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# TEXTS AND MANUSCRIPTS DESCRIPTION AND RESEARCH

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## THE MESSAGE OF THE THREE SACRED MONGOL LAMAS

The genre of messages, which has a long history in Buddhist literature [1], was most popular among Mongolian Buddhists. The large number of manuscripts containing injunctions has survived in both foreign and Mongolian collections of manuscripts and xylographs [2]. Rich material for the study of this genre of Mongolian literature is found in the collection of manuscripts and xylographs at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies; at present, it holds some 200 items that contain no fewer than 50 different “orders” (*jarliy*), “bequests” (*geriyes*), “royal messages” (*lüngden*), “edifications” (*suryal*) and “prophecies” (*eši*). In content, they can be divided into two main categories: prophetic messages and sermon messages. The majority of epistles identified in the collection contain prophecies by celestial beings or the upper echelons of the Buddhist Church in Tibet and Mongolia; they “usually foretell the coming of a difficult time and give instructions on deeds that please the gods” [3]. Prophetic messages contain either an exposition of the general requirements of Buddhist morality or a condemnation of specific inclinations unacceptable to the Buddhist Church such as unbridled drunkenness [4], smoking [5], games of chance, etc.

Among the sermon messages in the collection, a sermon entirely devoted to criticism of Mongolian shamanist beliefs is of special interest. It exists in two redactions. The earlier redaction of the sermon is attested in the collection in two manuscripts (C 237, Q 743) and in a Buryat xylograph edition from the early nineteenth century (Q 2088) [6]. A transcription and translation of the early redaction of this anti-shamanist sermon based on the Buryat xylograph has already appeared in print [7]. The later redaction has been attested thus far in a single manuscript which served as the basis for the present publication [8]. The manuscript entered the collection of the Asiatic Museum (today the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies) in 1838 as part of the second collection of P. L. Schilling von Canstadt (1786—1837), which was acquired from the scholar's relatives after his death. The scholar of wide interests, Schilling von Canstadt had purchased the collection from A. V. Igumnov (1761—1834) during his scientific expedition to Eastern Siberia in 1830—1832 [9].

The right side of the first folio of the manuscript contains the heading “Order of Mergen-panḍita, Keüken Khutuktu and Dalai Khutuktu” [10]. These holy *lamas* are mentioned at the end of the text in all copies of the sermon. In attempting to correlate the titles mentioned in the heading with actual Mongolian holy *lamas*, we encountered unexpected difficulties. The greatest were associated with Dalai Khutuktu [11]. I failed to find in the lists of Mongolian *khutuktus* a holy *lama* with such a title [12]. Entirely different problems attended the identification of the second author, Mergen-panḍita, as two *khutuktus* in Northern Mongolia held exactly this title [13]. It does not seem possible at present to ascertain which of these two Khalkha *lamas* fulminated against shamanist beliefs.

We know much more about the third author, Keüken Khutuktu, whose full title was *mergen qambo Keüken qutuγtu-yin qubilyan* [14]. One of the *qubilyans* (reincarnations) was observed by A. M. Pozdneev in North-Western Khalkha in the Setsen Khan *ayimag* near Tengelig-Buridu during the latter's journey through Mongolia in 1893 [15]. By all accounts, this was a much respected *khutuktu* who occupied a position of some authority in the Buddhist hierarchy of Khalkha. The Mongols date his appearance to the time of the Buddha Śākyamuni, when Keüken Khutuktu first appeared in the guise of one of the Buddha's disciples [16]. After a long series of reincarnations in India and Tibet, Keüken Khutuktu, beginning with the eleventh *qubilyan*, began to be reincarnated only in Khalkha, in the Setsen Khan *ayimag*. His monastery, Rinčhen-tegčün-gling, was founded there; by the end of the nineteenth century, up to a thousand *lamas* resided there [17]. The monastery had large landholdings and many *šabinars* (serfs), whose numbers swelled to thousands of *yurts* [18].

Upon the first reincarnations of the Urga Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, better known as Öndör-gegen (1635—1723), the *ayimag* (monastic community) of Keüken Khutuktu was founded in 1651 at his headquarters in Yeke Kuriyen [19].

In his diaries, Pozdneev provides several other curious facts about these Mongolian *khutuktus*. The first is that a “characteristic of the Keüken Khutuktus is that they do not shave the hair on their head and wear a long brace over their shoulders; they make daily offerings to Padmasaṃ-