibetan people's first contact with Buddhism. The *Golden Book* "clarifies" that while these have often been seen as descending from the sky, this is merely due to the fact that Tibetan Bönpo religionists worship the sky and so made this faulty attribution.⁶⁹¹ In fact, we read, these texts arrived at the still non-Buddhist Tibetan court carried on a wind from the palace of the King of Za Hor.⁶⁹² We can by now anticipate Zawa Damdin's Mongol claim on this foundational event in Tibetan Buddhist history, no doubt!

This pattern is repeated again and again, where figures from the founding civilizing myths of Tibet are claimed as constituting a part of the vast Hor-Sok ethnoreligious genesis. In other words, the 'empty chronotope of enlightened manifestations such as Thothori Nyentsen (considered an emanation of the buddha Samantabhadra) are temporalized and explained (by means of authorial intervention) in relation to Hor-Sok space. As such, their enlightened, abstracted drama is carefully channeled away from (in this case) the revered Tibetan imperial period, and instead located on the Hor-Sok stage.

In relation to King Songtsen Gampo, we are lead to re-read the common stories concerning the great civilizing projects of the first great Dharma King Songtsen Gampo (who brought not only Buddhism, but also literacy, architecture, medicine, and all other sorts of

691 Bön (*bon*) is a non-Buddhist tradition that developed a distinct identity in Tibet alongside Buddhism in the "renaissance period" in the eleventh-twelfth century. Central to both religious formations at this time were contested memories of the Tibetan imperial collapse, the enlightened nature of Tibet's Buddhist kings, and the nature of Buddhist government. On their mutual constituency through the "mirror-work" of interdependent historiography, see: Zeff Bjerken, "The Mirrorwork of Tibetan Religious Historians: A Comparison of Buddhist and Bon Historiography" (Ph.D., University of Michigan, 2001), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses (PQDT).

692 *Za hor*. Often understood to designate a place in contemporary Bengal. bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 125.

civilizing accouterments to Tibet from neighboring regions). The *Golden Book* reminds us that, “from Persia⁶⁹³ and the Land of Sok in the west, (Songtsen Gampo) brought the treasure or wealth and bounty,” and, “from the northern lands of the Uighur and Hor peoples, (he) received the example of law and action.” Also, we are reminded that, “From among the six inner minster whom he commanded, one was a Hor person.”⁶⁹⁴ Another example concerns the familiar story of the two monks from Khotan who received vision that the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara had manifested as a Dharma King in Tibet. Upon their arrival in the Land of Snows, they were at first shocked to see executed criminals and other evidence of an apparently un-enlightened kingship. According to the usual story, these misconceptions were cleared away upon meeting Songtsen Gampo, who awed them by revealing a seated Buddha Amitābha under his turban before magically sending them back to Khotan in an instant.⁶⁹⁵⁶⁹⁶ Once more, based on the exhaustive spatializing of the Hor-Sok imaginaire, the bare rehearsal of these well worn myths require next to no authorial intervention or explanation: they tell Hor-Sok stories and channel the enlightened conduct of these Tibetan kings into Hor-Sok space.

This pattern is repeated in terms of the well known exploits of the last great Dharma King of imperial Tibet, Trisong Detsen who, according to popular lore, invited the great Indian abbot Śāntarakṣita and the tantric master Padmasambhava to transmit the monastic code and tantric lineages into Tibet, built the first Tibetan monastery of Samyé,⁶⁹⁷ and had the first group of Tibetans ordained as monks. In the context of the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book*, these

693 *TA zig*.

694 *Golden Book*, pp. 125-126.

695 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 126.

696 *Golden Book*, p. 126.

697 *bSam yas gtsug lag khang*, in Central Tibet.

standardized stories require little curation to tell Hor-Sok stories. For instance, we read the famous story of Padmasambhava luring Pehar Gyalpo (*pe har rgyal po*) from a monastery in Bhata Hor to become the Dharma Protector (*chos srung*) of Samyé.⁶⁹⁸ Moreover, we are reminded that two of the important figures in Padmasambhava and King Trisong Detsen's retinue—Sokpo Pelyangcan Zennya⁶⁹⁹ and Sokpo Taktri⁷⁰⁰—apparently had Mongol “bones” (*Sog rus can*). The abundance of these Hor-Sok actors in the early Buddhist scene of imperial Tibet, according to the *Golden Book*, caused many Hor-Sok religious terms to enter into the Tibetan lexicon, something erased from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition by the reforms of the last of the three great Dharma kings of the Tibetan imperium, Tri Rélpachen.⁷⁰¹

The identification of Hor-Sok catalysts in the great episodes of Tibet's Buddhization do not end in either the *Dharma Conch* or the *Golden Book* with the demise of the Yarlung empire (and its fledgling Buddhist tradition). Following upon Rashipuntsog's eighteenth-century argument, Zawa Damdin paraphrases that Mongol peoples had helped preserve the Tibetan Buddhist monastic tradition by harboring Central Tibetan monks fleeing the suppression of Buddhism at the hands of Langdarma, concluding:

In such a short time these three great beings could not establish Buddhism in Hor, but later the Victor's teachings increased out of Tibet from north to north (to Mongolia), and as such they opened the door to Buddhism. That is why those three are very kind to Tibetans and Sok peoples!”⁷⁰²

698 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 126.

699 *Sog po dpal dbyangs can gzan gnya'*, one of Padmasambhava's twenty-five disciples.

700 *Sog po ltag 'khrid*.

701 *Khri ral pa can*; alias Tri Tsuk Detsen, r.c. 815-838 CE.

702 Ibid., 127-128.

Of interest here, however, is that Zawa Damdin further “proves” this assertion in part by citing the claim of an unnamed Russian scholar that the ruins of the retreat center these three refugees used on Mt. Bekala in Mongol lands was still in existence.

3 The Middle Spread of Buddhism Into Mongolia

3.1 Finding the Two Systems in the Mongol Empire

Seeing that the Victor’s Teachings have flourished in China, Tibet, and Hor
In the later Five-Hundred year period⁷⁰³

Due to the three secret, magical emanations of the
Protectors of the Three Families of the Victor’s Children,
I suppose it is due to my virtuous karma and aspirations that I was born in this country!

In the eyes of ordinary people, the wrathful and peaceful activity of
Kings who are the emanations of (either) Bodhisattvas and Demons appear similar.
(However) when they clarify the white and black (nature) of the hand and foot prints (of each),
Everyone, including scholars and the stupid, have the ability to evaluate (dpog par nus)
The evidence of the results (of their positive or negative actions) (‘bras bu’i rtags).

(If you) put your head underneath the ass (rkub) of a barbarian who does non-virtue,⁷⁰⁴
Follow whatever they say as advice,
And then receive the fortunes of the murderous enemy (gsod dgra yi g.yang lon pa)
What else will happen other than being punished by the Dharma Protector?

E MA!

Until I achieve the Stage of Patience on the Path of Preparation,⁷⁰⁵
May I never be reborn in an area where there are many holders of wrong view!
O Triple Gem, bless me so that this request (may come true)!⁷⁰⁶

703 *lnga brgya’i tha ma*. Indicating a late development in the development of the teachings which began with the historical Buddha, thought to expand and degenerate in ten five-hundred year periods.

704 Ie. if you respect them and take refuge in them.

705 One stage in the second of five ‘paths’ that describe a gradual maturation of a meditator’s perception of ultimate truth (*don dam*).

706 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 214–215.

So ends the second chapter of the *Golden Book*, entitled “An Explanation of the Manner in Which the Middle Spread of the Victor’s Teachings Occurred from Tibet, Land of Snows, While Chinggis Khaan, Turner the Wheel of Power, Controlled Most of the World.”⁷⁰⁷ These verses summarize and conclude what is a rather more conventional historical narrative on the history of Mongolian Buddhism in both the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book*. This builds extensively upon having satisfactorily recovered an expansive Hor-Sok spatial imaginary, and ‘recovered’ Hor-Sok complicity in the early Buddhist dispensation into China and Tibet (effectively making these Mongol stories), in relation to the ‘early spread’ of the Dharma into Hor-Sok. The staggeringly circuitous nature of both of these historical works, however, mean that in these latter sections there is little hesitation to provide new proof on, say, arguments for the Hor-Sok providence of Khotan, or the fact that Hor-Sok had an earlier Buddhist dispensation than China, which had already been reconciled earlier in both works.

Of importance for the current study is that with the turn to a middling, and then a later, Buddhist dispensation into Hor-Sok (one for which there were ample and explicit historical traces), the oscillation between ‘real’ and ‘empty’ characters are more fully on display than in the earlier recovery of a earlier spread. In the ‘Middling Spread’, everyday Mongols (ie. Hor-Sok peoples) continue in both works to act as ‘real’ characters who spatialize the drama of ‘timeless’ enlightened characters; for instance, those who enact the ‘three secret, magical emanations of the Protectors of the Three Families of the Victor’s Children,’ in the poem cited above. This is especially true in regards to the rather unique way that these works both rehearse and explain the genealogical succession of the ‘Golden Lineage’ (M. *Altan urag*) of Chinggis Khaan. This section of the *Golden Book* in particular is a fascinating example of not only the

707 *sTobs kyi 'khor bsgyur zing gir rgyal pos 'dzam gling phal cher la dbang bsgyur zhin bod gangs can nas rgyal bstan bar dar byung tshul bshad pa.*

subjectivities produced in this historiography, but also of the situated interpretative strategies and writing practices that I examine later in this dissertation. I return to a general overview of Chinggis Khaan's biography and his genealogy of succession from Zawa Damdin's oeuvre (and their exemplary display of what I am calling 'co-authorship') in the final chapter of this dissertation on the 'writing' of these histories.

An example of this oscillation comes in the *Golden Book* during a summary of the Middling Wave of the Buddhist Dispensation to Mongolia (from Tibet during the Mongol Empire):

In its first five hundred years the teaching of Buddha Śākyamuni flourished in the center and borderlands of the Noble Land (India) and during its final five hundred years the domain of influence of the most exalted Lords of the Three Families flourished in Tibet, China and Hor. Since this was the case, from among them (it was) the Buddha-activity of Mañjuśrī and Avalokitesvara which progressively caused Buddhism to flourish in both China and Tibet. After, when the time had come for the Teaching to flourish in the land of Hor, from having emanated as Chinggis Khan here in the land of Hor, Vajrapani accomplished the Buddha-activity of causing the Victor's Teaching to flourish (here). Initially, the races/lineages of Hor and Sok were fragmented (and) scattered. (He) united them⁷⁰⁸ into one kingdom. In order to raise a great army, through all manner of appropriate (ci rigs) peaceful and wrathful activities, he gathered (them) as subjects.

Therefore (de nas), as for the actual method of causing the Teachings to flourish in this country, there are both 'establishing the favorable conditions' and 'removing adverse conditions'. As for the first, there is the necessity for (establishing) both the support (*rten*) of the Royal Law (*rgyal khrims*) and the supports of the Dharma Law (*chos khrims*). In order to accomplish the first, (Chinggis Khan) subjugated principally by way of wrathful activities the prosperity of the Royal Law (of the) land of China. In order to accomplish the second, he subjugated principally by way of peaceful activities the prosperity of the Dharma Law (of the) land of Tibet. At that time in the land of India, Buddhism was decreasing, which is why he did not go there. It is clearly said in the prophecy⁷⁰⁹ that except for the land of Shing shung gyon, this came to fruition.⁷¹⁰

708 lit. made them into one (Tib. *gcig tu byas*).

709 This prophecy is from the *Root Tantra of Mañjuśrī*, quoted above.

710 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 170.

While the content of the ‘middle spread’ sections of both works are not radically unique in terms of their narrative content- Zawa Damdin follows convention in ascribing Chinggis Khaan and some of his progeny an ‘enlightened’ status and a central role in bringing Tibetan lamas to the court of the Mongol empire, for example- they do provide us with much to ponder in regards to the insertion of various authorial voices to color and ‘co-author’ the events described.

Because of space, I can only offer a brief summary of the usual (and already relatively well studied) historical narratives of Tangut, Sakya, and Kagyu encounters at the court of the Mongol empire, as these had solidified in Qing-era Monguor-Mongol historiography. This is primarily for the sake of non-specialists unfamiliar with these episodes, and for specialists wishing to quickly locate comparative historical narratives in either of these works. I will pause to highlight examples of the unique interventions of the authorial voice, since (as usual) these expand not only the narrative content of these well-worn stories, but creatively riff on the interpretative precedents of the received historical corpus available in early twentieth century Ikh Khüree.

This chapter of the *Golden Book* is divided into two sections: 1) “How the Royal Lineage of Chinggis Khaan, Turner of the Wheel of Power, Arose”; and 2) “How the Teachings of the Victor, together with the Holders of the Teachings, Arose”.⁷¹¹ The first of these sets out straightaway to summarize and expand the Hor-Sok space (already extensively treated in earlier sections) by again appealing to the naming practices of those ‘others who matter’ in the late Mongol *imaginaire*:

⁷¹¹ Ibid., 138.

In general, it is evident that it is everywhere renowned (*yongs su grags par mngon*) that ‘Hor’ and ‘Greater Hor’, ‘Tibet’ and ‘Greater Tibet’, ‘China’ and ‘Greater China’ come from the appellations used by Indians to name ‘such and such’ directional abodes of our land and its adjacent (territories), as well as for the various great names (*de dang de chen po zhes*) of lands in far away directions. As for the name ‘Mongel’, it is the ‘root name’ (*rtsa ba’i ming*) of this district. As for the name ‘Hor’, with the exception (*ma gtogs*) of the ‘Prophecy of Ox-Horn Mountain Sutra’, it does not arise in other scriptural sources (*gsung rab gzhan tsho*). In Sok dictionaries, ‘Za Hor’ translates as ‘Sharégola’.⁷¹² Because of this, I think (*e yin snyam*) that the ‘Bhata Hor’ are of the same lineage as India’s ‘Za Hor’. As for the name ‘Sok po’, I think that it is a corruption (*zur chag*) of ‘Sukapāna’ from the Indian language. As for those races (lit. ‘possessing lineage’, *rigs can*), the Tibetans call them ‘Takzig’, and Indians, Russians, etc. call them ‘Turushka’.

Furthermore, although Westerners and Northerners (*nub dang byang phyogs pa tsho*) call Hor, Sok etc. ‘Khalmyk’ and ‘Tatary’ etc.,⁷¹³ in earlier and later times, it so happened that the general and specific names (for these peoples) were inexact (*nges med*).

As for the root land (*rtsa ba’i yul*) of the Mongols, as I have already explained, in ancient times (they) existed between India and Barbarian (territory), in the lands of Heho, Hokhān [Khotan?], and so forth. Because this is so, today it is difficult for any (*sus kyang*) scholar to explain all the lineages of the various progeny (*rigs rus*) of the Kings of upper, lower, and middle Hor-Sok in ancient times. (As for some of all these, I) have already explained.⁷¹⁴

Having again clarified and recovered the names for the *pax Mongolica* and after nearly forty pages of biographical information on Chinggis Khaan (to which I return below), the *Golden Book* sets out to describe the middle spread of Buddhism to Hor-Sok.

Despite the admitted ambiguity of just who everyday Mongolian peoples were, or where they may have lived in ancient times during the earlier spread, with the ‘Middle Spread’ we encounter a more confident engagement with canonical sources regarding ‘Mongol’ space and time. This is framed straightaway by appeal to a series of interpretations of canonical sources and prophecies. For instance, the first lines of the “Explanation of How the Victor’s Teachings

⁷¹² *Sha ra’i gwo la*.

⁷¹³ *Hal mig; Tha thA ri*.

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 138-19.

Together With the Holders of the Teachings Arose” sections reads: “As for how the Victor prophesized the middle spread of the teachings into the land of Great Hor at the time of the later five-hundred year (portion of the teachings).”⁷¹⁵ Of interest here is the dualism of prophetic quotation and exegetical authorial voice, which unselfconsciously ruminates and unpacks the voice of the Buddha himself. For instance:

As for how the Victor prophesized the middle spread of the teachings into the land of Great Hor at the time of the later five hundred year (period of the teachings):

As it is said, in the ‘Sutra Requested by the Stainless Goddess’:⁷¹⁶

“Two thousand five hundred years after my parinirvāṇa, holy Dharma will develop in the land of Red-Faced Ones.”

The ‘land’ referred to in that prophecy is the land of Great Hor⁷¹⁷, which is correct according to the identification (*ngos bzung ba*) of some authentic (*tshad thub*) scholars. (This is also true) because by about that time (*lo de tsam na*), many years had already passed since the teachings had spread into the lands of China and Tibet.

Again, from the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra*:

“After my parinirvāṇa, this (teaching on) the Perfection of Wisdom from the central (land) will come to be practiced in the southerly region. After that, it will come to be (practiced) in the land of Bartani.⁷¹⁸ After that, it will arise in the northerly direction. Subsequently, in a future period, it will spread into a northerly land and a northerly direction.”

The meaning of that prophecy is that in earlier times the teachings of the ‘Perfection of Wisdom Sutra’ would spread in the regions of central, south, east, west, and northern India. Tibet is relatively north of India, but Hor is relatively north to Tibet, (which is where) the spread (of this teaching) occurred in the latter period. This has been explained by impartial scholars, such as the Victorious Lord Kelzang Gyatso, and so on.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid., 175.

⁷¹⁶ *Lha mo dri med zhus kyi mdo*.

⁷¹⁷ *gyi yul* added here as an interlinear note.

⁷¹⁸ *Bar ta ni*.

Likewise, in the aforementioned prophecy found in the *Root Tantra of Mañjuśrī*, it is said that during the end times (*dus gyi mthar*), many temples and the ‘three supports’ will be built in the country of Hor during the degeneration age, and the general Dharma teachings of the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna, and especially the teachings of the Perfection of Wisdom, will increase.

Further, from the great commentary to the Kālacakra tantras called ‘*Stainless Light*’ (*dri med ‘od*):

“After the Buddha’s (pari)nirvāṇa, in the land of Tibet those who collected (his teaching) (sdud ar byed pa po) wrote down the three vehicles (theg pa gsum) in the Tibetan language. (The same occurred) in China and in the Chinese language. (It also occurred) in Great China and in the Great Chinese language.”

As for the ‘Great China’ mentioned (in this prophecy), according to the speech of the great pandita, the all-seeing Lozang Pelden Yéshé (*blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes*), this refers to the land of the Manchu-Mongols.

Therefore, as for ‘Hor’ and ‘Great Hor’, these seem to be (*yin pa ‘dra*) the cause for calling (*zer rgyu*) the Mongols who lived in the lands of Khotan and Great China, respectively.

In the *Ox-Horn Prophecy Sūtra* it is said:

In the future, the Triple Gems will abide in China and Tibet, and people will act in relation to those great objects of offering. Also, those countries will become the countries of the great bodhisattvas. Also, the sentient beings (of those countries) whose disposition (compels) them to find the great bodhisattva path will have devotion to the Mahāyāna and will develop strong interest in practicing contemplation. By the power of that, neither the people of Khotan nor the Triple Gem will never become lost.

[Why will these never become lost?]: As it says in this prophecy, neither these people (*mi sde*) nor (their) Dharma was lost because of having surrendered to China and Tibet. The ‘people who were not lost’ were the Mongols of Khotan, such as the Uighurs (*yus gwor*), Oirots (*os rod*), and so forth.

As for other Khotanese peoples, etc., they became barbarians and thus ‘lost’ their (connection to these original) peoples and the Triple Gem.

As for the ‘Red-faced Ones’ previously mentioned in that sutric prophecy [ie. *Sutra Requested by the Stainless Goddess*], earlier scholars have said that this (refers) to those of the lineage of the red-faced monkey, and so say that it (must refer) to Tibet.

But there are other ways of explaining, such that (‘red-faced’ ones) are (also) said to refer to ‘Hor’ (peoples), since they are of a lineage whose behavior is associated with meat and blood (*sha khrag la spyod pa’i rigs*).

From the point of view of the *Sutra Requested by the Stainless Goddess*, it is said that the leader(s) of Khotan will be born again and again due to the power of mistaken prayer, and will then draw up an army to destroy the temples and ‘three supports’ of that land and steal the (monastic) treasures. From this, (it is clear that these kings were) of a lineage who acted to destroy the Buddha’s teachings. Because of this, it seems that the actual ‘red-faced ones’ are the barbarians of that land, such as the Garlok (*gar log*), and so forth.

There are many peoples belonging to Khotan, such as Indians/Chinese (*rgya*), Tibetans, Hor peoples, and so forth. For that reason, I think that if Buddhism spread into the land of the ‘Red-faced Ones’, it was not strictly because all the ‘Red-faced Ones’ entered the gateway of Dharma [ie. became Buddhists].

Similarly, as for “The Manner in Which the Actions of the Victor’s Child Vajrapani Further Came to Spread and Increase the Victor’s Teaching in the Land of Hor During the Later Period (*dus gyi mthar*)”:

As was mentioned above, in ancient times the Teachings of the Buddha spread in the land of Khotan, and then similarly (*bzhin yod*) the Victor’s Teachings spread into the connected territories of Hor and Great Hor (‘*brel bar hor dang chen po hor gyi yul*). Likewise (*yang*), when the Khotanese laws of religion and politics (*bstan srid kyi khrims*) decreased, the connected laws of religion and politics in the land of Hor also decreased.

After that, Hor-Sok peoples became fragmented and a few became scattered. As for all these, (for some) the Dharma system remained unchanged (*chos lugs sor gnas*), and others entered (*zhugs*) the backward dharmas of either the barbarians or the ‘Hrisa Thosi’ (*hrI sa tho si*). Some others came to possess neither a dharma system nor even a customary tradition.

The majority of Hor-Sok peoples continued to prostrate and make offerings to ‘Burkhan’ (T. *pur han*; M. *burkhan*), which refers to both the Buddha and a Warrior God (*dgra lha*). Both [Buddhist] monks and Bön practitioners [ie. shamans]⁷¹⁹ were called Pakshi [ie. ‘teacher’], their dharma systems became undifferentiated (*rnam dbye med par gyur*), and they were permitted to recite (*‘don du bcug pa*) their individual Dharmas, etc.⁷²⁰

719 ‘Shaman’ is, of course, nearly useless as a comparative category in the study of religion and is a false descriptor of the Bon tradition of Tibet. I use ‘shaman’ to translate *bon* here, however, since it is evoked by Zawa Damdin throughout the *Golden Book* to refer rather disparagingly of the indigenous traditions of Mongolia. In that sense, ‘shaman’ works quite well.

720 Ibid., 175-177.

Just how the Dharma came to Mongol lands during the Mongol empire via Tibet (ie. the ‘Middle Spread’) happens in the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book* in four broad acts: an early dispensation via the Tanguts prior to their destruction at the hands of the ‘enlightened’ Chinggis Khaan; a primary dispensation via the Sakya (*sa skya pa*) school; a secondary dispensation via the Kagyu (*bka’ brgyud pa*) school; and the consolidation of these transits in the establishment of various temples and retreat centers in Mongol space. The thrust of these narratives, as had already been the case in Mongolian historiography for some time, was to connect the timeless characters of Tibetan and Mongolian religious and political history. In particular, to connect the early figures of the Mongol empire with some of the most important ‘Tibetan’,⁷²¹ religious prelates of the day, and thus to explain and inscribe the empty characters of Tibetan and Mongolian religious history into a cohesive narrative of enlightened drama on a Mongol stage.

In the *Golden Annals*, for instance, we read of a certain Dungkurpa of Tsang (*gtsang pa dung khur pa*),⁷²² who along with seven disciples traveled to do retreat in the land of Hor. There he garnered the favor of locals (one shepherd in particular), and eventually, despite a language barrier, was called into the presence of ‘Holy Chinngis Khaan’. Chinggis only showed a small amount of faith in this lama at first, but after Dungkurpa was able to miraculously cure the sickness of a Mongol minister that had been inflicted by a Teng spirit (*steng gdon*), both the great Khaan and the minister made many offerings and offered the Tibetan lama a ‘certificate’ (*lung bzang po*) recognizing his enlightened qualities. The author’s voice and present intrude to

721 Though, as many scholars have shown, many of the ‘Tibetan’ lama at the Mongol court were in fact Uighurs and Tanguts.

722 Who we are told was a student of Lama Zhang (*bla ma zhang rin po che*).

tell us that, “people say that this was the first meeting between a Hor king and a Tibetan monk.”⁷²³ Due to this fortuitous encounter (ruined, we read, only later by the jealous intervention of indigenous ‘Bön practitioners’):

After that, in the year of the Fire Rabbit of the fourth rabjung, two thousand and forty one years since the parinirvāṇa of the Buddha according to the system of Būton (*bu lugs*), Bogta Gyalpo [Chinggis Khaan] went to Central Tibet, and entered into a priest-patron (*mchod yon*) relationship with the Sakya Gongma father and son. From Ü and Tsang he invited the Three Supprts. All the Sok peoples obtained unmoveable faith (to the Three Supports). They made offerings, and from taking vows such as the Upāsaka precepts and so forth, the Middle Spread of the Teachings here in the land of Hor, like finding (one’s) head (*dbu rnyed*). Of that:

Due to the coupling of the Sun and Moon of Dharma and political authority,
The festival of happiness and welfare swells like a summer lake!

The teaching of scripture and insight greatly increased, and as such it absolutely matched the year mentioned in prophecy, such as “in the fourth rabjung, in the fire bird year,” etc.!

The violence that attended, for instance, the six Mongol attacks against the Tangut empire (the Western Xia: 西夏; T. *mi nyag*) in the early thirteenth-century was also synthesized into this new narrative in the usual manner of transferring agency to misguided or evil “real” historical characters attending to the enlightened personage of (in this case) Chinggis Khaan himself:

Later, a rebellion arose in the land of the Tanguts. The Bogta King raised an army in order to correct (this situation). Some unruly soldiers destroyed many temples, and this was a time of great harm (*nyams smas*) to the Teachings.

That lama from Tsang who was previously mentioned went in front of King (Chinggis), and the Khan installed him at the head (of the religious figures at court) who made offerings to the sky (*gnam mchod thad*).

723 Ibid., 178.

724 Ibid.

Sainahé (*sa* ‘*in a has*) and his mother privately became (this lama’s) benefactors. (This lama) explained action, causes, and their effect and (various other) great Dharmas to the Bogta Khaan through a translator. From this, (Chinggis Khaan realized that) the joy and happiness of sentient beings are dependent upon the teachings of the Buddha, and the Khaan deemed it necessary to pay homage to the Teachings.

(This Lama) made supplications to the Khaan, (saying): “Do not tax or enlist into the army those monks who are Holder’s of the Teaching! Do not cause fear! [Whatever you] disperse [people, wealth etc. through conquest], (you must) re-collect! (Whatever you cause to) degenerate, (you must) repair (*gso ba*)!” This request to have an edict to protect the Teachings was granted.

Because of this, all the monasteries that had deteriorated in Tangut lands, such as in Bhati (*bha ti*) and so forth, were restored. All monks acquired an edict (of protection) from the Great Khaan. At the same time, all (other religious figures, such as) Bön, Zinshing, and so forth, were also exempted (*thar*) from taxation or military duty (*dmag las*).⁷²⁵

Unsurprisingly, the *Golden Annals* continues its narrative gloss of the messy affair of conquest and Mongol expansionism in order to foreground what we understand to be the primary focus of these campaigns: integrating religious and political authority and lineage (*chos srid* ‘*brel*). In this work, Chinggis’ final testament (*zhal chems*) to his son and successor Ögedei is only to urge him to invite lama Gungtangpa as an object of veneration (*mchod gnas*) for the latter’s mother, Börte Üjin. The ascension of Ögedei as Supreme Khagan of a Mongol empire rapidly expanding into China, Central Asia, and the Middle East, is here simply the story of dispelling the “enemies of religious and political authority,” such as the barbarous “Red-faced Kyrgyz.” The consolidation of the pre-Yuan Mongol empire is the story of collecting the Buddhist ‘supports’ already extant in Hor and bringing them to his court, and repairing the Jowo Ganden statue and several temples. The presence of Lama Gungtangpa (the ‘Head Lama’ (*bla mchod*) of Ögedei’s court) acts as a narrative pivot; channeling religious transmission from his Central Tibetan monastery of Tsel Gunthang into the early Mongol court; which, the

725 Ibid., 178-9.

intervention of the authorial voice reminds us, “people say is the first time a Hor king received a tantric initiation.”⁷²⁶ It also, we read, “allowed a system (to develop, whereby) Uighur and Sok monks chanted the Dharma there [in the Mongol court].”⁷²⁷

We read that Ögedei’s sons Güyük and Köten were influenced by this lama and their (apparently) devotedly Buddhist mother. As such, as they settled ‘inside the fence’ (ie. the Great Wall) at the city of Langjou in order to mount their attacks against the Song dynasty, they heard of Sakya Paṇḍita and immediately sent letters of inquiry. Contrary to the histories of even its most immediate Mongol and Monguor precedents (such as Tsépél, Dharmatāla, Thuken, etc.), in neither the *Dharma Conch* nor the *Golden Book* are descriptions of the violence enacted against Tibetan Buddhist monasteries at the hands of the forces of Köten’s emissary Doorta described. What is included, however, is a copy of the edict sent by Köten to Sakya Pandita ordering him to the Mongol court at Langjou. Because an actual transcription of the contents of this letter is extremely rare in Tibeto-Mongolian historiography, the inclusion of a purported version of Köten edict in the *Golden Annals* has attracted the attention of scholars such as Dieter Schuh, who has rightly picked up on the rather aggressive tone of this rare transcription of the “invitation.”⁷²⁸

Since to my knowledge there has not yet been an English translation of this letter—which in the popular memory of Inner Asian religious and political elites initiated so much of their history, and precipitated an enduring contact between real and enlightened chronotopes—I include it here in full:

726 Ibid., 179.

727 Ibid.

728 Schuh, D. (1977). Erlasse und Sendschreiben mongolischer Herrscher für tibetische Geistliche. Ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der Urkunden des tibetischen Mittelalters und ihrer Diplomatik. St. Augustin, VGH-Wissenschaftsverlag.

Khubilai's younger brothers, named Darhan Taiji and Doorda, along with their attendants, were officials commissioned to go to Tsang in the Wood Dragon year as messengers. The edict that they presented to the Gentle Protector Sakya Paṇḍita [read] as follows:

‘In dependence upon the glory of the merit of Tséring Namgyi Shémong (*tshe ring gnam gyi she mong*), this is my royal order (*rgyal po nged lung*):

Sakya Paṇḍita Kunga Gyeltsen Pélzangpo, understand (my) speech! I need a lama who can show me what to adopt and what to discard in order to repay the kindness of my parents, heaven (gnam), and earth. Upon investigating, it is you! Because of this, you must come here without thinking about the difficulty of the journey. If you say, ‘I am old’, how many times in his previous (lives) did the Buddha give his body for the benefit of sentient beings? Wouldn’t this contradict the promise (you have made to sentient beings based on) your Dharma understanding? By (considering) all this, if you still do not come, I will give an order to my army to harm many beings.

Are you still not afraid (*skrag pa e yin*)?

For these reasons, you should think of the consequences for the benefit of the teachings of the Buddha and the many sentient beings, and then come here as quickly as possible!

[Should you come], you will come to know monks of the easterly direction of the rising sun. I will give you: five dré (*bre*) of silver; a silk, impearled dharma robe with six thousand two hundred pearls; a Gölutang (*gos lu tang*) lama shawl (*ring ‘gag*) with shoes; two bundles of Khati Khatsangma (*kha to kha tshangs ma*) cloth; two pieces of Thonti Khatsangma (*thon ti kha tshangs ma*) cloth; and five types of silk in twenty long pieces.

This message is sent with Dorsi Gön (*rdor sri mgon*) and Doorta, and was written on the day of the auspicious new moon in the eight month of the Dragon year.⁷²⁹

3.2 Converting the Progeny of Chinggis

What follows for the remainder of the narrative content of the ‘Middle Spread’ in both the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book* essentially mirror what had become standard accounts in the Tibeto-Mongolian historical tradition at this time. Remembering a prophecy given by his uncle and primary guru Drakpa Gyeltsen (1147-1216), Sapaṇ and his two young nephews, Chögyel Pakpa Lodro Gyeltsen (*chos rgyal ‘phags pa blo gros rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po*) and

729 Ibid., 180-181.

Chakna Dorjé (*phyag na rdo rje*), dutifully set out on the long journey to the Mongol court.

There is no space nor need to detail here the fascinating and much-studied stories⁷³⁰ of the legendary miraculous displays, Dharma instruction, ritual healing, and dialectic feats which for Zawa Damdin and his primary historiographic interlocutors explained the “conversion” of the progeny of Chinggis to Buddhism, the installation of the Sakya school and the powerful Khön (*khon*) family as rulers of Tibet, and the dispensation of Tibetan Buddhism into courtly life during the Mongol empire.⁷³¹ Of mention here is perhaps only the intervention of Zawa

730 See, for instance: Louis Hambis, “L’histoire des Mongols à l’époque de Gengis-Khan et le dPag bSam lJon bZan de Sumpa Qutugtu,” in *Études Tibétaines Dédiées à la mémoire de Marcelle Lalou* (Paris: Librairie d’Amérique et d’Orient, 1971), 149–58; Schuh, “Erlasse und Sendschreiben mongolischer Herrscher für tibetische Geistliche. Ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der Urkunden des tibetischen Mittelalters und ihrer Diplomatie”; Morris Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Anna Tsendina, “Godan Khan in Mongolian and Tibetan Historical Works,” *Studia Orientalia* 85 (1999): 245–48; Igor de Rachewiltz, *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yuan Period (1200–1300)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993); Reuven Amitai and David Morgan, *The Mongol Empire & Its Legacy* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000); Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance Tantric Buddhism in the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture*.

731 This important period in Tibetan and Mongolian history is summarized succinctly by Kurtis Schaeffer: “The Mongol leader Genghis Khan (ruled 1206–1227) first met with Tibetan Buddhist figures as early as 1215, most likely in the Tangut kingdom. This meeting led to no lasting interaction, and it was not until 1240 that Goden, son of Ogedai Khan (ruled 1229–1241), sent troops into Tibetan territories as far as Penyül (*phan yul*), to the northeast of Lhasa (*lha sa*). For reasons not fully understood, Sakya Pandita (sa skya paN+Di ta), abbot of Sakya Monastery to the far southwest, acted as a representative for Tibetan territories in negotiations with Goden’s military commander, Dorta. Dorta was apparently impressed with the Sakya hierarchy, so much so that, when word got back to the Khan of the meeting, Goden ordered Sakya Pandita to meet in Liangjou. Goden did not meet with Sakya Pandita until 1247, the year in which the century-long relationship between the Mongol empire and the Sakya polity began.

The first direct control by Mongol imperial families came in 1251 (the year, by the way, of Sakya Pandita’s death), when Mongke Khan (ruled 1251–1259) distributed appanages consisting of Tibetan territories to major Mongol leaders. Mongke himself took Drikung (*bri gung*), Goden Khan took Sakya, Qubilai Khan received Tsé (*tse*), Taklung (*stag lung*) was under Arig Boge, and Phakmodru (*phag mo gru*) fell under Hulegu’s jurisdiction. Ruling from sometimes great distances, the Mongols could exert direct administrative and military control over their regions, though we possess insufficient evidence to describe the details of their rule during this period with any degree of specificity. It is apparent that the military incursions into Tibetan territory during this period were enough to strike lasting fear of the Mongols into the Tibetan leadership for generations to come.

It was Mongke’s successor, Qubilai Khan (ruled 1260–1294) that cemented the relationship between the Sakya polity and the Mongol empire. Qubilai formed a relationship with Sakya Pandita’s nephew, Pakpa Lodrö Gyeltsen (*phags pa blo gros rgyal mtshan*, 1235–1280) in 1254, giving him an edict granting Sakya Monastery tax-exempt status under Mongol rule, but not, as has sometimes been suggested, granting the Sakya polity control over Tibet. This was to come some years later, when in 1261 Qubilai granted Pakpa the title of National Preceptor (*guoshi*), and in 1264 issued another edict of tax-exemption while at the same time stationing administrators from Sakya at the head of each of the three regions or *chölkha süm* (*chol kha gsum*) of Tibet under Mongol control. With his new title Pakpa returned to Sakya in 1263 to take up the post of abbot of Sakya Monastery (he had served as abbot in

Damdin's authorial voice into the rehearsal of these narratives in order to weigh in on one vexing historical debate: whether Sakya Paṇḍita invented the Mongol script. This debate, which again there is no space here to summarize, was of great consequence to larger historical considerations in regards to just when the translation of Buddhist texts into the Mongolian language and the nativization of Buddhist ritual practice occurred. Zawa Damdin's position is quite clear:

After that, King (Köten) requested that a system to translate the scriptures (*gsung rab rnams*) into Mongolian (*Sog skad*) be initiated. While the Dharma Lord (Sakya Paṇḍita) was thinking about making new Mongolian letters (*Sog yig gsar ma*), he saw a woman holding a wood Nyé [tool] while tanning hides. On that basis, (he saw) letters in the form of the front side of the old saw-tooth (edge of the Nyé tool) (*gna' bo'i Sog le'i kha'i dbyibs can gyi yi ge*). As for those (letters), he drafted a written decree that [the Mongol letters] should remain unchanged.

He ordered the enumeration of the consonants and vowels, and also divided the male, female, and neuter [letters] (*pho mo mi ning gi rab dbye*). He also taught the manner of relating (*'jug tshul*) the first, last, and middling (order of the letters which were already in use), and so forth. In this way, he crafted a grammar (*yi ge'i phyi mo*), (not an alphabet)! It is for that reason that many followers (*rjes snyegs*) in [later] Hor writings have said that Sapaṇ made the Sok alphabet. (Such a position) is also [now] popularly accepted (*de skad du grags*) in China, Tibet, and Hor (that the Mongol alphabet was Sapaṇ's creation) based on those foolish rumors [and] writings (*mun sprul gyi gtam bris pa*)!

As for the letters in the shape of the Sok wood Nyé (tanning tool), it is explained that these have existed since ancient times in both earlier Uighur writings, and in the original (*yig tshang khun thub*) writings of the Chinese, Hor, and Manchu [peoples]. Also, (in these texts) it is exceedingly clear that the letters of the Manchu and Hor peoples have one common foundation (*gzhi gcig pa*), etc.

absentia since the death of his uncle in 1251, and held the position until his death in 1280), and to begin to refashion the regional administration into a national administrative control center. The day-to-day administration was left to the newly founded office of pönchen (*dpon chen*), which Pakpa created in 1265. Beginning with Shakya Zangpo (*shākya bzang po*), the pönchen were to play a critical role in the politics of Tibet for the next century.” (Schaeffer, Kurtis (2010). ‘The Mongol Empire and Tibet in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries,’ The Tibetan and Himalayan Library (retrieved Feb. 1, 2013). <http://places.thlib.org/features/15481/descriptions/92#ixzz2JgvrVTpL>).

Furthermore, that wood Nyé (tool) which was the basis of that Dharma Lord's vision illustrated (*dper na*) that just as (hides) can become workable (*las rung du gyur pa*), the ancient letters possessing the shape of the wood Nyé (tool) of the Sok peoples similarly could (become) a suitable vessel for the Dharma. As for this, I think (the vision) was a sign⁷³² (given) by the directional protectors (*rigs kyi srung ma*).⁷³³

After this we read of the installation of the Khön clan and the Sakya lineage as temporal powers subsumed to the Mongol empire (and then the Yuan dynasty) and the exploits of other Tibetan prelates vying for sectarian affiliation and Mongol patronage (such as Karma Pakshi). These affiliations, as we expect, result in detailed narratives describing the excellent patronage of the Mongol court to Buddhism (as far away as Bodhgaya) and their lama-preceptors. As a summary of sorts, in the *Golden Book* the authorial voice intrudes and re-contextualizes these well-worn narratives in the following brief but telling terms:

... Mañjuśrī manifested as Sakya Paṇḍita, Avalokiteśvara manifested as Pakpa, and Vajrapāṇi manifested as the Indian⁷³⁴ Chakna. Those three caused China, Tibet, and Hor to adopt a similar loyalty (*la rgya*) to the dual system of politics and religion. Ancient lamas have prophesized that, 'When the political authority (*rgyal srid*) of China, Tibet and Hor are lost, the Teachings in all three (countries) will also degenerate.' If you think about it, this prophesied time is now approaching (*bslebs kyin*). Because of this correspondence (between our times and this prophecy) (*'dri bas*), it is necessary for the wise to be conscientious and make effort in virtuous Dharma activity!⁷³⁵

Beyond simply the transit of lamas, texts, lineages, and blessing from various Tibetan Buddhist schools into the Mongol court in the 'Middle Spread', the *Golden Book* also is careful to not the institutional and material marking of Hor-Sok space by its newly adopted Buddhist identity. This section ends with surveys of the various temples built and printing block

732 *snyon pa'i brda*.

733 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 186–187.

734 I am unclear as to why Chakna is here identified as an Indian (*rgya gar phyag na*).

735 Ibid., 202.

sponsored during the earlier Mongol empire, the Yuan dynasty, and even after the dissolution of Mongol hegemony in the Ming dynasty. And with this, we move finally into the full nativization of the Buddhist tradition to Mongolia, the ‘Later Spread’.

4 The Later Spread of Buddhism Into Mongolia

4.1 The Full Manifestation of the Empty Two Systems During the Qing Formation

The Pure Land of Mañjuśrī exists on the earth,
There, (he who) wears the savage color and who is the Lord of fortunate beings,
And (he who) makes the appearance of coming to the earth as the Second,
Come together (Lord and Brahman)!
Then, both the wealth of politics and religion will increase like a summer lake.

~Trülku Drakpa Gyeltsen⁷³⁶

In both the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book*, the latter spread of the teachings (*phyi dar*) is a vast subject divided into several broad (and by now, perhaps, familiar) topics: 1) how the dual system of religion and politics was established in Mongolian cultural regions in the sixteenth-century, following the meeting of Altan Khaan of the Tümed and the Géluk prelate Sonam Gyatso (*bsod nams rgya mtsho*); 2) how the dual system of religion and politics was established in the “Central Land” of Khalkha (Zawa Damdin’s homeland); and 3) the manner by which the monastic community was both first established and then came later to mature (*grub don*). The *Golden Annals* then provides an extensive list of the monasteries in Khalkha, including information on the number of monks and types of colleges (*grwa tshang*). This list,

⁷³⁶ Quoted in: bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 354.

written in 1931, represents perhaps the final survey of monastic institutions in Khalkha prior to the purges of the last nineteen-thirties.⁷³⁷

Here, as in the previous sections on the earlier and middling spread of Buddhism into Mongolia, my intention is to provide neither an extensive, comparative survey of Zawa Damdin's historical claims, nor to synthesize or correct our historical record on this period on the basis of these sources. These are deserving of separate studies in their own right. Rather, as part of my larger project to explore a social history of the production of history in post-Qing scholastic circles, and as a foundation for the investigations of analytical procedures and writing strategies that follow, here my engagement with the truly prodigious material of these histories on the later spread of Buddhism will have to remain rather modest. Following rather brief summations of Zawa Damdin's historical descriptions of this period, I will continue to highlight examples of the balancing of real and empty characters in the construction of Mongolia space, time, and subjectivity. Of special interest is the way that these become so productively synthesized in these works (in line with many of their other Monguor-Mongolian historical precedents) in the 'real' *and* 'empty' personage of the first Jebzundamba, Zanabazar; what I argue is the actual generative source of the subjectivity of these histories and their immediate interlocutors. I will return for a more sustained study of the most interesting material from these sections in the following chapter on interpretative procedure; for instance, on Zawa Damdin's critique of the sixth to the eighth Jebzundambas and the incarnation system as a whole.

⁷³⁷ Krisztina Teleki has summarized Zawa Damdin's list and cross-referenced it with other historical and oral history sources in a Hungarian article. See: Krisztina Teleki, "Mongólia Kolostorai Az Arany Krónika Jegyzéke Alapján," in *Bolor-un gerel: Kristályfény: Tanulmányok Kara György Professzor 70. Születésnapjának Tiszteletére*, ed. Ágnes Birtalan, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Budapest: Eötvös Lóránd Tudományegyetem, Belső-ázsiai Tanszék, 2005), 773–90.

4.1.1 The Qing Formation and the Enlightened Authority of the Two Systems in Mongol, Tibetan, and Manchu Bodies

Whereas the particular embodiment of Zanabazar (whom we shall encounter momentarily) literally initiates the Mongolian Buddhist subjectivity in these works, it is the persons of the first Manchu rulers, such as Nurhaci and Hong Taiji, which for Zawa Damdin (the author character whose voice we encounter in the text) inherits and synthesizes the political system of both the Chinese and the Mongols. As such, these two characters together constitute and initiate the primary subjectivity of this work: a Qing centric, Mongolian, and Buddhist spatial and temporal imaginary. In a fundamental sense, with Nurhaci, Zanabazar, and the particular flavour of this late imagining of the Qing project in Mongolia, we are given the consequence of the expansive elaborations of Mongol space and time from the first three hundred folios of the *Golden Book*. Here, the ideological import and polemical proposition of the elaborate ‘recovery’ of a cohesive Mongolian geography, everyday peoples, earlier religio-political dispensation was not the independent and nationalist agenda of the pan-Mongolist, progressive projects of the post-Qing period. Instead, it seems rather to be a fundamental, rather timeless religio-political imaginary which, we are lead to conclude, has been long associated with the highly temporalized shifts in real Mongolian social and political organization. As we are regularly reminded by the intrusion of the authorial voice and the authorial present in this work, this was as true of Ikh Khüree in the 1920s and 1930s as it was in 6th century Khotan, and in 16th century Mukten.

Here, in order to embark upon this great synthesis of political authority into the person of the early Qing emperors in the *Golden Book*, we encounter yet another ‘recovery’ of synthetic ‘Mongol’ space as both a grand stage and interpretative pre-condition. As we have seen, in sections on the Earlier Spread, a vast Hor-Sok spatial imaginary pivoting on Khotan had been ‘clarified’, and then in the Middle Spread on Uighur territory, in the Later Spread a similar

Mongolization of the ‘space that matters’ is at play. Suddenly with this investigation of the Later Spread, a new pan-Mongol imaginary is evoked that is centered on the Hunnu, or Xiongnu (匈奴; Xiōngnú), a third century B.C.E. nomadic confederation about which little is known except from Han-era Chinese sources. It is also worth noting that the Hunnu are unmentioned as an organizing, pan-Mongol people in the *Dharma Conch* ‘root text’ either. It seems that the author only became aware of them towards the end of his life, as he completed the latter sections of the *Golden Book*.

The work to which the idea of the Hunnu are in the description of the Later Spread is clear from the opening words of the explanation of the royal genealogy of the Manchus:

After that, (I will describe) the manner in which the Manchu King Jurchi Mukten acquired the political traditions (*rgyal srid*) of both China and Hor together into his hands by means of the glory of his virtuous actions (*bsod nams kyi dpal las dang gis*).

As for the royal genealogy of the Great Qing dynasty (*ta’i ching gur*):

Although in ancient times Hor-Sok and Manchu peoples all lived in the same kingdom possessing the name ‘Hunu’ (*hung nu*) and were of the same Mongol lineage (*rgyal khams gcig gi skye bo mo+O ng+ga la*), as I stated above (*tshul gong smos ltar*), the emergence of enemy religion and politics due to barbarians, acted as a condition to cause these (Mongol) peoples to split apart (*sil bur ‘thor*).⁷³⁸

We further read that the Manchu royal genealogy came from the line of ancient Jurchen kings (*sngon gyi jur chid rgyal po*) of the ‘Golden Lineage’ (*al tan gyi rigs*); apparently in reference to either (or bothz) the ‘Jin’ (C. 金, ‘gold’) of the Jurchen Jin dynasty (1115-1234) (from whom the Manchus claimed to have descended), as well as the Manchurian clan name of the ruling house of the Qing emperors (the *Aisin* of ‘Aisin Gioro’). While the legends of Jurhaci

738 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 236.

and his son Hung Taiji need not concern us here, of note is simply the ways that the *Golden Book* substantiates its claim that indeed, the Qing rulers inherited the political system and authority of both the Chinese and Mongols, whose systems the advent of the Qing discontinued. This transition is explained in the *Golden Book* in a story of two of the queens of Legdan Khan (the last *borjigid* ruler of the so-called ‘Northen Yuan’) surrendered the famous jewelled seal of Chinggis to Hung Taiji during of a mass Sok submission at Mukten to growing Manchu power. A biography of this jewelled stamp is also given.⁷³⁹ This immediately precedes the story of the communal enthronement of Hung Taiji to khan, and the overthrow of the Ming by means of commanding “four sorts of troops of a Chakravartin King” (*yan lag bzhi pa’i dpung tshogs*). In addition to the offering of the Mongol royal stamp to is, in effect, how the *Golden Book* connects its claim that the Manchu emperors inherited the political authority of both the Mongols and the Chinese; by successfully overthrowing the Ming and commandeering and expanding state control in China into the sprawling Qing empire. A representative synopsis of all this from the *Golden Book*, with excellent examples of the co-authoring strategy I explore in the final chapter of this dissertation, is as follows:

The Glorious Protector Nāgārjuna said: ‘Because you desire to establish your own foundation (rting), (you) have to make effort for the benefit of others. If you are not endeavouring to establish your own foundation, then for what (reason) are you meditating?’

That hero (Nurhaci) always endeavoured to benefit others. He annihilated (tshar bead) hateful people (mi ma rus pa) by means of wrathful activity, and he protected the weak with remarkable love and pity (phangs). Not only did he protect his retinue as if they were his own sons, but he was loving (mnyes gshin) towards tens of thousands of others (as well). Frequently, he would rule by respectfully serving others as if they were his guest. On account of all this, his great renown was proclaimed in all directions.

739 On this famous jeweled stamp, see Ibid.: 145, 152, 228-230.

The Glorious Protector Nāgārjuna said that: ‘(Someone) who does not do bad activities makes his followers very peaceful and unwilling to fight with others. What skilful person would not respect (such a leader)?’

(Many people) surrendered (mgos btags) to he who possessed strength and heroism (ie. Nurhaci), and he came to control all of the north-east border of China, both new and old Manchu (territories), and Sokpo Kashir.

When his second son Hong Taiji, whose sign was the water-dragon, was twenty-nine years old, he became the leader of four groups of armed forces (dmag dpung). He drew up an army against China, and destroyed the Chinese army commander (dmag dpon) named Sungping (sung ping). By this, he took control of the three great palaces, and consequently became richer and richer, and more and more powerful.

Especially, in the Wood-Pig year when he was forty-four years old, many Sok leaders and their followers, such as the ten groups of Great Hor, etc., surrendered (mgo btags) to him.

Two queens of Legden Khaan of the Chakhar, together with two Taiji [ie. borjigid nobility] surrendered to him, and offered him the Precious Royal Stamp (of Chinggis) (*rgyal tham rin po che*). Consequently, his influence, wealth, and power (mnga' thang stobs 'byor) greatly increased.

After that, many people, such as the leaders of the ten great groups of Hor in the patrilineal descent line (sras brgyud) of Habothöhasar (ha bo thwo ha sar), those principal forty groups of Sokpo, and the Manchu Jurchen, all had a discussion and from this they named (Hung Taiji) ‘Bogta Séchen Taitung Khaan Agotauruzhiyekchitégéduertemtunérämtato’ (a gwo ta u ru zhi yeg chi te ge du er tem thu na'i ram tha two pog ta se chen tha'I tsung rgyal po) and enthroned him.

That king resided at his palace in Mukten for six years, protecting his kingdom. After that, in the Wood-Monkey year, with his divine army of the four kinds of troops (yan lag bzhi pa'i dpung tshogs) (of a Chakravartin King), he set out for the center (of China).

As was said by the Gentle Protector Sakya Paṇḍita: ‘Rough can subdue the rough, but how could it subdue the smooth? Drawing out a boil (phol mig) by means of burning and cutting is a ‘gentle means’ (zhis chos) that turns to poison.’

He tamed all groups of wild bandits and thieves, such as the bandit chief (zag dpon) named Liziching (li zi ching), and so forth.

The son of that Emperor named Taizi (tha'i tsi), who (was born in the) Tiger Year (ltag lo pa), came to stay in the Beijing Palace when he was seven years old. From this, when he took the throne, he became famous as Emperor ‘Zhitsugeuguleksen Hong Taiiyéper Jasak Chi Shünti’ (*zhi tsu ge'u gu leg sen hwong tai i ye per ja sag chi shun Ti rgyal po*) [ie. the Shunzhi Emperor: 順治帝, 1638-1661).

(The Shunzhi Emperor) satisfied (beings) by practicing the generosity of protection against fear, and he entered into a priest-patron relationship with the incomparable Ganden Mountain [ie. the Géluk tradition]. He allowed the head ritualists of the Three Systems [ie. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism) to continue (byed du bcug) to practice the varieties of their rites (rig byed sna tshogs).⁷⁴⁰

By this, the dispensation of privileged political authority in Inner Asia (that of the *borjigid* lineage and of the Chinese) is connected to the Qing, which, we must remember, was so stigmatized in Mongolia at the time of this composition. As such, the timeless legitimacy of Mongolian and Chinese political authority was channelled into what we are lead to understand is a rather timely inheritance of the timeless Mongolian people: the Qing as a gloss for the enlightened, empty religio-political authority of the Two Systems. That this political authority is constructed in the *Golden Book* as being heavily focused on acting as the perfect patrons of the Buddhism (and the Géluk in particular), and operated a model of authority based on the dual system of religion and politics, gestures quite clearly to the otherwise unstated polemical nature of this text. The *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book* both contain elaborate genealogies, narrative vignettes, and (especially) a plethora of exercises in prophetic exegesis to further substantiate and clarify this dispensation of political authority.

Indeed, there is unwillingness in these works to admit the timely disappearance of the Qing. The Qing was, according to these works, the fullest, temporalized articulation of the dual system of religion and politics which, we have read, earlier circuited through 'Mongol' space in ancient India, to Khotan and Central Asia, to the dispensation into China and Tibet, through Uighur and Tangut lands, and courtly life of the Mongol empire. Here, in the later spread, we move from the grand *pax Mongolica* of the 'Great Land of Hor' (T. *chen po hor gyi yul*) to the author's native Khalkha, in the Mongol heartland. The spatialization of Khalkha in relation the

740 Ibid. 236-238.

rest of Hor and those ‘others that matter’ is given quite plainly as a new spatialization of timely Hor space upon which the timely and timeless drama of ‘real’ and ‘empty’ characters (here, for instance, some but not all of the Jebzundamba Khutugtus and Qing emperors).

Having earlier tracked the lineal dispensation of the dual system as a historiographic problem, the crisis of transmission—indeed, of time and space itself—in the author’s post-Qing present emerges in the *Golden Book* as the concluding verses of the “Story of how the Victor’s Teaching came to Mongolia,” and just before the narrative of Zanabazar and the birth of the Mongolian Buddhist tradition. In a style which we tentatively link to moral injunctions which increasingly came into circulation in Mongolia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, here the crisis of genealogy and transmission- the absence of a timely expression of timeless subjectivity itself- is laid amusingly and fascinatingly bare:

In general, since ancient times there has been many myriarchies (*khri skor*) in the land of Sok, (such as) the Forty Myriarchies. As for these, when Bogta Chinggis Khaan dominated (*dbang bsgyur ba*) most of the world, Chinese territory (*rgya nag gi sa char*) was absorbed (*'jug*) (into these Sok myriarchies). Consequently, they became mixed abodes (*'dres mar gnas pa*) (shared between Chinese and Mongol peoples). When Togen Temur Khan lost the political authority (*rgyal srid*) (of the Yuan dynasty), it is known that (those territories) were re-absorbed into China (*rgya nag tu lus song bar grags*).

At the time that Bogta Chinggis Khaan was appointing (*bskos pa*) his sons and nephews (*sku tshe*), one by one, to be rulers (*rgyal po*) of individual (conquered) kingdoms, they also went together with their individual followers (*mi sde*) to those places. From this, in the end it so happened that they were absorbed (sic. *thims*, should be *thim*) here and there (*de dang der*) into those regions. That is the reason why many Hor peoples still reside in the area of east Rīwen (*shar gyi rI wen gyi gling*), and (why) earlier Gushri Khan and his group of followers settled in Tibet and became ‘Dam Sok.

It is also (why) later a group of Khoshot Mongolis called the Shomo Oirots (*o'i lid kyi sho mo*) held counsel (*gros*) following their oppression (*gzir*), and departed the land of Upper Hor (*stod hor*) to a place close (*thag mi ring*) to the west of Ngari’s Ladakh called Khohugerté Mongol (*khwo hu germ on gol*). They are still there, and abiding on the slopes of a mountain to the east of the great city called Pambha (*paM bha*) in the north-west of India, are a few groups of Hor people. (When) the Russian Hongsol (visited) that city, some of those (Mongol) resident groups (*gnas pa'i mi dag*) enjoined (*bcol gyin*) him, saying, “We follow the religious tradition of Tsongkhapa (ie. the Géluk tradition).

Because of this, many Hor lamas possessing good qualities travel along the railway (lcags lam). If you find a (candidate for our) resident lama, please introduce him to us!”

Also, it has come to pass that the Thokö (*thor gwod*) of the Oirots and the Durvet of the Tshowa Kashé (*dur bed kyi tsho ba kha shas*) who abided over yonder (*pha gir*) in the direction of the setting sun, are today subjects (*mnga' 'og*) of the Russians.

To the north-west of the place (*gling*) of Riven, there is a small place (*gling*) which is full of only Manchus called Sahalgön (*sa hal gon*). There are also a few groups of Hor people living in the land of America (*a mrl ka'i gling*), which is part of the northerly region (*byang gling gi char*).

From all this, as for those of the Hor-Sok lineage (*hor Sog mi rigs can*), (such as) these peoples (just described) who come and go, to and from, and so on, it is apparent just how amazing it is that they have become so trully dispersed!

As I have previously explained, from the heavenly appointed (*gnam bskos sa*) Brahma of this earth (*sa'i tshangs pa*), the great Bogta Chinggis Khaan to Emperor Gogen Témur O Hagento (*go gan the mur awo ha gan thwo rgya po*) fifteen Chakravartin Kings emerged from this land of great Hor. From him until Legden Khutugtu Khan, twenty one great khaan of Hor arose, and in the eleventh rabjung, a khan named Patu Mungkhé Tayen (*pa thu mung khe tA yan rgyal po*) emerged. The tenth of his eleven sons was Tsaléra Hong Taiji (*tsa la'i ra hwong tha'i ci*). The third of his seven sons was Ütsen Noyön (*u'i tsen no yon*). The eldest of his six sons was the Khalkha khan named Abutai Saiyin Hagen (*a bu tha'i sa 'in ha kan*). He was endowed with the bravery of he who robbed the haught Mana (*ma Na'i khengs pa 'phrog pa'i dpa' rtsal*). He raised a massive army against the Oirots, and consequently he put all of them under his power and also appointed one of his sons as the ruler of the Oirot, etc. He was trully unrivalled (*'gran zla dang bral ba*) in the direction of himself or others!

That is also the reason why the Sovereign Mañjuśrī Emperor (*'jam dbyangs gong ma bdag po*) praised (*bkur bzos*) the successive Tusheyetu Khaans as the rulers of Khalkha.

His son was Erge Mergen Hagen (*er ge mer gen ha gan*). His son was Wachir Pathathu Sheyethu Hagen (*wa chir pa tha thu she ye thu ha kan*), who was called Thushuyethu Khaan Gönpö Dorjé (*thu shu ye thu rgyal po mgon po rdo rje*). The lineage of his sons are the Jasags of Tusheye Han's Aimag (*thu she ye han gyi a'I mag gi ja sag*), and are the lineage of lords (*dpon brgyud*) of the twenty Banners (*Hoshü*) (*ho sho'u nyi shu'i dpon brgyud*).

The son of the fourth son of Tsalé Rahong (*tsa la'i rwa hong*) was named Amin Darala (*a min dwa ra la*). His son was Muru Bhumi (*mu ru bhu mi*). His son was Mahasamati Gegen Sechen Khan (*mahA sa ma ti ge gen tshe tshen han*). The lineage of his sons are the Jasags of Sechen Khan Aimag, and are the lineage of lords of the twenty three Banners.

The eldest son of Tsalé Rahong Ashi Hédar Khan Hong Taiji (*a sho ha'i dar hwong tha'i ci*), his son Bayan Dhara (*pwa yan dha ra*), his son was Léhur (*le'i hur*), and his son King Zite Ungen Jasagthu (*zit e un gen dza sag thu rgyal po*), and so forth, and the lineage of sons of his second son Noyön Taihathen Batar (*no yon tha'i ha than pA thar*), named Bēhathen Batar (*bed ha than pA thar*), etc., are the Jasags of Thuhan Aimag (*thu han gyi a'i mag*) and the lineage of lords of the nineteen Banners.

The sun-like (*spun bdun*) lineage of the sons of Tsalé Rahong's seventh son Samo Öhan Noyon (*sa mo od han no yon*), who was named Honhé Tsorköl, are the Jasags of Sain Noyon Aimag, and are the lineage of lords of the twenty four Banners.

The lineage of sons of Tsalé Rahong's fifth son named Tharanila (*tha ra ni la*) did not proliferate (*ma 'byung*).

The lineage of sons of the sixth son (of Tsalé Rahong) Helheng Khung Delen (*hel heng khung de len*), his son Ata Büma (*a tA bu'i ma*), his son Tsongthu Taijing (*tsong thu ta'i ching*), and so forth, are the lineage of lords of the Beili Banner of the Darhan (*dar han pe'i li'i ho sho'u*).

People of Khalkha extraction (*hal ha'i khong gtogs*) make up the lineage of lords of two Oiroi Banners. These are the son lineages of both the army commander (*dmag dpon*) named Ulan Batar (*u lAn pA thar*) and Phuna (*phu na*).

As for the reason why the Shavi Zuregchin (*zha bi zu reg chin dag*) of the great lamas and great leaders have neither a lineage (*rigs brgyud*) of Taiji or military, in ancient times before the holy Dharma had spread into the land of Hor there were very strict laws. If a fornicator (*g.yon can gyi bu*) had a son, people would recognize that this confused (*chol ba*) humane genealogical lineages (*mi'i rigs brgyud*) and would call (that son) a 'bastard' (*nal phrug*) and throw it away into the center of a thorn bush (*tsher phung*). Because this was the case, up until today bastards are known as Bata Chitu (*pA tha chi tu*).

Nowadays, as it is said in Lhatsün Jangchup Ö's (*lha btsun byang chub 'od*) 'Letter Which Reverses Mantra' (*sNgags log spring yig*): "Increasing copulation (*sbyor ba*) creates disorder (*chor bar 'gyur*) in human lineages. Increase liberation, and by this stop sleeping (*nyal thag*) (with) goats and sheep!"

Because it is the case that nearly everyone, beginning with lamas and leaders down to everyday monks and lay people, engage in rape/affairs (*byi bo byed mkhan*), consequently human lineages have become confused in both the center and borderlands. As for this (situation), it is said that, 'the father's sons are only a very few (*'ga' 'ga' tsam*), (while) the mother's sons are everybody!" Because the faulty deeds (*mtshang*) in this saying have now descended upon us, we should all (*ngo re*) feel very shameful (lit. 'heat', *tsha*)!

The rulers of ancient India, China, Hor and Tibet made very strict rules (about sexual misconduct). The purpose of this was not to kill children, but rather was the way (*sgo*) to

stop the (people) from entering the door of (the sort of) copulation (*bsgag pa*) which is sexual misconduct (*log g.yem*).

As it says here, (to do this) is to sever (*bcod pa*) the tradition of the pure Human Dharmic Laws (*mi chos gtsang ma*). From this, do not disparage (*smod*) the laws of kings as the lower actions of misbehaving humans (*mi'i spyod ngan*).

The Sixteen Pure Laws of Human Dharma are:

Venerate the Three Jewels and Practice Holy Dharma.
 (Come to) Possess Merit and Respect (Your) Father and Mother.
 Respect Those of High Lineage and the Elderly.
 Maintain Friends and Government and Health for your Countrymen.
 Be Straightforward of Mind as If (You Had) One Eye Only.
 Be Competent in (Amassing) Food and Wealth Free of Deceit.
 Refrain from Envy, and Equalize (Yourself) With Everyone.
 Do Not Base Your Mind on Women, and (Make Your) Great Vehicle Pleasant and Wise Speech.

Broadminded are those Nobleman Who Abide in Doing What Are Called These Sixteen Pure Human Laws.

In earlier times, rulers together with their ministers and subjects (*'bangs*) generally abided by the Ten Virtues, and in particular by the Sixteen Pure Human Laws. As such, (they maintained) the glorious pair of Dharma and Politics, and this was the means by which, from the point of view of what is obviously a diversion, they traveled in stages along the right path to truly high and definite goodness (*mngon mtho dang nges legs*; ie. higher rebirth and liberation).

Of this, it was said by the Glorious Protector Nāgārjuna that, “If one correctly practices (legs spyad) the system of human law, it is not a long way to travel to the god realm! If you climb the latter from the human realm to the god realm, liberation is not far off!”

That being said, nowadays all high and low beings, monastics and laity alike, in general practice the Ten Non-Virtuous Actions, and especially their actions reverse the yoke of oxen of Dharma and Politics.

We can see with our own eyes⁷⁴¹ the suffering that is uninterruptedly experienced because of the turning of the wheel of disease, weapons, and famine (as a result of abandoning the dual system). This is like experiencing the sufferings of the Three Lower Realms.

741 lit. (it is) a perceptible phenomenon (*mthong ba'i chos*).

As for this, it is a reality that the distinguishing feature of the karma of the world's inhabitants is that the results of actions are infallible (*mi bslu ba*) and that the three true meanings of the Buddha's instructions and prophecies really come true!

Of this, it is also said in *Transmission of the Vinaya* (*'Dul ba lung*): "As for what was previously not a custom (tshul) or Dharma, today it has become famous as (our) customs and (our) Dharma." This is said again and again (in the scriptures).

It says in the *Sutra on the Application of Mindfulness* (*mDo dran pa nyer bzhaḡ*) that: "Because of actions that act as a condition to tear (*dral ba*) the customary tradition and the Dharma tradition- (such as when) the living beings of the world do not respect rulers or chieftains, do not respect father or mother, do not respect virtuous protectors or Brahmins, and do not respect gods or lamas, etc. the Māras of the black side of the world and the force of the humans and non-humans of the demonic abodes are spreading, and the Gods of the white side of the world and the power of humans and non-humans of the godly abodes are decreasing."

This is said many times (in these scriptures).⁷⁴²

4.1.2 The Jebzundamba I and the Beginning of Khalkha Mongolian Buddhism

The general trend in much of the later historiography produced by Monguor-Mongol Buddhist historians during the Qing was to locate and initiate the narrative of a definitively Mongol Buddhism in the embodiment of the first Jebzundamba Khutugtu Yéshé Dorjé (*rJe bstun dam pa ye shes rdo rje*, 1635-1723). Indeed, the inscription of Zanabazar into the annals and histories of the Tibeto-Mongol world as the embodiment of both various Tibetan Buddhist masters⁷⁴³ and the golden lineage of Chinggis, had long been the inscription of an authorized re-spatialization of the religio-political authority of the Géluk sect. By the time Zanabazar was born, the ascendancy of the Géluk sect to political predominance was already well under way. With the help of the Khoshuud⁷⁴⁴ Mongol Güshi Khan's forces, the Dalai Lama and his Géluk

⁷⁴² Ibid., 321-325.

⁷⁴³ According to most sources, including the *Golden Book*, Zanabazar was identified by the Dalai Lama, Panchen Lama, and a Dharma Protector as the incarnation of both Tāranātha (an important figure in the Jonang school which the Fifth Dalai Lama was busy extinguishing from the Tibetan religious landscape), and Jamyang Chöje.

⁷⁴⁴ The Khoshuud were part of the Dzuungar Oirat group. This was a powerful Oirat Mongol federation which, in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, fought against various Eastern Mongol groups (such as the Khalkha),

school had defeated rival sects (who had their own Mongol military backing), and were well into the process of consolidating their rule (which involved, in no small part, actively drawing upon models of authority based in the ritual and prestige of the Tibetan empire). It was also a new political authority that, under the Dalai Lama V Ngakwang Lozang Gyatso and Panchen Lama Lozang Chökyi Gyeltsen, enjoyed close relations with a relatively new Qing empire. As we shall see, these figures—Gushi Khan, the Dalai and Panchen Lamas, the Chinggisid lineage in Khalkha, and the Kangxi emperor—all factor into the common description of initiating the story of Buddhism in Khalkha.

It is the inscription of Zanabazar's embodiment and career which so usefully and most fully instantiated the empty time of religio-political authority and social organization which I have been arguing Zawa Damdin is recovering from his eclectic traces, and mapping onto a nebulous Mongol (ie. Hor-Sok) space in the earlier and middling spreads. In the analytical language of this study, Zanabazar's mind and body embody both real and empty time, and is spatialized in the tumultuous events of the seventeenth century. It is for this reason that, in Monguor-Mongol Buddhist historiography of Zawa Damdin's Qing-era historiography, Zanabazar is the first Mongolia Buddhist subject, and the wellspring of the fullest instantiation of the Two Systems in Mongol history.

Beyond simply this, as a narrative trope with its own historicity, Zanabazar's embodiment points back to the practices and operations of these Mongolian historians of Tibetan-language *chos 'byung*, something which is vital to begin understanding as part of reconstructing the social history of this period. In the analytical language of this study,

generally resisted Qing dominion, and involved themselves in Tibetan affairs (Christopher Pratt Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongolian Empire* (New York, NY: Facts On File, 2004), 425.).

Zanabazar's life embodies real and empty time, and is spatialized in the tumultuous events of the seventeenth-century. In the purview of the rather diverse set of interpretative procedures at play in the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book*, the sorts of 'proof' they evoke, and the nature of historical conclusions they profess, the wedding of real and empty time is simply fundamental.

A final summary of this embodiment- the timely subjectivity which instantiates the religio-political system so in flux during the present of Zawa Damdin's composition (and which, as we shall see below, intrudes itself upon the text so often)- is given in the *Golden Book* as follows:

That kind of Great Lord who kept (fulfilled) the prophecy given by Buddha in all of his different lifetimes, in the degeneration age in the country of Hor, how he performed the Buddha activities that I have already mentioned, now I will summarize.

First, Kyabgon Jetsun Dampa Lozang Tenpai Gyeltsan is, even though when he was young it clearly appeared that had the marks of a Buddha. Because of that, he tamed all the arrogant (people) of the center and borderlands and made/let them serve Buddhism. At that time, even though this country appeared like a country of demons, he overpowered (zil gnon) (all this) by his loving kindness and compassion. And he built the Rib bo dge rgyas monastery, and established the monks community, and built the three supports, and also established the system of studying. They continually studied, contemplating, and meditating, and so forth. He established the system of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna. In this way, in the dark borderland he lit the fire of the holy Dharma. The pile of his kindness is impossible to repay!

After that, Jetsun Losang Dampa'i Dro med showed that he correctly followed the spiritual master and completed the two stages and he tamed the people who had 'Disturbed Mind (angry), Black Direction Demon Rocky Mountain' ("people who behave like a Demon are really powerful like a rocky mountain, and their mind is disturbed") and he established both the Mahāyāna and the Vajrayāna school. In this area he gave fortunate people eyes so that they could see the path to liberation.

After that, the thousand suns of his co-emergent knowledge of Jetsun Yeshe Tenpai Nyima removed all the darkness (of sentient beings), and he established the three foundations (of the saṅgha, rainy retreat etc.), which are the root of the Buddhist

teaching. Because of that, this borderland country was made yellow. He did immeasurably kind (actions).⁷⁴⁵

As such, as the timely embodiment of the empty subjectivity of ‘Hor’ religio-political authority in the Mongol space of the Qing, Mongolia was ‘yellowed’, a reference to the Yellow Hat Teachings (T. *zhwa ser bstan pa*) of the Géluk, which to this day is a synonym for Buddhism itself in Mongolia (M. *Sharin Shashin*, the ‘Yellow Religion’). It begins the story of dozens of important Mongolian Géluk lamas, most of whom were direct students of Zanabazar, whose agency in the nativization of the Géluk tradition in Mongolia occupies the final quarter of the *Golden Book*. They curated the thorough localization of the Géluk school, and more abstractedly, the empty subjectivity of religio-political authority circulating around Asia in various Hor-Sok spaces that had begun in the early and middle spread. For instance:

In this way, as I have mentioned above, in terms of faith, devotion, wealth, and power, the Dharma kings and ministers of Hor can rival the Dharma kings of China and Tibet. As for all those great, holy beings who were born in Tibet and Sok due to the timely ripening of the prayers of powerful request of the Holders of the Holy Dharma, they have been extremely kind to all the beings who have arisen and who might arise here in this great land of Hor.

In this land, many scriptural colleges (*bshad grwa*) and retreat centers (*sgrub grwa*) endowed with ethics, and which are the source of all benefit and happiness, were established. In general, the Victor’s teachings, and in particular, (the spread of) the stainless teachings of the Gentle Protector Lama (Je Tsongkhapa) which combines the teaching and practice of sutra and tantra, has spread (to this land). As for the flourishing (of these teachings), the complete collection of causes (*rgyu tshogs*) (for these teachings) to abide for a very long time were accomplished. It is as if Dharmic Buddha Field of the Land of Snows [Tibet] transformed in order to transfer here to this land!⁷⁴⁶

Their careers, their close relationships with some of the enlightened Qing emperors (but not the degenerate, timely later ones), the establishing of the ‘three supports’ (T. *rten gsum*)

745 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 399–400.

746 Ibid., 314.

(statues, texts, and stūpas) which Buddhized Mongol space still in the time of Zawa Damdin, all are summararily described by our author. Unfortunately, apart from the list of monastic and scholastic institutions of the early 1930s which I include as an appendix to this dissertation, there simply is no space to provide any further details here. A concise summary from the *Dharma Conch* will have to suffice for us here:

And so the Jebzundamba built a moveable monastery,
Which had a great main temple that was made with a tent like a white scarf.
Not long thereafter thousands of Saṅgha collected and
The complete teaching of Sutra and Tantra of the Ganden tradition increased.
That monastery was called 'Khurel Chenmo'.

Until today, Khurel Chenmo Monastery has been the
Principal cause of the excellent spring of the
Teachings of the Victorious Buddha spreading and increasing in the north of the world.
Previous generations of this land say that this is the reason why
A temple made of wood, stones and earth was not built.

At that time, great spiritual sons such as the Great Learned One known as Dzaya Pandita,
And also the Great scholar Nomon Khan and so forth,
Emerg'd because they all had a connection
With the Refuge and Protector Jetsun Dampa Khutukhtu from a long time ago.

By the compassion of those holy beings,
In the four kingdoms of Khalkha and in the individual lands of the eighty Jasags,
There emerged thousands of monks endowed with good ethics,
Who held and protected the Yellow Hat tradition of the Gélukpa.

In each of those places were infinite
Representations of the Body, Speech and Mind brought from India, China,
Nepal, Tibet, Khotan and so forth, and also
Those that were personally built by that Refuge and Protector,
Father Jebzundamba Khutukhtu and his Spiritual sons, and so forth.

At the range of the Royal Mountain Hanggap Henthi
Is the retreat center of Elpa Dorje Trag Fort and so forth.
There, on the surface of the rocks are painted images, seed syllables,
Mani syllables, the Kālacakra Mantra
And others which have spontaneously appeared, and also
The hand and feet marks of the Supreme Lord of Refuge, and more.

Furthermore, there are also many amazing abodes of Arhats, Bodhisattvas,
Paṇḍitas, Mahasiddhas, Heruka Chakrasamvara Mother and Father,

Dakinis and Dharma Protectors there as well.
 In this way, because of the outer, inner and secret
 Buddha-activities Of the successive incarnations of the Highest Refuge and Protectors,
 Fathers and Sons, who were non-biased scholars and siddhas who all Gathered here in
 the remote region of Central Hor,
 The taste of the marvelous festival of the Perfect qualities of the four abundances
 Have arisen at this time and in this place!⁷⁴⁷

The analytical point with all this is simply that the dissolution of the Qing and the critique of the person of the Jebzundamba VIII by certain sectors of Mongolian nobility, scholastics, and revolutionaries, posed a particular sort of 'crisis' of time and space which, I argue, was perhaps the primary polemical 'social otherness' to which the 1931 *Golden Book* was seeking to address. It also, no doubt, represented a contemporaneous lacunae wherein the rise of various modernist, reform, and socialist actors were staging an epistemic, political, economic, and (eventually) violent attack against the timeless subjectivity of these works. These intrude onto the latter pages of the *Golden Book* in many ways, and it is to a brief summary of these ruptures of the authorial voice and the authorial present that I now turn by way of concluding this chapter.

4.1.3 The VI-VII Jebzundambas and The End of Buddhism in Mongolia

Zawa Damdin's literary stylization of the dystopia that he saw manifested in a newly empowered Mongolian masses is frequently combined in the *Golden Book* with critiques of the degeneracy of contemporary Buddhist institutionalism. It is of great interest that these do not simply implicate everyday monks, but also Buddhist elites, including lamas and even the "living Buddhas" that had long been at the center of Buddhist life in Inner Asia.⁷⁴⁸ Like most of his

747 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Hor Gyi Yul Du Dam Pa'i Chos Rin Po Che Byung Tshul Gyi Gtam Rgyud Bkra Shis Chos Dung Bzhad Pa'i Sgra Dbyangs/," 31–32.

748 T. *sprul sku*; M. *khuwilgan*.

presentist narratives, such critiques of Buddhist institutionalism are mostly dispersed across the *Golden Book* in small asides or laments amidst other narratives. We have already seen some examples, drawn from well-worn narratives from classical Buddhist sources on monastic decline associated with the dissolution of the teachings. Specifically, these are associated with the “five degenerations”⁷⁴⁹ that are commonly understood to be signs of the gradual decline of the Buddha’s teachings during the “age of degeneration,”⁷⁵⁰ when no Buddha will appear in the world.⁷⁵¹ In themes already familiar to us from Zawa Damdin’s diagnostic of revolutionary degeneracy introduced above, a predicted sign of such degeneration is that monastics will no longer safeguard their celibacy and will instead behave like the laity while wearing robes.

At stake in all these scattered laments in the *Golden Book*, it seems, was the status and definition of “those who are called a holy person”⁷⁵² in the post-imperial period. To answer this question (which, we should remind ourselves, socialist party agitators were answering in their historical-materialist agitprop at this time), Zawa Damdin once again turns to a Qing-era authority from his interpretative community, Changkya Rolpé Dorjé:

The All-Knowing Changkya has written:

It is taught that they [noble beings]
Do not destroy their practice by means of knowledge,
Nor do they destroy their uprightness (*btsun pa*) by means of practice.⁷⁵³

749 S. *pañcakaṣāya*; T. *snyigs ma lnga*.

750 S. *kaliyuga*; T. *rtsod ldan gyi dus*.

751 The five degenerations are usually listed as: degeneration of life span, of views, of afflictions, of sentient beings (mentally and physically), and of the aeon (since the world and the environment are expected to deteriorate). See: Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 614.

752 T. *skyes bu dam pa zhes pa*.

753 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 313.

But what of incarnate lamas, those “living Buddhas” who were the very embodiment of enlightened presence in Inner Asian Buddhist institutions, the manifestation of the enlightened authority implicit in the concept of the Two Systems? Coming after a long section describing the biographies of Mongolian lamas responsible for the Buddhist dispensation into Mongolia, Zawa Damdin nuances the rather brief definition of holy personhood from Changkya. This comes from a citation attributed to yet another Qing-era cosmopolitan Géluk monk from the Sino-Tibetan-Mongolian borderlands, Gungtang Könchok Tenpé Drönmé, himself the third incarnation of the Gungthang lamas.⁷⁵⁴

Guntang Jampelyang said that:

An incarnation (of a Buddha) emerges in this world to benefit the teaching. Their activity must “make a handprint” in teaching and meditation. (If instead) they become the support for the merchandise of cyclic existence, if in samsara we find a rich person family’s son (instead of an incarnation) we could just ask them (for wealth).

Anyone from the history of scholars, noble and good Ones who protect and increase the Buddhist teachings, and also those who guide all sentient beings to higher realms and the enlightenment. Those are noble beings.⁷⁵⁵

If we doubt that there may be a polemic against contemporary degeneration here, Zawa Damdin makes his intention clear:

Nowadays, those with the name of ‘lama’, ‘incarnate’, or ‘noble one’ just turn the wheel of attachment, anger and ignorance and destroy the Victor’s teaching and decrease the Buddha’s teaching. In this way, all sentient beings are brought to the lower realms. Those are definitely not noble beings. Forget it! We must understand this!

Why did the status of holy persons require clarification in the revolutionary period, we may wonder? Indeed, why the general lament of increasingly visible Mongolian masses, unchained from the yoke of religious and political authority? The case of the extended critique

⁷⁵⁴ *Gung thang dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me*, 1762-1823.

⁷⁵⁵ bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 314.

of the Sixth to the Eighth Jebzundamba provides us an important insight into just what the oscillation between real and empty time implicit in Monguor-Mongol Buddhist historiography meant for staging a sustained historiographic critique. I have argued that the timely peregrinations of various “Mongol” peoples across Asia during the early, middling, and later spreads of Buddhism act as both the site and explanation for the timeless interventions of various enlightened characters, and for the dual system more abstractedly.

Yet, what is involved in mounting a critique of empty, enlightened intervention? As we shall see, what is required is to transpose them from the timeless narrative realm to a timely narrative realm. A case *par excellence*, of great importance for our understanding the social site of production and polemical ground of this historiography, and for the social site of Mongolian Buddhist scholasticism in the post-Qing period more generally, is the critique of the sixth to the eighth Bogd Jebzundambas. As I have already mentioned in the previous chapter, it is with the biographical inscription of the fifth Jebzundamba that the didactic and millenarian presentist intrusions begin to pepper the *Golden Book*. I have also already mentioned that a consortium of Mongol princes requested the Golden Book itself focused on a Qing revival in 1919, and the memory of Zawa Damdin’s distaste for the Eighth Bogd Khaan in the oral histories of his students collected by Khurelbaatar. In other words, it is with the death of the Jebzundamba V in 1841 that the crisis of Mongol space and time, and the dissolution of a timely basis for the dual system, truly begins for Zawa Damdin. Examining just how the later Jebzundambas are taken from the realm of enlightened intrusion to highly temporalized and degenerate actors in the *Golden Book* will provide us with a rather novel insight into the analytical apparatus mobilized in this historiographic operation.

These largely rotate on the intrusion of the authorial voice to explain prophecies of religio-political decline and moral degeneracy. Of great interest is the fact that almost all of

these prophetic anticipations of degeneration in the *Golden Book* begin to intrude only towards the end of the biographical inscription of the Fifth Jebzundamba (*blo bzang tshul khrims 'jigs med bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan*) (1815-1841). His death was, according to the architecture of the *Golden Book*, the end of the timeless embodiment of the dual system, and the beginning of a timely, degenerate object of critique. In other words, a crisis of Mongol space and time as a timely expression of timeless religio-political drama, even as the relics of Qing era dispensation still defined the scholastic and ritual life of the author's milieu, which was increasingly the focus of socialist aggression.

As such, the life of the Fifth Jebzundamba acts as the end point of the appearance of the dual system on the Mongol stage, and provides the basis for three sorts of authorial intervention into the text: ritual continuums; didactic presentist intrusions; and millenarian presentist intrusions. All of these gesture in their own ways to what I am calling the crisis of Mongolian space and time (from the scholastic perspective) just prior to the purges. For example:

Furthermore, in earlier times when Atiśa came to Tibet, he saw two wild yaks on the mountainside of Sakya, and he prophesied that, "In a future time, two Mahakalas will do the Buddha's activity here. These will be 'Gur' and 'Zhel' (ie. *mgon po gur* and *mgon po zhal*). He pointed to the white earth and said, "There, seven *Dhi* syllables, one *Shri* syllables, and one *Hung* syllable will arise in succession. There will be seven emanations of Mañjuśrī, one emanation of Avalokiteshvara, and a single (*re re*) emanation of Vajrapani who will benefit sentient beings." From among those who arose at Glorious Sakya (Monastery), the emanation of Mañjuśrī was Sapan, the emanation of Avalokiteshvara was Pakpa, and the emanation of Vajrapani was 'Chinese Chakna' (*rgya nag phyag na*).

Because of those three, China, Tibet, and Hor came to act (*mdzad tshul*) with a united loyalty (*la rgya gcig*) to (the dual system) of the teachings and political authority. Our religious forefather (*bla ma gong ma*) have also prophesied that, "When it so happens that China, Tibet, and Hor will become separated (*bral*) and cut-off (*chad*) from political authority (*rgyal srid*), it will come to pass that the White Teachings (ie. Buddhism) will deteriorate in all three lands."

If you think about that prophecy, nowadays is beginning to seem (*yod dra ba*) like the time of that prophecy is approaching (*slebs kyin*)! Because of this, the knowledgeable

should rely upon conscientiousness and devote (‘*bad dgos*) (themselves) to the virtuous Dharma!⁷⁵⁶

Another example, again pivoting on the final temporal and spatial stage of empty subjectivity, the Jebzundamba V, reads as follows:

By the kindness of that Lord of Refuge, for the benefit of future seat holders, he gave advice. This was from Spiritual Songs:

The group of sentient beings who are devoted to divine Dharma
 If you want to practice both Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna
 I (have) a vajra which has meaning and samaya
 Amazing tantra, they have a great benefit so without doubt you must practice it!
 (To) A person who practices dharma correctly:
 Don’t go on the path of wrong livelihood!
 Go to the path of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna and try to understand the emptiness of
 Dharma!
 If you want to study Dharma, that is Dharma.
 Don’t change your mind, you must follow the Dharma!
 Nowadays, all of us who follow his advice, we must practice and protect the religion.

According to that Spiritual Song, we should not live by means of wrong livelihood, and make effort to protect and increase the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna teachings of the Jamgon Lama. In this way, we can repay the kindness of that Father Je!⁷⁵⁷

Yet another example comes just after the didactic intrusion from the general assessment of religio-political subjectivity under the Qing cited just above:

From the prophecy about the future (*ma ’ongs lung bstan*) of Trülku Dragpa Gyaltsan: “In the easterly country where they do everything by following the [holy] Dharma, a ruler who is the emanation of Mañjuśrī will newly arise. By legalizing the ten virtuous actions, the happiness of the word will be arranged (‘*god*). (This ruler) will respect the reddish-yellow wishfulfilling jewel (ie. the monastic community) on his crown.”

Also in regards to this (prophecy) (*de lta na ’ang*), because of the nature of (this degenerate) time (*du kyi chos nyid kyis*), sixty years after Emperor Sisel (ie. T. *srid gsal*; C. 道光, Daoguang, r. 1821-1851⁷⁵⁸) (ie. in 1911), the ‘house of political and religious law’ (*bstan srid khang kyi khrims srol khang*) began to become looser and looser in both the central and borderland (areas). Eventually, loyalty (*la grya*) to the connection of the

756 Ibid., 202.

757 Ibid., 399.

758 Tuttle, “Tibetan Buddhism at Ri Bo Rtse Inga/Wutai Shan in Modern Times,” 194–196.

teachings and political authority will be cut in China, Tibet, and Hor. Then, (the dual system of the teachings and political authority) will transform into fragrant food (*gza' ba zhim mo*) for the barbarians of the ends of the earth. This (situation) was (described in a) quote above, from the *Root Tantra of Mañjuśrī*. After that, the (dual) system will be destroyed, and those 'other beings' (*phyi rol skye dgus*) will make (their own) supplications (*nye bar spyod*). It is certain that all this has (now) come to fruition (*thog tu khel bar nges shing*)!⁷⁵⁹

One final example comes in a narrative scene describing the final days of the Jebzundamba V, who sent emissaries to Central Tibet to make offerings to the Panchen Lama, and to exchange prophetic pronouncements:

At that time, his uncle Khenpo went to Tibet. Then he wrote what will happen in the future in the Ox Tiger year and offered to the Panchen Rinpoche. When his uncle came back, the Panchen Rinpoche also sent a letter which said 'in this situation, whatever you think will come to be.' The Panchen also praised him. Those symbolize that the prophecy of the future, if you do not mistake the auspicious signs, when the time occurs everything will truly happen.

Nowadays, from your illusion people make and pronounce many different prophecies. That is because religious and political law is not strict enough. This is all the drama of crazy people!

If you really closely investigate, then from the prophecy from the Lord of Refuge (Jebzundamba V), he says that in the future the Victor's teaching will be destroyed.

That is now happening.⁷⁶⁰

Just a little further, we read another general assessment of the prophesied degeneration of the basis for the timeless religio-political subjectivity. Here, however, the target is on degenerate monasticism (something that was the target of many of the Buddhist reform movements in play in the post-Qing and post-Tsarist periods):

If you do not protect your samaya and vows, do not correctly follow the lama and spiritual master, and do not believe in the triple gem from the bottom of one's heart. If

759. bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 241.

760 Ibid., 390-391.

you go in the wrong direction with the vinaya texts by destroying the fully ordained or novice vows by using as an excuse the profound Vajrayāna teaching and wear the dharma robes, then you deceive the good followers of the Buddha Sākyamuni.

If we do these many bad actions, this becomes the cause to harm the lives of the upholders of the Buddha's teaching and the masters. In the country, there is doubt and famine and contagious diseases (*nad rim*) and also people of the countries are not friendly and become angry with each other, etc.

This unwanted situation has now emerged.⁷⁶¹

A final series of millenarian presentist intrusions follow upon the summary of the biographies of the first five Jebzundambas, pausing on the life of the fifth to unpack a prophecy regarding the negative consequences of continuing to move the primary monasteries of Ikh Khüree (Gadentegchenling and Riwogegyéling). There is no room to survey these all, but one example is telling:

Even though it is like that (*de ltar na yang*), disciples merit has decreased and also the demonic actions have increased, they do not let them continuously stay in Khurel Chenmo and in Gadentegchenling according to the Kyabgon Chenpo what he established in one place. He carefully left his testament, but because of wrong prayer and demonic persons, even though they knew (about his testament) they ignored it. Khurel Chenmo Kalapa and both tantric colleges were moved back to the old ruins (lit. 'left-overs of one of their previous locations'). This was prophesized by the Je himself, "(I) established the Tegchenling in order to teach the Dharma. (In this place I want) monks went to practice the profound teaching of the Mahāyāna and the Vajrayāna. (However, it will be) intentionally destroyed by 'the yellow wind'. (As such), I don't have confidence that this (place) will establish the Buddhist teachings here."

Alas! (*kye ma kye hud*) the Lord himself said, "If Khurel Chenmo is continually established in the wrong place, eventually it will become a city of female slaves (*bron mo*)!" He said this again and again. Nowadays, old people are saying this again. If I think about that, since (what is happening) nowadays is simply the (unfolding) of karma and its results, what can I do?⁷⁶²

761 Ibid., 394.

762 Ibid., 400-401.

Again, just a little further along, a consequences of an obscure prophecy by the Jebzundamba V are the site for the intrusion of the authorial present:

While slapping his fingers on the throne and showing sadness, (the Lord of Refuge) said, “A re! You all did not think very carefully! In the future all bad circumstances come from that (receiving a particular gift from the Qing emperor). In earlier times, it was the case that even scholars could not explain the meaning of that prophecy. However, nowadays even an old shepherd could explain its meaning!”⁷⁶³

A general assessment of these various prophetic announcements by the Jebzundamba V is given as follows, including in the text the authorial present characterized as a scene of absolute disorder:

The Lord himself said, “You all, the understanding of the higher persons becomes lower, and the understanding of lower persons becomes higher. Higher beings will become scared of lower beings. If it turns out not to happen like this, it will be better. We can only hope, as we have no other option.”

Since earlier times they did the actions of the dual system of religion and politics. In the future times, if we change this behaviour at the main monastic seat of Ikh Khüree, then higher and lower beings will come to misunderstand each other. That sort of degenerate time all started after the Lord of Refuge (the Jebzundamba V) passed to the other land (ie. died).⁷⁶⁴

A final, rather poignant and pointed presentist intrusion, which I believe speaks directly to the broader polemical ground of the *Golden Book* (a crisis of Mongolian religio-political space and time), and the absence of a base for the subjectivity ‘recovered’ in these works, is given as follows:

It is said in (Nāgārjuna’s) ‘Advice to the King’: the Precious Rosary’: “Always be broadminded and do very broad deeds. From broad actions, broad results arise. O King, you must build monasteries (‘support of the Dharma’) and the supports of the Triple Gem, which is never thought of by unfortunate beings! In this way, you will make yourself famous.”

⁷⁶³ Ibid., 402.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid., 403-404.

If you look in the biography of those Sok Kings, they completely acted just as Nāgārjuna advised. And also, in the biographies of these kings we can see (their actions) and remember (them) in order to be happy, rejoicefull, and faithful.

More recently, both priest and patron have gone beyond the rules of politics and religion, and their behaviour is too extreme. That is why the Precious Sandalwood Jowo (statue) went to the sky; which is no different than the actual living Buddha.

After that, just as the wind disappears, the Emperor disappears.⁷⁶⁵

5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have endeavored to show how the Buddhist scholastic historiography under investigation here oscillates between recovering the developments of real Mongolian space, time, and subjectivity (subject to temporal change implicit in narrative), and the empty interventions of timeless actors embodying the dual system of Dharma and politics. I showed how each of the early, middling, and later spreads of the Dharma into Mongolia depended first on a careful, authoritative recovery of a vast Mongol spatial imaginary from sources available in the cosmopolitan milieu of early-twentieth century Ikh Khüree. I argued that in each of these cases, once a temporalized Mongol space had been defined, the actual subject of these histories (the empty Two Systems) was both defined and explained by the rise and fall of the *pax Mongolica*.

I also showed that throughout these works, narrative and interpretative precedents were synthesized by our author to extend earlier Monguor-Mongol Buddhist scholastic historiography to form a polemical “treatment” for the what Zawa Damdin perceived to be the absence of the Two Systems during the Two Revolutions. In all this, the centripetal force was a unitary Mongol peoples capable of enveloping a great diversity of civilized and barbarous tribes. Just how these reading practices were legitimized by appeal to procedures drawn from Zawa Damdin’s broader

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid., 443.

scholastic milieu (ie. the ‘analytical apparatus’ of his historiographic operation) will now be examined, drawing upon case studies from his historiography.

Chapter 4

Gleaning an Analytical Procedure and Writing Practice

1 Rendering the Upheavals of the Post-Imperium Sensible

The Mongolian Buddhist historiography under examination here (and perhaps many, if not all, other post twelfth-century Tibetan works of religious history as well⁷⁶⁶) is comprehensible as cultural practice only in light of their *scholastic* milieu, topical content, and modes of interpretation and composition. This is so in the sense of identifying and extensively exploring their interpretative contexts of production. More broadly, scholasticism as a way of “making sensible” has also been ignored in the study of monastic mediations of modernism in Inner Asia: from the recognition of Empress Elizabeth, Tsar Nicholas II and other members of the Duma⁷⁶⁷ as Buddhist protectors and divinities;⁷⁶⁸ to encounters with the *Kāmasūtra*, French literature and secular newspapers; to the force of British military technology and the polemics of

766 I use the twelfth-century here since this was, in Jonathan Gold’s words, a ‘neoconservative’ period when the Indo-centric scholastic vision of the Sa skya school fermented, and which would be so foundational for later Tibetan (and Mongol) Buddhist intellectual life. This movement is exemplified in the life and work of Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan (Sakya Paṇḍita, 1182-1251), whose *mKhas pa ‘jug pa’i sgo* (‘Entranceway to Learning’) famously elucidated a vision of Buddhist scholasticism for Tibet. See: Jonathan C. Gold, *The Dharma’s Gatekeepers : Sakya Pandita on Buddhist Scholarship in Tibet* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007), <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip072/2006032683.html>.; Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan, “mKha Pa ‘Jug Pa’i Sgo,” in *gSung “Bum (dpe Bsdur Ma)/ Kun Dga” Rgyal Mtshan*, Krung go’i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, vol. 4 (Pe cin, 2007), 33–153. As Zeff Bjerken has shown, it is also a time when the Bön and Buddhist traditions in Tibet began to define and redefine their religious identities by means of a parallel, polemical growth in historiography. See: Zeff Bjerken, “The Mirrorwork of Tibetan Religious Historians: A Comparison of Buddhist and Bon Historiography” (Ph.D., University of Michigan, 2001), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses (PQDT).

767 A trend which, in the post-Soviet Buddhist revivalism of Buryatia, has continued with the Khambo Lama Ayusheyev recognizing two presidents of the Russian Federation (Valdimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev) as the female Buddha White Tara. When questioned about this recognition, the Khambo Lama reportedly answered that, “the leader of the country is a man who bears very serious responsibility for others. The Buddhists must support him, identifying him as a deity” (E. Hartley, “President Medvedev Is a Buddhist Goddess,” *The Telegraph*, August 27, 2009).

768 See: Bernstein, “Pilgrims, Fieldworkers, and Secret Agents: Buryat Buddhologists and the History of an Eurasian Imaginary.”

American missionaries; to the appeals of Russian and Chinese political envoys and intelligentsia (imperial and communist alike).

As we have seen, the *dialectic* that occurred between Buddhist scholastics and forms of culture, ideas and blunt politico-economic coercion in transit in Inner Asia in the twilight of the imperial period has thus far been largely left invisible because of various teleologies. Most prominently, these include the geo-politics of the Great Game, the Bolshevik flirtation with, and eventual containment of Buddhism in Buryatia and Kalmykia, the slow dislocation by the MPRP of Buddhism institutionalism, and (eventually) the PRC take-over of Tibet. The *ways* that these competitive visions of Inner Asian modernities were received, negotiated, rejected or produced in turn by Buddhist scholastics on their own terms has often been lost, or else glossed, in scholarship for the simple reason that the scholastics eventually—but only after an extended conversation and digestion—lost out to other socio-political trends. As such, a social history of Buddhist interpretation and rationalization of incumbent modernities as cultural practice (as in historiography, for instance) has been lacking. To borrow a phrase from both Zawa Damdin and de Certeau, a turn to “recover” the “echoes” of these important Buddhist dialectics after a century of socio-political history they failed to quell, will necessarily require a turn to Buddhist scholasticism.

This chapter will argue that the interpretative techniques mobilized by Zawa Damdin to write the past is based entirely upon the methods and modalities of scholastic interpretation proper to the Géluk school. These were procedures for producing valid knowledge that, as we have seen, our author labored to learn, transmit, and protect during all of the “wanderings” of his adult life. Despite claims by Bira and contemporary Mongolian nationalists to the contrary, even though Zawa Damdin’s ‘wanderings’ took him far afield across the spatio-temporal and intellectual topographies of Inner Asia, throughout it all he never left his homeland of Géluk

scholasticism. He mobilized the modes of rational inquiry proper to Géluk philosophical investigation in order to induct and then tame these forces into temporalities sensible to his social location in the monastery. This was possible, since the dialectic hermeneutic of his Géluk scholastic regime and its related logical procedures (S. *pramāṇa*; T. *tshad ma*; M. *khemjiy-e*) were well equipped to reconcile and “tame” all these irruptions of disturbing social otherness; they aimed to reconcile contrarian doctrine promoted by non-Buddhists (S. *tīrthika*; T. *mu stegs pa*; M. *tirtika*), accommodate hierarchies of provisional (T. *kun rdzob bden pa*; M. *inaghunki ünen*) and ultimate (T. *don dam bden pa*; M. *üнемlekü ünen*) claims to truth. This by means of modes of “direct” (T. *mngon sum*; M. *ile*) and “inferential” (T. *rjes dpag*) cognition, two foundational epistemological categories in Géluk thought that, in Zawa Damdin’s iteration, function as stinging social critique of modernist trends in Mongolia. On the very eve of the final purge of Mongolia’s Buddhist infrastructure, Zawa Damdin could write “rationally” about the triumphantalism of the Buddhist tradition (embodied in the Two Systems) as *the* story of “the Great Land of Hor-Sok.”

1.1 On the Boundary of Culture and a Dead Nature

To try and think about a social history of historical interpretation in Mongolian Buddhist scholasticism, we ought first to clarify the horizon of such a project. While he did reference archaeological evidence, the oral tradition, and his own experience in places, overwhelmingly Zawa Damdin found his historical evidence in texts. As such, the operation briefly explored in this chapter is divided between reading and writing historical texts. Mikhail Bakhtin described texts as an “inscription lying on the boundary line between culture and a dead nature.”⁷⁶⁹ A text

769 Bakhtin, M. M. and M. Holquist (1981). *The dialogic imagination: four essays*. Austin, University of Texas Press. p. 253.

is a mute other that is evoked and enlivened in the space of particular readers that make up interpretative communities spanning place and time. This is, for Bakhtin, the “world that creates the text, for all its aspects—the reality reflected in the text, the authors creating the text, the performers of the text (if they exist) and finally the listeners or readers who recreate and in so doing renew the text—participate equally in the creation of the represented world in the text.”⁷⁷⁰ In Bakhtinian terms, this happens at the interface between the chronotopes⁷⁷¹ of the world of readers and the *constructed* chronotopes of the world represented in the text.⁷⁷² We have already explored the latter in my previous analysis of the real and empty chronotopes that I have argued organized the narrative content of the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book*.

The meaning of text—whether Russian formalist fiction or an Indian prophecy—is “recovered” by means of reading, a labor that in turn must always pivot on situated models of language, representation, and interpretation. What, we must wonder, constituted such theories for Zawa Damdin and his broader interpretative community? In fact, it seems that the cosmopolitan Géluk circle of the Qing whom Zawa Damdin looked to for narrative and interpretative precedents often incorporated such theories rather explicitly into their historiography. A comprehensive survey is not possible here, but consider some of the meta-comments the Dalai Lama V included in his influential 1643 history of Tibet, *The Song of the*

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid. 86.

⁷⁷¹ Chronotopes: “(literarily time-space) the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature... In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indications are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible, likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the moments of time, plot, and history.” Ibid... 86.

⁷⁷² Ibid.

Spring Queen.⁷⁷³ The first, from the concluding verses, offers poetic insight on the place of reading history in the Géluk formation on the eve of the Qing formation:

Even if one controls an exhaustible wealth of power and riches,
When the eye which discerns the best accomplishments of this and later lives is opened,
They are weighed in the balance together with the nāgas who live underground.
(Then), even if they are heavy, who would discern it?

Having looked at reliable histories,
The power of discerning wisdom, which is drawn from the path of learning, is subtle,
But, like the way of walking of an unattended born-blind person,
Books heavy with the burden of errors are many.

After drawing a straight cord on the bow of history,
With an arrow which shakes the tree of elegant speech,
Even if one is able to hit the heart of ignorant delusion,
When an impartial learned man sees (the history) one's joy increases.⁷⁷⁴

Elsewhere, the Dalai Lama V offers a summary of his reading practice of the available historical record, and his mobilization of certain recognizable analytical procedures from the traditions of logic familiar to Tibeto-Mongolian scholasticism:

Because of the encouragement (given) by the order of bsTan-'DZin CHos-Kyi-rGyal-Po [Gushi Khan], the lord of power, I examined carefully such source-materials as:

(The will of Sroñ-bTSan sGam-Po called) bKa' CHems bKa' KHol ma,
The cycle of the Great Compassionate One,
(The *Blue Annals* written by) the lord of learned men, the translator from 'Gos, gŽon-Nu dPal and
The *Records* of the TSHal-pa.

I have done a little refutation (of errors) and establishment (of truth) with regard to the books (which contain) the foolish and baseless words of proud and haughty "learned men". And although, having entered the creed of bTSHoñ-Kha-Pa [Tsongkhapa], the second Victor of the Age of Degeneracy, I know the facts and have irreversible faith (in the dGe-Lugs-Pa) [Géluk], nevertheless, without being stained by the fault of heresy

773 Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, *Bod Kyi Deb Ther Dpyid Kyi Rgyal Mo'i Glu Dbyangs* (Pe cin: Mi rigs dge skrun khang, 1980).

774 Nag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, Zahiruddin Ahmad, and Culture International Academy of Indian, *The song of the queen of spring, or, A history of Tibet* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 2008), 2013.

(found) in like-minded creeds, I gained some knowledge of about [sic.] the ten branches of learning.⁷⁷⁵

A “legitimate” reading is of course itself a historical phenomenon that forces us to consider the social distribution of positions from which to read, and available and authoritative interpretative apparatuses to mobilize. In thinking about these questions in the case at hand, I am more interested in understanding the practices of reading and writing the past that emerged from particular theories of language, representation, and interpretation in monastic social sites, and not broad demographic questions more familiar to the sociology of knowledge. This, I believe, is what circumscribes the text/context relationship; a dialogism that is most interesting for foregrounding how knowledge (here, about the past) can be created legitimately (ie. can be read as true by other readers extending into the future). That Mongolian during the Two Revolutions was a socio-cultural space rife with competing, over-lapping, and open-ended theories of language, representation, and interpretation makes this subject all the more interesting. As we shall see, the newly plural sites of knowledge production in revolutionary Mongolia were a threat that needed to be subdued at the very outset of Zawa Damdin’s *Golden Book*.

As such, in this chapter I will attempt to circumscribe a broad theory of Géluk interpretation, language, and representation. I then introduce some of Zawa Damdin’s own reflections on his analytical operation and his practice of writing history, before turning to examples of his synthesis of heterodox “scripture” as historical authority (ie. European scholarship) and then two extended examples of his mobilization of his Géluk hermeneutic to “reconcile” a historical debate. I conclude with Zawa Damdin’s exchanges with the cosmopolitan Buryat scholastic and statesman Agvan Dorjiev over the former’s historical claims in the *Dharma Conch*.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid., 205–206.

2 The Site: Buddhist Scholasticism in Inner Asia

Before summarizing some general features of Géluk hermeneutic and epistemic technologies that I believe facilitated Zawa Damdin's historical interpretation (ie. constitute the tools used in the factory of historiographic production, to use Certeau's gloss of Marxist metaphors), we must wonder how apt is it to identify so casually a 'scholastic' tradition in Inner Asian Buddhism? We are fortunate that in this we now have several works of secondary scholarship on the philosophical positions and debates of the Géluk and other Tibetan philosophical schools, and even a few which examine their evolving exegetical traditions specifically.⁷⁷⁶ Of these, José Cabezón's examination of Géluk scholastic interpretation is particularly relevant, since it treats various overarching themes of Géluk interpretative theory (and not simply the details of how it, for example, distinguishes between Chandrakīrti's Prasaṅgika and Bhāvaviveka's Svātantrika views on conventional truth). Importantly, Cabezón's work is unique because it provides insights into the place of non-philosophical and even, I argue, non-Buddhist encounters and exegesis in the Géluk system (even if Cabezón does not himself explore this topic and pays little attention to historical context and variation over time).

776 See, for instance: Hopkins, J., & Napper, E. (1983). *Meditation on emptiness*. London: Wisdom Publications; Tsoṅ-kha-pa, B., & Thurman, R. A. F. (1984). *Tsong Khapa's speech of gold in The essence of true eloquence: Reason and enlightenment in the central philosophy of Tibet*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press; Klein, A. C. (1986). *Knowledge and liberation: Tibetan Buddhist epistemology in support of transformative religious experience*. Ithaca, N.Y., USA: Snow Lion Publications; Newland, G. (1992). *The two truths in the Mādhyamika philosophy of the Ge-luk-ba order of Tibetan Buddhism*. Ithaca, N.Y., USA: Snow Lion Publications; Mkhas-grub, D., & Cabezón, J. I. (1992). *A dose of emptiness: An annotated translation of the sTong thun chen mo of mKhas-grub dGe-legs-dpal-bzang*. Albany: State University of New York Press; Tsoṅ-kha-pa, B., Sparham, G., & Iida, S. (1993). *Ocean of eloquence: Tsong Kha Pa's commentary on the Yogācāra Doctrine of Mind*. Albany: State University of New York Press; Magee, W. A. (1999). *The nature of things: Emptiness and essence in the Geluk World*. Ithaca, N.Y., USA: Snow Lion Publications; Cozort, D., 'Jam-dbyaṅs-bṣad-pa, N., & Rol-pa'i-rdo-rje, . (1998). *Unique tenets of the middle way consequence school*. Ithaca, N.Y: Snow Lion Publications; Hopkins, J., & Tsoṅ-kha-pa, B. (1999). *Emptiness in the mind-only school of Buddhism: Dynamic responses to Ḍzong-ka-bā's The essence of eloquence: I*. Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press; Dreyfus, G. B. J. (2003). *The sound of two hands clapping: The education of a Tibetan Buddhist monk*. Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press; Hopkins, J., & Vose, K. (2008). *Tsong-kha-pa's final exposition of wisdom*. Ithaca, N.Y: Snow Lion Publications.

Before exploring evidence for Géluk scholastic exegesis in Zawa Damdin's histories—which I am arguing constitute the primary framework for his analytical operation and writing practices—I will first introduce the general epistemological assumptions, synthetic sensibilities and sources of interpretative authority in the Géluk hermeneutic of which Zawa Damdin was a distinguished practitioner. This will allow us to better detect the mobilization of those resources in the construction of his elaborate histories of the Mongolian ethnoreligious genesis, and in particular to focus on their unique mediation of European forms of knowledge newly available in the post-imperium.

2.1 Scholasticism and the Production of Knowledge in Inner Asia

Whether monastic or not, intellectual movements which Cabezón and others classify as “scholastic” are generally concerned with “reconciling the rational and the experiential aspects of human religiousness,” by being, “justified by reasoning and... made experientially relevant.”⁷⁷⁷ Beyond simply synthesizing religious experience and rationality or reason (however this might be defined in a particular tradition), scholastic movements are, in general, ones that claim, “reason and systematicity... [as] the very prerequisites for spiritual realization and action.”⁷⁷⁸ There are four factors that Cabezón identifies as pushing scholastic movements towards a rational and systemic approach to the religious life, which I believe also informs the historical practice of Zawa Damdin and his interpretative community (all of whom were accomplished philosophers, and included extended doxographic sections in their historiography).

⁷⁷⁷ José Ignacio Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language : A Study of Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism*, SUNY Series, toward a Comparative Philosophy of Religions (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1994), 18–19.

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid., 20.

First, the universe is understood to be accessible, intelligible, and knowable, or, “at the very least everything that is of soteric importance is understandable through rational inquiry.”⁷⁷⁹ The second is that scholastic movements are tradition oriented, meaning they display a strong historical consciousness and foreground the maintenance and preservation of tradition and lineage. Importantly here, Cabezón points out that in practice, “preserving tradition,” means, “to preserve its intellectual underpinnings, [which consist primarily of] rational inquiry into doctrine.”⁷⁸⁰ For Géluk exegetes and other scholastics, rational inquiry is the only guarantor of orthodoxy, and is the ultimate source of authorizing the validity of religious experience (and, I propose, of historical truth). Thirdly, rational inquiry is essential not only for maintaining internal continuity and orthodoxy within a scholastic tradition, but is also “considered essential to *distinguishing* that tradition from others, and to *demonstrating* its relative superiority to others.”⁷⁸¹ This also relates to the growth in most scholastic traditions of a second-order, critical reflection on the methods for establishing rational proof, since “the scholastic method itself had to be justified to others, defended against rival theories of philosophical explanation, and in this way established on firm footing.”⁷⁸² Fourthly, by means of a particular tradition of rational inquiry, scholastics must often confront and systematize a vast, disjointed and contradictory scriptural corpus.

As such, scholasticism is a directed labor that, minimally, must “synthesize... [dissimilar and contrarian scriptural] material into an ordered whole.”⁷⁸³ This synthesis is not exclusionary;

779 Ibid.

780 Ibid.

781 Ibid., 21.

782 Ibid., 22.

783 Ibid.

for instance, in the sense of eliminating some texts as heterodox. Since scholasticism mobilizes a tradition of inquiry in order to prove the content of doctrine by means of both a synthetic and dialectic hermeneutic,⁷⁸⁴ in principle. “It is always possible for an opponent, real or imagined, to demand a reason, that is, to require that a particular doctrinal assertion be justified; and for the scholastic there is never any theoretical ground for denying the validity of such a request.”⁷⁸⁵ In other words, scholastic practice mobilizes a hermeneutic aiming to map a synthetic, self-affirming holism across a diversity of textual sources.

The centrality of language, as medium of expression and as object of inquiry, in the scholastic project is evident in Zawa Damdin’s philological “rescue” of Mongolian stories from his eclectic sources. Cabezón argues for a three-fold construction of language in scholastic traditions: scriptural language as source, philosophical language as medium, and language in general as the object of critical reflection.⁷⁸⁶ Cabezón uses “scripture” to reference all of the authoritative texts of a tradition, whether these are considered canonical, exegetical, or oral, and argues that for scholastics, scripture is “proliferative” (ie. there is in theory no scripture whose doctrine cannot be synthesized with a scholastic position if only the proper mode of rational inquiry is employed). In light of the historical materials at hand, we must also include heterodox “scripture” here, whether scientific claims that the earth was round, French literature, or Altaic linguistics.

784 According to Cabezón, a synthetic hermeneutic is one “that attempts to bring together analogous doctrines into a logical whole,” which often exists alongside a “dialectic hermeneutic that attempts to reconcile contradictory doctrines by interpretation.” (Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language: A Study of Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism*, 226.).

785 Ibid., 22.

786 Ibid.

2.2 The Analytical Procedures of the Géluk Tradition

We have seen how, in general, scholastic traditions are ones which adopt a dialectic hermeneutic in order to systematize a vast scriptural corpus that will, inevitably, assert contrarian doctrinal positions; what Cabezón usefully labeled a “monothetic vision [imposed upon] a polysemic textual corpus.”⁷⁸⁷ This exegesis is done nominally in order to rectify the “apparent” diversity of canonical sources, subdue the threatening views of real or perceived opponents, and clarify the opaque meaning of orthodox sources for contemporary audiences. Very importantly, in the Géluk tradition this was accomplished by privileging critical inquiry over other modes of authorization prevalent in other Indian and Tibetan Buddhist contexts, such as historical origins, scriptural authenticity, and authorship:

For the Géluk pas, therefore, in the end the critical spirit must triumph. If along the way spatiotemporal concerns (such as authenticity) are disregarded, and if overtly religious presuppositions (such as the infallibility of the Buddha) prohibit the repudiation of the pragmatic value of doctrine, it is only to pave the way for the truly important questions, those of [ultimate and provisional] truth as determined by critical inquiry.⁷⁸⁸

Managing the multi-vocality of canonical sources (and, as we see in Zawa Damdin’s historiography, non-canonical and even non-Buddhist sources) requires a dialectic hermeneutic (the theory of scriptural interpretation) and exegesis (Tib. *bshad byed*, the practice of this theory)⁷⁸⁹ that can “tame” and “make sensible” this dangerous and contradictory diversity of sources and claims. More specifically, it had to maintain an ideological (ie. rhetorical) commitment to a unitary canonical finality.⁷⁹⁰ In this, the Géluk were not unique, since “in the case of Buddhist scholasticism [*writ large*]... no belief is ever considered so basic as to be

⁷⁸⁷ Ibid., 55.

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid., 70.

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid., 71.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid., 74.

exempt from having to be validated through direct perception of inference.”⁷⁹¹ Furthermore, Buddhist “exegesis was both sufficiently abundant and sufficiently diverse to vitiate against the claims (a) that the tradition of scriptural commentary was unnecessary and (b) that any one tradition was the *exclusive* heir to the Buddha's insight.”⁷⁹²

If we are in doubt that the leap from philosophical to historiographic interpretation is too great, we will recall that Zawa Damdin was himself an accomplished and widely read doctrinal exegete, as were the other members of his interpretative community. We need only remember the *Essence*, his famous, heterodox Mādhyamaka commentary, whose interpretative coordinates help us locate the analytical procedures he also used in his historiography. We will remember that the *Essence* represents a late and radical departure from standardized Géluk scriptural positions, which traditionally approached its study of the grounds and paths of sūtra from the Yogic Middle Way Autonomy School.⁷⁹³ While Jules Levinson’s analysis of that text does not explore these topics at all (his thesis stays firmly fixed on this one text and its use of “metaphors of liberation” in comparison with exegetical works by other Géluk scholars), he does briefly reflect on Zawa Damdin’s interpretative operation:

[After having completed his Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka presentation], Blo bzang rta dbyangs [ie. Zawa Damdin] presents thirty-four pages of dialectical discussion in which he differentiates the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka school’s view from that of the other schools, and offers extensive support, both scriptural and logical, for the radical position taken by the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka school.⁷⁹⁴

Evoking legitimizing Géluk interpretative procedures related to scripture, logic, and exegesis thus authorizes the heterodox analysis of the *Essence*. Zawa Damdin’s radical interpretation of

791 Ibid., 97.

792 Ibid., 95.

793 S. *Yogācārasvātantrikamādhyamika*; T. *rNal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma rang brgyud pa*.

794 Levinson, “Metaphors of Liberation: Tibetan Treatises on Grounds and Paths,” 265.

Madhyamaka rests largely on citations of Indian and Tibetan works deemed authoritative by scholars associated with the Gomang (T. *sGo mang*) and Loseling (T. *bLo gsal gling*) colleges of the great Drepung monastery in Central Tibet (the former being the preferred college of Mongolians studying in Lhasa, and the latter being the scholastic basis of his own Loseling college in Ikh Khüree). Such textual and interpretative communities help us think about the extended “place” of interpretation in the study of Buddhist scholastic receptions of the post-imperium.

2.3 The Basic Intelligibility of the Universe

Of most consequence for us here is the underlying belief in Zawa Damdin’s Géluk scholastic milieu that the entire universe is accessible to rational inquiry, and that nothing, in theory, is beyond human understanding. An important corollary to this is that in the Géluk school (and other Tibetan Buddhist schools besides) there are two versions of the finality and completeness of the Buddhist canon: the first, “states that the corpus of the Buddha’s words contains every doctrine that is soteriologically necessary, that nothing relevant to the task of liberation is omitted;” while the second “maintains that that not only religiously valid doctrines but that every phenomenon has been taught by the Buddha- that nothing exists that the Buddha did not teach.”⁷⁹⁵ Holding that the entire universe is knowable and that the Buddha treated every phenomenon points to the openness of Géluk scholastics to a theoretically endless corpus of scripture. This was true whether Géluk scholastics were reading the, “inerrant word of the Buddha,”⁷⁹⁶ or the musings of Finnish linguists. In addition to an openness to such sources,

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid., 91.

⁷⁹⁶ S. *avisamvāda*; T. *mi slu ba*.

Cabezón points to the requirement that these sources be rendered intelligible to Géluk orthodox positions.⁷⁹⁷

2.4 The Géluk Hermeneutic and Historical Practice

In Cabezón's or any other scholarship on Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist hermeneutics, we come across no explicit reference to non-philosophic applications of the scholastic interpretative acumen. This is because there were perhaps no manuals for establishing "correct knowledge" on matters, say, historical, as a distinct enterprise in opposition to matters soteriological.⁷⁹⁸ The Pramāṇika school orders each element of the universe according to the types of rational inquiry required to arrive at correct interpretation.⁷⁹⁹ However, there does not seem to be any distinct

797 The former belief is for the Géluk school ultimately based on the doctrine of omniscience. Omniscience (S. *sarvajñāna*; T. *rnam mkhyen*) is traditionally identified as one of the characteristics of the "Truth Body" (S. *dharmakāya*; T. *chos sku*); the complete fruition of Training in Wisdom (*shes rab kyi bslabs bya*), and the putative goal of scholastic inquiry, we must remember. Omniscience is, for the Géluk at least, the ultimate result of a gradual program of knowing things directly and indirectly. Everything that is provisionally and ultimately true is available in increments to the adept; which includes everything, since in the Géluk nominalist reading of the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika position ('Middle-Way Consequence School'; T. *dBu ma thal 'gyur pa*), all phenomenon are both conventionally and ultimately "true". This is so, among other things, by means of implementing 'consequentialist' (S. *prāsaṅgika*; T. *thal 'gyur pa*) syllogistic arguments in order to produce correct knowledge (S. *pramāṇa*; T. *tshad ma*) about conventional and ultimate truths.

Programmatically, in the Géluk synthesis this process of syllogistic inquiry first produces inferential cognition, and then direct, experiential cognition of ultimate truth. This particular brand of syllogistic reasoning constitutes the mechanism by which an adept moves through the archetypal process of 'Hearing, Contemplating, and Meditating' (S. *śruta cintā bhāvanā*; T. *thos bsam sgom gsum*) on ultimate truth, eventually resulting in a direct, non-conceptual realization of emptiness (S. *śūnyatā*; T. *stong pa nyid*).⁷⁹⁷ More specifically, evident facts⁷⁹⁷ are accessible through direct perception⁷⁹⁷, more abstruse facts⁷⁹⁷ are accessible through inference⁷⁹⁷, and extremely abstruse facts⁷⁹⁷ are available through scripture⁷⁹⁷ (though in this latter case... [the Géluk pas] attempt to make of the use of scripture simply another case of inference).⁷⁹⁷ From the emic perspective, this is the soteriological value and goal of the Géluk pa scholastic enterprise, and defines its rationalism as scholastic, as opposed to a variety of secular criticism or free-form intellectual inquiry. That being said, there was nothing stopping Géluk scholastics from applying their finely tuned dialectic hermeneutic to other intellectual matters, since in the end, all conventional and ultimate objects are knowable and are to be known.

798 I am not saying that there are not standards and precedents in non-philosophical "sciences" (*rig gnas*), such as medicine or 'arts and crafts', nor am I ignoring style manuals and second-order critical reflections on particular genres of writing, such as poetry or biography. However, in terms of producing a unitary, systematic view of non-soteric truth or materials (remember, in theory for the Géluk school at least, no religious or secular truth is beyond the purview of its rationality), we do not see a separate, second-order body of work on methods of rational inquiry in order to produce, for instance, correct 'historical knowledge'.

799 The logical school associated with the Indian Buddhist scholars Dignāga (c. 480-540 CE) and Dharmakīrti (c. 7th-century), in relation to which the dGe lugs school models itself as orthodox heir.

application of logic to produce solid historical knowledge versus, say, valid knowledge about evident facts like sensory experience, more abstruse facts like emptiness, and so on. If we were not discerning, we might conclude from Cabezón's point that "nowhere in the preceding analysis of [Géluk] scripture and commentary do we ever find historical discussion of the Géluk promotion of direct and inferential reasoning over authorial intention or legitimacy as markers of scriptural authenticity,"⁸⁰⁰ that there is little historical consciousness or concern in this school. However, from what is essentially a philosophical survey in Cabezón's work, we can extricate certain references that will allow us to identify a place for historiography in the Géluk scholastic program, and to better orient ourselves to the type of narrative trajectory we often find therein.

Firstly, from a section dealing with the nature of doctrine as both scripture and realization, we read:

Who is it that maintains (*dhātarah*, 'dzin pa po) the doctrine in its two aspects? It is said to be those who preach it (*vaktarah*, *smra ba po*) and those who practice it (*pratipattarah*, *sgrub par byed pa*). Hence, the survival of the doctrine is believed to depend on *two* facts, not only the maintenance of the scriptural tradition, but on the preservation of the living experiential one as well.⁸⁰¹

Here we find the primary historical subjects of what we might call scholastic Buddhist histories. Such histories narrate the lives and deeds of those who preached and practiced the doctrine; a doctrine which elsewhere in their scholastic careers the same authors of these histories would be pre-occupied with clarifying by means of direct and inferential reasoning. Zawa Damdin's own career and written oeuvre is paradigmatic in this regard, for as we have seen his life was spent guarding and expanding the Géluk philosophical colleges of his Khalkha homeland up until the very eve of the purges. Indeed, many Qing-era Géluk histories contain extensive doxographic

800 Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language : A Study of Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism*, 45.

801 Ibid., 40.

sections arguing for the doctrinal superiority of the Géluk school.⁸⁰² The *Golden Annals* is a case in point, as is one of its primary sources, the Monguor Tuken Chökyi Nyima's *Crystal Mirror*,⁸⁰³ and the 1889 *Rosary of White Lotuses* written by the Inner Mongolian Dharmatāla Damchö Gyatso.⁸⁰⁴ Any problem of genre only arises if we do not acknowledge the syncretism that exists both in terms of analytical procedure and, more broadly, subject matter between disparate works that explicitly clarify doctrine, or ones that rehearse the story of its caretakers. Being assembled by appeal to the particular analytical operations and writing practices unifies all these.

Beyond simply identifying the role that historiography might have played within the larger scholastic program (in order to narrate and historicize idealized types of scholastic figures), we can also see some concrete applications of framing and re-contextualization that emerged from philosophical inquiry in the interpretation of historical sources. For the Géluk and other Buddhist schools, although various Buddhist canons are thought to contain a complete statement on all phenomenon, exegesis is required in order to renew the accessibility of these teachings in new times and places. While a broad comparative study will be necessary to truly pursue this assertion, we might dwell upon the implication of the very regular descriptions of historical practice by Géluk scholars. A representative example comes once again from the Dalai Lama V's *Song of the Spring Queen*:

802 Doxography (S. *siddhanta*; T. *grub mtha'*); polemic (sometimes known as *dris lan* "Replies to Queries," or *brgal lan*, "Answers to Objections" often blur boundaries familiar to the Euro-American academy between philosophy and historiography.

803 bLo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1984). *grub mtha' shel gyi me long*. 1 vols. lan kru'u: kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

804 Dharmatāla, *Dharmatāla's Annals of Buddhism*, Śta-Pitaka Series : Indo-Asian Literatures ; (New Delhi: Sharada Rani, 1975).

I have done a little refutation (of errors) and establishment (of truth) with regard to the books (which contain) the foolish and baseless words of proud and haughty “learned men”.⁸⁰⁵

Concerning how Géluk philosophical exploration can never go beyond the totalizing purvey of scripture, Cabezón notes, “it is amazing how clever exegetes can, to paraphrase Jonathan Z. Smith, extricate themselves from the self-imposed limit that is a canon and thereby effectively go both beyond and against scripture, regardless of the rhetoric to the contrary.”⁸⁰⁶ This is how the Géluk tradition at least balances the somewhat paradoxical idea that (a) the canon is complete, represents the Buddha’s inerrant speech, and acts implicitly as the basis for realization, with (b) the notion that rational inquiry must act as later intermediary in order to recover these truths, add to the Buddha’s speech, and produce realizations of its truths by means of successive experiences of inferential and direct cognition: “Hence, the creativity of commentary lies not in the novelty of the subject matter, but in the originality of exposition.”⁸⁰⁷

The implications should be clear enough for thinking about how new stories can, in theory, legitimately be told out of standardized historical sources for Géluk exegetes. For instance, as we have seen already in Zawa Damdin’s and Gombojab’s works, the story of Mongolian Buddhism and an expansive Mongolian ethnic identity out of the imperial records of China and Tibet (from as early as the third-century), or even from South Asian canonical sources, prophetic works, and works of nineteenth-century French fiction. New doctrine and new historical stories can both be told by Géluk scholastics, but only by demonstrating that

805 Nag dbang blo bzan rgya mtsho, Ahmad, and International Academy of Indian, *The song of the queen of spring, or, A history of Tibet*, 205.

806 Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language : A Study of Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism*, 23.

807 Ibid., 81.

standardized modes of rational inquiry have only recovered the implicit, obscured or lost meaning from the finality of scriptural sources.

But what happens when Géluk pa scholastics—who were also, as we have seen in post-imperial Mongolia, also political leaders, travelers, scientists, and translators—were compelled to actively confront new social, ideological or political possibilities and imaginaries? How did the Géluk hermeneutic in which they were trained help tame attacks on their own privileged position in Inner Asian society, even if only in their scholastic works? Zawa Damdin’s histories provide perhaps the only extant examples of such defenses, and so it is to his own reflections on interpreting and authoring history that I briefly turn, before introducing his analytical technique in practice.

3 Zawa Damdin’s Reflections of Producing Historiography

Zawa Damdin often references the intended readers of his historiography in rather stereotypical forms, as either “knowledgeable persons,” or when he wished to emphasize the definitiveness of one of his arguments, the “wise and the stupid”. In this way, it is hard to glean who exactly his anticipated readers were, beyond perhaps the Jebzundamba VII and the Tusheyetu Khaan who, we will remember, requested the composition of the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book* respectively. Such references to stereotyped readers was a common trope, expressed beautifully once again by the Dalai Lama V in the *Song of the Spring Queen*:

From the burden of the womb of (this) spring in the Land of Snows,
If knowledgeable persons, spreading branches and leaves of intelligence,
Want the products of elegant speech (narrating) wonderful stories,
Let them heed these Records (called) “The Song of the Queen of Spring”.⁸⁰⁸

⁸⁰⁸ Nag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, Ahmad, and International Academy of Indian, *The song of the queen of spring, or, A history of Tibet*, 204.

While Zawa Damdin did not break with tradition in directing his work to a particularly defined audience, he does situate his work as a very specific intervention into his received tradition of primary and secondary sources. He describes this lacuna in a section of the *Golden Book* that transitions between his expansive clarification of Mongolian territory and the Mongolian people, and the narrative of the Early Spread:

If (one were to) analyze by comparing the words of the Victor, the outer and inner commentaries,⁸⁰⁹ and the earlier and later writings of the great kingdoms, this region of Great Mongolia (Hor-Sok) has existed for thousands of human years, comparable to the age of the world itself. Everyone, whether wise or foolish and whether in the direction of others or ourselves cannot deny (that this is true). Though indeed it is like that, nevertheless, (here I will explain only) the manner in which lawful politics⁸¹⁰ became connected to the arrival of the Victor's teaching at a certain point here in this region. (Such a connection) is not clear from the ancient writings of the Mongol common (peoples), which are not explicit (on the matter). Even now, because this situation is such (that we must) search, and (these sources) are so rare, it is intrinsically difficult to (provide) a clear and detailed description.⁸¹¹

Zawa Damdin continues by describing his methodology, though only with the scantest of detail:

Indeed, just how all sorts of political authorities and royal dynasties abided for greater or lesser (amounts of time), in our own or other's directions, by means of continuously wandering through the wheel of cyclic existence, sometimes amicably and sometimes in strife, is limitless!

As a consequence of there being scant (mention of all this) in the Kangyur, Tengyur, (or) chronicles,⁸¹² the importance of not missing (what details are there) and to write (about these) has been neglected.

(In order) to write out⁸¹³ merely those illustrative examples of what occurred in (relation to) only those many (kings) who protected the "Unity of the Dharma and Politics,"⁸¹⁴

809 ie. non-Buddhist (*phyi*) and Buddhist (*nang*), respectively.

810 *rgyal srid*.

811 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 98.

812 *deb ther*.

813 'god.

814 *Chos srid zung 'brel*.

(here, I will) thoroughly investigate⁸¹⁵ primarily the origins of the progeny of this region of Mongolia, and whatever political authorities (guarded) the Victor's teaching.⁸¹⁶

Further details about the general research procedures undertaken by our author are provided in the colophon to the *Golden Book*, though never explicitly mentioning the actual technique by which he “thoroughly investigated” the historical traces and secondary scholarship he considers. Interestingly, he also gestures to the inappropriateness of a monk devoting so much time to historiographic pursuits:⁸¹⁷

In this commentary [the *Golden Book*], you have read the stories of many kings and ministers and robbers with bad qualities; this is not suitable for monks to explain! But, the fact is that in the histories of earlier scholars this is explained so there must be some special meaning and so I have explained (it all again here).

I have traveled to many different countries, been to their libraries, and read many scholarly texts, and so all of those I understand. But I know that there are many different texts with many different meanings and many different perspectives, so it is difficult to make only one single point. So, because of that, and because of my own understanding, it is possible that I made many mistakes so please forgive me!⁸¹⁸

Such generalities aside, we can detect some more reflection on the actual interpretative challenges and possibilities that faced our author from the many authorial asides embedded in the actual narrative of the *Golden Book* (which, as we have seen, has been the most productive source to better understand the place, polemic, and practice of Zawa Damdin's historiography). As just one example, from the earlier sections clarifying the scope of the Mongol expanse:

815 *rtsod gcod pa*.

816 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 99.

817 I have been told on many occasions that in the Géluk scholastic ideal, historical pursuits are often dismissed as a distraction from more central pedagogical programs such as memorization and debate. I have not yet been able to find any textual elaboration or collaboration of this attitude, however.

818 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 477–478.

In general, the people of Mongolia (*hor*) have many different races and languages. An old saying⁸¹⁹ of the Mongols in this area⁸²⁰ (says) that: “Our origins come from the direction of the setting sun, called “The Mongol,”⁸²¹ which was a very peaceful and happy.” This is just what I have heard said merely from the old tradition,⁸²² but as of yet I have not been able to find an original textual source⁸²³ or commentarial scriptural source⁸²⁴ which can clarify (this matter).

Notwithstanding this, the analysis of Knowledgeable Ones must compare the manner of explaining (in our) acquired (sources, such as): texts (*deb yig*) from the kingdom of Aparanta,⁸²⁵ (where people) abided in the borderland areas since ancient times; old and new sayings of outer (non-Buddhist) and inner (Buddhist) scholars; and the sūtras, tantras, and commentaries. This is why I have explained a little bit about this here.⁸²⁶

Indeed, it is precisely in such a comparative, synthetic analysis of available sources that Zawa Damdin can be most clearly placed in both his Qing-era interpretative community, but also in the new, European-infused milieu of revolutionary Mongolia. His Occidentalist critiques and adoptions of the scholarly products of the European academy allow us to see the Géluk synthetic hermeneutic at work, which I first introduce before turning to some of his adoptions from the pages of the *Golden Book*.

819 *gna' gtam*.

820 This presumably refers to the Khalkha environs of Ikh Khüree, or perhaps Zawa Damdin's Gobi homeland to the south.

821 *i he mon gol*. This may very well be a Tibetan transcription of *yehe monggol*, Mongolian for “Great Mongolia”, though our author does not himself provide any clarification.

822 *gna' rgyun*.

823 *khungs thub kyi yig tshang*.

824 *bstan bcos kyi shes byed*.

825 Aparanta was an ancient kingdom in Western India during the Third Buddhist Council.

826 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 67–68.

4 Synthesizing Heterodox Scripture and European Science in the *Golden Annals*

We have seen already that Buddhist doxography has always been able to accommodate a hierarchy of claims to truth, being quite comfortable to assign a provisional status to doctrine that differs from the ultimate status of any given orthodox position. In this general sense then, the *modus operandi* of the Géluk hermeneutic was familiar with—impelled even—to assess, syncretize, and subsume contrary doctrinal positions. In the argument I am advancing in this chapter, I would add that Géluk exegets like Zawa Damdin were similarly impelled to address and synthesize contrarian historical sources, political imaginaries, ideological frames, and so on.

It is in Zawa Damdin’s construction of the real chronotope of Mongolian time, place, and subject—which once hosted the enlightened Two Systems, though these were absent by the time of his historical compositions—that it becomes clear how extensively our author turned to newly available European scholarship and literature, alongside the full breadth of Qing-era scholarship he had available. While the eclectic nature of his archival practices must be left to a future study, here I wish to introduce his narrative products of his extensive mining of French literature, Chinese pilgrimage tales, Altaic philology and archaeology, and Russian Buddhology newly available in the Mongolian language in the post-imperium. He did so alongside the “Mongol stories” he and his interpretative community had recovered from his Buddhist canonical sources. It is here, in the real time of these late Buddhist histories, that the fun house mirror of our own academic categories truly emerges: our secondary sources (whose signs of knowledge the current study displays) are already in our primary sources.

References to European scholars (*rGya gser mkhan po*) and European scholarship occur throughout the *Golden Book*. Only rarely are we given specific names or works, however: more often than not, such references come as short asides to provide additional evidence for a

particular historical argument. From the work of Bira and Khureelbaatar, we do know that Zawa Damdin was in contact with the Russian Buddhologists Scherbatsky and Tubyansky, but it was not through such direct contact with representatives of Euro-Russian academy that our author encountered (and digested in an Orientalist mode) such scholarly products. These come instead from the flurry of European scientific and cultural achievements that were mediated into Mongolian erudite circles (especially in Ikh Khüree) beginning in the Autonomous Period. These were largely the products of what Robert Rupen has labeled the “Buryat Intelligentsia;” a group of Buryat nationalists who, from their position as intermediaries between Russia and Mongolia, engaged in all manner of intellectual and socio-political projects in post-Qing Mongolia: from gathering folk songs to drafting the platform of the Mongolian People’s Party.⁸²⁷ Their widely ranging intellectual interests were, at the core, inspired by a particular brand of progressive nationalist politics. Their focus on Mongolian languages, folk traditions, epic and historical traditions, literature, and ritual life both were motivated by, and produced anew, an “increased consciousness of ‘Mongol-ness’.”⁸²⁸ This group generally considered Buddhism the very condition for conceiving of a pan-Mongolian ethnic family:

The more strenuously the government and missionaries pursued their policy of Russification and religious conversion, and the more they subjected the Buryats to persecution and violence, the stronger and more unanimous became the movement toward Buddhism and towards those of their brethren [i.e., Transbaikalian Buryats and Mongols] who had conserved their writing and national integrity and solidarity thanks to Buddhism.⁸²⁹

827 See, for instance: Jamtsarano (1907), 21 quoted in: Dugarava-Montgomery, “The Buriat Alphabet of Agvan Dorzhiev.” See also: Rupen, “The Buriat Intelligentsia”; Rupen, “Cyben Zamcaranovic Zamcarano (1880-?1940)”; Bernstein, “Pilgrims, Fieldworkers, and Secret Agents: Buryat Buddhologists and the History of an Eurasian Imaginary”; King, “Like Giving Milk to a Snake: A Socialism of the Buryat-Mongol Buddhist Imaginary.”

827 Rupen, “The Buriat Intelligentsia.”

828 Rupen, “The Buriat Intelligentsia,” 396.

829 Jamtsarano (1907), 21 quoted in Dugarava-Montgomery and Montgomery (1999), 83-4.

An important caveat here is that for these reform-minded Buryat intellectuals and their sympathizers in Mongolia, even though Buddhism was considered the “shelter of the national spirit,”⁸³⁰ there was a need for reformation based in large part upon introducing what were considered the technological, pedagogical, and cultural advances of European civilization.

One of the primary early interfaces by which these products of Euro-American “modernity” entered into Mongolian Buddhist space in the Bogd Khaanate was the *New Mirror* (*Shine Toli*), an immensely controversial, secular newspaper. A Tsarist representative in Ikh Khüree named I. Y. Korostovets started this paper, but it was soon directed by the Buryat reformer and nationalist, Tseveen Jamsrano. In the pages of the *New Mirror* literate Mongolians, including Zawa Damdin and other Buddhist scholastic elites, were able to read, in the Mongolian language and for the first time, excerpts from the works of Leo Tolstoy, Jules Verne, Robert Louis Stevenson, Jack London, and more.⁸³¹ They also encountered what was then cutting-edge scholarship on Mongolian linguistics and history by European and Russian academics. In many cases, these proposed radically different visions of the Mongolian past than what had been widely promoted in Qing-era historiography since the seventeenth-century.

As we have seen, in these earlier indigenous compositions, Mongolian history, Buddhist identity, and Qing rule had been historicized and naturalized selectively according to newly emergent models of “Buddhist rule” associated with Qing state-craft. These circumscribed royal genealogies extending back from Chinggis Khaan to the rulers of the Tibetan Yarlung dynasty, and on to the mythic Indian sovereign Mahāsammata.⁸³² In contradistinction to these familiar historical tropes, monks and literati who flipped through the pages of the *New Mirror* at this

830 Ibid...

831 Rupen, “The Buriat Intelligentsia,” 396, n. 34.

832 On these transitions, see Elverskog (2006).

time encountered, for instance, the Finnish linguist Gustaf John Ramstedt's⁸³³ challenging article "History of the Uighur."⁸³⁴ Written in Mongolian during a sojourn in Ikh Khüree, this piece introduced the radical idea that Mongolians shared Turkic-origins with other Central Asian peoples, not Buddhist kings in India or Tibet, nor even the minority socio-political identities which had been issuing from Qing centers for the last two and a half centuries. Despite Bira's Soviet-era lauding of Zawa Damdin's turn to such scientific histories in the *Golden Book*, our author does in fact still present the Mahāsammata legend as the root of Mongol ethnoreligious primordialism. Still, the effect of Ramstedt's work on our author was pronounced, since he chose to translate it *in toto* and include it in the *Golden Book* alongside extended passages from his canonical sources. The consequence of Ramstedt's history in the context of the *Golden Book* was to support the idea that the ancient Hunu were in fact Mongolian.⁸³⁵ Zawa Damdin also encountered other European histories of the Mongols in the pages of the *New Mirror*, such as David-Léon Cohan's historical fiction on Tartary,⁸³⁶ which are translated into Tibetan and extensively cited in the *Golden Book*.

In addition to fiction and history, and far more troubling for scholastics like Zawa Damdin, the *New Mirror* also contained articles that amounted to generic "popular science."

833 Ramstedt wrote at least two major works on Mongolian writing and linguistics: G. J. Ramstedt, *Über die Konjugation des Khalkha-Mongolischen*. (Helsingfors: Finnischen Litteraturgesellschaft, 1903); G. J. Ramstedt and Suomalais-ugrilainen Seura, *Das Schriftmongolische und die Urgamundart, phonetisch verglichen*. (S.l.: s.n.). On Ramstedt's career, see: Harry Halén and Suomalais-ugrilainen Seura, *Biliktu Bakshi, the Knowledgeable Teacher: G.J. Ramstedt's Career as a Scholar* (Helsinki: Finno-Ugrian Society, 1998); G. J. Ramstedt and John Richard Krueger, *Seven Journeys Eastward, 1898-1912: Among the Cheremis, Kalmyks, Mongols, and in Turkestan, and to Afghanistan* (Bloomington, Ind.: Mongolia Society, 1978).

834 Written in 1912, but I am unclear just when it was published in the *New Mirror*. Schorkowitz gives the title as *Uiṣur ulus-un quriyangqai teüke* (Dittmar Schorkowitz, *Staat und nationalitäten in Rußland: der Integrationsprozess der Burjaten und Kalmücken, 1822-1925* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag, 2001), 296, n. 79.

835 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther," 1975, 78.

836 See Chapter V and VI in: David-Léon Cahun and Frédéric Théodore Lix, *La bannière bleue : aventures d'un musulman d'un chrétien et d'un pa'ien à l'époque des croisades et de la conquête mongole* (Paris: Hachette, 1877).

These pieces, in part, “embod[ied] modern conceptions which demolished the Buddhist cosmology. Mongolian folklore and western science were presented almost simultaneously.”⁸³⁷ Whereas newly available historical information actually buttressed emerging conceptions of a broad Mongolian ethnic family and Buddhist history for scholastics such as Zawa Damdin, these scientific notions cut deeply against classical Buddhist hermeneutical traditions for producing “valid knowledge”. Of those, the claims of Western European astronomy specifically proved to be the least palatable for Buddhist scholastics. These not only were a direct affront to the cosmological claims of standard Indian Buddhist sources such as Vasubandhu’s *Treasury of Abhidharma* (S. *Abhidharmakośa*) or the Kālacakra system. More dangerous still, they introduced empiricism onto the Mongolian scene, a theory and practice of knowledge seemingly capable of disproving Buddhist validation of its sources on the origin and composition of the world and the universe (which, we must remember, was for Zawa Damdin and his interpretative community the pre-condition for telling the story of the Mongolian religio-ethnic past).

Before looking at just how this played out in Ikh Khüree, and then in the pages of the *Golden Book*, I must note that the challenge of European astronomy (and especially the idea that the earth was round) had already infiltrated the worlds of Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhist scholastics resident at the Qing court; these are some of the very same Géluk scholars who pushed genres of (auto)biography and historiography to new heights. Those scholars had enjoyed regular contact with Jesuits employed as astronomers and cartographers in the courts of Kangxi and Qianlong, for instance. In the eighteenth-century, these members of Zawa Damdin’s interpretative community introduced the “the new Chinese astrology”⁸³⁸ into their own Tibetan-

837 Rupen, “The Buriat Intelligentsia,” 397.

838 T. *rgya nag rtsis gsar*.

language compositions.⁸³⁹ This, in turn, influenced some later Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhist scholastics working in Qing cosmopolitan environments to write more expansive and widely read geographic works that incorporated, rather unproblematically it seems, newly available European astronomical notions about planetary movement. For instance, Sumpa Khenpo Yéshé Peljor's 1777 *General Description of Jambudvīpa*⁸⁴⁰ introduced a reading public literate in Tibetan (which at this time very much included Mongolian regions) to descriptions of several previously unknown European countries. What did prove to be unbearably vexing about this work for Buddhist scholastics at the time was a description of the Arctic midnight sun; a phenomenon explainable only by accepting that the earth was round.⁸⁴¹ This was something widely decried as impossible by Buddhist scholastics, whose canonical sources described a flat earth. However in some quarters, including those of some progressive Géluk hierarchs such as the Seventh Panchen Lama (1782-1853), Buddhist intellectuals were encouraged to keep an open mind and to take these contradictory claims to truth seriously.⁸⁴² In other words, to adopt a sort of epistemic syncretism that could entertain the wild claims of European empiricism, while still promoting the contrary claims of Buddhist scripture (scholastic fundamentalism if ever there was such a thing!).

The point here is that what was “new” in European astronomy (both at the Qing court and in the monastic readership of the *New Mirror*) was not simply a privileging of empirical

839 For instance, Māyang bzod pa rgyal mtshan's *rGya rtsis snying bsdus*, 1744, and in the notes of A skya Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1708-1768). See: Lobsang Yongdan, “Tibet Charts the World: The Btsan Po No Mon Han's Detailed Description of the World, an Early Major Scientific Work in Tibet,” in *Mapping the Modern in Tibet*, ed. Gray Tuttle (IITBS, International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies GmbH, 2011), 76.

840 Sum pa mkhan po ye shes dpal 'byor, *'Dzam Gling Spyī Bshad Dang Rgyas Bshad* (Lha sa: Bod ljong bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2011).

841 Yongdan, “Tibet Charts the World: The Btsan Po No Mon Han's Detailed Description of the World, an Early Major Scientific Work in Tibet,” 77.

842 Ibid., 88-9.

evidence over scriptural descriptions; something we associate with European modernity and which we might be overly excited to detect in these Buddhist-scientific encounters. As Matthew Kapstein has rightly noted, those cosmopolitan Mongols and eastern Tibetans of the Qing simply incorporated new facts about the world (such as travel accounts and more comprehensive maps) without modifying core cosmological views (such as the flat earth containing four continents arranged around the *axis mundi*, Mt. Meru, described in Buddhist scripture). They added to scripture, or more specifically, to the assertions of particular exegetical traditions. The historical and geographic works that emerged from this Qing cosmopolitanism acted, it turns out, as primary sources for Zawa Damdin's own historiography, and they determined in large part how he encountered the popular science and Orientalist scholarship in the *New Mirror*. All of it (whether it agreed with traditional exegesis or not) simply had to be taken seriously according to the very logic of Geluk-school scholasticism, as José Cabezón has so clearly shown.⁸⁴³ The ambiguity of the post-Qing Mongolian Buddhist encounter with European science and culture is evident in Zawa Damdin's *Golden Book*. In some places their claims were incorporated straightaway to buttress his own historiographic theses (for instance Ramstedt's work as the basis for a new genealogy of Mongol ethnicity), while others required a decisive refutation in order to guard the coherence and authority of Buddhist ways of knowing the world, and, we must presume, the validity and basic coherence of a "Buddhist" world thus known.

Returning to the *New Mirror*, its first edition was published in 1913 and sent shockwaves through literati circles in Ikh Khüree. This was so, at least at first, for much the same reason as Yéshé Peljor's *General Description of Jambudvīpa* almost one hundred and fifty years earlier; European astrological claims of a round and moving earth. It is unsurprising perhaps that such

843 Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language : A Study of Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism*.

controversial claims graced the first issue, since its then-editor Jamsrano was committed more than anything else to extending what one witness, Wilhelm Alexander Unkrig, described as “modern astronomical knowledge among the Mongols.”⁸⁴⁴ The first edition in 1913 sold out immediately, being consumed by a fascinated and apparently outraged audience. Its contents seem innocuous enough to us today, comprising simple descriptive accounts of topic such as: “The Earth, the Continents,” “Heat and Cold,” “Wind and Atmosphere,” “Thunder and Lightning,” “The States of the World and Their Forms of Government,” “The Development of Culture,” “Race and Religion,” and “The Life Expectancy of Man.”⁸⁴⁵ Elites from Gandentegchenling Monastery (including perhaps Zawa Damdin, who was a prominent scholar there at this time) complained to the Jebzundamba himself that Jamsrano’s public dissemination of “Western” ideology and “scientific” falsities was an affront to Buddhism.⁸⁴⁶ While the *New Mirror* continued to be published for some time, Zawa Damdin apparently still had a bone to pick six years later when he began to compose the *Golden Book* in 1919. It is to his engagement with the idea of a round earth in that history that I now turn.

4.1 An Occidentalist Critique of the Proposition that the Earth is Round

In both the *Golden Annals* and the *Melodious Sounding of the Auspicious Dharma Conch*, an elementary problem Zawa Damdin faces, it seems, is to reconcile contradictory claims in Buddhist canonical sources regarding the physical layout of the universe and its ‘contents’ (*bcu*, ie. sentient beings). It is interesting to note that no other immediate precedents

844 Unkrig (1926), quoted in: Rupen, *Mongols of the Twentieth Century*.

845 I have not as of yet been able to access any original copy of the *Shine Toli* from the Mongolian archives. This table of contents is taken from Rupen (1964), 83-4.

846 Ibid.

in Mongolian Buddhist historiography precede their narrative content with such an expansive subject. Dharmatāla's 1889 *Rosary of White Lotuses*, for instance, begins straightaway with a "General Account of the Emergence and Spread of Buddhism in the World."⁸⁴⁷ Likewise, Gushri Tsépel's 1819 *History of Buddhism in Hor* begins straightaway with the empty chronotope of the early "enlightened" kings of Tibet, their connection to Mahāsammata, and their work to bring Buddhism there during the Yarlung empire. We shall see below why devoting so much space to reconciling the contradictory statements of Buddhist sources on this topic was so important for our author, since at least in part they respond directly to non-Buddhist (apparently scientific) presentations on the form of the world newly available in Ikh Khüree at this time.

Our author delves into this topic in the *Golden Annals* with a quote from the *Flower Garland Sūtra*⁸⁴⁸ on the nature and form of the waters bounding the land whose stories he will soon narrate:

In the lands of all directions oceans have appeared,
 Several are round and several are triangular.
 In several directions direction are (oceans in the shape of a) square.
 Moreover, (in the end) it is the ocean of karma that 'writes' (the) form (of these waters).⁸⁴⁹

847 *sPyir 'jig rten du chos ji ltar byng tshul*. However, Dharmatāla does provide a fascinating general account of the Mongols later in the text, but does not devote such attention to establishing a valid picture of the physical distribution of the universe and its beings as the first order of business. See "Classification of the Mongols" (*Hor Sog gi rnam gzhag*), Dharmatāla (1975 (1889)). *Dharmatāla's Annals of Buddhism*. New Delhi, Smt. Sharada Rani. pp. 42-60.

848 Skt. *Buddha āvatamsaka-mahāvaiṣṭya sūtra*; Tib. *Sangs rgyas phal po che zhes bya ba shin tu rgyas pa chen po'i mdo*. See, for instance: Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1976-9). "Phal po che'i mdo." In *bka' 'gyur* (sde dge par phud). 36: 4 - 793. delhi: delhi karmapae chodhey gyalwae sungrab partun khang. Zawa Damdin composed a praise text based on one of the most famous characters in this sutra, the bodhisattva gZhon nu nor bzang (Skt. Sudhanakumāra), who is one of the archetypes of the perfect Buddhist disciple in Mahāyāna literature. See: bLo bzang rta mgrin (1975-6). "rGyal sras gzhon nu nor bzang gi rnam thar las brtsams pa'i bstod pa/." In *gsung 'bum/_blo bzang rta mgrin*. 1: 119 - 134. new delhi: mongolian lama gurudeva.

849 bLo bzang rta mgrin (1975-6). "byang phyogs chen po hor gyi rgyal khams kyi rtogs brjod kyi bstan bcos chen po ngo mtshar gser gyi deb ther." In *gsung 'bum/_blo bzang rta mgrin*. 2: 43-490. new delhi: mongolian lama gurudeva. p. 44.

The import here has nothing to do with describing bodies of water (though he does do this presently, after having cleared away doubts). Rather, the point of the quotation concerns what is stated so poetically in the final line of the quoted verse; that the world is “written” by the karma of sentient beings. While this may seem at first like an uncomplicated presentation of basic Buddhist doctrine, Zawa Damdin is in fact being strategic and laying the ground for a rather complicated reconciliation of the Buddhist cosmological position. This position, it seems, required defending. Specifically, this quote sets up his ‘karmic relativity defense’, by which he will be able to circumvent and ultimately synthesize *both* the contradictions inherent in his own scriptural sources, as well as what he considers the debased critiques of the Buddhist cosmological position. He builds his point further by writing that:

There are a variety of ways of explaining the number, size, measure, and so forth of the underlying mandala base, the mountains, the oceans, the continents, and so forth in (the scriptures) of Sutra and Tantra, (such as) the Higher and Lower⁸⁵⁰ Abhidharma⁸⁵¹, the Kālacakra Tantra, and so on. *However, these are never mutually contradictory.*⁸⁵² Those (mountains, oceans, etc.) are not established from their own side, but rather they are established from the karma of sentient beings. In our own world, many different oceans, mountains and islands have all appeared at once. These might appear to the vision of one

850 Here, the “Upper Abhidharma” is that of the Mahāyāna school (Tib. *theg pa chen po*), and the “Lower Abhidharma” is that of the Śrāvakayāna (Tib. *snyan thos kyi theg pa*). Both of these were studied extensively in the dGe lugs pa scholastic institutions in Tibet and Mongolia to which Zawa Damdin was heir.

851 The Abhidharma is one of the “Three Baskets” of the Buddhist canon (Skt. *tripiṭaka*; Tib. *sde snod gsum*), and is a term that is notoriously difficult to translate. It has been rendered into English variously as “phenomenology”, “higher knowledge”, “manifest knowledge”, and so forth. Abhidharma is, in general, concerned with classifying experience, and systematizes many of the topics mentioned in the Sūtras (the “Sayings of the Buddha”, another of the canonical *tripiṭaka*). Topics include: the five psycho-physical aggregates (Skt. *pañcaskandha*; Tib. *phung po lnga*) which are the basis for inputting the ‘self’; the six sense-faculties and their six sense objects (Skt. *dvaḍaśa āyatana*; Tib. *skye mched bcu gnyis*); the eighteen classifications of all knowable things (Skt. *aṣṭadaśa dhātu*; Tib. *khams bco brgyad*) and so forth. One such classification, which Zawa Damdin evokes here, concerns the physical structure and genesis of the universe. These are generally divided up into the physical world, understood as a “vessel” (*nod*) and the beings who inhabit it, known as the “contents” (*bcud*). Famous commentaries to the Abhidharma include Asaṅga’s fourth-century “Compendium of Abhidharma” (Skt. *Abhidharmasamuccaya*; Tib. *mngon pa kun btus*), and his younger brother Vasubandhu’s “Treasury of Abhidharma” (Skt. *Abhidharmakośa*; Tib. *chos mngon pa’i mdzod*) and “Auto-Commentary on the Treasury of Abhidharma” (Skt. *Abhidharmakośa-Bhāṣya*; Tib. *chos mngon pa mdzod kyi bshad pa*).

852 *phan tshun ‘gal ‘dur mi ‘gyur*.

sentient being, but not another (depending on their karma) [...] *because of this we cannot object if one person does not see what another sentient being sees.*⁸⁵³

This point, which for Zawa Damdin pre-emptively provides an explanation for the contradictions found in the Abhidharma and Kālacakra presentations of the ‘arrangement of the world and its beings’ which he is about to describe, is further supplemented by a classic example found in Buddhist sources. He writes that if a god, a human being and a hungry ghost were to all gather in front of one cup of water, “at that time, because of their different karma, for one it would appear as nectar, for one it would appear as water, and for one it would appear as pus. While this is true, we would not say that there is more than one cup of water.”⁸⁵⁴ The point, he writes, is that Buddhist canonical sources describe the world in which we live differently, according to different karmic potentialities of sentient beings. As such, it is not the varied presentations of spatial and temporal truth in the Buddhist scriptures that are invalid, partial or limited, but rather, it is the case that what at first presents itself as a collection of contradictory accounts are in fact explanations tailored to the varied dispositions of beings. The contradictions are, as such, ultimately non-contradictory. They also, it seems, prove their “enlightened” providence, since the assumption here is that different presentations depend on an omniscient reading of the karmic potential of any given textual audience.

While the details cannot detain us here, it is the specific language of this examination that, at its root, situates Zawa Damdin’s historical analysis as one application of a more general Géluk hermeneutic. This follows a particular three-pronged approach on evidence above, and elsewhere besides in Zawa Damdin’s work and those of his interpretative community: *dgag*

853 Ibid. Emphasis mine.

854 blo bzang rta mgrin (1975-6). "byang phyogs chen po hor gyi rgyal khams kyi rtogs brjod kyi bstan bcos chen po ngo mtshar gser gyi deb ther." In gsung 'bum/_blo bzang rta mgrin. 2: 43-490. new delhi: mongolian lama gurudeva. p. 44.

(refuting opponent positions); *gzhag* (establishing one's own position); and *spong* (clearing away potential critiques of one's own position).⁸⁵⁵ The opponent position in Zawa Damdin's critique soon becomes clear: claims and epistemic foundation of scientific empiricism.

Following upon the karmic-relativity defense outlined above, he writes that:

So, [when] non-Buddhist barbarians use their many different machines to search all over the world, it is not necessary that they see by means of their direct cognition in the same way as is described in the Sutras and Tantras.⁸⁵⁶ This is so since most of them are obscured by karma and this (Buddhist) presentation remains a secret to them. [Additionally, in relation to] some of these (geographic features, etc.), the names and objects have already changed (since the time they were described in Buddhist sources), and now they are identified differently, and have different shapes, etc.

This is why the 'Superficial Intellectuals'⁸⁵⁷ (ie. scientists) of Europe (*yi wa ro pa*) use machines to describe this world as being shaped like an egg (ie. round) and always continually rotating- something they believe they are actually seeing! (This is akin to) the 'Story of the Eighteen Different Blind People Describing the Elephant'⁸⁵⁸ depicted in the *Compendium of the Great Vehicle*.⁸⁵⁹

Here, we see a mechanism of exclusion; Zawa Damdin introduces a particularly vexing example of the 'dangerous irruptions of social otherness' circulating in literate circles in the pages of the *Shine toil* (the *New Mirror*).

855 According to Geshé Lhundub Sopa, this was also Thuken Losang Chokyi Nyima's approach in the *Crystal Mirror*. See: Nyima, *The Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems: A Tibetan Study of Asian Religious Thought*, 25:xviii.

856 Ie. the fact that they do not see the world in the same way as is described in Buddhist canonical sources does not disprove the validity of those sources.

857 The designation Zawa Damdin uses for 'scientist' here is *rtog ge pa*. Instead of an adaption of a foreign word to describe this class of people, or even a favorable indigenous term, his use of *rtog ge pa* positions them in rather derogatory terms. This word is generally used in scholastic contexts to designate a logician or 'reasoner' who relies too heavily upon logic and scripture without any real experience of what the terms actually mean (through, for example, meditative practice). As such, I render this above as 'Superficial Intellectuals', as oppose to simply 'Logicians'.

858 This is Asanga's composition (Skt. *Mahāyāsaṃgraha*; Tib. *theg pa chen po bsdus pa*). This story describes the partial, inaccurate descriptions of an elephant by eighteen blind people who can only access some partial feature (a tail, a foot, etc.) by means of their other senses. The analogy to the Buddhist doctrinal understanding of the limited experience of the world by those 'blinded' by karma and delusions should be clear.

859 Ibid... p. 45.

In both the *Dharma Conch* and the *Golden Book*, Zawa Damdin first sets out to reconcile contradictory claims in Buddhist canonical sources regarding the physical layout of the “vessel-like” world (Tib. *snod*) and its living “contents” (Tib. *bcud*). Many biographical and historical works produced during the Qing by Mongolian Buddhists and their Tibetan interlocutors do spatially and temporally arrange their subjects in relation to several founding socio-religious events, such as the enlightenment of the historical Buddha or the life of Chinggis Khaan.⁸⁶⁰ None of Zawa Damdin’s immediate interlocutors precede their historical account with the type of extended delimitation of the physical universe we see in his historical works, especially in the later *Golden Book*.⁸⁶¹ Why such an extensive and, we intuit, defensive presentation? A large part of the answer is that Zawa Damdin was seeking to introduce a very expansive vision of the Mongolian Buddhist past, which depended upon identifying “Mongol” actors across a vast swath of Buddhist literature.⁸⁶² This, in turn, depended upon a particular presentation of the physical universe and its living contents that could be mined convincingly for Mongolian Buddhist stories lost in what he often described as “the rivers of Sūtra and Mantra.” In the *Melodious Sounding of the Auspicious Dharma Conch*, completed in the first years of the Autonomous Period, this entailed merely synthesizing the views expressed in Buddhist canonical presentations and their associated exegetical material. However, by the time he was impelled to begin writing the *Golden Book* in 1919, it was not simply contradictory claims in his

⁸⁶⁰ Gray Tuttle, “Challenging Central Tibet’s Dominance of History: The ‘Oceanic Book’, a 19th-Century Politico-Religious Geographic History.”

⁸⁶¹ Dharmatāla’s *Rosary of White Lotuses*, for instance, begins straightaway with a “General Account of the Emergence and Spread of Buddhism in the World” (*Spyir ‘jig rten du chos ji ltar byung tshul*) (1889, xxv). Likewise, Gushri Tshe ‘phel’s 1819 (1981) *History of Buddhism in Hor* promptly begins with an account of the early “enlightened” kings of Tibet, their connection to Mahāsammatā, and their work to import Buddhism during the Yarlung empire. While several eighteenth-century Amdo scholars (all Qing cosmopolitanists) did apply themselves to either geographical projects or geographically-heavy historical works, we do not find in their pages the extensive defense of traditional Buddhist cosmology (its limits and contradictions).

⁸⁶² On an earlier, influential attempt to do the same, see Elverskog (2005).

Buddhist sources which required careful synthesis or refutation, but also troubling claims by European science by then in circulation in learned Mongolian society.

Following some standard poetic verses and opening homages, Zawa Damdin broaches his description of the world with a quote from *Flower Garland Sūtra*⁸⁶³ on the nature and form of the waters bounding the land whose stories he will soon narrate:

In the lands of all directions oceans have appeared,
 Several are round (*zlum po*) and several are triangular (*gru gsum*).
 In several directions are [oceans in the shape of a] square.
 Moreover, [in the final analysis] it is the ocean of *karma* that writes (*bris*) the form [of these waters].⁸⁶⁴

The point of the quotation for his larger argument is stated poetically in the final line of the quoted verse; the world is “written” by the *karma* of sentient beings. This provides a scriptural basis for what will be his “karmic relativity defence” against empiricism. He builds his point further, writing:

There are a variety of ways of explaining the number, size, measure, and so forth of the underlying *maṇḍala* base, the mountains, the oceans, the continents, and so forth in [the scriptures] of Sūtra and Tantra, [such as] the Higher and Lower Abhidharma, the Kālacakra Tantra, and so on. *However, these are never mutually contradictory.*⁸⁶⁵ Those [mountains, oceans, etc.] are not established from their own side, but rather they are established from the *karma* of sentient beings. In our own world, many different oceans, mountains, and islands have all appeared at once. These might appear to the vision of one sentient being, but not another [depending on their karma] [...] *because of this we cannot object if one person does not see what another sentient being sees.*⁸⁶⁶

863 Skt. *Buddha fivataṃsaka-mahāvaipulya Sūtra*, Tib. *Sangs rgyas phal po che zhes bya ba shin tu rgyas pa chen po'i mdo*. See, for instance, Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1976-9). Zawa Damdin composed a praise based on one of the most famous characters in this *sūtra*, the Bodhisattva Gzhon nu nor bzang (Skt. Sudhanakumāra), who is one of the archetypes of the perfect Buddhist disciple in Mahāyāna literature. See Blo bzang rta mgrin (1975-76i).

864 Blo bzang rta mgrin (1975-6j), 44.

865 *phan tshun 'gal 'dur mi 'gyur*.

866 Blo bzang rta mgrin (1975-76j), 44.

This point, which for Zawa Damdin pre-emptively provides an explanation for the contradictions found in the primary Buddhist presentations of the “arrangement of the world and its beings,” which he is about to describe, is further supplemented by a classic example found in Buddhist sources. He writes that if a god, a human being, and a hungry ghost were to all gather in front of one cup of water, “at that time, because of their different *karma*, for one it would appear as nectar, for one it would appear as water, and for one it would appear as pus. While this is true, we would not say that there is more than one cup of water.”⁸⁶⁷ The point, he continues, is that Buddhist canonical sources describe the world in which we live differently, according to different karmic potentialities of sentient beings. As such, it is not the varied presentations of spatial and temporal truth in the Buddhist scriptures that are invalid, partial or limited, but rather, it is the case that what at first presents itself as a collection of contradictory accounts are in fact explanations tailored to the varied dispositions of beings. The contradictions are, as such, ultimately non-contradictory. They also, it seems, prove their “enlightened” providence, since the assumption here is that different presentations depend on an omniscient reading of the karmic potential of any given textual audience.

While this clarification of apparent contradiction in canonical sources also frames the earlier *Dharma Conch*, (to which the *Golden Book* is ostensibly a commentary), the real polemical target in this later work soon becomes abundantly clear:

So, [when] non-Buddhist barbarians use their many different machines to investigate all over the world, it is not necessary that they see by means of their direct cognition in the same way as is described in the Sūtras and Tantras.⁸⁶⁸ This is so since most of them are obscured by *karma* and so this [Buddhist] presentation remains a secret to them. [Additionally, in relation to] some of those [geographic features, etc.], the names and

867 Ibid...

868 That is to say, the fact that they do not see the world in the same way as is described in Buddhist canonical sources does not disprove the validity of those sources.

objects have already changed [since the time they were described in Buddhist sources], and now they are identified differently, and have different shapes, etc.

This is why the “Superficial Intellectuals”⁸⁶⁹ [i.e. scientists] of Europe (*yi wa ro pa*) use machines to describe this world as being shaped like an egg [i.e. round] and always continually rotating—something they believe they are actually seeing! [This is akin to] the “Story of the Eighteen Blind People Describing the Elephant”⁸⁷⁰ depicted in the *Compendium of the Great Vehicle*.⁸⁷¹

According to Zawa Damdin, the claim of these foreign “Superficial Intellectuals” is that their “machines” allow them to produce knowledge about the world only by means of direct cognition (*mngon sum*). The implicit critique is that they do not employ that more foundational sort of reasoning prized by Geluk scholastics that, among other things, produces a provisional inferential cognition (*rjes dpag*) of hidden truths about the world, such as past and future lives, the workings of *karma*, and so forth.

Having “subdued” the epistemic challenges stemming from this “scriptural tradition of heretical others,”⁸⁷² Zawa Damdin then feels contented to begin organizing his vast historical presentation by producing an extensively cited, synthetic version of the contradictory cosmological presentations found in his own Buddhist sources. This was a cosmological vision which was, unsurprisingly, particularly suited for him to authoritatively “rescue” an extensive

869 The designation Zawa Damdin uses for “scientist” here is *rtog ge pa*. Instead of an adaption of a foreign word to describe this class of people, or even a favorable indigenous term, his use of *rtog ge pa* positions them in rather derogatory terms. This word is generally used in scholastic contexts to designate a logician or “reasoner” who relies too heavily upon logic and scripture without any real experience of what the terms actually mean (through, for example, meditative practice). As such, I render this above as ‘Superficial Intellectuals’, as oppose to simply ‘Logicians’.

870 The *Mahāyānasamgraha* (Tib. *Theg pa chen po bsdus pa*) attributed to Asaṅga. This story describes the limited, inaccurate descriptions of an elephant by eighteen blind people who can only access some partial feature (a tail, a foot, etc.) by means of their other senses. The analogy points to the classical Buddhist characterization of unenlightened experience, which is defined as necessarily ‘blinded’ by karma and delusions.

871 Blo bzang rta mgrin (1975-76j), 44.

872 *Mu stegs gzhan gyi gzhung lugs pa*.

Mongolia ethnic, political, and religious past, which constitutes the remaining four-hundred plus folios of this last great statement of Mongolian Buddhist historiography.

On the basis of this initial critique of European empiricism, the entire *Golden Book* can be understood as a polemic for a particular mode of organizing knowledge production, and for its base (the monastic college) more broadly. If we remember the actual threats posed to his Buddhist institutionalism over the years that it took to complete, we can appreciate how Zawa Damdin could not accept injunctions like those put forward by the Seventh Panchen Lama almost a century earlier (to simply adopt an hermeneutic syncretism in relation to European empiricism and its astrological assertions). This was not the Qing cosmopolitan environment of Sumpa Khenpo Yéshé Peljor, but rather an antagonistic period that increasingly set monastic knowledge production off from a newly coveted scientism associated with Europe.

5 Defending the Place and Practice of Scholasticism in the Revolutionary-era: Zawa Damdin's Letters to Agvan Dorjiev and Ts. Jamsrano

However, the ability of the Géluk hermeneutic to defend against rising tides of secularism, science, and revolutionary violence was also questioned amongst Géluk scholastics during the imperial-socialist transition. We will recall that many prominent Buddhist incarnate lamas, monastic scholars and lay Buddhist intellectuals (such as the Buryat Intelligentsia) led modernist reforms not only of government structure, but also of Buddhist monasticism, a central site of contention until the violence of the socialist purges in the late 1930s. Zawa Damdin was, as I have already mentioned, deeply engaged with such reformist figures, even if he himself was cautious of the disruption their projects would cause for the Buddhist dispensation, and for some semblance of religio-political authority in the post-imperium. I conclude this chapter with a brief summary of two letter correspondences between him and two prominent members of the Buryat

Intelligentsia: Ts. Jamsrano and Agvan Dorjiev. The former, we will recall was the editor of the controversial *New Mirror* newspaper that provided so much contrarian European “scripture” which Zawa Damdin treated in his historiography. The latter, an intermediary between the Qing empire, the Dalai Lama XIII and the court of the Tsar, was a prominent advocate for protecting Buryat-Mongol Buddhism before and after the Russian Revolution. Both were casualties of the purges of the 1930s, yet in the early heady days of the revolutionary period, both contacted Zawa Damdin for advice of how best to reform the Géluk scholastic program in the post-imperium. Zawa Damdin’s answers provide perhaps the clearest insight into his conservative stance in the revolutionary period, his distrust of opening monastic education to non-monastics, and the superiority of the Géluk hermeneutic that he staunchly defended against the incursions of secularism and modernist reform.

In the available Tibetan-language version of Zawa Damdin’s letter exchange with Jamsrano, the former respectfully requests names of texts to translate into Mongolia as the basis for a newly conceived of monastic college.⁸⁷³ The aim of this college, Jamsrano writes, is to provide facilities to keep Mongolians from leaving to study in foreign universities, and to provide a reformed monastic curriculum that would have lay and monastic pupils studying the Buddhist canon side by side. This was a project already started in Buryatia, Jamsrano writes, and one he hoped could continue in Ikh Khüree with the help of Zawa Damdin and his students, especially in relation to logic texts that were our author’s specialization. Zawa Damdin’s cold response, quoted in part here, is telling of just what was at stake for our author in challenging the social boundaries and interpretative techniques that delimited his Géluk scholastic tradition:

If you look at the system of India, the source of knowledge that possessed the law of both religion and politics, (you will see that only) the first four of the five major sciences

⁸⁷³ bLo bzang rta mgrin, “mKhyen Ldan Lo tsA Ba Tshe Dbang Gi Gros Lan Spos Shel Phreng Ba.”

are shared with the laity. Because of that, it is an [ordained] paṇḍita who knows all five major sciences, and one who is not a monk just studies general knowledge (ie. the first four sciences). [Alternatively], if after someone becomes a monk, with great effort they study those four sciences (alone), they contradict both the law of religion and politics! That is the reason why in the past the very wise Dharma practitioners, kings, and ministers of Indian, Tibetan and Mongol lands did not start a system of having general (ie. non-monastic) schools which taught logical texts, nor (did they have a system) where novice and fully ordained monks would join (such a school).

If monk and lay students mix, it is like mixing milk and water; there will be no shame or modesty amongst any of them. They will look down upon, condemn, disparage, scorn, and slander (each other), and so forth. They will perform many actions that will harm both religion and politics. (It is said that) political leaders controlling the Dharma and Dharma leaders controlling politics are both great signs of the unfortunate. This is clearly mentioned in the *History of Buddhism in China*.

Buddhist and non-Buddhist monks never studied in the general schools of the laity in India. (Even) when the Buddha (himself) studied reading and writing [ie. was learning general knowledge as a young man], he did not (yet) turn the Wheel of Dharma- we have to consider the reasons for this. (These are), especially, because in order to practice the Threefold Training of the great Buddha's system step by step, we have to gradually study the Three Baskets of the Buddhist canon (which explain them). In this case, first you have to receive the monastic vow and then you can study (the canonical works on monastic discipline). The Buddha never gave lay people permission to join the class on the holy vinaya [monastic discipline], even if they were great beings. As for Barbarians and non-Buddhists, there is no question (that they cannot rightly join this class, as you propose)!

Nowadays, even though people say that they have already studied and engaged in meditation, it is commonly the case that they have only the outward appearance of practicing virtue. To take money in exchange for giving teachings to other people is not the Buddhist system. Even though a great translator and lay practitioner might know four languages, because he has a lower form (than an ordained monastic), he cannot look at the texts on monastic discipline. You can see that this is true by looking at the biographies of the previous great beings.

Even when the Buddha's gave teachings, although the four types of disciples⁸⁷⁴ would gather, that was simply in order to study temporarily. That was not the same as a permanent school. We have to clearly understand this differentiation!

(Furthermore), although lay people might stay in your monastery (ie. the school you propose to build), that is because the administrator has not analyzed (properly). If you look at any monastery's constitution,⁸⁷⁵ (the fact is that) if someone is not a monk, there

874 Ie. monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen.

875 T. *bca' yig*.

is simply no way for them to join the monastery. This is clearly shown. Also, if when students study the biography of Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachers, if their karmic potentialities happen to awaken, then they are powerless to not become Buddhist. If they do not have such karmic potentialities, even if we teach them the extensive and deep teaching, like giving milk to a snake, it is possible to destroy the life of enlightenment of both oneself and others.

That is why in this situation (which you propose), both scholars and the stupid must be careful!⁸⁷⁶

Read alongside his critique against the paucity of scientific empiricism that opens the *Golden Book*, Zawa Damdin's cold response to Jamsrano is telling of the boundaries he hoped to maintain around the Géluk monastic college (*chos grwa*), the larger context of the Two Systems which were its support, and the clear differentiation between lay and monastic segments of society.

Such concerns were not unique to Zawa Damdin, but are found even in figures such as Agvan Dorjiev, a Buryat reformer and prominent Géluk scholastic who struggled in difficult times to reform Inner Asian Buddhist institutionalism in the post-imperium. This is evident in a fascinating, undated letter exchange between him and our Zawa Damdin, where the former attacks some of the historiographic claims made by the latter in the *Dharma Conch*.⁸⁷⁷ The version I have available is in Tibetan and is included as two separate texts in Zawa Damdin's *Collected Works*.⁸⁷⁸ Much of their exchange concerns particular historical arguments Zawa Damdin made in the *Dharma Conch* that Agvan Dorjiev finds dubious (such as the Mongol and Khotanese providence of *li yul*). However, because of space here I will mention only one

876 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "mKhyen Ldan Lo tsA Ba Tshe Dbang Gi Gros Lan Spos Shel Phreng Ba," 654.

877 This letter must have come sometime around the arrival of the Dalai Lama XIII to Ikh Khüree in 1904-05, who was in the company of Agvan Dorjiev and who, Khurelbaatar's scholarship tells us, had already sent this letter prior to their arrival (Khurelbaatar and Luvsantseren, *Ogtorguin tsagaan gardi*, II:237.).

878 bLo bzang rta mgrin, "mTshan Zhabs Mkhan Chen Gyi Dogs Lan Tshangs Pa'i Drang Thig," in *gSung 'Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 2, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 561-72; bLo bzang rta mgrin, "mTshan Zhabs Mkhan Chen Gyis Chos 'Byung Las Brtsams Te Bka' 'Dri Gnang Ba'i Chab Shog," in *gSung 'Bum/ bLo Bzang Rta Mgrin*, vol. 2, 17 vols. (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1975), 551-54.

question and answer related again to the threat to the Buddhist dispensation in Inner Asia posed by newly competing sites and modes of knowledge production; this was one that, again, pivoted on modes of interpretation more than doctrinal pluralism.

Here, Agvan Dorjiev identifies a “mere” acceptance of knowledge gleaned from direct cognition (empiricism) on the part of non-Buddhist “barbarians” as an imminent threat to Buddhism:

Especially nowadays in this region,⁸⁷⁹ there are many of people who do not accept the existence of previous or future lives since they accept only direct cognition and not inferential cognition.⁸⁸⁰ If we can clarify the wrong view of those people, then it is possible that they would become Buddhist. You [Zawa Damdin] possess one thousand (wisdom) eyes, so who else other than you could wield the sharp logical reasons which would completely destroy this type of wrong view! Please deliberate upon this important topic and provide an answer.⁸⁸¹

Zawa Damdin chooses to humbly decline answering Dorjiev’s questions directly,⁸⁸² and so we are left with the contents of the *Golden Book* to glean more of his position in relation to the threat of non-Géluk interpretative operations (even when the scholarly products of those operations were often so smoothly synthesized with his other historical arguments!). Having finished giving his survey of Mongolia’s monastic colleges in the later sections of the *Golden*

879 *Lhag par deng sang ‘di phyogs su*. It is unclear just what “region” or “place” (*phyogs*) Dorjiev means? Since their topic of discussion in the letters concern Zawa Damdin’s historiographic claims regarding what we might gloss here for simplicity’s sake as a broadly “Mongol cultural region” (Tib. *hor yul*; *sog yul*), we might presume that Advan Dorjiev is referring to the newly autonomous Mongolian state and his own Buryat homeland.

880 Given Agvan Dorjiev’s extensive diplomatic travels, and his engagement with a great diversity of people holding such “wrong views” along the way (Orthodox Christians, European scientists, Russian Orientalists, and of course, Russian and Mongolian socialists), exactly whose conversion to Buddhism he is hoping for here is hard to gauge. On those travels, see: Snelling, *Buddhism in Russia : The Story of Agvan Dorzhiev, Lhasa’s Emissary to the Tzar*; Ibid.; Dugarava-Montgomery, “The Buriat Alphabet of Agvan Dorzhiev”; Rupen, “The Buriat Intelligentsia”; A. I. Andreev, *Soviet Russia and Tibet : The Debacle of Secret Diplomacy, 1918-1930s* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003).

881 Blo bzang rta mgrin (1975-76d), 554.

882 See Blo bzang rta mgrin (1975-76e), 571-2.

Book, Zawa Damdin pauses to mock the paucity and degeneracy of an explicitly “European” scientific empiricism:

Today, barbarian non-Buddhists write about the types of insects and how many fish are in the four different types of ocean in this world, and so forth. They write about such meaningless and mistaken topics and conceitedly claim they are writing Buddhist commentary (*śāstra*).

Even if we are just pretending to debate or compose (texts), whatever we do, we have to focus on the benefit to sentient beings by means of liberation. The Lord of Logic [Dharmakīrti] said in the *Commentary on Valid Cognition*.⁸⁸³

They don’t know, but teach others.
People with illusions listen carefully to whatever is said.
(In order to remove such illusions),
You must find some scholar or Knowledgeable One.

That is why in whatever they (non-Buddhist scholars) say, we must investigate whether this is the cause of enlightenment or not. Whether they know the count of insects or not, this is useless (information) for me. I believe “valid people”⁸⁸⁴ are people who know which things to accept and which things to not accept, and what is the cause of enlightenment.⁸⁸⁵

It is telling that, in this fascinating and candid attack on competing modalities for producing knowledge about the world, Zawa Damdin evokes the authority of none other than Dharmakīrti himself. The *Commentary on Valid Cognition* was, and remains, the very bedrock of Géluk scholastic education, providing as it does the contours and modes of logical analysis used by such scholastics to definitively clarify the definitive and interpretative meaning of the Buddhist doctrine. Indeed, it was precisely in its conceptual framework (ie. sensory knowledge alone) that

883 S. *Pramāṇavārttika*; T. *Tshad ma rnam ‘grel*.

884 sKyes ba tshad ma.

885 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 428–429.

competing modes of scientific knowledge production in the post-imperium was situated.⁸⁸⁶ In this chapter, I have attempted to show that for scholastics such as Zawa Damdin—who spent their entire careers practicing such logical procedures—the application of the Géluk hermeneutic was not limited to matters we would see as philosophical. Indeed, in Zawa Damdin’s histories and those of his Qing era interpretative community, such logical procedures were not only used in the construction of “authoritative” historical arguments, and in mediating varieties of contrarian “scriptural sources” (which, as I have shown in the case of Zawa Damdin, also included European scholarship). It seems in fact that carefully maintaining the continuity of such analytical traditions, as the basis for Géluk soteriology and as the ultimate beneficiary of the presence of the Two Systems in society, was the very purpose of the historiographic enterprise. In the words of the colophon to the *Golden Book*, which we cannot but read in a tragic trope given the purges that were soon to follow:

By the white virtuous action that has come from all that [ie. the composition of the *Golden Book*], may self and other in all our lives be born in a precious human life that is the support for the four vehicles of the Mahāyāna. Then, just like the biographies of the previous kings, minister, paṇḍitas, and translators, and with great perseverance, may I spread and protect the Buddhadharma in all different places and times!⁸⁸⁷

6 Conclusion

All this seems to point to a strategy of re-contextualization on the part of Buddhist scholastics managing the reformist and modernist movements of the post-imperium. These strategies were aimed at making the intrusion of threatening socio-political forces commensurate and then render them controllable using the synthetic logic and narrative precedent of the Qing-era Géluk scholastic system. This represents the final construction of the “place” of the

886 The four chapters of the *Pramāṇavārttika* are divided between: 1) Inference (*rang don rjes su dpag pa*); 2) Valid Cognition (*tshad ma grub pa*); 3) Direct Perception (*mngon sum*); and 4) Logic (*gzhan gyi don*).

887 bLo bzang rta mgrin, “Byang Phyogs Chen Po Hor Gyi Rgyal Khams Kyi Rtogs Brjod Kyi Bstan Bcos Chen Po Ngo Mtshar Gser Gyi Deb Ther,” 1975, 478.

revolutionary era in the *Golden Book*; one permeated by wrong views and limited modes of producing valid knowledge, made possible in the wake of the nineteenth-century decline of enlightened authority, which all severely threatened the physical, legal, and soteriological possibilities available to the ever expanding imagined community of Mongolian people.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

Read alongside better-studied official state histories produced during, or about, the Two Revolutions in Mongolia, the fatalist reception of socio-political upheaval in Zawa Damdin's histories does not only offer a contrarian literary construction of the post-imperium. Instead, temporality comes to circumscribe various models of real and empty agency and enduring ideologies of religio-political authority; these, in turn, both extend and complicate constructions of the Two Systems from the Qing-era works of Zawa Damdin's interpretative community. Still, we are left wondering if those who adopted and relayed progressive temporal schemes, such as nationalists and socialists, were in a better position to secure their political position over monastic leaders such as Zawa Damdin who denied agency in the face of a dystopia? More simply put, did diverse conceptions of temporality better equip some actors and their institutions to conceptualize periods of sharp political transition than others? Was there even a basis for political theories of change, much less of revolution (even if just a discourse) in the monastic college portfolio? What means did different sectors in society have to shape time, and how do these map onto bloody developments between 1911-1940 in Mongolia, and elsewhere in the monastic participation in Inner Asian socialist and modernist movements?

Answers to these questions arise from considering Zawa Damdin's works, but cannot be answered on their basis alone. That will depend on a more comprehensive and comparative study of the Mongolian Buddhist archive of the imperial-socialist transition. Still, I believe that the time of revolution in Zawa Damdin's monastic writings serve as an important counter balance to the current scholarly preoccupation with circumscribing genealogies of normative, state centric discourses of ethno-nationalist identity after the collapse of the Qing. Such attention to temporal diversity challenges us to account for the contested social imaginaries in

revolutionary Mongolia by inquiring “into those conditions of discursive formation that require and produce the kind of subjects who may speak in its name.”⁸⁸⁸ It also offers the possibility of bringing the study of Buddhist life in revolutionary Inner Asia into better conversation with the fractured social representation of time in the “age of revolution” (1750-1850) in Europe, whose memory Asian revolutionaries so often evoked (even if only to differentiate their own radical projects).⁸⁸⁹

1 Summary

In this study of Zawa Damdin’s post-imperial Buddhist historiography, I have endeavored to explore the narrative contents of his works and the practices by which they were produced. This has provided, I hope, some insight into the negotiation of imperial collapse and revolutionary development amongst the Mongolian Buddhist intelligentsia outside of party cadres, who were at this time becoming enemies of the people’s state. In particular, I have sought to highlight how Zawa Damdin wedded the streams of real and empty time, place, and subjecthood that he (and his larger interpretative community) saw as having washed ashore onto an ever-changing “Mongol” shore in three waves. By gathering intrusions of the authorial voice—laments, tangents, reflective interludes, and the like—I also tried to provide a summary of the terms, causes, and consequences of the degeneration Zawa Damdin saw in his post-imperial environs. I showed that the social time of these works (though, most centrally, that of the *Golden Book*) operated on a strict division between the total decline of enlightened presence and authority (embodied as the Two Systems) in the mid-nineteenth century leading up to the Qing collapse, and the utopia of its former manifestation in Mongol space. I also tried to show

888 Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), 115–116.

889 Reinhart. Koselleck, “Futures Past on the Semantics of Historical Time,” 2004.

how this story was told as a mosaic of chronotopes—of literary constructions of time-space relations—that wove real Mongols and related Asian peoples into the empty time and place of buddhas and bodhisattvas, and vice versa.

2 Future Areas of Investigation

If nothing else, I hope that this study brings Zawa Damdin's life and scholarship to a wider audience, and perhaps also suggests the promise of a more holistic analytical perspective to operations of knowledge production amongst Buddhist monastics through the imperial-socialist transition. It is notable that the modes of engaging new secular categories of national self-representation and governance (which are Asad's way of situating science, religion, and ethnicity) are couched in these monastic sources in decidedly territorial and generative terms.⁸⁹⁰ As is widely recognized, the Mongolian revolution was organized around the mediation of European political and scholarly discourses. Part of this were new concepts of a Mongol nation, citizenship, and an expansive Mongol ethnicity, but beyond these were new spatial master categories such as "Asia" and "Europe" that began to index science, progress, development, rationalism, equity, and their opposites. Buddhism, as I hope I have shown, was implicit in that process, and was aligned in various structures of authority and permission, as either part of, or alterior to, a post-imperial modernity.

This all suggests to me that in our comparative exploration of secularism, religion, and science in the works of Inner Asian Buddhists, we ought to be attentive to three themes: 1) That the threats and possibilities of new ways of knowing the world (and the new worlds thus known) found their currency in profoundly territorialized terms; 2) That the history of 'science' and

890 Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003).

‘religion’ in Inner Asian Buddhism is not simply one of ideas in transit, but more fundamentally of so many ‘strategic synchronicities’ between available technologies for producing knowledge about the world, disciplining the self, and organizing political authority; and 3) That we might expand Talal Asad’s differentiation between the “secular” as epistemology and “secularism” as political discourse to include “techniques” and “territories” of science and other, related forms of knowledge production.

Beyond offering us more clarity in assessing the form and content of Buddhist life during Inner Asia’s rapturous transition to state socialism, such themes bear more widely upon the study of modern Buddhisms and the cultural history of Buddhology more widely. The realities of uneven racial, class, and gendered access to Buddhist discourse and practice requires that we look less to *meaning making* and more to fluid structures of authority and authorizing processes. To return to the revived Gobi monastic community of the current Zawa Rinpoche as an example, there is no longer any “outside” of transnationalism in modern Buddhist formation. While occupying a small stretch of desolate Gobi desert, the ruins of Zawa Damdin’s monastic home has been rebuilt with funding from around the world, supported by exiled Tibetan lamas, and has attracted devotees from across Eastern Asia and Europe. Buddhism and the nation, in whatever trans-regional relationship, are today inseparable and are imagined to have always been so. Despite its current hegemonic form, we have comparatively little historical knowledge about just *how* religion as a category, and nationalism as an ideology, were mediated into Buddhist Asia. For that reason, attention to monastic sources such as Zawa Damdin’s historiography help us track the mediating practices whereby Mongols (or Tibetans and Chinese) began to think “Buddhism” and “the nation.”

Setting the broad “transnational turn” of the Buddhist dispensation into its various contexts of production represents an important new chapter in the field. More broadly, it will

help produce critical cultural histories of religious studies more broadly. This is because much of our scholarship on global Buddhisms continues the venerable and regrettable tradition of Buddhist Studies that, to evoke Donald Lopez's words already cited in the introduction to this study, represents, "Buddhism [...] as a self-identical dharma that has moved from one Asian culture to another, unchanged through the vicissitudes of time."⁸⁹¹ To redress the mirage of a self-identical Buddhist dharma moving across cultures, and now across nations, we might productively turn to the critiques of historians of early modern forms of knowledge in South Asia. Sheldon Pollock and others have been fiercely critical of post-colonial scholars and social theorists of modernity for the dearth of their knowledge about pre-modernity and the pre-colonial.⁸⁹² In that same vein, we cannot just theorize what Thomas Tweed likes to call the "crossing and dwelling" of transnational Buddhism,⁸⁹³ without understanding the mediating practices and forms of knowledge that existed before and during its production. In the case of Inner Asian Buddhist traditions, this began precisely when Zawa Damdin was looking, perhaps desperately, for any legacy of the Two Systems in his dystopian revolutionary environs.

Who were the agents that translated political ideologies of nationalism and related concepts of religion into modernizing Buddhist Asia? What were the mediating practices they adopted? What were the topographies of exchange and the contours of the social imagination these engendered? It is here, in the contact zones of political, academic and Buddhist discourse and practice that a properly critical history of transnational Buddhism ought to begin. In this we might do well to attend to Peter van der Veer's call for attention to the "alternative

891 Lopez, *Curators of the Buddha : The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, 8.

892 Pollock, *Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia : Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500-1800*.

893 Thomas A. Tweed, "Theory and Method in the Study of Buddhism: Toward 'Translocative' Analysis," *Journal of Global Buddhism* 12 (2011): 17–32.

cosmopolitanisms” that emerged in urban centers in Asia.⁸⁹⁴ He rightly suggests that we ought to be attentive to the patterns of inclusion and exclusion that mark transitions to a national public sphere, and be sensitive to the cultural engagements that direct such transitions. “In these urban arenas,” he writes, “new sources of the self, in religious, gender, and political terms, develop.”⁸⁹⁵ As “national” and “Mongolian” Buddhist subjects were being formed in Ikh Khüree, we must be careful to set these innovations into conversation with Buddhist leaders who found the project to make everyday Mongolians visible deeply problematic. We must also remember to try and discern “what is unthinkable at a given time,” as Bourdieu would have it; in tracking the global transit of the “problematics, concepts, methods and techniques” that made Buddhists begin thinking the “nation” and “national Buddhism.”⁸⁹⁶

Zawa Damdin, as I have attempted to show throughout this dissertation, was one such Buddhist leader whose ambiguous role in the mediation of European political ideologies, scholarly practices, and especially Buddhist Modernism are particularly relevant here. Despite his progressive intellectual associations, until the purges of 1937, Zawa Damdin held to the Qing-era vision of Mongolians as imperial subjects and virtuous Buddhists well outside of the new nationalist paradigm. In other words, he suffered from imperial nostalgia and was particularly critical of the new visibility of the Mongolian masses. His monastic histories remind us that nationalized urban spaces in Asia could simultaneously mediate dissident subject-formations outside of official representations and state rhetoric.

894 Peter van der Veer, “Transnational Religion” (presented at the Transnational Migration: Comparative Perspectives, Princeton University, 2001).

895 Ibid, 14.

896 Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 5.

A critical study of transnational Buddhism requires that we historicize the specific modes by which national and religious imagination have been materialized and experienced as “real” in Asia and its diasporas. Such an historical perspective allows us to see the sheer diversity of Buddhist discourse during nationalist processes and exposes the actual practices and social sites by which Buddhist actors invented their traditions and communities in the post-imperial period. In Asia’s heartland new urban centers, new routes of social mobility, and new canons of thought all, in particular constellations of power, formed modern Mongolian subjects by making “national” and “Buddhist” imagination “real”. They did so using specific modalities of knowledge production specific to their monastic sites, though in ways that were in broad conversations with new intellectual and political trends.

What is particularly promising from such attention is that it exposes the global transit and determining effects of our own scholarship on newly globalized forms of Buddhism. As we have seen in the case of revolutionary Mongolia, it was not only the nation state that helped assign a particular location for “modern” forms of Buddhism; in the hands of progressive monastics and the Buryat Intelligentsia, it was also the scholarly categories of a nascent religious studies, and of the humanities more generally, that in the heady days of revolution provided the contours of a puritan Buddhism palpable to the nationalist imagination. For this reason, setting the universal form of transnational Buddhism into history requires us to not simply focus on the importation of Orientalist forms of knowledge about Asia emanating from Europe. We must also acknowledge forms of Occidentalism constructed by Buddhist intellectuals as a result. The “Europe” of the Asian imagination also connected their religious identities to new forms of national and transnational community, as we have seen so regularly in the cautious, and sometimes aggressive, Occidentalist critiques of Zawa Damdin.

If the strength of the study of transnational religion is that it adopts currents from post-structuralism, post-colonialism and the feminist study of religion to focus less on meaning making and more on structures of authority and authorizing processes, then we must not fail to find ourselves in our sources. We must first listen to the insights of scholars of subaltern studies who have shown that the operating procedure of humanistic disciplines has traditionally been to “make others the same”—to translate other lives and other times into rubrics of religion and world history, for example.⁸⁹⁷ Then, looking at early mediations of the ideology of nationalism and the concept of national Buddhism in places like revolutionary Mongolia, we must also acknowledge an important inversion of this process.

In their understudied histories, letters, edicts, and ritual responses, we see how Buddhist literati made European political ideology and the scholarly object of Buddhist Studies their own. The Occidentalism that we find in monastic archives not only sets scholarship in religious studies into its own global flows and sites of appropriation. As some scholars have begun to note, a critical cultural history of Buddhist Studies itself both complements and complicates a general history of Orientalism.⁸⁹⁸ The Buddhist history constructed in Buddhist Studies was almost always *foreign* to actual Asian Buddhists on the eve of national formation and global diaspora. For that reason, we need to understand how its terms were first made native, and then hegemonic, over the course of the globalized twentieth and twenty first century. All this requires that we attempt to produce social histories of the operations of knowledge production at various Buddhist sites, and not simply endeavor to order and correct the resulting narratives.

897 Robert Young, *White Mythologies : Writing History and the West* (London; New York: Routledge, 1990).

898 Lopez, *Curators of the Buddha : The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*; Donald S. Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La : Tibetan Buddhism and the West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Philip C. Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

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