
From Lhasa to Beijing: The Significance of the Fifth Dalai Lama's Visit to the Qing Court in 1652

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Introduction

Evelyn Rawski's 1996 presidential address to the Association of Asian Studies, *Reenvisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History*, challenged the long-held belief by scholars that, despite the Qing's Manchu ethnicity, the key element behind the Qing Dynasty's acceptance by the Chinese people was that the Qing had been Sinicized. Instead, Rawski argues the opposite: "the key to Qing success, at least in terms of empire building, lay in its ability to use its cultural links with the non-Han peoples of Inner Asia and to differentiate the administration of the non-Han regions from the administration of the former Ming provinces."¹ Rawski's argument does not deny that Manchu leaders aimed to portray themselves as Chinese (which they did, evidenced by their acquisition of the Chinese language, acceptance of Confucian principles, and their interest in Chinese art and literature),² but that the brilliance in the Qing's successful quest to build a vast empire resided in their ability to adopt various customs according to the subjects they conquered, such as the Chinese, Tibetans, and Mongols.

¹ Evelyn Rawski, "Presidential Address: Reenvisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 55, no. 4 (1996): 831.

² Rawski, "Presidential Address," 834.

Rawski's main concern regarding the Sinicization theory of Qing success in this regard is that the theory is heavily reliant on official Chinese-language records. Risking obscuration of important historical fact and detail, the Qing court conducted its official business not only in Chinese, but also in Manchu. Until recently, historians have largely ignored documents written in Manchu, arguing that these documents would not reflect significant differences from Chinese-language sources.³ In the 1980s, however, access to Manchu-language sources improved and more historians began to study the Manchu language. Rawski determined that "Manchu-language documents were a vital part of an early Qing communications network that frequently bypassed Han Chinese officials."⁴ Rawski's conclusion was a major breakthrough: a new wealth of Manchu-language sources was now available to allow historians a better perspective of the Manchu ruling class. Consequently, this reality gave birth to the school of New Qing History, stimulating new academic research and historical debate. This paper extends upon Rawski's argument that Chinese-language sources have their limitations in studying the Qing Dynasty, and that a holistic analysis of linguistically diverse sources is necessary to draw more academically rigorous conclusions. In this paper, I will explore the visit by the Fifth Dalai Lama to the Shunzhi court of the Qing Dynasty, analyzing the historical records of this event through both Chinese and Tibetan sources according to Rawski's holistic methodological framework.

Background and Origin of the Qing

The Fifth Dalai Lama, often referred to as The Great Fifth, was the first Dalai Lama to exercise both temporal and spiritual authority over all of Tibet. Shortly after the Ming-Qing transition in 1644, the Fifth Dalai Lama visited the Qing court at the invitation of the Shunzhi Emperor in 1652. From an institutional perspective, both the Qing Dynasty and the Dalai Lama were quite new to the ownership of formal power, having gained

³ Ibid., 829.

⁴ Ibid., 829.

rulership in 1644 and 1642 respectively. The Fifth Dalai Lama, a renowned writer, detailed his journey to the Shunzhi court in his autobiography. It is no surprise that the Qing court also produced several Chinese-language records of this visit, the most prominent being the *Qingshilu*, or the “Veritable Records of the Qing Dynasty.”

These Chinese-language and Tibetan sources each have distinct perspectives. As I will further investigate, the primary concern of the Chinese with regards to the visit was effective implementation of protocol. This focus is most apparent in the Qing court’s discussion on whether or not the Emperor ought to meet the Dalai Lama outside of Beijing. Conversely, the Dalai Lama’s focus with regards to the visit is primarily concerned with religious practice. As Zahiruddin Ahmad notes, “this monkish learning is seen not only in the language used – it abounds in scriptural quotations and allusions – but also in the view of the whole word... secular affairs play a very minor part in that world.”⁵ Underlying the perspectives of these sources, a full picture of the Fifth Dalai Lama’s visit to the Qing court requires an understanding of the complex political and religious dynamics in China and Tibet in the 17th century, particularly between the Manchu, Mongols, and Tibetans.

Origin of the Qing Dynasty

The Qing dynasty, established in 1636 by the Manchu Hong Taiji, succeeded the Ming dynasty in 1644. Formerly titled the Jurchen, ancestors of the Manchu people and rulers of the Jin Dynasty, the Manchu reigned in northern China between 1122 and 1234 A.D. In the early seventeenth century, the father of Hong Taiji, Nurhaci, launched the Manchu conquest of China, declaring himself khan of the Later Jin Dynasty. Traditionally, rulers in China have employed the notion of the Mandate of Heaven to gain legitimacy amongst Chinese subjects. Posing as a reformist, Nurhaci claimed this Mandate and offered “to those Chinese with education who

⁵ Zahiruddin Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century*. (Roma: Istituto Italiano Per Il Medio Ed Estremo Oriente, 1970), 38.

surrendered... a chance of serving in the growing Jurchen bureaucracy, and senior Chinese officials who came over to his side were offered to marriage into his family, honorific titles, and high office.”⁶ After Nurhaci’s death in 1626, Hong Taiji took Nurhaci’s command.

Much like Nurhaci, Hong Taiji was very willing to adopt Chinese characteristics of rule and even employed Chinese officials. Hong imitated the Ming Dynasty’s bureaucratic system by establishing six ministries, he adopted adherence to the traditional Confucian method of examinations for civil service, and he continued the employment of Chinese officials throughout his new bureaucracy (even to the point that some Manchu advisors felt that he was being *too* generous to the Chinese).⁷ Most significantly, Hong Taiji declared the formation of the Qing Dynasty in 1636, posing a direct threat to the perishing Ming Dynasty. Hong died before the Manchu were able to complete their conquest of China, but, assisted by famines and unrest plaguing the Ming, Hong’s son, Shunzhi, successfully toppled the Ming Dynasty in 1644.

Once enthroned in the Forbidden City, the Qing made significant changes to Ming society by requiring men wear queues (the Manchu hairstyle), forbidding the practice of foot binding, and reducing the influence of court eunuchs.⁸ The Qing largely maintained the Ming system of governance, however. Most importantly, the Qing instituted a change such that each ministry would be led by two presidents, one Manchu and one Chinese. This bi-ethnic style of leadership was also implemented at the lower levels of Qing governance.⁹ The Qing were quick to realize that they were a minority, but that the system in place could be modified to their advantage through minor adjustments. This is not to say that the Manchus

⁶ Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013), 28.

⁷ I Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 28.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

in anyway became Chinese through administrative procedure. As Thomas Laird notes, intermarriage between the Manchu and Chinese was forbidden, Manchu officials were required to speak and read Manchu, and Manchu officials were assigned to oversee Chinese bureaucrats in order to ensure Manchu control.¹⁰ However, by adopting various Ming policies, at least in the eyes of Chinese officials, the Qing inherited much of the Ming approach to governance, particularly through their adoption of the Ming perspective regarding the existence of the ‘Sinocentric world order.’

The Qing and the Sinocentric World Order

The Qing Dynasty’s adoption of the traditional Chinese perspective of a Sinocentric world order, which stressed that China stood at the center of civilization in its unparalleled cultural supremacy, maintained the tribute system that structured much of Chinese foreign policy throughout history. For thousands of years preceding the Qing, Chinese dynasties maintained their sovereignty relatively independent of threats from other great civilizations. There have been disagreements among scholars, however, about the origins of the tribute system. John Fairbank argues the tribute system originated during the Zhou dynasty between 1046 and 256 B.C.E, Morris Rossabi contends the tribute system arose later during the Han dynasty sometime between 206 B.C.E and 220 A.D., whereas John Willis favors its origin during the Ming dynasty between 1368 and 1644 A.D.¹¹ Nonetheless, Sinocentrism was engrained in Chinese society when the Qing conquered the Ming Dynasty. Influenced by the Sinocentric tribute system and the Mandate of Heaven, Chinese foreign policy developed a peculiar method of guest ritual at the Chinese court.

James Hevia, a professor of history at the University of Chicago, highlights three general principles regarding the visitation of guests to the Qing Court. First, a guest, such as a lesser lord, is not invited to the Chinese

¹⁰ Thomas Laird, *The Story of Tibet*. (New York: Grove Press, 2006), 164.

¹¹ James Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), 12.

court, but rather is granted permission to enter the imperial domain. Second, there would be no parity between the guest and the Chinese emperor, and the process would emphasize the supremacy of the Chinese emperor. Third, the guest ritual would be infused with an explicit morality.¹² As I will further investigate, the Fifth Dalai Lama's visit to Beijing did not easily fit with the protocols of rigid Chinese guest rituals. It is important to note that the Qing Court did overlook some formalities of the traditional tribute system, indicating that the Qing did not totally conform to the Sinocentric view of the world. Rather, the Qing incorporated these Chinese guest rituals into their system of rulership. I will discuss this in detail after I describe the political landscape in Tibet and Mongolia.

Relations with and between the Mongols and the Tibetans

The relationship between the Mongols and the Tibetans extends back to the Yuan Dynasty in the thirteenth century. Like the Qing, the Yuan were a conquering dynasty that absorbed the Chinese state into a much larger political unit. The founder of the Yuan, Khublai Khan, received religious instruction in Tibetan Buddhism by Phagpa Gyaltsen, a young Tibetan monk who was a guest at the Mongol court. In return, Khublai Khan appointed Phagpa as his imperial preceptor and conferred upon him the title of "Great Precious Prince of the Faith."¹³ Phagpa's appointment allowed him to spread Tibetan Buddhism throughout the Mongol empire. The Mongols later transcribed Phagpa's ideas and edicts in a book titled *White History*, which stated that "the corner of sacred religion is the Lama, the Lord of Doctrine, the head of power is the Khan, the sovereign of terrestrial power."¹⁴ Later in his life, Phagpa returned to Tibet and established Mongol supremacy over Tibet by ruling in the Mongol's place, giving birth to the Lama-Patron relationship. This unique relationship framed the

¹² Ibid., 117.

¹³ W.W. Rockhill. *The Dalai Lamas of Lhasa and Their Relations with the Manchu Emperors of China*. (Delhi: Indraprastha Press, 1998), 2.

¹⁴ Laird, *The Story of Tibet*, 115.

interdependency of religion and politics in Tibet, a connection which persisted long after the collapse of the Yuan dynasty.

Referring to the symbolic relationship between a religious figure and lay patron, the Lama-Patron relationship is of great importance in understanding the fusion of religion and politics in Tibet. Isihama emphasizes that “after the rise of the Qing dynasty, Buddhist government became the diplomatic basis of the Tibetan-Mongol-Manchu relationship.”¹⁵ The Tibetan word for this connection is *choyon*, an abbreviation of two words: *cho*, meaning “that is worthy of being gifts and alms” (a Lama), and *yon*, meaning “he who gives to that which is worthy (a patron).”¹⁶ Due to the lack of a Western parallel, *choyon* can sometimes be a difficult concept to comprehend for Western readers; Hevia explains:

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 domain.¹⁷

With regards to the Fifth Dalai Lama who would later visit the Qing court, the *choyon* was of particular importance. By unifying the nomadic tribes north of the Great Wall of China, the Qing had established a territory significantly larger than that of the Ming. However, a few Western Mongolian tribes, such as those in the Dzungarian Basin, remained independent of the Qing. One such tribe was the Qoshot Mongols, ruled by

¹⁵ Schwieger, *The Dalai Lama and the Emperor of China*, 62.

¹⁶ Melvyn Goldstein. *A History of Modern Tibet 1913-1951*. (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1989), 44.

¹⁷ Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar*, 43.

Gushri Khan. Gushri Khan's relationship with the Fifth the Dalai Lama would shape the political identity of Tibet for centuries.

In the early 17th century, Tibet was in a state of religious and political turmoil characterized by major hostility between two schools of Tibetan Buddhism, the Kagyu School and the Gelugpa school. The Kagyu school were allies with the King of Tsang, a Tibetan province. The Gelugpa, however, was the school that shared a deep connection with the Mongols. In fact, in 1576 A.D., the Prince of the Tumed Mongols invited Sonam Gyatso, a prominent Gelugpa Lama to Mongolia and conferred on him the title of the "The All-embracing Lama, the Vajra-holder."¹⁸ From then on, the relationship between the Mongols and the Gelugpa Lamas only grew stronger, evidenced by the fact that the reincarnation of Sonam Gyatso, who was to be the fourth Dalai Lama, was born to the chief of the Tumed Mongols. Interestingly, Rockhill states that there were likely more Mongolians recognized as reincarnations of Gelugpa Lamas than Tibetans.¹⁹

Around 1630 A.D., a direct threat to the existence of the Gelugpa school of Buddhism arose. The King of Tsang, ally of the Kagyu sect, accumulated power and assumed control over all of Tibet. In response, the Fifth Dalai Lama's regent called upon Gushi Khan, the leader of the Qooshot Mongols and a devout follower of the Gelugpa sect, to save their school from persecution. In 1642 A.D., Gushi Khan marched his forces into Tibet and defeated the King of Tsang. Gushi Khan then went on to capture all three provinces of Tibet and was declared the ruler of Tibet. Shortly thereafter, Gushi Khan, as a form of respect, transferred his newly gained power to the Fifth Dalai Lama. This marked the beginning of the political authority of the Dalai Lama in Tibet, which continued until 1959.

¹⁸ Rockhill, "The Dalai Lamas of Lhasa and Their Relations with the Manchu Emperors of China," 5.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

Invitation to the Qing

Two years after the establishment of the political authority of the Dalai Lama in 1642 A.D., the Qing Dynasty successfully assumed power in Beijing. Questions that loom over the decision of the Qing to invite the Dalai Lama to court investigate whether the invitation was religiously or politically motivated. Some have suggested that “the Manchus’ invitation of the Dalai Lama was nothing more than a logical extension of their devotion to Buddhism.”²⁰ However, these claims simplify the religious and political complexities behind the invitation. It is certain that religion played a role in the invitation, but political motivations were equally important to the Qing.

Religious Motivations

Examining the religious motivation behind the invitation, spiritual connection between the Manchus and Tibetans was established decades before the declaration of the Qing Dynasty. In the spring of 1621 A.D., a Tibetan Lama, Uluk Darqhan Nangsu, visited Nurhaci at his court. Tak-sim Kam writes that Nurhaci’s reception of the Lama was “fulfilling the conventional patron-priest relationship, because Nurhaci, as a devotee to the religion, not only showed deference to him but also offered him a generous largess including an estate with workers.”²¹ One could argue that Nurhaci was also receptive to the Lama because of certain political motivations, such as wanting to use Tibetan Buddhism as a means to dictate his subjects. However, Kam puts this argument to rest, stating “Nurhaci’s patronage of the Lama was not politically motivated since most of the Mongol groups such as the Uriyangqai, Ongninhud, Dorbed, and Jalayid that came to

²⁰ Schwieger, “The Dalai Lama and the Emperor of China,” 62.

²¹ Kam, T. 1994. *Manchu-Tibetan Relations in the Early Seventeenth Century: A Reappraisal*. Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University –. 2000. The dGe-lugs-a breakthrough: The Uluk Darxan Nangsu Lama’s mission to the Manchus. *Central Asiatic Journal* 44(22), 161-62; Gray Tuttle. “A Tibetan Buddhist Mission to the East: The Fifth Dalai Lama’s Journey to Beijing, 1652-1653.” *Brill’s Tibetan Studies Library* 10, no. 3 (2006): 70.

submit to [Nurhaci] were followers of shamanism, not Tibetan Buddhism.”²²

Nurhaci’s interest in Tibetan Buddhism was passed down through his son, Hong Taiji, evidenced by Hong’s invitation to the Dalai Lama in 1649 A.D., asking he visit “in order to propagate the growth of Buddhist Faith and benefit all living beings.”²³ As a result, it is evident that the Qing court’s invitation to the Fifth Dalai Lama was not a spontaneous decision once they came to power. Instead, interest in and respect for the Dalai Lama extended back two generations. The text of the invitation itself can also be lent to an interpretation that the invitation was religiously motivated, suggesting that the purpose of the trip would be to spread the teachings of the Buddha:

We cannot bear to see suppressed the laws which have come down from ancient times. Neither do we wish that they should be extinguished without transmission to posterity. Therefore, we are sending, especially, envoys to invite you, the high priest, in order to propagate the growth of the Buddhist Faith and to benefit all living beings.”²⁴

Lastly, evidence of the Qing court’s religious motivation can be found in the religious duties that the Dalai Lama performed during his visit. Gray Tuttle notes that the imperial family was actively engaged in making offerings to, and receiving teachings from, the Dalai Lama. Many high-ranking members of the imperial family even undertook Tantric

²² Kam, T. 1994. *Manchu-Tibetan Relations in the Early Seventeenth Century: A Reappraisal*. Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University –. 2000. The dGe-lugs-a breakthrough: The Uluk Darxan Nangsu Lama’s mission to the Manchus. *Central Asiatic Journal* 44(22), 161-62; Gray Tuttle. “A Tibetan Buddhist Mission to the East: The Fifth Dalai Lama’s Journey to Beijing, 1652-1653.” *Brill’s Tibetan Studies Library* 10, no. 3 (2006): 70.

²³ Tuttle, “A Tibetan Buddhist Mission to the East: The Fifth Dalai Lama’s Journey to Beijing, 1652-1653,” 71.

²⁴ Zahiruddin Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century*. (Roma: Istituto Italiano Per Il Medio Ed Estremo Oriente, 1970), 175.

initiations.²⁵ The Dalai Lama was also asked by the Emperor to settle a religious dispute, noting in his autobiography that “The emperor sent me Kabala Ama and Akshan Ama to say that the root of the dispute between the two Mongolian Lamas was Buddhist religion and I must pass the judgement.”²⁶

Political Motivations

Although there is strong evidence to support the religious nature of the Qing invitation, there also exists strong evidence of political motivation. Most importantly, the Qing Dynasty saw the invitation as an opportunity to manage the western Mongolian tribes. As previously described, the Qing united the Mongolian tribes north of the Great Wall, but there still existed some tribes that remained independent further west. These tribes posed a genuine threat to the newly established Qing Empire since they could potentially unite and form a rival empire. Hence, the Qing court sought to use the influence of the Dalai Lama among these western Mongolian tribes to create a peaceable environment and quell challenges to Qing power. This is evident in an edict issued by the emperor which states “in the middle of the Emperor T’aitsung (1627-1644), the Khalka had not submitted. Considering the fact that all Tibetans and Mongols obeyed the worlds of the Lamas, the Dalai Lama was sent for, but before the envoy reached him the Emperor T’aitsung died.”²⁷ By inviting the Dalai Lama to Beijing, Tibetan historian Zahiruddin Ahmad suggests that the Qing were looking to restore the Lama-Patron relationship that existed between Khublai Khan and Phakpa.²⁸ By doing so, the Qing could present themselves to the Mongols

²⁵ Tuttle, “A Tibetan Buddhist Mission to the East: The Fifth Dalai Lama’s Journey to Beijing, 1652-1653,” 81.

²⁶ Samten Karmay, *The Illusive Play: The Autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama*. (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2014), 299.

²⁷ Rockhill, *The Dalai Lamas of Lhasa and Their Relations with the Manchu Emperors of China*, 12.

²⁸ Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, 154.

as the rightful successors to power and establish their authority over the Mongolian tribes.

Another example that displays Qing political motivations behind inviting the Dalai Lama to court was the Qing response to the request that the Emperor meet the Dalai Lama outside of Beijing. Emperor Shunzhi was unsure as to whether he should accept this request, but issued an edict to his court stating, “If we do not go to meet [the Dalai Lama] after having invited him to come, he may go back to Tibet after having come part of the way, and the consequence will be that the Khalkha will not render their submission.”²⁹ Shunzhi’s edict evidences that his primary concern was that the Dalai Lama might return to Tibet and that, as a result, a powerful western Mongolian tribe would not submit to Qing sovereignty. Despite the fact that the Manchus had long been lobbying for this visit, there is no mention here of religion.

The court’s reaction to the Emperor’s edict is notable. Manchu officials recommended that the Emperor abide by the Dalai Lama’s request and that “such an act of extreme condescension would certainly cause the Khalka Mongols to finally submit to the Imperial rule.”³⁰ On the other hand, Chinese officials recommended that the Emperor not accommodate the Dalai Lama, for “being the Lord Paramount of the whole world ought not to go meet the Lama.”³¹ Initially, the Emperor accepted the advice of his Manchu advisors. He sent a letter to the Dalai Lama stating “you have written to Us that the climate within the borders is bad for your health, and that it is better that we should meet outside the border. We will consequently proceed to Tai-ka and await you.”³² Despite this letter, however, the

²⁹ Rockhill, *The Dalai Lamas of Lhasa and Their Relations with the Manchu Emperors of China*, 12.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

³¹ Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, 168.

³² *Ibid.*, 170.

Emperor remained in the capital, citing unpropitious heavenly signs and his need to be in constant communications with his troops.³³

Significance

The differing perspectives amongst Manchu and Chinese officials with regards to the Dalai Lama's request to meet the Emperor outside of Beijing are significant. Some scholars have observed that the Qing "discussed foreign relations not in terms of tribute but in terms of defense."³⁴ The willingness of the Manchu officials to submit to the Dalai Lama's request validates this claim. Although the Emperor reneged his submission and did not go to meet the Dalai Lama outside of Beijing, his initial agreement with Manchu officials indicates that the Manchu officials were pragmatic. Unlike the Chinese officials, they were not concerned with protocols based upon the traditional Sinocentric view of the world. From the Sinocentric perspective, the Lord of all under Heaven ought not even consider the Dalai Lama's request—to meet in Beijing was non-negotiable as visitors were thought as those delivering tribute. However, Manchu advisors calculated that breaking protocol in order to fulfill the Dalai Lama's request would be politically advantageous. Manchu advisors were willing to overlook the rigors of the tribute system model to achieve a larger goal: bringing the western Mongolian tribes under Qing influence. Moreover, they were willing to exhibit their respect for the Dalai Lama at the expense of Chinese tradition.

Chinese Records

Chinese records of the events surrounding the Dalai Lama's invitation to the Qing court lack the detail found within the Dalai Lama's autobiography. With regards to the Chinese records, Ahmad states that "only such facts have been recorded as occurred within the official range of

³³ *Ibid.*, 172.

³⁴ Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar*, 14.

activities.”³⁵ After the Emperor decided not to meet the Dalai Lama outside of Beijing, he sent Shisai, his elder brother, and Jirgalang, his uncle and former regent, to welcome the Dalai Lama. Jirgalang’s presence is notable since at the time of the Dalai Lama’s visit, he was a prominent and powerful figure within the Qing court.³⁶ These two figures from the imperial family accompanied the Dalai Lama on his way. According to the “Veritable Records of the Qing Dynasty,” the Dalai Lama met the Emperor in the South Park on 14 January 1653. The Emperor permitted the Dalai Lama to sit in his presence and provided a banquet in his honor. Importantly, the records note that the Dalai Lama brought horses to the Emperor as a form of tribute to which the Emperor accepted.³⁷ Upon the Dalai Lama’s departure, the “Veritable Records” note that the Emperor gave a banquet and presented gifts such as saddles, gold, silver, and jade to the Dalai Lama.³⁸ However, the Dalai Lama’s autobiography provides a much more complete picture of his visit.

The Dalai Lama’s Account

Motivations

The decision of the Dalai Lama to accept the Qing invitation to Beijing was primarily religious. Tuttle writes that “the visit of Beijing must be seen in the context of missionary activity, rather than strictly as a matter of political expediency.”³⁹ As a Buddhist monk and teacher, the Dalai Lama’s primary reason for this visit was to spread the teachings of the Buddha. The Dalai lama also believed that he shared a religious connection to the

³⁵ Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, 21.

³⁶ Tuttle, “A Tibetan Buddhist Mission to the East: The Fifth Dalai Lama’s Journey to Beijing, 1652-1653,” 82.

³⁷ Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, 177.

³⁸ Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations*, 181.

³⁹ Tuttle, “A Tibetan Buddhist Mission to the East: The Fifth Dalai Lama’s Journey to Beijing, 1652-1653,” 66.

Manchu Emperor. Evidence of this religious perspective is apparent in his autobiography. The Dalai Lama writes about a prophecy that a high Tibetan Lama, Yolmo Trulku, sent the presiding Manchu Emperor when Tibet was crippled with religious warfare. The prophecy said: “The emanation of Jampal will be in Ü. If he does not come across with sudden impediments, He will tame Tibet, China, and Mongolia.”⁴⁰ The Dalai Lama determined that this emanation of Jampal, a Tibetan Buddhist deity, that Yolmo Trulku prophesized to rule over such vast lands, must be the Manchu Emperor: “it occurred to me that Yolmo Trulku probably thought of me as having connection with Jamyang (the Manchu Emperor).”⁴¹ It is this spiritual connection that inspired the Dalai Lama to undertake the difficult journey to the Qing court. The Dalai Lama believed, as Ahmad notes, that the Manchu emperor was a possible Dharma King who would rule according to Buddhist values and act as Tibet’s patron.⁴² Similar to what Phagpa had achieved four centuries ago, the Dalai Lama saw an opportunity to expand the influence of Buddhism and the Gelugpas with the help of a dominant patron.

In making this journey, the Dalai lama was not simply focused on reaching Beijing and disseminating Buddhist teachings. Instead, the prospect of teaching Buddhism along the way to Mongolians also played a vital role in his decision to travel to Beijing. When the Dalai Lama received the invitation, he was in the midst of writing the biography of the Third Dalai Lama. Tuttle points out that “revisiting the events of his predecessor may have further inspired him to retrace his steps and recreate old bonds that may have weakened, especially with the Ordos and Tumed Mongols.”⁴³

⁴⁰ Samten Karmay, *The Illusive Play: The Autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama*. (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2014), 223.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁴² Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, 159.

⁴³ Tuttle, “A Tibetan Buddhist Mission to the East: The Fifth Dalai Lama’s Journey to Beijing, 1652-1653,” 73.

On his way to Beijing, he took time to teach Buddhism to Tibetans, Mongolians, and Chinese from all walks of life. He writes “Mongols, the Hor people and nomads of the local area came to meet me and I gave teachings for each group as they wished.”⁴⁴ The Dalai Lama provides detailed records about his encounters with different groups and the teachings that he gave. The number of people who received teachings and offered presents to the Dalai Lama is fascinating. Tuttle provides the account:

In Kokonor, at least four thousand Mongols came to greet the Dalai Lama, of which three fourths were initiated and therefore made donations. In the Ordos some twenty thousand Mongols made offerings with about one-third taking initiations from the Dalai Lama. Among the Tumed, some forty-one hundred Mongols came to see the Dalai Lama and again some three-quarters were blessed. Only some six hundred officials made offerings and received initiations. The vast majority of the people he met in and around the capital, some twelve thousand in all, also seemed to have been Mongols, though it is clear that Tibetans, Manchus and Chinese were also counted among these.⁴⁵

Overall, the Dalai Lama’s autobiography suggests that he gave teachings to an estimated forty thousand Mongols.⁴⁶

Significance of the Dalai Lama’s Account

Unlike Chinese records of the events surrounding the Dalai Lama’s invitation to the Qing court, the Dalai Lama’s autobiography includes important details that grant more comprehensive insight into the nature of

⁴⁴ Karmay, *The Illusive Play: The Autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama*, 266.

⁴⁵ Tuttle, “A Tibetan Buddhist Mission to the East: The Fifth Dalai Lama’s Journey to Beijing, 1652-1653,” 76.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 74.

the exchange. As previously mentioned, the Dalai Lama met members of the imperial family who were sent by the Emperor to welcome him outside Beijing. His account in his autobiography upon meeting Jirgalang, the Emperor's uncle, is noteworthy. He states that Jirgalang "appeared with an entourage of 3000 riders, and a striking display of sword, umbrella, banner, flag, music, etc.... it was a sign that I was the legal King (of Tibet) of whom there was not the like in Tibet."⁴⁷ The Dalai lama saw himself as the legitimate ruler of Tibet and it is evident the Qing treated him as such by sending arguably the most powerful figure in the Qing Court beyond the Great Wall to receive him. Furthermore, Hevia notes that the "Dalai Lama invested, entitled, and provided seals for Mongol Khans, received and dispatched disputes between the Khans, and like emperors and Khans, received and dispatched embassies, commanded populations – in some cases, even armies."⁴⁸

The Dalai Lama's autobiography also provides great detail of his formal audience with Emperor Shunzhi. For an academic, comparing the account of the Dalai Lama's visit to the traditional protocols of a visit by a tributary state is stimulating. Historian Christian Jochim describes the ceremonial audience in the traditional Sinocentric view as "an event that revered, and reified, the entire pattern of relationships built around the imperial person, a pattern of hierarchical order superimposed upon a well-orchestrated and coherent oneness."⁴⁹ In other words, there were strict rules that had to be followed, which cemented the Emperor's status as the Lord of all under Heaven. However, the Dalai Lama's account of his audience indicates this procedure was not followed. The Dalai Lama writes that the "the Emperor descended from his throne and came forward to the range of ten arm spans. He held my hands and through an interpreter enquired about

⁴⁷ Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, 181.

⁴⁸ Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar*, 39.

⁴⁹ Christian Jochim, "The Imperial Audience Ceremonies of the Ch'ing Dynasty." *SSRC Bulletin*, no. 7 (1979): 96.

my health.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, “when tea was served, [the Emperor] said, ‘You drink the tea first.’ [the Dalai Lama] replied: ‘That would not be right.’ He said: ‘Let us drink it at the same time then.’”⁵¹ It is evident that the Emperor went out of his way to pay his respect to the Dalai Lama, ignoring the traditional protocols of the Chinese tribute system.

Conclusion

The Dalai Lama appears to have spent approximately two months as a guest of the Qing Court. Throughout his stay, he gave teachings to members of the imperial family and the noble class. He even gave teachings to the Emperor himself, particularly the *Jenang* of Drolkar Chendunma and instructions in the *guruyoga* practice.⁵² In turn, the Emperor showered the Dalai Lama with generous gifts such as a “rosary of a hundred beads of pearls,” in which each pearl was as big as the tip of a finger.⁵³ Moreover, the Qing court hosted numerous banquets and receptions in honor of the Dalai Lama. In these events, the Dalai Lama received vast amounts of presents from members of the noble class such as jewelry, clothes, and horses among other things. Whenever the Dalai Lama and the Emperor were present at the same event, the Emperor made sure to show his respect. One such account is recorded by the Dalai Lama: “the [Emperor] entered from the back door and stood on a golden throne that was very large and the height of a man’s waist... before he sat down, he stood there and sent Askhan Ama to tell me that I should sit on my throne at the same time as he sat on his stool.”⁵⁴ Perhaps the Emperor performed this gesture out of respect for his spiritual teacher, or perhaps the Emperor thought that it was more important to please the Dalai Lama so that he could achieve the

⁵⁰ Karmay, *The Illusive Play: The Autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama*, 294.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 294.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 301.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 302

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 297.

legitimacy necessary to bring the western Mongolian tribes under his rule. Regardless, the exchange between the Dalai Lama and the Qing Emperor was unique and led to an ultimately successful conclusion due to the pragmatic and respectful approaches from both sides. This conclusion not only validates Rawski's claim that the Qing Dynasty "drew on multiple sources and adapted ideologies of rulership and administrative structures," but also demonstrates the importance of analyzing sources in languages other than Chinese, such as Tibetan, when constructing accounts of Chinese history.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Evelyn Rawski, "Presidential Address: Reenvisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 55, no. 4 (1996): 842.

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