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JAMES HEVIA

Lamas, Emperors, and Rituals: Political Implications in Qing Imperial Ceremonies

... meaning is always, to some extent, arbitrary and diffuse ... social life everywhere rests on the imperfect ability to reduce ambiguity and concentrate power.

... there is no basis to assume that the histories of the repressed, in themselves, hold a key to revelation ... the discourses of the dominant also yield vital insights into the contexts and processes of which they were part.

Comaroff and Comaroff 1990, 11, 17.

In the "Lama Temple" of Peking, the Yonghe Palace, are two stone inscriptions attributed to the Qianlong emperor, Hongli, each of which is carved in Chinese, Manchu, Mongol, and Tibetan on the four sides of large stone blocks. Their subject is Buddhism, but the difference and discursive distance between them signify two poles of a contradiction that animates much of the history of relations between Tibetan and Mongol lamas and Qing emperors.¹ My purpose here is to consider this contradiction as an historical artifact of extreme ambivalence, a vacillation which, in the case of the Qianlong emperor, highlighted the complexities of maintaining Manchu hegemony over much of Inner Asia.

The first of these inscriptions was written in 1744. It dedicates the

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1. For translations of each of the inscriptions see Lessing 1942, 9-12 and 58-62. It should be noted that his translations appear to be composites of the four versions. Lessing does not reproduce original language versions of these inscriptions, only a difficult to decipher photograph of the *Lamashuo*. However, photographs of each of the inscriptions in their multiple versions can be found in Franke and Laufer 1914.

Yonghe Palace as a Buddhist temple to Hongli's father, the Yongzheng emperor. In it the emperor speaks as a "filial son, the pious friend of priests, a Chinese Aśoka Dharmarāja" (Lessing 1942, 61-62), indicating that his father has realized nirvāṇa and achieved the highest form of enlightenment (Farquhar 1978, 32). From this inscription and other sources it is easy to develop an image of Qing emperors as "perfect Buddhist monarchs, grand patrons of the True Law, and bodhisattvas" (Farquhar 1978, 22).

The second inscription is entitled *Lamashuo* (Pronouncements on Lamas).² Once characterized by Lessing as the composition of a disappointed old man "full of acrimony and acerbity" (1942, 62), the text was written by the Qianlong emperor in the wake of the second campaign to expel the Gurkhas from Tibet (1792). It conveys quite another message. Speaking in a voice of authority,³ the emperor presented his own version of the historical relations between the Yuan, Ming, and Qing royal houses and Tibetan and Mongol religious hierarchs, one that served to justify his decision to impose a new selection process for "incarnated" lamas such as the Dalai Lama and the Mongol Rje btsun dam pa Khutukhtu.

Those who have drawn attention to these stelae have tended to interpret them in one of two ways. The first is to see them as indicating the manipulative aspects of Qing treatment of the religious beliefs of others.

2. I have consulted two printed versions of the *Lamashuo*, one in the *Weizang tongzhi* (Gazetteer of Tibet, hereafter cited as WZTZ), 1, 23-26, one found in the *Shiwen shichuan ji* (Poems and Prose on the Ten Great Campaigns of the Qianlong Era), 1962, 674-676, as well as Lessing's translation of the text from the stele. While there are clear variations between these versions, my use of the inscription focuses on their commonalities.

The possibility of different content appearing in the four languages in which inscriptions like the *Lamashuo* are rendered has recently been discussed by Elliot 1992 with respect to a variation noted by Lessing in the Manchu version (1942, 61). According to Elliot, in the Manchu text the emperor defended himself against criticism by some Chinese officials over his dabbling with Tibetan Buddhism. Hongli added that if he had not studied Buddhism, there would not now be peace in Inner Asia (1992, 26-27).

3. While Lessing's characterization of the tone of voice to be found in this text is interesting, I would suggest that it is also consistent with the imperial voice in texts discussed by Crossley 1990, and Zito 1987. Crossley finds clear affinities to the *kaozheng* tradition that animated many of the other text projects of the Qianlong era. Zito adds that in the case of the Hongli inscription she deals with, the emperor positions himself, much as he does in the *Lamashuo*, as the singular authority on the subject at hand. On *kaozheng* see Elman 1984 and Guy 1987.

The second is to argue that in fact early Qing emperors were true believers in Tibetan Buddhism, but because of political exigencies in China, had to hide their religious convictions.⁴ While either of these interpretations has certain explanatory power for understanding the degree to which emperors were involved with Tibetan Buddhism, they each tend to obscure a central contingency of Inner Asian politics. In order to have any influence in the region, Manchu emperors had to address Tibetan Buddhism whether they believed in it or not. Perhaps more importantly, they had to do so in an idiom that was already well established throughout the region. Their successes at incorporating Inner Asia into their multi-ethnic empire were just as much a result of mastering this idiom, of "reducing ambiguity" and concentrating power in the form of discursive authority, as it was of their military might and administrative acumen.⁵

One possible way of explaining the forces at work in Tibetan-Mongol-Manchu relations is to draw on the tribute system model of "traditional Chinese foreign relations" (Fairbank 1942, 1948; Fairbank and Teng 1941). The limitations of this approach have, however, become increasingly clear. For example, in his now classic formulation of the tribute system, Fairbank had argued that its "secret" lay in the fact that it had become a "vehicle for trade" (1948, 132). Yet in the situations that will be discussed here, trade does not seem to be a factor. Moreover, Fairbank's later modifications to the content and purpose of the system (1968) offers very little guidance for or explanations of relations between Qing emperors and Tibetan and Mongol Buddhist hierarchs. This is especially the case when we recognize that the Qing emperors were not Chinese rulers, that their empire included more than China, and that these same emperors appear to have been actively engaged in Tibetan initiation rituals and in the cult of the emperor as bodhisattva.⁶

4. Lessing and Farquhar tend to come down on the side of the first argument. See Chia 1992, 207-208 for a review of this position and additional sources. Grupper 1980 and 1984 and Sperling 1983 see the emperors they discuss as believers in Buddhism. One might add parenthetically that while it has long been a creed among historians that superior Chinese civilization sinicized the Manchus, few have asked whether the Manchus were true believers or cynical manipulators of Confucianism.

5. On the military and administrative consolidation of Qing control in Inner Asia see especially Fletcher 1978a-b as well as other sources on the region cited in this section.

6. Scholars who have recently sought to retain some usefulness for the trib-

Another way of proceeding might be to see these relationships as ones in which the various parties attempted to encompass and include others in their own cosmologies through joint participation in rituals of inclusion and transformation. So, for example, Qing emperors frequently attempted, through audience rituals, to establish with lamas relations of the kind that obtained between a supreme lord (*huangdi*) and a lesser lord (*fanwang*),⁷ and thereby negate any claims by lamas to superiority. But even this gesture was not without ambiguity. At the same moment they attempted to include lamas in their emperorship *as if* the latter were worldly lords, emperors also sometimes distinguished them from the category of *fanwang* (see below on the Khalkha submission to the Qing).

For their part, Tibetan lamas and Mongol hierarchs sought at various times to assert a long-standing Buddhist view which placed the lama as the intellectual/spiritual superior of a lord of the "mere" earth. In this relationship, usually referred to as that of lama and patron (T. *mchod*

ute system model have at the same time questioned its applicability to specific historical circumstances; see, for example, Rossabi 1983 and Wills 1984, 1993, 102. Interpretations that do not exclusively rely on the tribute system, but rather point to supposedly long-standing policies from one dynasty to another, such as the principles of divide and rule, using barbarians to manage barbarians, etc. would also have difficulty accounting for imperial interest in Tibetan Buddhism and bodhisattvahood. See, for example, Yang 1968, 20-33. On Inner Asia see sources cited in Grupper 1984. Farquhar 1978, Jagchid 1974, and Rahul 1968-1969 tend to problematize the tribute system hypothesis. Few, however, have been willing to abandon it completely. For other critical engagements with the tribute system model see Hevia 1989; Hevia, forthcoming; and Farquhar and Hevia 1993.

On the problems the Manchus as well as other conquest dynasties pose for transhistorical categories such as the tribute system it is perhaps worth recalling that Lattimore (1962, 77) long ago drew attention to the propensity of Euro-Americans to speak of the Chinese empire, when in fact under such dynasties, China formed only a part of these empires. Much of the argument for maintaining China-centered terminology pivots on the notion of sinicization. Crossley 1990 has raised serious questions about the sinicization of the Manchus.

7. See Hevia 1989 on supreme-lesser lord relations and their link to the relationship between the cosmos and the emperor. In cosmological terms, the relations between supreme lord and lesser lord were caught up in the production of imperial virtue (*de*). The idea here seems to have been that as virtue extended outward into the world, it resonated with attributes common to all humans. In the lesser lords, it reoriented and attracted them toward the Imperial source of virtue, to, as many sources have it, "sincerely face toward transformation" (*shanghua zhi cheng*). For further elaboration see the section below on imperial audiences.

yon), the lama claimed to command superior spiritual powers. As such he could recognize a lord, including an emperor, as a cakravartin king, instruct him in Buddhism, initiate him into tantric mysteries, and receive offerings from him for sustenance of the sect. The patron, in turn, would be expected to accept a position as inferior, protect the lama, seek his teachings, and promote Buddhism in his (the patron's) domain.⁸ In either case—supreme-lesser lord or lama-patron—the relationship was hierarchical, with one party assuming the position of a superior, the other of an inferior.

The differences evident here between the relations of supreme-lesser lord and lama-patron draws attention to the multiple forms of power present in the Qing empire. It also suggests that imperial hegemony was itself a continuous undertaking; there was always that which resisted or deflected Qing management and control, always counterdiscourses emerging to either challenge or evade the projects of the Manchu imperium.⁹ In a sense, therefore, Qing emperorship was itself a continuing achievement, one that, among other things, involved the inclusion of the strength of other rulers and significant personages into the powers of the supreme lord.

In order to elucidate more clearly the stakes of these struggles for lamas and emperors, I will focus on accounts of encounters between them in various sites selected by the Qing court. Since the court hosted these meetings, they were organized around principles of Guest Ritual (*binli*) and imperial audiences (*chaojian*). Scholars have long acknowl-

8. Ishihama 1992, 507, notes that when granting titles the lama was the clear superior to an earthly lord. Much the same could be said of the other relations between lama and lord referred to here. Ruegg 1991 provides the most detailed study of Tibetan lama-patron relations. He also argues that it is misleading to see the relationship in terms of oppositions between secular/spiritual and profane/religious (450), but as historically variable. For example, the Dalai Lama might be conceived as a Ruler-Bodhisattva, and Dharma-kings or Cakravartin-Sovereigns as manifestations of bodhisattvas.

For a discussion of cakravartin rulership see Tambiah 1976, 39-53 and La Vallée Poussin 1988, 2, 484-487. *Cakra* or wheel refers to the king's chariot rolling in the four directions defining the kingdom. Depictions of the Qianlong emperor as the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī have him holding a wheel in his left hand. See Farquhar 1978, 7, Kahn 1971, 185, and Palace Museum 1983, 117.

9. Much of the work on popular culture in China directs attention to the diversity of beliefs and practices in the late empire. See Naquin 1985 and other articles in the same volume, Esherick 1987, and Kuhn 1990. For a discussion and analysis of the construction of orthodoxy in Qing China see Zito 1987.

edged that imperial ritual and ceremony occupied an important place in the establishment and continuation of Chinese dynasties. Just what the role of ritual might have been in the reproduction of monarchical order in imperial China is, however, far from evident, particularly in light of recent critiques of instrumental, representational, symbolic, and theatrical interpretations of ritual (cf. Bell 1992).¹⁰ Recent research and theoretical developments have also called into serious question methodologies which separate “beliefs” from “reality” and then attempt to resolve the resulting contradictions imputed to historical subjects in functional, symbolic, or expressive terms (see Skorupski 1976; Sperber 1975; Taussig 1987; and Thompson 1986). As a corrective to earlier treatments of Qing imperial ritual, I intend to treat ceremonial audiences as constitutive, rather than representative of, hierarchical political relations between the Manchu imperium and Tibetan or Mongol religious hierarchs.¹¹

Before proceeding to an exploration of the political work that ritual does, however, a few words are in order about the nature of this study. The methodology I adopt begins by reading across a disparate collection of historical materials about meetings between lamas and emperors, and about ritual practices. Rather than simply seeking facts about encounters and ceremonies, I am concerned with the disjunctions, contradictions, ambiguous presentations, claims, counter-claims, assertions, and refutations to be found in many of these materials. The differences and heterogeneity evident in these sources are, however, only one aspect of their interest. Equally significant are the many forms of signifying practice they embody: writings on paper, writings on stone, writings informed by and sometimes commanding history, writings inspired by the capacities attributed to incarnate beings, bodily practices in imperial audience, bodily practices in meetings between incarnate beings and others, and bodily practices in tantric initiation rituals. My purpose is

10. See for example the following, all of which treat audience ritual as functional, symbolic, or expressive, Fairbank 1942; Jochim 1980; Mancall 1968, 1971; Pritchard 1943; and Wills 1984.

11. These considerations of hierarchy and its connection to the ceremonial construction of relations of power are not novel. They draw on more general sociologies such as Dumont's classic study of hierarchy in India (1970), Bourdieu's studies of social practice and bodily disposition (1977), and later critical engagements with the work of each of these scholars (e. g., Inden 1990 and de Certeau 1984). These writings enable readings of rituals that are sensitive to and find real political significance in the movement, location, and concrete dispositions of time, space, and bodies in ritual practices.

not to present a comprehensive history of lama-emperor relations, nor is it to open new sources on these subjects. Drawing on a variety of previous work, I offer what I hope will be understood as a nuanced reading of things long known, things which to date have been separated by disciplinary boundaries and the division of labor symptomatic of area studies. I claim no particular expertise beyond my own research on Qing imperial ritual, only an ongoing fascination with power and its constitution in the practices considered here. If there is a virtue in this sort of work it lies in its eschewing of historiographic naturalism; it is itself a made object, one which draws attention to its own manufacture and to the inventiveness of the sources it considers.

Qing Emperors and Tibetan Buddhism

Qing emperors were involved in Tibetan Buddhism to a degree that is seldom acknowledged. This interest went beyond simply conceding the importance of Buddhism for the empire's subjects and included, for example, the construction of monasteries, the launching of military campaigns that during Qianlong's reign helped to extend the dominion of the Dge lugs pa sect (e. g., Martin 1990), and the participation of emperors in tantric initiation rites. The depth of this involvement may be accounted for by a variety of factors. As the Qianlong emperor pointed out in his *Pronouncements on Lamas*, Qing interest in Tibetan Buddhism had to do with the fact that important relations had previously existed between the Yuan and Ming dynasties and Tibetan lamas from Inner Asia. In the case of the Yuan, a lama-patron relationship was forged between Khubilai Khan and the lama 'Phags pa of the Sa skya pa sect. During the early Ming period the fifth Karma pa Lama visited the court of Ming Chengzu (the Yongle emperor) in 1407. In both cases emperors bestowed titles on the lamas and lamas bestowed tantric initiations on emperors. In the Ming case, Tibetan sources add that the lama recognized the emperor and empress as the incarnations of Mañjuśrī and Tārā.¹²

In addition to these historical affiliations between Tibetan Buddhism and the two dynasties that preceded the establishment of the Qing, the Manchu ruling house was perennially concerned with the possibility of

12. On Yuan relations see Franke 1978 and 1981, Rossabi 1988, and Richardson 1984, 34. On the Karma pa Lama's visit to Peking see Sperling 1983, especially 80-99 and Wylie 1980. On Tibetan incarnation see Wylie 1978. On Mañjuśrī see Lamotte 1960.

the re-emergence of a Mongol kingdom in Inner Asia that might challenge its own pre-eminence (Rossabi 1975 and Petech 1950).¹³ Such concerns existed before the formal inception of the dynasty in China and were fueled by more than simply the fact that some Mongol Khans refused to submit to Manchu overlordship. Among other things, only a few decades before Nurhaci began to consolidate the Manchus, Altan Khan and the third Dalai Lama had met in Mongolia and, invoking the relationship between 'Phags pa and Khubilai Khan, forged a lama-patron relationship (Bawden 1968, 29-30 and Rossabi 1975, 118). Matters were further complicated when in 1639 the Tüsiyetü Khan, Gombodorji, had his son, later entitled by the fifth Dalai Lama as the Rje btsun dam pa Khutukhtu, accepted by the Khalkha Mongols as an incarnate lama. According to Bawden (1968, 53-54), the Khan's purpose here may have been to provide a counter force to the power of the Tibetan Dge lugs pa sect, while at the same time hedging against a potential alliance between the Tibetans and the newly declared Qing dynasty of Hung Taiji (Abahai). For their part, the Manchu rulers seemed to have been intent on preventing either the Dge lugs pas or the Khalkha khutukhtu from providing a focal point for Mongol restorationists (Grupper 1984, 51-52).

With the founding of the Qing dynasty the triangular relationship between Manchus, Mongols, and Tibetans became more elaborate. The Dalai Lama and occasionally the Rje btsun dam pa Khutukhtu acted as if they themselves were rival lords. They invested, entitled, and provided seals for Mongol Khans, arbitrated disputes between Khans, and, like emperors and Khans, received and dispatched embassies, commanded populations, and in some cases even armies (Bawden 1968, 31, 34, 48-50, and 63-69; Ishihama 1992; Rossabi 1975, 112-114, 119; and Ruegg 1991, 450). In addition, each of these lamas was regarded as an incarnate bodhisattva, the Rje btsun dam pa Khutukhtu, Vajrapāṇi and the Dalai Lama, Avalokiteśvara, two bodhisattvas who, with Mañjuśrī, formed a triumvirate. These celestial bodhisattvas embodied the universal totality of the three aspects of the Buddha—power (Vajrapāṇi), compassion (Avalokiteśvara), and wisdom (Mañjuśrī). It is perhaps not so surprising, therefore, that a cult of the emperor as the bodhisattva

13. Here it is useful to follow Crossley's distinction (1990) between the dynastic house and the Manchu clans in general. This is particularly the case in the Qianlong era when Manchu-ness was literally constituted by order of the emperor. See Crossley 1987, which admittedly does not draw the same conclusion I have here.

Mañjuśrī would emerge under the early Qing emperors.

At the same time that Manchu emperors showed concern over the activities of lamas and khutukhtus, they also demonstrated a keen interest in Tibetan Buddhism. Beginning with Nurhaci, emperors promoted the cult of specific deities, such as Mahākāla, in Shenyang and later Peking. Hung Taiji built temples to Mahākāla and Kālacakra in Shenyang. The Kangxi emperor constructed Buddhist temples at Rehe, and his grandson the Qianlong emperor built reproductions of the Potala and the Panchen's residence at Tashilhunpo at the same site. Qing emperors also altered or embellished existing structures in Peking, of which the Yonghe Palace is only one example.¹⁴ In addition, the Qianlong emperor authorized monumental translation and text editing projects of the Buddhist canon.¹⁵ Qing emperors also joined with Tibetan and Mongol Buddhist hierarchs in the promotion of the cult of Mañjuśrī on Mount Wutai.¹⁶ It also seems significant that emperors were willing to accept names and titles such as the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and cakravartin king (Farquhar 1978) and receive consecrations from Tibetan Buddhist lamas (Grupper 1980 and 1984).

Emperors may also have been drawn to Tibetan Buddhism because lamas possessed extraordinary magical powers. At one end of the spec-

14. Franke 1981, 308 and Grupper 1980 and 1984 discuss the link between Mongol rulership and Mahākāla. On temple construction at Rehe see Qi 1985. Other examples of temple restoration and patronage include those to Mahākāla and Yamāntaka which bracket the imperial palaces in Peking, see Arlington and Lewisohn 1935, 82, 127-128. The Kangxi emperor also reconstructed temples on Mount Wutai, see Gimello 1992, 134. The promotion of Buddhism at the center of Qing power in China may account for the curious claim made by Buddhist monks to Lessing in the 1930s. They told him that the Supreme Harmony hall (*Taihe dian*), the first of the audience halls in the "Forbidden City," was a maṇḍala for Yamāntaka (1976, 89-90).

15. Other examples of Manchu involvement in Tibetan Buddhism from Nurhaci to Hongli abound. According to Grupper (1984, 57, 73), the Kangxi emperor acknowledged the close tie between the Qing royal house and Tibetan Buddhism when he enfeoffed the first Lcang skyā Khutukhtu. The site of the fief was appropriately enough Dolonnor; the enfeoffing document asserted a relationship between Khalkha submission and the patronage of Tibetan Buddhism by Nurhaci and Hung Taiji. Also see Jagchid 1974, 44. The Yongzheng emperor also patronized Buddhism, although according to Hummel (1943, 918), he was more interested in Chan.

16. On Wutai see Farquhar 1978, 12-16; on lamas and emperors at Wutai see Bawden 1961, 58, Hopkins 1987, 28-29, and Pozdneyev 1977, 336. On the basis of these and other examples, Grupper argues that the early Manchu kingdom was "indistinguishable" from those of Mongol Khans (1984, 52-54, 67-68). For the earlier history of Wutai and Mañjuśrī see Gimello 1992.

trum of such magical capacities were levitation, self-dismemberment and re-union (Das 1881, 159), and supernatural powers of perception. Mongol sources record, for example, that when the Rje btsun dam pa Khutukhtu visited the court of the Kangxi emperor, the emperor repeatedly tested and attempted to trick him. The Khutukhtu saw through each of these ruses, revealed the subterfuge, and delighted the emperor with his powers in the process (Bawden 1961, 51-56, Pozdneyev 1977, 333-334; on the powers of enlightened beings see Bhattacharyya 1980, 88-90).

At the other end of the spectrum was the ability of lamas to command the powers of celestial beings in order to influence events on earth. For example, the biography of the Lcang skya Rol pa'i rje (1717-1786) records how he performed a ritual on Mount Wutai that launched bolts of fire onto a battlefield hundreds of miles away where Qing forces were engaged in a campaign against the Jinchuan "rebels." Lcang skya's intervention not only carried the day for the Qing, but aided in the eventual suppression of the uprising and spread the Dge lugs pa sect into regions where it had hitherto been marginal or non-existent (Martin 1990).

The supernatural powers of lamas might have had other significance as well. Some sources note that Tibetan lamas of the Sa skya pa sect vied at displays of magical power with shamans at the Yuan court (e. g., Heissig 1980, 24, 36 and 1953, 514). These particular powers appear to have been closely aligned with lamas' medical knowledge, a factor that may also have brought them into confrontation with Mongol shamans. Whatever the case, in the famous second conversion of the Mongols to Buddhism in 1578, shamanism was reported to have been forbidden and shamanic idols replaced by images of the Buddha and various other deities.¹⁷ Given the potential for conflict in matters where the powers of Tibetan lamas and those of shamans overlapped, one might well ask if lamas provided a convenient counter-balance to shamans at the Yuan and Qing courts.¹⁸ Perhaps the promotion of the cult of Mahākāla by

17. Heissig 1980, 27, 36, Bawden 1968, 32-33, and Ahmad 1970, 88-99. Shamanism did not, of course, disappear among Mongol groups as a result of this meeting between Altan Khan and the Dalai Lama.

18. Recent work in China among contemporary Manchu shamans is very suggestive on this count. In interviews conducted by Wulaxichun (1986, 104-106), a story about the Nudan shaman indicates rivalry between lamas and shamanism, with the shaman triumphing over the lama. Here I follow the text of a story in Chinese and a translation by Shi Kun (n.d.). For

Qing emperors not only incorporated aspects of Tibetan Buddhism and Mongol rulership into Manchu emperorship, but undermined the powers of shamans within the Manchu clans.

One of the more obvious of such incorporations which relates directly to the question of emperorship was the promotion of the Manchu ruler as the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.¹⁹ Various Tibetan works, for example, “urged consecrated sovereigns to adopt the twin goals of Bodhisattvahood and universal dominion” (Grupper 1984, 49-50). Equally compelling are those aspects of Buddhist notions of divine rulership which seem to make a link between the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and a cakravartin king. According to Snellgrove, there had been from very early on in Buddhism an association of rulership with Mañjuśrī. The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, for example, notes that in constructing a maṇḍala for the deity “. . . the great cakravartin-chief is placed at the center. He has the colour of saffron and is like the rising-sun. He holds a great wheel which is turning . . . He is like a great king with his palace and his decorations, a great being who is crowned and adorned with all adornments” (Snellgrove 1959, 207). While this description may be usefully compared to the various pictorial representations of the Qianlong emperor as a bodhisattva (color reproductions show him in saffron robes holding the wheel), it extends, more importantly, the range of possible meanings for imperial interest in Tibetan Buddhism.

For example, consider some of the implications of claims that Manchu emperors were involved in Tibetan initiation rituals (see below for further discussion). This issue is especially important because it seems just as plausible to assume that emperors could have achieved the sort of political manipulations of Buddhist populations with which they are

accounts that demonstrate a lama's superior powers to those of shamans, see Heissig 1953, 521-526.

Whether or not Tibetan Buddhism was used to check the power of shamans, it is interesting to note that by the time of Qianlong's reign shamanism seems to have been in serious decline. See Crossley 1987 and 1990 for imperial sponsored efforts to revive it. Rossabi (1975, 114, 118) has argued that championing the spread of Buddhism and the suppression of shamanism was a device used by various khans to achieve hegemony over other Mongols. Bawden (1968, 178-179) notes a continued opposition between Buddhism and shamanism among Mongol groups in the early part of this century.

19. While it seems to be the case, at least in Chinese sources, that Qing emperors did not claim to be the incarnate bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, they also seem to have done little to discourage others from making the claim on their behalf. See Farquhar 1978.

often charged simply by patronizing Buddhism from a distance. It was not, in other words, necessary for them to participate in these rituals to benefit from being identified with Buddhism.²⁰

What then could have been the motive of Manchu emperors? One explanation may have to do with the promises implicit in the ritual technologies of some tantric teachings. They offered the possibility of achieving buddhahood in a single lifetime, rather than through eons of rebirth (Snellgrove 1987, 236). Of great significance in this regard was the knowledge certain lamas commanded for the construction of maṇḍalas and for the initiation of others into rites that allowed them to achieve buddhahood. Seen from this position, Hongli's paean to his father seems less problematic and later reports, such as those by Lord Macartney, that Hongli himself had achieved buddhahood less peculiar (see Cranmer-Byng 1963, 136, 232).

By the time of the reign of the Qianlong emperor certain changes in lama-emperor relations had occurred. The Sa skya pa sect that had close affiliations with Nurhaci and Hung Taiji seems to have been downgraded; in its stead was the Dge lugs pa sect. Of particular interest in this respect was the association between the Qianlong emperor and the Mongolian scholar and Dge lugs pa adept, Lcang skya.²¹ The latter's career seems worth reviewing both because of his association with the emperor and because it spans the period that separates the young from the old Hongli, the earlier and later inscriptions at the Yonghe Palace.

Lcang skya studied Manchu, Chinese, and Mongolian at the court of the Yongzheng emperor, where he became close friends with a class-mate, the emperor's fourth son, Hongli. In the early 1730s, he journeyed to Tibet, studied with the Dalai Lama, and was ordained by the Panchen Lama in 1735. In addition to placing his magical powers at the

20. In his generalizations about the nature of Buddhist rulership, Tambiah points out that the major responsibility of the patron in a lama-patron relationship was to preserve and nourish the Three Jewels, thus creating a field in which merit could be made by all living beings (1976, 41). This suggests that one attribute of a cakravartin was his ability to constitute such a field in a relationship with a lama.

21. He appears in Qianlong era Chinese sources as Zhangjia Hutuketu and was the second incarnation, the first having been enfeoffed by the Kangxi emperor. In some English language sources he is referred to as the "Grand Lama of Peking." Cammann (1949-50, 10-11) says he was commonly known as Lalitavajra, Sanskrit for the Tibetan, Rol pa'i rdo rje. Rockhill (1910, 47) presents Lcang skya as an agent of the Panchen Lama. Also see Turner 1800, Appendix 4; Hedin 1933, 94-127; and Das 1882, 29-43.

service of the Qianlong emperor, Lcang skya was also involved in translating Indian commentaries and tantras from Tibetan into Mongol and Manchu; teaching Hongli Tibetan and Sanskrit; establishing colleges (1744) for the teaching of philosophy, tantra, and medicine at the Yonghe Palace; transmitting the fifth Dalai Lama's *Sacred Word of Mañjuśrī* ('*Jam dpal zhal lung*); and acting as mediator between Tibetans, Mongols, and Manchus.²² Finally and perhaps most significantly for the subject of this study, Lcang skya bestowed upon the Qianlong emperor tantric initiations. According to his Tibetan biography of the Khutukhtu, on one such initiation occasion, the emperor relinquished the highest seat to Lcang skya, knelt before him during the consecration, and later bowed the top of his head (*tingli*) to the lama's feet.²³

Lcang skya's activities on behalf of the Qing court distinguished him from other incarnated beings with whom the court had dealings. The emperor noted as much in his *Pronouncements on Lamas*, indicating that Lcang skya was the only lama ever entitled by the court as "Teacher of the Kingdom" (WZTZ 1, 23). The many duties and achievements of Lcang skya, as well as his special role as the bestower of tantric initiations on the emperor, highlights the degree to which Hongli was involved in Tibetan Buddhism. Through the agency of the Lcang skya, the emperor apparently sought to center Tibetan Buddhism within his own rulership and patronize it with the wealth Qing emperors drew from the Chinese part of their empire.²⁴

This brief review of Manchu affiliations with Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs suggests a connection between such relations and the constitution and reproduction of Qing emperorship. Far from being discrete aspects

22. On Lcang skya's life I draw primarily from Hopkins 1987, 15-35, 448-449, *The Collected Works of Thu'u bkwan blo bzang chos gyi nyi ma* (1969), and Grupper 1984, who relies on Kämpfe's (1976) German translation of Lcang skya's Tibetan biography, and Chen 1991. Also see Bawden 1968, 70, 85, 121; Chia 1992, 220-232; Jagchid 1974, 43-44, 53-54; Pozdneyev 1977, 320, 351-352; and Rahul 1968-69, 220-221.

23. The brief description provided here of the Qianlong emperor's initiation comes from the Tibetan chronicle of Lcang skya's life, portions of which are cited (in Chinese translation) by Wang 1990, 57-58. For a full Chinese translation of the Tibetan chronicle see Chen and Ma 1988. I am indebted to Evelyn Rawski for bringing these sources to my attention.

24. On centering see Hevia 1986, 251-256. Chia (1992, 224-227) has argued that the Qing court attempted to make Peking a center of Tibetan Buddhism. I concur, but as will be discussed below with respect to the *Pronouncements on Lamas*, I believe Hongli's ambitions were even grander.

or images of rulership, politics and religion appear to have been fused, both embedded within cosmologies. What was at issue between lamas and emperors might be explored, therefore, in terms of both the incompatibilities and overlaps between competing cosmologies. To address these issues, I want to point out certain connections between host-guest protocols (audiences) and Tibetan initiation rites. Then, in conjunction with the history presented above, I will reconsider a few of the encounters between lamas and emperors in order to draw some initial conclusions about the nature of relations among these personages in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Imperial Audiences, Lama Audiences, and Tibetan Initiations

While generally treated by Euro-American historians as the site of highly formalistic performances which merely acted out pre-existing relations, imperial audiences, ranging from the routines of empire to the spectacular celebrations of an emperor's birthday, might better be thought of as *constitutive* of a host of relations of power which were organized around the emperor as the pivot between the cosmos and the earth.²⁵ Among these various audiences are those described in the Guest Ritual (*binli*) section of the *Da Qing tongli* (juan 45-46).²⁶ Guest Ritual was the formal idiom or medium through which interdomainal relations (i. e., kingdom-to-kingdom) of the kind implied in the foregoing discussion were conducted. Like other audience rituals, it was organized on the principle that virtuous superiors attracted to themselves virtuous inferiors, i. e., powerful others who demonstrated sincerity (*cheng*) in the form of reverence (*gong*), obedience (*shun*), earnestness (*geng*), and faithfulness (*zhi*), and in so doing fashioned a complex

25. Although the form and content changed over time, from at least the Tang period audiences were codified in imperial ritual manuals (see the *Da Tang Kaiyuan li* and the *Ming jili*). These manuals elaborated the details of an annual cycle of rites performed by a sage ruler and his court (Zito 1984). By the 1760's a clearly defined set of protocols differing in a number of ways from those of the Ming period had been organized under two sections and four chapters of the *Da Qing tongli* (Comprehensive Rites of the Great Qing, 1756, hereafter DQTL). Audiences included routines of empire (*changchao* or regular audience) and spectacular celebrations on the solstices, the first day of the year, and imperial birthdays (*dachao* or grand audience). See DQTL, *juan* 18-19 and Hevia 1986, 231-250.

26. I use here the 1883 reprint of the 1824 edition of the DQTL. The 1824 edition is especially useful for making the point that rites change (see Zito 1984, 77). Various forms of audience were usually followed at some point by feasting, see *juan* 40.

imperial sovereignty (see Hevia 1989). In such a scheme, the position of the emperor was impossible unless he acted as a completer of cosmic initiatives; his position was similarly impossible to sustain without loyal inferiors who actively completed his initiatives. Hence no subject position could be constructed without the recognition and collaboration of others. In the human world it was in and through audiences that such political subjects were made.

Audience was one part of the routine of embassies.²⁷ Prior to the audience proper, officials made certain preparations. They established places for participants in the hall designated for audience, set out imperial regalia such as banners, umbrellas, and chariots, and rehearsed participants. On the day of audience, the emperor took his throne, and the guest (a lesser lord or his ambassador) and his entourage were led to a position on the *west* side of the courtyard *outside* the audience hall proper. There the guest performed three kneelings and nine head-knockings.²⁸ Ascending the west stairs of the hall, the guest proceeded to the *threshold* and knelt. The emperor asked questions (usually about the guest's health) which were transmitted by the Director of the Board of Rites to a translator who addressed them to the guest. The guest's response followed the same path in the reverse direction, with the Director of the Board of Rites molding them into a memorial (*daizou*) addressed orally to the emperor. Once the conversation was complete, the audience ended. The guest and his entourage then retraced their steps.

In special cases the emperor deemed appropriate a guest might participate in an additional rite which took place *inside* the audience hall. The procedures closely parallel those outlined above, with the exception that the guest not only entered the hall but might also be given a seat. Then the emperor might call for a bestowal of tea. First the emperor drank the tea, while all knelt and knocked their heads to the floor. Then the tea was circulated, and the guest knelt in acceptance, performed one head knocking, sat, drank, and performed an additional head knocking in

27. On the embassy routine see Wills 1984. For specific reference to the routines of Mongol embassies during the Ming and Qing see Serruys 1967 and Chia 1992.

28. The action in question here is also referred to as *kotow* or *kowtow* in Euro-American literature on China. While there are many forms of kneeling and bowing the head indicated in Chinese ritual texts, the English language usage usually indicates the one John Fairbank dubbed the full *kotow*, which, as in the case here, involved three kneelings and nine head knockings.

thanks for the bestowal. The emperor might then question the guest much as before.

This brief outline draws attention to the movement, placement, and position of participants in ritual space. For example, the guest is always oriented to the west side of courtyards, gates, and stairways leading to and from halls. Second, the *kotow*, when performed, occurs outside and at the foot of the stairs leading to the western door of the audience hall.²⁹ Third, sitting in the emperor's presence was a special privilege which could be enhanced by the bestowal of a tea ceremony and additional bowing, kneeling, and knocking the head to the ground within the audience hall.

The *Comprehensive Rites* also contains details for lesser and varied host-guest protocols pertaining to persons from the level of high ranking imperial princes down to that of commoners. What is striking about these protocols is the rigorous application of principles of movement, placement, and bodily activities of participants, all of which form an ensemble of actions that highlight differences between grades of people. This section begins with meetings between imperial princes and various ranks of princes of outer dependencies (*wai fan wang*) enfeoffed to the empire, and each has sections which mimic those of imperial audience. However, as the rank of the imperial prince reduces in relation to the rank of the outer prince, the imperial prince moves ever farther out of the hall to greet the guest. Placement within the hall as well as the spatial location at which the host sees off the guest also varies depending upon differences in rank.

At the same time, imperial superiority is maintained throughout by carefully managing the locations of participants and their actions at various moments in the rite. So, for example, when a third rank imperial prince hosts an outer prince of the first rank, their seating positions in the hall are reversed (host on west, guest on east). However, in the opposite case (first rank imperial prince and third rank outer prince), the host takes up a position like that of the emperor, in the center of the hall, with the guest on the west facing east (see DQTL, *juan* 46).

Although there do not seem to be comparable protocol manuals on

29. Numerous sources provide diagrams and pictures of regalia and its layout for audiences. See, for example, DQHDT, *juan* 19-20 and Wan Yi et al. 1985, 30-45. Texts on Guest Ritual do not include the establishment of places and other forms of preparation. Instead the reader is referred back to the Felicitous Rites (*Jiali*, *juan* 18-19). The description of Guest Ritual provided here is from the DQTL, *juan* 45, 1a-4a.

audience in either Mongol or Tibetan, accounts of meetings between lamas and others also seem concerned with the management of bodies in ritual time and space. In his discussion of meetings between the Rje btsun dam pa Khutukhtu and various guests, Pozdneyev reported that the positions taken up by the Khutukhtu were predicated on the rank of the guest. So, for example, the Khutukhtu would come out of his audience hall further to greet a more senior person and they would sit facing each other in the hall itself, while commoners prostrated at the entrance to the hall (1978, 348-349). Similar patterns emerge in the accounts of audiences with the Dalai Lama (Turner 1800, 333-334). Further, as in imperial audiences, when the host takes up a position in the center of the hall, the guest is positioned below the host and on the west side of the hall or at the right hand of the host.

References to the actions of ritual participants in audiences with lamas and khutukhtus indicates other affinities between Tibetan and Mongol practices and Qing audience rituals as well. Of particular interest is the use of spatial placement to indicate differences in rank. These examples also suggest that the ritual codes of audience were concerned with the task of establishing seniority across discursive domains. In accomplishing this task, the bodily actions and positions of ritual participants at various times appear to be a crucial index for constituting differences between them and establishing superiors and inferiors.

Much the same could be said about certain aspects of Tibetan initiation rituals.³⁰ Like Qing audience rituals, initiations included a period of preparation in which the master of initiations ritually constructed a maṇḍala, i. e., a figure of an idealized palace with entryways, hallways, throne rooms, and thrones upon which buddhas, bodhisattvas, and deities sit. Spatially, initiates are like guests in the presence of the master of initiation who, led by him, move in and out of the maṇḍala and make offerings to the master and the deities. At the time of the ceremony, the master of the initiation deploys his superior spiritual powers in summoning the buddhas and bodhisattvas from their various abodes in the universe and then fixing them in the maṇḍala by mantra and mudrā (see Snellgrove 1987, 1, 216-217 and 1959, 66-68).

Throughout the rite, bodily actions further clarify and constitute a relation of superior and inferior between master and initiate. Initiates move through the rite prostrating and touching variously their whole bodies,

30. Space prevents a thorough explication of initiation practices. Here I draw for my main points from Snellgrove 1987, 1, 213-303 and 1959.

faces, foreheads, the tops of their heads, and their mouths to the ground, during which they pronounce mantras, and before and after which they perform specific mudrā learned from their master. At one point, the master becomes a buddha charging the initiate to secrecy (Snellgrove 1987, 1, 218-219).

An example of a portion of an initiation may help to clarify the powerful relationships organized by these rites. An especially pertinent ritual reported by Snellgrove involves the consecration of universal sovereignty found in the *Mañjuśrīmālakalpa*. The relevant passage notes that beginning from a position on the west “facing east and looking toward the maṇḍala,” pupils render their master royal honors, treating him as if he were Mañjuśrī the prince (or perhaps a supreme lord like an emperor?). They spread a great canopy, set out flags, banners of victory, and hold a white parasol over his head, while waving white fly-whisks. They then ask the master if they too may become a buddha (Snellgrove 1987, 1, 226-227).

Here we see mimetic relationships established between worldly sovereignty and cosmic sovereignty. As such this initiation rite makes claims for establishing a relationship between cosmic infinitude and transient human life as strong as those made in the ensemble of imperial rites that fashion a relationship between the cosmos (*tian*), the son of the cosmos (*tianzi*), and his kingdom (*guo*). As he guides a pupil through initiations, the master as a buddha binds the pupil to himself and to the cosmic technologies that make the latter's transformation into a buddha possible. These are powers which ought to awe lords of the mere earth. That initiation masters were supposed to possess such powers should be borne in mind when we learn, for example, that lamas and khutukhtus initiated Qing emperors from Nurhaci to Qianlong into tantras. Put simply, when the cosmological logic of ritual is borne in mind, the powers of the lama rival those deployed in the imperial Grand Sacrifice to the Cosmos or in court audience for the constitution of imperial sovereignty.

Encounters and Inscriptions

I began this paper with an assertion that the two inscriptions of the Qianlong emperor at the Yonghe Palace marked two poles of a contradiction, signifying ambivalence on the part of early Qing emperors toward Tibetan Buddhism. The brief history of imperial involvement in Tibetan Buddhism and the discussion of ritual presented above suggest

some potential problems in lama-emperor relations. All parties made various claims to pre-eminence; no one could completely ignore the claims of the others. Nothing highlights these political realities more than the contradictory accounts of meetings between Qing emperors and various Buddhist hierarchs from Inner Asia. What these accounts tend to show is that while the Qing court did at times defer to Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs, increasingly over the course of the eighteenth-century Manchu emperors asserted supreme-lesser lord, rather than lama-patron relations in their intercourse with Tibetan lamas and Mongol khutukhtus. In the face of these Qing hegemonic gestures, lamas and khutukhtus attempted to retain the high ground of spiritual superiority.

After the establishment of the Qing dynasty in China in 1644, and well before the Manchus asserted hegemony over Tibet, the first significant encounter between a Qing emperor and a lama occurred when the fifth Dalai Lama journeyed to Peking in 1653. The court of the Shunzhi emperor was split over where the lama should be received. Thinking that it might be a useful way for winning over Mongol groups who had yet to submit to Manchu overlordship, the emperor's Manchu advisors thought it wise to meet the lama in Mongolia. His Chinese councilors objected, arguing that cosmic portents indicated that the lama sought to challenge the emperor's supremacy. In keeping with the spatial principles of imperial ritual, therefore, if he left his capital and went to Mongolia, he would be acknowledging the lama's superiority (SZZSL, 68, 1b-3a, 31b). The emperor decided to give audience in Peking, but with certain modifications that vary from guidelines to be found in ritual manuals.³¹ The Veritable Records (Shilu) of the Shunzhi emperor of January 14, 1653 notes that the Dalai Lama arrived and visited (ye) the emperor who was in the South Park. The emperor bestowed on him a seat and a feast. The lama brought forward a horse and local products and offered them to the emperor (SZZSL 70, 20a-b).

The differences in question include the holding of the audience in the large park to the south of Peking rather than in one of the outer palaces of the imperial city³² (ritual manuals suggest the Supreme Harmony

31. The DQTL would, of course, not be collected and edited for another century, so it may seem odd to speak here of deviations. The point, however, is that this particular encounter is different from those outlined in other ritual manuals as well as various accounts of audiences at the Qing court that also occurred before the above text was compiled.

32. The South Park referred to here is probably the Nanhaizi or Nanyuan

Hall) and the fact that the audience was characterized as a visit (*ye*), rather than as a “summons to court” (*zhaojian*), the usual form for recording such events in the Veritable Records. In the latter case, while *ye* connotes a visit from an inferior to a superior, I believe it suggests some sense of deference in this context. On the other hand, certain things were done in accordance with imperial audience as outlined in other sources such as the Ming and Qing ritual manuals. The emperor bestowed a seat and a feast on the lama. The lama, like other loyal inferiors, made offerings of local products (*fangwu*).

If this entry on audience appears anomalous when compared to imperial audience protocols, the account of the same audience in the autobiography of the fifth Dalai Lama is even more unusual. While he does not mention the site at which the audience took place, the lama claims that the emperor descended from his throne, advanced for a distance of ten fathoms and took his hand. The lama also reports that he sat in audience on a seat that was both close to the emperor and almost the same height. When tea was offered, the emperor insisted that the lama drink first, but the lama thought it more proper that they drink together. On this occasion and over the following days the lama recorded that the emperor gave him numerous gifts fit for a “Teacher of the Emperor” (*dishi*). The emperor is also said to have requested that the Dalai Lama resolve a dispute between two other lamas. On his return trip through Mongolia to Tibet, the lama displayed the presents given by the emperor and appears to have distributed some of them along the route.³³

haizi, located outside the south wall of Peking. Apparently used as a hunting park by the Manchu court, it can still be seen on maps from the early part of this century (see Clunas 1991, 46). I am indebted to Susan Naquin for this information.

One cannot help wondering if the solution to the problem posed by the lama’s visit might help to explain the use of other sites around Peking to address relations with Inner Asian lords. The example of the Ziguang pavilion to the west of the main audience halls of the “Forbidden City” is well known, but audiences and feasts also might take place at the Yuanming yuan. The DQHDT, 1818 edition, *juan* 21, 6a-7a, diagrams a feast in a round tent at the Yuanming yuan.

Holding audiences outside the main halls of the palace for problematic guests continued through the end of the dynasty. Between 1870 and 1900, no European, American, or Japanese ambassador was received in the Supreme Harmony Hall. They were hosted at the Ziguang pavilion or other halls, see Rockhill 1905.

33. The Dalai Lama’s account is taken from Ahmad 1970, 175-183, who relies on the autobiography of the fifth Dalai Lama, v. 1, 197a-198b. See his reference to this source on p. 340. On the dispute the lama was asked to

What is especially interesting about these two accounts is not simply that they differ, but that the dimensions along which they diverge involves ritual practice. The imperial records mention the lama's offerings to the emperor, all of which may be construed as his acceptance of a position of inferiority. The lama's account emphasizes offerings made by the emperor to him and includes many examples of the emperor deferring to the lama as a person of superior spiritual insight. The imperial records solved the problem of a meeting with an important and potentially dangerous personage by shifting the location to one outside the imperial audience hall complex proper. The lama's account emphasizes that the emperor came down from his throne to greet him, an act of considerable deference.

A similar pattern of divergent accounts emerges in connection with meetings between the Shunzhi emperor's successors and the Rje btsun dam pa Khutukhtu. Here too the court seemed willing to accord a degree of deference to the Khutukhtu, while still working to establish a supreme lord-lesser lord bond. So, for example, at the famous submission of the Khalkha Mongols to the Qing at Dolonnor in 1691, the Veritable Records indicates that when the Kangxi emperor received the Khutukhtu in an audience on May 29, the Khutukhtu knelt (*gui*) before the emperor. The emperor bestowed tea and other gifts on the Khutukhtu. The next day another audience was held for other members of the Khalkha nobility; they performed three-kneelings and nine-head-knockings (*sanguì jiukou*).³⁴ At the same time, all of the activities that occurred at Dolonnor were catalogued under the general rubric for classifying relations between the supreme lord and lesser lords, i. e., "cherishing men from afar" (*huairou yuanren*, see SZRSL 151, 23a). It appears, therefore, that the Khutukhtu assumed the position of a loyal inferior, but one who was in some way differentiated from the remainder of the Khalkha nobility.

On its side, Mongol versions of encounters between the emperor and the Rje btsun dam pa Khutukhtu closely parallel in form the Dalai Lama's version of his meeting with the Shunzhi emperor, a pattern which continued into the Qianlong era (see Bawden 1961, 49-60 and

resolve see Heissig 1953, 528.

34. The Khutukhtu appeared in the first audience with the Tüsiyetü Khan who was also recorded as kneeling. In the entry for the following day, however, the Khutukhtu is not mentioned, only Khalkha Khans and ranks of nobles, which would presumably include the Tüsiyetü Khan, see SZRSL, 151, 8a, 10a.

Pozdneyev 1977, 332-336). In 1737, for example, the second Rje btsun dam pa Khutukhtu journeyed to Peking, where he was met and honored by high officials and lamas at the Anding Gate. When he arrived at his quarters, the Qianlong emperor met him. Upon seeing the emperor, the Khutukhtu knelt, but the emperor insisted he not do so. Later in an audience that included a tea bestowal, the emperor asked the Khutukhtu to sit closer and higher than other guests (Bawden 1961, 71 and Pozdneyev 1977, 341). In addition, the Qianlong emperor lavished gifts on him and acknowledged his powers.³⁵

Much the same sort of conflicting presentation occurred when the Panchen Lama visited Rehe and Peking in 1780. According to the lama's account, the emperor left the throne and greeted him at the door to the reception hall. Taking his hand, the emperor led him to the throne, where the two sat facing each other and "conversed as intimate friends." Later the emperor visited the lama at the special residence that had been prepared for him, a reproduction of the Panchen's palace at Tashilhunpo, and sought his teachings. Banquets and gift giving followed over the next several days. Various sources claim that during his stay the lama initiated the emperor into the Mahākāla and Cakrasaṃvara tantras.³⁶ Here again the lama is cast as teacher, the emperor as patron and pupil.

The Veritable Records provides quite another point of view, one that differs from both the Tibetan account and the Veritable Records' version of the visit of the fifth Dalai Lama discussed above. In these records the emperor summoned the lama to audience (*zhaojian*) in the Yiqingkuang Hall at Rehe. Three days later the lama was again summoned to the round tent in the Garden of Ten-thousand Trees (*Wanshou yuan*), where Inner Asian lords of various ranks looked on while the emperor bestowed caps, gowns, gold, silver, and silk on the lama (GZCSL 1111,

35. Pozdneyev dates the visit as summer 1736, Bawden, 1737. I have found no indication of an audience for either year in the Veritable Records. However, there is an entry for a banquet held on the ninth day of the first lunar month (February 27, 1738) in a large tent at the Fertile Abundance Garden (*Fengze yuan*), located between the Middle and Southern Lakes in Peking with the Rje btsun dam pa and Lcang skya Khutukhtus in attendance, see GZCSL, 60, 8a. As Susan Naquin pointed out to me, the date of the banquet is significant, because special receptions of foreign "tributaries" took place during the new year celebrations.

36. I follow Das's translation from an abridged version of the Panchen Lama's life, see 1882, 39-42. On the initiations see Das and Grupper 1984, 59. Also see Cammann 1949-1950 on the lama's visit.

4a and 10a-b).³⁷ While these audiences constitute the encounter as one between the supreme lord and lesser lords, the lama was differentiated from the various Inner Asian lords looking on, much as the Rje btsun dam pa Khutukhtu had been at Dolonnor. According to a directive in the *Rehe zhi* (Rehe Gazetteer) the lama was allowed to kneel (*gui*) before the emperor instead of bowing (*bai*), provided he was sincere (*cheng*).³⁸

There was another sort of deference that may have occurred at Rehe as well. According to a diagram to be found in the 1818 edition of *Da Qing hui dian tu* (Diagrams of the Collected Statutes of the Great Qing, hereafter DQHDT, *juan* 21, 7a), during feasts held at the round tent in the Garden of Ten-thousand trees, khutukhtus and lamas were seated closer to the emperor than Mongol nobles.³⁹ This is the sort of distinction a supreme lord could make when cherishing men from afar.

These records indicate that conflicting and contradictory accounts of the signifying practices (i. e., movement in time along east-west and high-low axes, as well as bowing, kneeling, and enunciating) of ritual participants were not uncommon when lamas and emperors met. Such differential presentations of bodily practices tell us much about the efforts of Manchu emperors and Buddhist hierarchs to incorporate each other as sublords, patrons, or pupils. Even when honoring lamas and altering audience protocols for them, the Qing court insisted that they were recipients of imperial grace (*en*), making it quite clear, at least by

37. Other occasions of feasting and bestowal followed, including one in the Preserving Harmony hall (*Baohe dian*) at Peking on October 29, 1780 (GZCSL, 1112, 17b-18a and 1116, 4a).

38. *Rehe zhi*, 24, 10b. The reason given in this case for allowing the lama to kneel was that it was customary in Buddhism to bow (*bai*) only to the Buddha. This particular reference to respect for the customs of others was not unusual. It is evident, for example, in the negotiations over the form of audience during the Macartney embassy to China, where again the issue was the sincerity of the act (see ZGCB, 3, 20b and Hevia 1989). It is also present in the instructions to the imperial envoy, Songyun, before his departure to Tibet in 1795. In order to accord with the teachings of the Yellow sect, he was ordered not to bow his head to the ground (*koubai*) before the Dalai Lama, see GZCSL, 1458, 34b-35a. These various examples suggest that interpretations of the "kowitz" ought to be re-evaluated, beginning with the tribute system version and Levinson's modification of it (see 1968, 2, 68-69).

39. Also see Wan et al. 1985, 76-77 and 288 for two paintings of banquets, one at the Ziguang pavilion and the other at the Garden of Ten-thousand Trees in Rehe. These pictures show lamas positioned higher and closer to the emperor than other Inner Asian dignitaries. Space prevents a more thorough consideration of feasts, but clearly seating at imperial banquets was another way in which hierarchy was constituted.

the time of the Qianlong reign, that the lama was a loyal inferior of the supreme lord. In contrast, Tibetan and Mongol accounts seem concerned with the superior knowledge or expertise of the lamas relative to that of their imperial hosts as well as with specific acts of bodily practice that differ from those described in imperial ritual manuals. They also tend to construct the emperor as an offerer of gifts, and hence as a devotee/pupil, and the lama as receiver of alms.

The Pronouncements on Lamas and a Sense Of an Ending

It is within the context of these competing accounts of meetings between lamas and emperors that we might now consider the second of the two inscriptions at the Yonghe Palace, Hongli's *Pronouncements on Lamas*. Crucial to an understanding of this essay is the fact that the emperor positions *himself* as the ultimate authority on matters involving lamas and khutukhtus. After reviewing the history of interaction between Tibetan lamas and previous dynasties, Hongli asserted that the Qing had never used the title "Teacher of the Emperor" (*dishi*),⁴⁰ only the title "Teacher of the Kingdom" (*guoshi*), and that, as noted above, exclusively in the case of the Lcang skya Khutukhtu (WZTZ 1, 23).

Second, in spite of evidence to the contrary such as that discussed above, Hongli pointed out that while the Qing dynasty acknowledged the importance of the Dalai and Panchen Lamas, it did so only because the Yellow sect (Dge lugs pa) was important to the Mongols. He added that the two lamas had submitted to Manchu lordship by making offerings of local products to the court in 1642 and had subsequently received titles and seals from the Qing dynasty. For their part, emperors accepted the submission of the lamas as they did any other lords—they were bound to obey the injunction of the cosmos (*tian*) to follow the path of cherishing and showing kindness to men from afar (*huairou zhi dao*, WZTZ 1, 24).

Third, after questioning the very notion of incarnate (*zhuanshi*) lamas, Hongli proceeded to reorganize the selection process of the Dalai Lama and the Rje btsun dam pa Khutukhtu. Thoroughly criticizing what he saw as a selfish (*si*) monopoly of certain Tibetan and Mongol clans over succession, the emperor decreed in the name of his own disinterestedness (*gong*) that in the future the names of potential incarnates would be

40. On the origins of this term and for citations of the relevant bibliography concerning its history see Dunnell 1992. On the Yuan use of the term see Franke 1981.

placed in a golden urn and, under the eyes of his observers, determined by lot (WZTZ 1, 24-25).⁴¹ The emperor had Tibetan, Mongol, Manchu, and Chinese versions of the *Lamashuo* produced. Apparently they were widely disseminated.

The importance of the *Pronouncements on Lamas* to issues raised throughout this essay can be summarized as follows. By establishing that the Qing dynasty had never considered lamas to be teachers or emperors their students, the Qianlong emperor effectively rejected any claims of spiritual superiority lamas might make in a relationship with a reigning emperor. In invoking an emperor's responsibilities to the cosmos, Hongli displaced any claims lamas made concerning their own constitutive agency as "teachers" onto the reality of an immanent cosmos and its earthly son, the emperor. Finally, in casting the relationship in terms of a hierarchy of rulership, the emperor effectively refuted Buddhist constructions of interdomainal relations as ones between lamas and patrons. In this context, the *Lamashuo* may be interpreted not only as a defense of imperial policy (Lessing 1942, 62), but as a gesture at closure; an attempt to halt Tibetan or Mongol Buddhist statements that privileged lama-patron relations over any other kind. The efforts of Qing emperors to end assertions by lamas of superiority are epitomized best perhaps in the refusal by Hongli and his predecessors to award the title "Teacher of the Emperor" to a lama. They are also embodied in the imperial-sponsored construction of alternative sites for the practice of Tibetan Buddhism and in Hongli's insistence that the two most important lamas of Tibetan Buddhism had submitted to Manchu overlordship

41. It is difficult to discern conclusively if in fact the policy initiated by Hongli was carried out. For an account of the selection process in Tibet see Waddell 1895, 248-251. If it had been employed to select the Dalai Lama, it would have affected the ninth through the thirteenth incarnations. Goldstein (1989, 44) notes that the thirteenth was not selected this way in 1879, but makes no reference to previous incarnations. According to Shakabpa, the system was not used for the selection of the ninth Dalai Lama (1806); it seems to have been used for the selection of the eleventh (1841) and twelfth (1858); and may have been used for the selection of the tenth Dalai Lama (1822); see 1967, 172, 174-76, and 183. It is also clear from Shakabpa's account that the use of the system was a volatile political issue in Tibet (186). Richardson (1984, 71) notes only that the decree was ignored in 1808, but insisted upon by 1818 when the tenth Dalai Lama was being sought. In the latter case the child already selected by the Tibetans was subsequently chosen by lot. Hongli's alteration of the process by which incarnations of the Dalai Lama and the Rje btsun dam pa Khutukhtu were selected continued a pattern of imperial intervention in such processes. See Bawden 1968, 132-133 and Rossabi 1975, 156-157.

before the dynasty was established in China.

Concluding Comments

Like the stone inscriptions at the Yonghe Palace with which I began, the discussion presented here concerning audiences, initiation rituals, and encounters between emperors and Buddhist hierarchs maps difference and ambiguity, challenging efforts to reduce complicated political relationships to the timeless regularities of cultural essences. How are we to reconcile or historically address the contrary accounts of lama-emperor engagement? What are we to make of audience protocols and alterations to them; of the interest of Manchu emperors in Tibetan initiations and in titles such as cakravartin king; of the occasional imperial endorsement of the Sa skya pa as opposed to the Dge lugs pa sect of Tibetan Buddhism; or of imperial action which seemed at times to countenance and at other times oppose Manchu shamanism? What of the triangular relationship between the Qing emperor, the Dalai Lama, and the Rje btsun dam pa Khutukhtu, in which each was presented as a human incarnation of a celestial bodhisattva? There are no clear and easy answers to these questions because, among other things, to do them justice would require a wider reading in Mongol, Tibetan, and Manchu sources, as well as in archival materials still extant in China, than has yet been attempted. Moreover, there are simply too many instances of ideas, concepts, practices, and terminologies flowing among these groups and being appropriated and re-deployed within political struggles to continue to warrant dealing with Manchus, Tibetans, and Mongols as unitary and exclusive national entities. It may be necessary to reconceptualize sovereignty in terms other than those which map ethnicity and culture over territory (thus producing the requisite ingredients in a nation-state construction). Such an imperative is only intensified by the fact that Manchu emperors, lamas, and khutukhtus appear to have vied with one another for supremacy on the basis of cosmological principles, ones which could neither be ignored nor completely captured and incorporated into one over-arching cosmology.

The Dalai Lama's account of his meeting with the Shunzhi emperor acknowledges, for instance, that the lama was still given a seat below the height of that of the emperor. This statement would seem to clearly signal an acceptance of an inferior status. Yet at the same time, there is little doubt that the lama also asserted superiority in that he suggested a lama-patron relationship. Such subtle negotiations continued right into

the Qianlong era and only appear to end with the *Pronouncements on Lamas*. Indeed, the fact that it is so difficult to pin down whether Tibetans and Mongols ever actually complied with Hongli's alteration of the selection process of reincarnates suggests as much (see note 41).

Problems posed by such indeterminacy are only partly a function of conflicting accounts. They are also a product of the very formation of imperial sovereignty. Earlier I argued that the main feature of audience ritual was the constitution of such sovereignty, which by definition was hierarchical in nature. In the past, there has been a tendency to fix attention on the superior in this relationship, assuming a notion of power that is fundamentally oppressive and instrumental. It seems to me, however, that it makes just as much sense, after Foucault (1980), to view imperial power as productive, to see the specific relationship formed in superior-inferior relations as a joint construction which empowers the latter as well as the former. Audiences below the level of the emperor particularly emphasize the constitutive nature of power. Assuming the position of a superior, the emperor's servants themselves became "hosts" to various "guests" in audiences, addressing and forging relationships with others of the imperial polity. In this way the Manchu imperium extended the emperor's virtue (*de*, Waley's "power of the exemplar") globally, ordering the world in a specific way. For their part, lamas appear to have spread Tibetan Buddhism through recognizing powerful others (particularly military powers) as cakravartins and incarnate bodhisattvas, as well as through the performance of initiation rituals. In these ways they asserted their superiority over lords of the world.

These considerations of power draw on certain insights which emerge from reading across the sources considered. The first of these is that "common sense" divisions between religion and politics and between ritual and "bureaucratic" routines obscure rather than explain these political relations. Second, a functionalist understanding of ritual as integrative and productive of community solidarity cannot adequately account for conflict or contradictory gestures within ritual action.⁴² Third, ritual action is as historically contingent and politically significant as the Qianlong emperor's stone inscriptions at the Yonghe Palace and ought to be treated as such, rather than as an aspect of the residual category of culture within political and social histories (see Farquhar and Hevia 1993).

42. The classic articulation of this notion of ritual can be found in van Gennep 1960, first published in 1909.

The Tibetan and Mongol accounts cited here may also be viewed as specific resistances to and strategies for deflecting the hegemonizing practices of the Qing imperium. They nevertheless seem to be organized through different metaphysical assumptions, different views of the nature of reality, and, more than likely, differing views of just how bodies can have signifying capabilities. Yet what they share is equally important. For both lamas and emperors, meetings appear to have been a kind of pivot at which asymmetrical hierarchies were fashioned, in which the present and future were significantly addressed, and in which bodily action constructed highly consequential relationships.

The disposition of bodies and the organization of ritual space were about who was actually submitting to whom, with the mutual recognition that such submission had wide political consequences. Yet, since participants vied to hierarchize each other in audiences, submission was a complicated affair. On their side, Manchu emperors wanted lamas to offer themselves sincerely to the emperor; that is, to accept loyally a position of an inferior in a relationship with the supreme lord. For their part, lamas wanted emperors to humbly accept a position as patron and pupil of the lama. I do not think it would make much sense to either party for submission in such relations to be coerced. I suggest, therefore, that at least on the Qing court's side, meetings between lamas and emperors were about constructing scales of sincere (*cheng*) loyalty.⁴³ Participants scrutinized the bodily movements of others as outward signs of inner conditions in an effort to determine whether verbal statements or other kinds of action (such as gift giving), all of which presumably manifested loyalty and submission, were indeed sincere.

It is not clear to me the extent to which the parties involved in the encounters I have presented here were aware of each other's construction of events, but it seems highly unlikely that the Qianlong emperor, for example, did not have some inkling of how lamas might present their meetings with him to others. In this respect, the *Pronouncements on Lamas* might be read as an assertion that lamas could not be counted on to be loyal inferiors, i. e., to bring to completion the emperor's initiatives. The form the Qianlong emperor selected for determining incarnate lamas makes this point—it is a parody of a pre-existing Tibetan selection

43. In accounts of embassies found in various imperial court records, the emperor invariably reminded his officials to evaluate the sincerity of embassies. See, for example, the ZGCB on the Macartney embassy and Hevia 1986 and 1989.

process which looked for various signs on a child indicating advanced progress on the path to buddhahood. By introducing a lottery, the emperor declared that the Tibetan Buddhist beliefs associated with human incarnations of enlightened masters were about as conclusive as a game of chance.

The Qianlong emperor's casting of the relationship between the Qing court and the Yellow sect in terms that privilege hierarchies of lords over hierarchies of spiritual powers makes, I would argue, the concerns of the Manchu court easier to understand. Lama hierarchs posed a threat because they challenged the very premises upon which an encompassing imperial sovereignty was grounded. That is, they embodied a competing and equally powerful hierarchical view of the cosmos that placed them above the multitude of earthly lords, even if the latter be patrons. Moreover, if Tibetan lamas had been able reliably and consistently to incorporate Manchu emperors as pupils, then any claims emperors made in Inner Asia to supreme lordship could be challenged on cosmological grounds. Lamas were also dangerous because they had the potential for confusing the loyalties of lesser lords, such as Mongol Khans. Yet the problems lamas posed to imperial sovereignty were not easily resolved (cf. Ruegg 1991, 451). While the Qianlong emperor might have parodied incarnation, he remained profoundly interested in Tibetan Buddhism, patronized it, and seemed to have had little trouble with being treated by many as an incarnated bodhisattva. And if Hongli and other emperors were interested in tantric initiations, who is to say that they might not have seen them as one among other ways of fulfilling their cosmological responsibilities in a Manchu (as opposed to a Chinese) empire?

Seen from this position, the temporal and discursive distance posited earlier between the stone inscriptions at the Yonghe Palace seems less dramatic. For the point is that the *Pronouncements on Lamas* is not so much directed at Tibetan Buddhism per se, as it challenges what the emperor saw as abuses by the Tibetan monastic nobility. These efforts at reform were given material density by the placement of the *Lamashuo* inscription. Rather than flanking the central path running south-north through the Yonghe Palace, as the 1744 inscription does, the *Pronouncements on Lamas* was placed at a more inner location directly on the center path. Hongli here centers and encompasses his authoritative version of Tibetan Buddhism deep within the Qing imperium.⁴⁴

44. See the diagram of the palace complex in Lessing 1942.

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