

Religion, War, and Empire-Building in Eighteenth-Century China

THE MANCHU QING empire reached its zenith in the eighteenth century. The three great rulers of the high Qing era (1681-1796) – the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong emperors – were ambitious empire-builders, whose techniques of imperial expansion and domination rivalled in sophistication those of the European imperialists who later all but completely overwhelmed China and Chinese culture. In pursuit of their imperial goals, these Manchu rulers incorporated diverse peoples and cultures into the Qing polity and ruled them with a combination of patronizing severity and flexible pluralism.¹

Although often conceptualized as a Chinese empire dominated by alien rulers, the Qing empire was, in fact, oriented as much towards its Inner and Central Asian dominions as it was towards China, which formed but one, albeit major, part of the whole. In this respect, the Qing empire resembled, on a smaller scale, that of the Mongols, who ruled China as part of their vast empire from 1276 to 1368. Although the Manchus were ready to invoke that precedent whenever it suited them, they had to proceed with care, as their plans for empire required that the Mongols of their own time submit to Manchu overlordship and become subject peoples of the Qing empire. This goal was achieved as much through diplomacy and manipulation as through military force, for when the Manchus first came to dominance in the seventeenth century, the Mongols were insufficiently united to pose an effective challenge.

Among the significant wars of the high Qing were several that resulted either in imperial expansion or in the consolidation of Qing control over outlying territories. These included the wars against the Zunghars, a subgroup of the western Mongols with imperial ambitions of their own, which began with the Kangxi emperor's campaigns of the 1690s and continued intermittently until 1759. Together with the Ili and Muslim campaigns of the late 1750s, the Qing wars against the Zunghars culminated in the

destruction of the Zunghar people, and the annexation of Xinjiang, vast territories in Central Asia that brought the empire governed from Beijing to its greatest extent ever.

Other imperial wars of the eighteenth century included the invasion of Tibet in 1720, when Qing troops expelled occupying Zunghars and began a lengthy period of Qing domination; the suppression of a Muslim uprising at Ush in Xinjiang in 1765; the two Jinchuan wars, fought for control of the Sichuan-Tibet borderlands in 1747-9 and 1771-6; the suppression of two Muslim uprisings in Gansu province in the 1780s; and two Gurkha wars of 1788-92, fought to retain Qing control of Tibet. Thus, by the middle of the eighteenth century, the Qing empire included, besides China and Manchuria, Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang. In all those regions, religion – Tibetan or Lamaist Buddhism and, to a lesser extent, Islam – played a crucial political role.

The connection between religion and war in China has been pervasive but not always obvious. In the histories of other parts of the world, religious wars occur frequently; for example, the Crusades of medieval Europe, the later European wars between Catholics and Protestants, and the Islamic jihads. Moreover, the 'civilizing mission' of empire-building European powers contained a strong religious element; the intention was to Christianize, variously, and if necessary by force, the barbarous natives of Africa and Asia, including China. But in China, wars of religion were virtually unknown for two reasons: there was no single established religion of state, and the religions that were at one time or another prevalent lacked a strong evangelical element.

Qing emperors saw no clear delineation between religion and politics. Unless religion was controlled absolutely, it was a threat to their sovereignty; in other words, religion either specifically served the state or subverted it. Emperors could not brook competition, whether located in the unpredictable supernatural world or in the human one. The Qing state thus preferred to monopolize all contact with the supernatural world, so far as possible, in order to keep it under control. Although religious activity was not banned, anyone who claimed a special relationship with spirits did risk breaking the law, because, in effect, their principal source of power was beyond Qing control, and, as such, heterodox (*xie*):¹ there was a presumption that members of such sects, almost by definition susceptible to disaffection against the state, might gain access to black magic that could be turned to treacherous purposes. It was, in part, out of such considerations that the Qing regarded such millenarian groups as the White Lotus, the Eight Trigrams, and their variants, as a potential menace.

¹ On Qing multiculturalism in war, see Joanna Waley-Cohen, 'Commemorating War in Eighteenth-Century China', *Modern Asian Studies*, xxx (1996), 869-99.

¹ See, e.g., Xue Yunsheng, *Duli Cunyi* (Beijing, 1905; repr. Taipei, 1970), no. 162.

Religions that recognized an authority within this world but beyond the geographic scope of the empire were similarly suspect. Christianity, Islam, and Tibetan Buddhism all fell into this category. The Kangxi emperor, for example, resisted papal claims to authority over Chinese Christians in the first decades of the eighteenth century because, in his view, the possibility that some Chinese would thereby owe allegiance to some authority other than himself posed a threat to his dominion over his subjects. In fact, no actual wars involving Christianity occurred in China for almost another one hundred fifty years, and that war, the Taiping rebellion (1851-64) had little to do with outsiders' attempts to woo Chinese away from their rulers' authority. Similarly, although the Qing tolerated Islam, they were unusually jittery about the unsettling effect of Chinese Muslims on the stability of the imperial order, both in Xinjiang, where there was a strong Muslim presence, and in the north-west of China proper, where two uprisings in the 1780s proved to be a prelude to a series of major Muslim rebellions that rocked the region in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

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This essay focuses on the role of religion in the second Jinchuan war (1771-6), fought in the highlands of western Sichuan province, on the Tibetan frontier. It argues that this war formed part of a continuum; in other words, like all other major wars of the high Qing, it involved the attempt to gain or retain control over populations whose religious beliefs raised questions about the solidity of their political allegiance to the Qing emperor.

In short, the Yellow Hat sect of Tibetan Buddhism, the *dGe-lugs-pa*, hoped to take advantage of the war to extend their influence into the Jinchuan area, a long-time centre of the indigenous Tibetan Bon religion as well as a minor stronghold of the Red Hat sect of Tibetan Buddhism,¹ the Karma-pa, the Yellow Hats' principal competitor.² The Qing were willing to support the Yellow Hats, with whom in public they professed an intimate alliance, but only to the extent that such support did not undermine their own ultimate control over the region. In order to understand the complexities of the situation, therefore, we must provide a brief sketch of the highly complex role Tibetan Buddhism played in Qing imperial politics.

¹ Not all adherents of Tibetan Buddhism were Tibetans: some were Mongolians.

² According to Joseph Fletcher, 'monasteries of the older, "unreformed" monastic orders held their lands by recognizing the political authority of the Dalai Lama, to whom in theory all land belonged. These older orders, the *Sa-skya-pa*, *rNying-ma-pa*, and *bKa'-rgyud-pa*, have been referred to collectively as the Red Sect, but, like the *dGe-lugs-pa*, they were monastic orders rather than sects, and the epithet Red is more properly reserved for the so-called Red Hat lamas of the Karma-pa sub-order of the *bKa'-rgyud-pa* to distinguish them from the Black Hat line': 'Ch'ing Inner Asia c. 1800', in *The Cambridge History of China: X: Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911*, pt. 1, ed. J. K. Fairbank (Cambridge, 1978), p. 99.

After Buddhism reached Tibet from India in the late seventh century, it gradually came to prevail over the pre-existing indigenous religion, Bon, which itself took on some Buddhist features in order to remain competitive. Over time, several different orders of Tibetan Buddhism developed, with doctrines similar to one another, but with each claiming descent from a different master. One of the most influential was the Red Hat sect, but in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, a new school, the Yellow Hat sect, gradually gained in influence and, by the mid-Qing, was in the process of becoming the dominant religion of Tibet. But not without energetic opposition; competition among the different sects for supremacy – which in that theocratic context meant political as well as religious supremacy – was intense.

In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the leader of the Yellow Hats, seeking military reinforcement against the various other sects with whom they competed for power, especially the Red Hats, formed an alliance with the Mongols, who were regrouping in the hope of reviving the kind of confederation that had once made their forebears so powerful. As part of that alliance, the Mongol leader, Altan Khan (1507-83), converted to Yellow Hat Buddhism and recognized its leader as the Dalai, or Universal, Lama. Following their khan's lead, many rank-and-file Mongols also converted to Yellow Hat Buddhism, thus giving it a much broader base of support.

In 1639, the Khoshuud Mongols under Gūūshi Khan (d. 1656) invaded Tibet at the invitation of the Dalai Lama, who wished to use Mongol military power to crush his Red Hat rivals. Under Mongol military protection, the Yellow Hat sect thus became predominant both in Tibet and among the Mongols and, in 1640, Tibetan Buddhism was officially adopted as the religion of the Mongols. As a result, many Mongolians, as well as Tibetans, now owed at least spiritual, if not also political, allegiance to the Dalai Lama. At the same time, the Mongols, with the support of the Zunghars, who themselves had close ties with the Dalai Lama, effectively took over control of Tibet.¹

From the Mongols' point of view, the alliance with the Yellow Hats evoked the historically close relationship between the Mongol leader Khubilai Khan (r. 1260-94), who established the Yuan dynasty and became emperor of China in the late thirteenth century, and the 'Phags-pa lama, a scion of the most powerful family in Tibet. They had forged a so-called 'lama-patron' relationship, in which the 'Phags-pa lama acknowledged Khubilai as a universal Buddhist ruler, or *cakravartin*, and the reincar-

¹ The following section on the early Qing draws on the work of Dai Yingcong, 'The Rise of the South-western Frontier under the Qing, 1640-1800' (Ph.D. dissertation, Washington, 1996).

nation of the Bodhisattva Mañjusri, the third member of a Buddhist trinity whose other two members, in their latter-day incarnations, were variously said to be the Dalai Lama and one of the Mongol khans.¹ For his part, Khubilai put the 'Phags-pa lama in charge of Tibet, in what amounted to a joint secular and sacred rulership of Tibet and Mongolia and, for a time, China. This device enabled Khubilai to dominate Tibet politically without force, while allowing Tibetan religious leaders considerable autonomy over the faithful. Though it pre-dated the development of the Yellow Hat sect, as a configuration of power it served as a seductive precedent, and one the Manchus intended to emulate.

As a political mechanism, moreover, the lama-patron relationship had an added advantage for the Manchus in that it was not associated exclusively with the Mongols. In 1407, the Ming ruler, the Yongle emperor (r. 1402-24), had followed Khubilai's precedent by exchanging titles for religious initiation, and identification as the reincarnation of Mañjusri, with a senior lama from Tibet. The device attracted the Manchus because they sought to present different images to the diverse peoples within their empire, drawing, for example, on predominantly Buddhist precedents as part of their schemes to pacify the Mongols, and on Chinese and Confucian precedents to legitimate their rulership of China. In other words, the fact that both the Mongol Yuan and the native Ming had adopted some form of lama-patron relationship with Tibet rendered the precedent doubly valuable.

The Mongols submitted to the Manchus before the latter established themselves in China in 1644, encouraging the Tibetan religious establishment to follow suit. In 1652, the Dalai Lama paid a formal visit to the Qing ruler, the Shunzhi emperor, who recognized Mongol authority in Tibet but also appointed his own administrative official there. The extent to which, at this juncture, the Manchus were interested in Tibetan Buddhism from a strictly religious, as distinct from a political, or politico-religious, point of view, remains somewhat unclear; doubtless it varied both among individual rulers and as the need to dominate Tibet became more pressing. For instance, Hung Taiji, the leader of the Manchus prior to the conquest of China, disparaged the Mongols' adoption of Lamaist Buddhism, suggesting that it had undermined their martial prowess. This implies that, had any pre-conquest rapprochement with the Tibetan religious leaders taken place under his auspices, it would have been done for strictly pragmatic reasons, not out of any religious impulse.² Yet under the high Qing emperors, imperial interest in the rituals and initiations of Tibetan

¹ A Bodhisattva is a superior spiritual being who, having already attained Buddhist enlightenment, postpones personal nirvana in order to help those still trapped in the cycle of suffering that defines human life; a bodhisattva periodically reappears among men in a new reincarnation.

² Daqing Taizong *shilu* 18, 3b, cited by Dai, 'Rise of the Southwestern Frontier', p. 81.

Buddhism does seem to have gone beyond what was strictly necessary for purely political purposes. Even if imperial willingness to accept Tantric initiation arose, as Samuel M. Grupper suggests, in part out of a desire to acquire some of the magical powers associated with lamas, in the end the emperors seem to have become true believers.¹

From the outset, the Manchus objected to the dual political and religious alliance between the Mongols and the Tibetans, because they feared that the Dalai Lama – an influential religious leader considerably nearer than the pope in Rome – might become a focal point for opposition to their own hegemony. They themselves intended to supplant the Mongols in any arrangements with Tibet; they envisaged their rule as a joint secular and sacred authority shared with Tibetan Buddhist leaders, along the lines of the device once employed by Khubilai Khan.

Yet, until the 1680s, when the successful conclusion of the campaign to suppress the rebellious Three Feudatories enabled the Manchus to consolidate their hold over China proper, they paid little attention to the north-west. By then, the Mongols, particularly the Zunghars, had taken advantage of the Qing focus on the rebellion to the south to mount a series of attacks on Qing territory in northern Mongolia. To protect their security, the Qing launched in the 1690s a series of campaigns against the Zunghars, whose leader, Galdan, (1644[1632?]-1697) had once been a Yellow Hat lama in Tibet and who retained close ties to the religious establishment there. During these campaigns, at the latest, the Manchus came to recognize that, politically, it was essential to tighten their control over Tibet and its religious establishment, because such control was critical to their long-term domination of Mongolia and Zungharia, and hence the key to imperial expansion to the north and north-west.

This goal became an integral part of the Qing campaign to eliminate the Zunghars. In 1717, in the course of a highly complex dispute over the Dalai Lama succession, the Zunghars invaded Tibet; in 1720, the Qing drove the Zunghars out, nominally to support the 'true' new Dalai Lama but in reality to dislodge the Zunghars and consolidate their own control. The Qing were now dominant in Tibet, at the expense not only of the Zunghars but also of the Mongols, who had dominated Tibet for most of the preceding century. It was a milestone in the push to expand Qing imperial control in Inner and Central Asia.

¹ Samuel M. Grupper, 'Manchu Patronage and Tibetan Buddhism during the First Half of the Ch'ing Dynasty', *Journal of the Tibetan Society*, iv (1984), 47-75; see also James P. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793* (Durham, NC, 1995), pp. 39-42 and 'Lamas, Emperors, and Rituals: Political Implications in Qing Imperial Ceremonies', *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, xvi (1993), 243-78; and Chia Ning, 'The Lifanyuan and the Inner Asia Rituals in the Early Qing (1644-1795)', *Late Imperial China*, xiv (1993), 60-92.

Although the Qing emperors were more or less equal to the Dalai Lamas in the competition for power over their Tibetan Buddhist subjects, the relationship between them was more than a simple struggle for supremacy. As James P. Hevia suggests, both emperor and Dalai Lama made public displays of claims to authority over the other, while at the same time privately purporting to acknowledge the other's superior status.¹ Here Tibetan and Chinese accounts often diverge, the Tibetan accounts portraying the emperor's respect for the Dalai Lama as his teacher, and the Chinese portraying the emperor as condescending to the Dalai Lama. Such ambiguities were exposed most clearly in wartime, when emperor and Dalai Lama sometimes vied with one another for authority over the Mongols, although they were capable of joining forces to stop the Mongols from feuding. Moreover, the Kangxi emperor was both ready to invoke the common religious ideals of himself and the Dalai Lama whenever this seemed expedient, and obsessed with destroying the Dalai Lama's loyal disciple, Galdan.² Such seemingly inconsistent approaches arose out of the desire to be all things to all the diverse subjects of the Qing empire.

The same phenomenon helps to explain the Qianlong emperor's attempts to represent himself as the reincarnation of the Bodhisattva Mañjusri and, by association, Khubilai. Assumption of this 'persona' implied that the Manchu emperor had superseded the Mongol khans as the 'new Khubilai', with the consequence that the Qing empire (into which Mongolia was subsumed) had a special relationship with Tibet that echoed Khubilai and the 'Phags-pa lama's'.³

Qing imperial politico-religious aspirations also prompted the emperors to consecrate numerous Tibetan Buddhist temples, notably the Yong He Gong ('Lama Temple') in Beijing. The erection of temples and stelae was a staple feature of the Qing imperial project, done to commemorate military victories, as well as to convey a particular point of view. Although the Yong He Gong had been the residence of the Qianlong emperor's father before he became the Yongzheng emperor, the Qianlong emperor had it converted into an important religious centre, partly to express Qing hegemony over Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism. In it stood, among other imperial proclamations, a stele engraved in four languages (Chinese, Manchu, Mongolian, and Tibetan) with the Qianlong emperor's inscription, *Lama shuo* (*Pronouncement on Lamas*), of 1792. The text sought to locate the connections between emperors of China and Tibetan Buddhism

¹ Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar*, esp. ch. 2.

² Peter C. Perdue, conversation, 1997; see also Jonathan Spence, *Emperor of China: Self-Portrait of K'ang-hsi* (London, 1974), pp. 18-22 and *passim*.

³ David M. Farquhar, 'Emperor as Bodhisattva in the Governance of the Ch'ing Empire', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, xxxviii (1978), 5-34.

in the tradition dating back to the Mongols, unambiguously claimed Qing authority over Tibet and the Yellow Hat sect (including the right to nominate the successor to the Dalai Lama), and proclaimed that Qing protection was prerequisite to peace in Mongolia.¹

The Qing also expressed their hegemony over the various parts of their empire by building reconstructions of famous landmarks and landscapes at their various capitals. The best-known example was located at the palace complex at Chengde (Rehe), the Qing summer capital on the edge of Mongolia and Manchuria, north of Beijing. The Chengde complex included temples and palaces that exactly replicated those in Lhasa, as well as man-made landscapes that resembled the Mongolian steppe and beauty spots in south China. In these ways, art and architecture became instruments of the imperial project. When applied to Tibetan Buddhism, the religious connotations revealed the intent to control the faith as well as the faithful.² In the eighteenth century, this intent emerged clearly in the Jinchuan campaigns fought in Sichuan province.

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The Jinchuan or Giarong area of western Sichuan province was inhabited by largely self-governing ethnic minorities with hereditary chieftains, over whom the Qing claimed authority but, in fact, exercised little control. It resembled a fiefdom or series of fiefdoms within the empire, in which tribes frequently disputed over territory, between times making marriage alliances among their rulers. The Qing left them alone unless one chieftain displayed an inclination to increase his power at his neighbours' expense, the cause of the first Jinchuan war of the 1740s, when Qing armies moved in to stop the advance of the chieftain known as Shaluoben.

In this war, which later became known as the first of the Qianlong emperor's Ten Great Campaigns, the Qing suppressed the Jinchuan with some difficulty, and within twenty years the Jinchuan rose again. This time, two cousins, Suonuomu and Senggesang, respectively grandson and great-nephew of Shaluoben and the leaders of the Greater and Lesser Jinchuan tribes, formed an alliance and attacked their neighbours with a view to taking over their territory and steadily aggrandizing themselves. As their success was bound to be the Qing's loss, the Qing again intervened. Eventually, the Lesser Jinchuan were defeated, but not before the annihila-

¹ See F. D. Lessing, *Yung-Ho-Kung: An Iconography of the Lamaist Cathedral in Peking, with Notes on Lamaist Mythology and Cult* (Stockholm, 1942), pp. 57-62.

² See Philippe Foret, 'The Qing Imperial Landscape Project', unpublished manuscript, 1994; Anne Chayet, *Les Temples de Jehol et leurs modèles tibétains* (Paris, 1985). On the use of architecture as an expression of links between Manchu rulers and Buddhist cosmology at the pre-conquest capital in Shenyang (Mukden), see Grupper, 'Manchu Patronage', p. 53.

tion of a Qing army under commander-in-chief Wenfu, at Muguomu, in one of the Qing's worst defeats in years.

It took several more years before Qing armies were able to capture Suonuomu and Senggesang. The troops had a difficult time in the mountainous terrain, where the weather was unpleasant and the natives both extraordinarily hostile and effective at resisting Qing assaults on their lofty stone fortresses. But in the end, at considerable cost and with the help of foreign-designed artillery, the Qing won the war – the fifth of the Ten Great Campaigns – and brought the area more fully under metropolitan control. One might end the story here, but for the question of religion.

At its outset, the war was characterized by the Qing themselves simply as a campaign to bring rebellious minority groups, loosely referred to as 'the Jinchuan', under Qing control. Initial reports make little mention of religion, which suggests that Qing authorities did not at first grasp its central role. As the war dragged on, however, the Qianlong emperor and his advisers came to understand that more than political authority or territorial control was at stake.¹

In the Jinchuan area, which was a centre of the Tibetan Bon religion, still a competitor with Buddhism, native chieftains often held positions giving them religious as well as secular authority. The Qing, though, were unaware of the significance of this: their records refer to Shaluoben as though it were his name, rather than, as they occasionally grasped, a religious title denoting the principal master of a Bon monastery. Qing generals at the Jinchuan front noted that the younger sons of the Jinchuan rulers customarily became monks of the Bon religion, and that, as such, they automatically took the title Shaluoben. This was true of the chief holdout against the Qing in the second Jinchuan war, Suonuomu, who was sometimes referred to as Shaluoben Suonuomu, indicating his religious authority.² However, not all the tribes in the area were Bon adherents, nor did all of them fight on Suonuomu's side in the war: the Qing, in fact, were adept at seeking out divisions among the different political and religious groups and turning one against another.

One of the Qianlong emperor's close advisers was a Mongolian scholar-politician-cum-religious figure known in Chinese as the Zhangjia Khutukhtu and in Tibetan as Lcangskya (1717-86). A former classmate of the emperor, he had studied as a young man with the Dalai Lama in Lhasa and become closely identified with the Yellow Hat leadership, by whom he

¹ See, e.g. [Taipei, Academica Sinica], Wenfu, *Jinchuan Zougao* (Wenfu died at Muguomu in 1773); cf. Nayan Cheng, *A Wencheng Gong Nianpu* (1813; repr. Taipei, 1971).

² See Patrick Mansier, 'La Guerre du Jinchuan (Rgyal-Rong): son contexte politico-religieux', in *Tibet: Civilisation et Société (Colloque organisé par la Fondation Singer-Polignac, Paris. Les 27, 28, 29 août 1987)* (Paris, 1990), pp. 125-42.

was ordained in 1735. Returning to Beijing, he played a dual role, first of advising the emperor on Tibetan and Mongolian affairs, including religious matters, and sometimes acting as his personal emissary to the Tibetans and the Mongols, and second, of acting as a semi-official representative of the Dalai Lama at the Qianlong emperor's court. In Beijing, he used his unusually close relationship with the emperor, whom he was said to have initiated into the mysteries of Tantric ritual, to promote the cause of the Yellow Hats.

The Zhangjia Khutukhtu's support for the Yellow Hats led him to despise their rivals of the Bon religion. From the perspective of the Yellow Hats, the Jinchuan war may well have appeared as an unforeseen bonus, in the sense that just as the Mongols had once helped them fend off Red Hat power, now Qing military power could help the Yellow Hats to destroy the Bon challenge to their supremacy. There is no doubt that it was partly owing to the Zhangjia Khutukhtu's influence that the Qianlong emperor was willing to try to suppress the Bon religion in the Jinchuan area. By doing so, he could ingratiate himself with the Dalai Lama and the Yellow Hats, with whom it was preferable to maintain as cordial relations as possible in order to discourage any attempt by the Mongols, or others, to oust the Qing from Tibet.

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What the Qianlong emperor found objectionable about the Bon religion, perhaps more than its status as a religious competitor of the Yellow Hats, was its adepts' ability to perform magic, which proved just as effective as gunfire in undermining his armies' morale, already under severe assault. The Qianlong emperor, who liked to attribute his own military victories to divine assistance, could not allow others to do the same.¹ Both Chinese and Tibetan sources imply that magic, deployed by the Bon against the Qing and on behalf of the Qing against the rebels, played a significant role in the Jinchuan war.

The use of magic, especially against enemies, had long been a prominent feature of the Bon religion. Whether or not the Qianlong emperor himself believed in supernatural forces, it mattered if his troops believed that they were being undone by magic. Thus we find him, while making routine assertions of the power of the orthodox (*zheng*) to overcome the unorthodox or improper (*xie*), complaining about Bon monks chanting magical

¹ For some examples of the Qianlong emperor's claim to be receiving divine assistance, see, e.g., *Pingding Liang Jinchuan Fanglüe* (originally published in Beijing by the Office of Military History, 1782; repr. Beijing, 1991), p. 1683, 123, 52; Peng Yuanrui, comp., *Gaozong Yuzhi Shiwen Shi Quan Ji*, ed. Xiong Hui, pp. 400-1 (repr. Zhengzhou, 1989-90); Zhang Zhao, Liang Shizheng et al., *Shi Qu Bao Ji Xubian* 1793 (repr. Taipei, 1969-71), i. 241-6.

incantations against the Qing army, and about certain types of demon-traps (*zhenyawu*) that, when ritually buried by Bon monks, could cause trouble to Qing armies, at the least by unnerving them. The Qianlong emperor issued instructions that, if his armies unearthed any of these traps at the monasteries they were gradually taking over, they should at once throw them into fire or water in order to destroy their magical power in such a way as to convince the troops that the devices posed no danger. Even if they found none, they should still pretend to have done so, and should go through the motions of destroying them, so that the troops would once more take heart. In short, maintaining troop morale was a military issue for which no effort should be spared.

The use of another Bon magical technique, thought to be an effective way of destroying one's enemy, allegedly was ordered against the Qing by none other than Suonuomu of Greater Jinchuan himself. The technique involved inserting rolled-up papers inscribed with magic formulas or drawings of animals thought to have magical powers, such as foxes, eagles, snakes, and horses, inside hollow ox horns which were then buried in the ground.¹ But the Bon were not alone in calling on supernatural aid to win the war. According to Tibetan sources, the Qing responded in kind. The Zhangjia Khutukhtu himself was said to have conjured up fireballs and dust-clouds that confounded the enemy and, in the end, enabled the Qing to pacify them. No such reference, however, has yet come to light in Chinese sources, which suggests that the Qianlong emperor may have preferred to attribute his victories, in public at least, to his greater military prowess.²

Other Chinese accounts of the war suggest indirectly that the Qing used religion in the Jinchuan war in another way, one that had nothing to do with magic and the supernatural but perhaps invoked the idea of using one alien religion against another. The emperor sent Felix da Rocha (1713-81), the Jesuit director of the Imperial Board of Astronomy, to the battlefield to make more accurate surveys that would enable the Qing artillery to fire more effectively, and to supervise the casting of cannon on the spot, an expedient to which the Qing were driven by the precipitous terrain of the area. One of the Qing's difficulties in the Jinchuan war was the rebels' ability to build tall stone towers that were virtually impregnable without effective artillery. Shortly after da Rocha reached the front, new cannon were built and fired, apparently in accordance with his directions, leading

¹ *Qing Shilu Zangzu Shiliao* (Lhasa, 1982), 27 June 1775, v. 2, 591; 5 May 1776, vi. 2, 823, cited by Mansier, 'La Guerre du Jinchuan', p. 132.

² See Dan Martin, 'Bonpo Canons and Jesuit Cannons: On Sectarian Factors Involved in the Ch'ienlung Emperor's Second Goldstream Expedition of 1771-6, Based Primarily on Some Tibetan Sources', *Tibetan Journal*, xv (1990), 3-28.

to the successful destruction of rebel towers, and thus contributing directly to the eventual Qing victory.¹

Qing generals in the field suspected that local specialists in weather magic were also deploying their skills against their armies. One of the many problems encountered by Qing troops in the Jinchuan area was snow during May and June, biting winds, whirling hail, and torrential rain that turned roads into mud that came up to their horses' bellies, making progress impossible.² Throughout the war, the Qing forces felt that the atrocious weather had in some way been deliberately brought on by magicians. Adherents of the Red Hat sect of Tibetan Buddhism were, for some reason, thought to be particularly adept at using *zhata* or *jada* rain magic which, throughout Central and Inner Asia, was believed to be a potent weapon that could tip the balance in battle. One of its best-known invocations had been against Chinggis Khan himself, and belief in its efficacy prevailed among many Turkic and Mongol groups, including those whom the Qing generals fighting the Jinchuan had earlier encountered in the wars fought to conquer Xinjiang.³

In 1772, three generals, possibly seeking to account for their inability to report much success in the war, addressed the emperor as follows:

At the beginning of the fourth month, it rained and snowed continuously on the troops on the southern front; really, in this uncivilized territory the weather is mostly cold and rarely warm; since ... early spring there has been a biting wind every day, and driving rain that starts and stops without warning. We suspect that the Xiaojinchuan, who habitually practise the Red Religion, are using *zhata* rain magic.

The emperor's response was ambiguous. At first he acknowledged that such conditions were practically definitive proof of witchcraft; then he fulminated about the dangers of letting people believe in this kind of thing: 'These kinds of improper methods are bound to strike fear into people's hearts, but the more we succumb to fear, the more outrageous their methods will be; if you confront spirits [by denying them spirithood], then the spirits naturally are overcome ... Wenfu and Agui must issue a proclamation to all the officers and men so that they all know my views.'⁴

¹ See Joanna Waley-Cohen, 'God and Guns in Eighteenth-Century China: Jesuit Missionaries and the Military Campaigns of the Qianlong Emperor (1736-96)', Proceedings of the 33rd Conference of the International Congress of Asian and North African Studies: IV: *Contacts between Cultures: Eastern Asia: History and Social Sciences*, ed. Bernard Hung-kay Luk (Lewiston, 1992), pp. 94-9.

² References to atrocious weather appear in every account, official and private, of the war. For some examples, see Wenfu, *Jinchuan Zougao*; Nayancheng, *A Wencheng Gong Nianpu*, i. 463-7, QL 36/12/27; n.d., ii. 653-3, QL 37/12; ii. 751-2, QL 38/4/1; ii. 908-16, QL 38/8/29.

³ See Adam Molnar, *Weather Magic in Inner Asia* (Bloomington, 1994).

⁴ Nayancheng, *A Wencheng Gong Nianpu*, ii, 541-2, QL 37/5/12.

He authorized bonuses or extra rations to keep up the troops' morale regardless of the expense. No wonder, perhaps, that the second Jinchuan war was one of the costliest of his many wars.

In any event, whatever the effectiveness of the magic, it constituted an important weapon in the arsenal of both sides in the Jinchuan war: one side claimed that the Yellow Hats, represented by the Zhangjia Khutukhtu, were confounding the rebels in order to help the Qing side and, by association, the Yellow Hats, while the other side claimed that the Bon and the Red Hats were using magic to undermine the Qing.

The religious significance of the second Jinchuan war partly stemmed from the involvement of local lamas, who, to imperial fury, took an active part in the fighting. Not only did they advise the rebels, they also sheltered and fought with them. During the campaign, for example, Jinchuan troops frequently took refuge in monasteries, which Qing forces had first to expend considerable effort in capturing, and then to leave garrisoned with precious troops to prevent their re-occupation by the enemy. Often, lamas produced supernatural weapons; the Qianlong emperor particularly resented lamas who chanted incantations against his armies, although he also objected to their joining in the fighting. In some instances, too, it seems likely that lamas surrendered themselves, in the hope that Qing troops might hesitate to attack them as they would have done ordinary soldiers, or at least that their religious status might save them from the severest punishment. On one occasion in early 1776, for example, no less than sixty lamas emerged from a monastery to surrender to the Qing, providing enough distraction to enable Jinchuan fighters who had been hiding there to escape.¹

After the war, the emperor specified that the lamas must be moved out of the area to anticipate further trouble. Allowing the lamas to remain was both too risky and would be conniving at a breach of imperial law: the utterance of imprecations against the emperor's troops was an improper use of religion (*xiejiao*).² Some were executed while others were transported to Beijing by cage-cart. Of these, some were unlucky enough to find themselves part of the elaborate victory rituals, in which Suonuomu's severed head was presented to the emperor in front of a vast audience arrayed before the Meridian Gate (*wumen*).

Other lamas, more fortunate, were transferred from Beijing to monasteries within China proper or at the summer capital, Chengde. In Chengde, the Tibetan temples, built not only to demonstrate Qing emperors' religious devotion but also, and more particularly, as an expression of Qing

hegemony over Tibet, were ordered to accommodate the lamas as probationers; if they tried to escape, they were subject to immediate execution. This relocation was, presumably, a form of forcible conversion, if we assume that the lamas sent away from the Jinchuan region were mostly Bon or Red Hats and the Chengde temples were Yellow Hat. It was analogous to another aspect of post-war 'reconstruction' in the Jinchuan region: the transformation of Bon monasteries into Yellow Hat monasteries.¹

After the war, the Qianlong emperor attacked the Bon religion as an improper set of practices that could not be condoned. Though such an attitude must have pleased the Zhangjia Khutukhtu and the Dalai Lama, the emperor was hardly likely to deliver the Jinchuan region into the latter's hands after a costly six-year war to regain control of it. He preferred instead to let the Bon and the Red Hats serve as a counterweight to Yellow Hat power. Hence, he rejected suggestions that he should allow lamas to be sent from Tibet to help resuscitate religious life in the war-torn area: as he saw it, where there were lamas, there would sooner or later be whole religious communities, and these always led to trouble. Monasteries destroyed in the war had been turned into military barracks and were to remain so, and any monasteries permitted in the Jinchuan region would be manned by lamas sent from Beijing, presumably after careful vetting. Alternatively, lamas from the De'ergegeqing monastery, who had visited Qing military encampments during the war to recite sutras on their behalf, would be installed in a revitalized monastery after conversion at Beijing during an imperial audience to loyal subjects. In short, the Qianlong emperor identified the Yellow Hats as a potential threat even as in public he expressed his support for them, and he saw the other sects, the Bon and the Red Hats, as a means of checking the Yellow Hats' advance. Moreover, just as the Yellow Hats used the Zhangjia Khutukhtu as an unofficial imperial representative, so the emperor placed carefully selected lamas in the Jinchuan region to act as his intelligence.²

The Qianlong emperor's attempts to eradicate the Bon religion in the Jinchuan area were not altogether effective; perhaps they were not intended to be. In fact, the Bon religion was practised there until the late twentieth century, when Communist efforts may finally have succeeded in bringing it to an end.

The Qing's two-pronged approach – professions of whole-hearted support for the Yellow Hats accompanied by a clear intention not to facilitate their path to exclusive power in the Jinchuan region – was an integral part of a policy designed to co-opt and control the Tibetan Buddhists, itself

¹ Nayancheng, *A Wencheng Gong Nianpu*, 22 June 1772, ii. 541-3; iv. 1,831-5. QL 41/1/2.
² *Ibid.*, n.d., 1776, iv. 1,853-6, QL 41/1; n.d., 1,907-10, QL 41/4.

¹ On the punishment of the lamas, see, e.g., *Daqing Gaozong Shilu*, 1,007, 10b-11a, QL 41/4/22.
² *Qingshilu Zangzu Shiliao*, 26 April 1776, vi. 2,808.

vital to the establishment, expansion, and maintenance of the Qing empire. In the same way, the attacks on 'black magic' were designed partly to improve military effectiveness and partly to remind the people that religious observance could easily drift over the line into sedition.

* * *

Imperial ambivalence about the combination of magic, religion, and warfare was not limited to the Jinchuan war. For instance, as Susan Naquin explains, an observer on the government side in the Wang Lun rebellion of 1774 (at the height of the second Jinchuan war), recorded that rebels, chanting 'guns will not fire', appeared able to deflect government bullets. Certainly the chants were unnerving enough that the government troops consistently missed their targets. Only when Qing forces countered magic with magic were they able to overcome the rebels: they sent naked prostitutes on to the ramparts to deploy the yin force of their urine and menstrual blood (in fact, the blood of chickens and black dogs) in the hope of terrifying and immobilizing the enemy.¹

The Qianlong emperor's attitude towards the use of magic in war may have hardened with time. His reaction to claims, made in yet another war, that rebels were using magic against Qing troops gives us a fairly clear sense of the imperial position by the 1780s, several years after the end of the second Jinchuan war. This later campaign also involved a religion with foreign connections: in this case, an uprising staged by Muslims of Hezhou in Gansu province. The governor-general reported to the emperor that, 'when Qing troops fired their guns, [rebel leader] Wang Fulin used swords and circulated charms [so that the] bullets fell to the ground in confusion. Only when they shot down Wang Fulin were they able to kill the rest of the enemy.'

The Qianlong emperor was furious:

Guns [*wuqiang*] are a valuable part of our arsenal and there is no match for them when fired properly. In other words, if our troops do not practise [so as to become more] accurate, when the time comes to fire they will often fire too high, and that is how they come to miss the enemy, or maybe the enemy starts firing before [our men] see them, or when the enemy arrives we run out of bullets or powder. This is a common and pervasive disease of the Green Standard Army. Just think! If the enemy can recite charms to avoid gunfire, why don't they do it to avoid [our] arrows; [in that case the whole thing] would be much more credible [but since this is not in fact the case] there is absolutely no logic to this. Yet the common gunner of the Green Standard army is unskilled and relies on excuses to put the blame on others, without thinking that he might practise so as to be [well] prepared.

¹ Susan Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion* (New Haven, 1981), pp. 100-1.

Moreover, it means that any residual devotees of improper teachings [*xiejiao*, heterodox religion] will hear it and in their turn rely on [such] words to mislead the masses.¹

Although it is clear that the Qianlong emperor does not believe in this type of magic and regards it as nothing more than an excuse, for military purposes he cannot take a chance on others' claiming to believe in it.

The Qianlong emperor's criticism identified the Green Standard troops as chronic slackers, prone to blame their incompetence on forces beyond human control, and contrasted them unfavourably with the Manchu and Mongol banner forces. The Qing armies were divided among Manchu/Mongol banner troops and Chinese Green Standard troops, although ethnic separateness was not strictly maintained; the latter was a kind of constabulary used as auxiliary reserves in time of war. The Qianlong emperor tended to take a dim view of the Green Standard troops, particularly after the Muguomu débâcle, the official cause of which was the pusillanimity of deserting Green Standard troops. At that time, the inference had been that Manchu/Mongol troops would not have run away as the Green Standards were said to have done, thus bringing disaster on the Qing army. Similarly, the Qianlong emperor's comments imply that Manchu troops would have drilled properly and thus would not have needed to claim that supernatural forces made them miss their targets. Later references to Green Standard ineptitude specifically order that the soldiers use the same illustrated drilling manuals as the crack Manchu troops.² In short, Manchu soldiers were more professional, and better suited to imperial armies than Chinese troops.

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The major wars of the high Qing – those that directly related to the Manchu imperial project – all contained a significant religious element. In pursuit of empire, it was critically important for the Qing to co-opt and control religious beliefs, particularly those with an external source of authority. The Qianlong emperor's view of himself and his imperial aspirations were centred on a secure empire; in that regard, the secret of success, as he repeatedly noted both by quoting ancient Chinese texts and by urging the merits of rigorous training programmes on his officers, lay in military preparedness.³ Whatever claims Tibetan sources might make for

¹ *Gongzhongdang Qianlong Chao Zouzhe*, xlii. 75-6, QL 43/2/10.

² See, e.g., *Gongzhongdang Qianlong Chao Zouzhe*, xlii. 635, QL 43/4/13.

³ See Lu Zhengming, 'Qianlong Di "Shi Quan Wu Gong" Chu Tan', in *Zhongguo Junshi Shi Lunwen Ji*, ed. Nanjing Junchusi Bianyan Shi and the editorial dept. of *Shi Xue Yue Kan* (Kaifeng, 1989), pp. 239-58.

the magical contributions of the Zhangjia Khutukhtu, and though the Qianlong emperor might have felt that he had to pay attention to the enemies' purported deployment of magic because of its effect on morale, there was no room, in the Qianlong emperor's overall scheme of creating an effective army to extend and protect the great Qing empire, for any kind of religion that was not under Qing control. The political risks were too great. The religious basis of Qing rule allowed no latitude for even potential rivals.

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An Island of Women: The Discourse of Gender in Qing Travel Writing about Taiwan

SEVENTEENTH- AND EIGHTEENTH-century Chinese travellers to the island colony of Taiwan almost invariably remarked that indigenous custom gave precedence to the female sex. 'The savages value woman and undervalue man' became a commonplace of Qing ethnographic writing about the indigenous peoples of the island, known as *fan* (savages) to the Chinese. As an inversion of the Confucian patriarchal maxim 'value man and undervalue woman', this pithy expression indexed the alterity of Taiwan to the Chinese who colonized the island in 1683. Encountering a land with female tribal heads, uxorilocal-residence marriage, and matrilineal inheritance, Chinese travellers perhaps thought that they had stumbled upon the mythical Kingdom of Women – the Chinese equivalent of Amazon. As in the Kingdom of Women, it seemed, here women took the lead, and men followed. The anomalous gender roles of the indigenous peoples thus became one of the most popular topics in Qing travel writing about Taiwan. As writers were fascinated with the habits of 'the savage woman', women and their daily lives were a favourite subject of illustrated ethnographic albums. Female sex roles attracted this intense interest not only because they appeared strange in and of themselves, but also because they served as a marker of the strangeness of Taiwan as a whole. The discourse of gender was central to Qing colonial representations of Taiwan's 'savagery'.

Indeed, gender is closely intertwined with ethnicity in pre-modern Chinese ethnographic discourse. As far back as the Six Dynasties (222-589), the trope of gender inversion (the reversal of normative sex roles) was used to represent foreignness in both historical and literary texts. Kingdoms of Women were widely recorded in geographical texts such as the ancient *Shanhai jing* (*Classic of Mountains and Seas*, 6c. BC-1c. AD), as well as in dynastic histories and travel accounts. Such lands also became a favourite subject of fiction, the most famous Qing example being the nineteenth-century satiric novel *Jinghua yuan* (*Flowers in the Mirror*). The trope of gender inversion was particularly popular in accounts of the region now known as South-East Asia, and (in the late Qing) of America