

groups operating there. “Xinjiang has been far quieter since 2001 than has any part of China proper” (p. 112).

On the level of practical politics, though, there may be less disagreement. Bovingdon situates the emergence of the Uyghur issue internationally in the context of the Western “humanitarian” interventions of the 1990s—consistently opposed by China—and recognizes that talk of self-determination is meaningless for Uyghurs without similar infringements on Chinese sovereignty, highly unlikely in today’s context. The book thus ends on a pessimistic note: the author’s “representational politics” gives the Uyghurs a degree of agency, but in an exclusively ethno-national field, which in the real world seems to lead to a political dead end.

If maintaining a sense of national identity is the only realistic goal left for Uyghurs in Xinjiang’s ever-narrowing political environment, then the Chinese goal of “depoliticizing” nationality in Xinjiang has already been achieved: there is nothing left for them to bargain for *as Uyghurs*. Efforts of PRC scholars and politicians to forward this trend thus seem unlikely to bring the desired national harmony to Xinjiang, making this book a timely and important contribution to our understanding of the ongoing conflict in northwest China.

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Shinchō to Chibetto Bukkyō: bosatsuō to natta Kenryūtei [The Qing Dynasty and the Tibetan Buddhist World: The Qianlong Emperor Who Became a Buddhist King]. By YUMIKO ISHIHAMA. Tokyo: Waseda University Press, 2011. 330 pp. ¥7,000 (cloth)

doi:10.1017/S0021911812001477

A decade after publishing *Historical Research on the Tibetan Buddhist World*, Waseda University professor Yumiko Ishihama presents another exceptional work contributing to the ongoing discussions on Qing China in relation to the Tibetan Buddhist world. Ishihama has consistently focused on the Tibetan Buddhist world, including Tibetans, Mongols, and Manchus (p. 331), a “network transgressing geographical and ethnic boundaries that took shape at the turn of the eighteenth century” (p. 253).¹ Consulting comprehensive sources in Tibetan, Chinese, Mongolian, and Manchu, she offers refreshing insights into eighteenth-century Qing China from a Tibetan Buddhist perspective.

The book challenges conventional approaches to the Qing-Tibetan Buddhism relation. Those approaches center on Qing court activities and consider Tibetan Buddhism as merely a political tool to mollify the Mongols. Ishihama

¹All quotations in this review, as well as the book’s subtitle, were translated from the Japanese original by the reviewer.

focuses on the Tibetan Buddhist world instead, including stupas (chapter 1), monasteries (chapters 2, 4, 5, and 6), rituals (chapter 7), and the production of Buddhist texts and images (chapters 3, 8, 9, and 10). She argues that the Tibetan Buddhist world understood the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736–95) as “a reincarnated Buddhist king who had gone beyond ethnicities, time and geography for the sake of the salvation of all sentient beings” (p. 256). Chapter 10 shows how the Sixth Panchen Lama endorsed the Qianlong emperor as a reincarnation of renowned Buddhists in writing. This Buddhist perspective merits further scholarly attention, as it provides an ideal entryway through which to understand how the Tibetan world responded to the Qianlong emperor’s efforts.

Ishihama concurs with existing literature on the Qianlong emperor’s genuine devotion to Tibetan Buddhism. In chapters 6, 8, and 9, she painstakingly examines how the emperor made offerings appropriate to the Buddhist world at the White Stupa in Beijing. Additionally, the Qianlong emperor studied Buddhist philosophy assiduously in preparation for receiving empowerment from his religious teacher, the Third Chyan kya (Lcang Skya), who was also a childhood schoolmate. Ishihama concludes, through reading Tibetan Buddhists’ writings about the Qianlong emperor, that they in fact saw the Qianlong emperor as a truly Buddhist king.

A highlight of this book is chapter 5, which juxtaposes the Yonghegong (TB: Dga’ ldan byin chags gling)—the largest Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Beijing—with the “Dga’ ldan” monastery in Khalkha Mongol lands and Bla brang bkra shis ’khyil in Amdo, a borderland of China and Tibet. She argues, primarily through studying their monastic colleges, that the emperor became a local patron of Yonghegong in similar fashion to how the Mongol nobility supported the other two monasteries.

Although the book title suggests that it concerns the Qianlong reign alone, Ishihama’s study actually reaches back to the seventeenth century. The first two chapters illustrate how Buddhists, through the Chakhar Mongols, arrived in the Manchus’ then-capital of Mukden (present-day Shenyang). Her discussion of early interactions between the Manchu leaders and Tibetan Buddhists asks an often-overlooked question: under what historical circumstances did the emperor become a Buddhist king? Most scholars have overly addressed the Qianlong emperor and his personal interaction with his religious teacher, so much so that when considering the Qing in relation to Tibetan Buddhism, the Qianlong emperor is almost synonymic for the Qing. Ishihama does not answer the question thoroughly, either. For instance, she only mentions in brief the preceding Yongzheng (r. 1722–35) emperor. She submits that the relationship between the Qing and the Tibetan Buddhist world deteriorated in comparison to the Kangxi reign. But the short Yongzheng rule greatly impacted the ensuing sixty-year Qianlong reign. It was during the Yongzheng period that the borderland of Amdo officially became part of the Qing empire, and it was this region that many of the Gelukpa Buddhists originated from and stayed connected to while serving in the Qing court, including the Qianlong’s religious teacher, the Third Lcang Skya. It was the Yongzheng emperor who established the Xining Amban—an administrative post specific to the newly incorporated Amdo region.

What other institutional mechanisms were available to the Qianlong emperor for his efficacious partaking in the Tibetan Buddhist world? Focusing exceedingly on emperors, the Qianlong emperor in particular, results in an inadequate understanding of Qing China and the Tibetan Buddhist world.

Ishihama is also cautious about competitions for Manchu patronage within the Tibetan Buddhist world. Mukden's Shisheng monastery demonstrates, in Ishihama's opinion, the missionary accomplishments of the Sakya School in the early seventeenth century. But the Geluk hegemony deeply changed the historical narratives of the time; Ishihama's short discussion is inspiring, but one wonders if the Geluk School fully excluded others in the seventeenth century. Research shows that other schools were present at the Qing court with support from powerful princes at late as the 1730s. Matters were also complicated within the Geluk School. Chapter 10 indicates that the Sixth Panchen Lama tactically added a figure from central Tibet into the Amdo-originated Lcang Skya lineage of incarnations. Moreover, much attention is paid to highly respected Buddhists at the court. However they also traveled and wrote extensively: for instance, the Lcang Skya spent considerable time on the road and produced an enormous amount of writing. What, then, can one learn about the Buddhist world and the Qing at the margins from these writings? In other words, studying Qing-Tibetan Buddhist relations begins with the court, but should not stop there.

These questions aside, this book engages Qing imperial management with the Tibetan Buddhist world thoughtfully. It should thus not only be of interest to scholars of Tibetan history and of Qing frontier management, but also be inspiring to those interested in religion in multiethnic empires in early modern time. Some readers can also utilize the appendixes, which include Romanized versions of Mongolian, Tibetan, and Manchu stele inscriptions, and Chinese materials in the original script (pp. 260–305). Several chapters, such as chapter 5, on the significance of the Yonghegong in Beijing, and chapter 10, which compares the differences in reconstructing the lineage history of the Qianlong emperor and that of the Lcang Skya, would be particularly important to translate into English for a wider audience.

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Tibet: A History. By SAM VAN SCHAİK. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2011. xxiii, 324 pp. \$35.00 (cloth)
doi:10.1017/S0021911812001489

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