

50 Qutuytai Sečen Qung Tayiji, comp.: *The White History of the Ten Meritorious Doctrines* (16th Century)

Translated and introduced by Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz

Introduction

The *White History of the Ten Meritorious Doctrines*^I is probably a work of the sixteenth century. It was compiled by the Mongol nobleman Qutuytai Sečen Qung Tayiji (1540–1586), the nephew of the powerful Mongol ruler Altan Khan (1507–1582), on the basis of much older textual materials from the thirteenth century. The *White History* consists of three independent parts. The first part deals with the regulations for the cult of Chinggis Khan, which still lives on in today's cult site of Ejen Qoro in Inner Mongolia. The second part explains the history and application of the two orders (Mo. *qoyar yosun*) of 'religion' and 'secular' government; the third part describes how Qubilai Khan (r. 1260–1294), the first ruler of the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1260–1368), implemented an ideal rule based on these two orders. Although according to indigenous Mongolian classification the text is considered a work of history (Mo. *teüke*), its true character is closer to a manual for rulers. The Mongols imported the system of the "two orders" of the 'religious' and the 'secular' from the Tibetan "Joint Twofold System of Governance" (Tib. *chos srid zung 'brel*), and adapted it to their own socio-cultural and political contexts. The *White History* presents an ideal Buddhist society, in which the religious and worldly spheres are two separate yet interrelated realms. It provides a Buddhist ruler with governmental instructions on how a good life – in the Buddhist sense – can be realised in a Buddhist society, describing in detail the institutions of the religious and worldly domains, their interplay, and the actors involved. In the *White History*, societal reality is evaluated similarly to the secular/religious divide advanced in Western European thought. Yet, in the Mongolian case, the 'religious' and the 'secular' are framed and discussed as two separate sovereign spheres that are not conceived as mutually exclusive, but rather as complementary to each other. The binary distinction, on which Mongolian society should ideally be modelled, is a religious distinction, however. Good worldly governance is based on Bud-

I For a general introduction to the text, see Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz, "The 'White History': Religion and Secular Rule in Buddhist Mongolia," in *Companion to the Study of Secularity*, ed. HCAS "Multiple Secularities – Beyond the West, Beyond Modernities" (Leipzig: Leipzig University, 2021), https://www.multiple-secularities.de/media/css_kollmar-paulenz_whitehistory.pdf.

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dhist ethical rules, which should be implemented at all levels of society. A good government is one that provides its subjects with the best conditions for attaining the Buddhist goal of liberation. This includes internal order, material prosperity, and rule of law. The conception of society developed in the *White History* therefore claims authoritative interpretive power even over those societal spheres that are formally excluded from the religious sphere, and are therefore designated as non-religious. In this sense, it is a Buddhist – or religiously defined – secularity that unfolds in the *White History*.

Throughout the last four centuries, the *White History* has been widely read by Mongolians. Today, the deep traces left by the work in the collective memory of Mongolians can be found even in the modern Mongolian Constitution of 1992, which still uses the same terminology as the *White History* in its regulation of the relationship between religion and the state.

The passages translated here are from the second and third parts of the *White History*. They illustrate which parts of society the Mongols considered ‘secular,’ and what ideas they had of an exemplary ‘secular’ ruler and his duties, and of a prosperous worldly rule. The just ruler is a *cakravartin*, a “wheel-turner,” who is considered the worldly counterpart to the Buddha. He brings peace and stability to his subjects, but must also not shy away from armed force in defending the Buddhist realm. In sum, he represents the Buddhist ideal of political authority.

Bibliographical Information

The translation given here is based in two manuscripts:

Arban buyantu nom-un čayan teüke. In, *Die Familien- und Kirchengeschichtsschreibung der Mongolen*, by Walther Heissig. Vol. 1, 16.–18. Jahrhundert. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1959. Facsimilia I, 1–25. [Microfilm collection of Raghu Vira, New Delhi]. [MS A]

Erte boydasun yabudal-un yamun-u čayan teüke kemekü yeke erketü köligen sudur ene bolai. In *Čayan teüke – “Belaja istorija” mongol’skij istoriko-pravovoj pamjatnik XIII–XVI vv.* [Čayan teüke – “White History”: A Mongolian historical-legal monument of the XIII–XVI centuries]. Translation by P.B. Baldanzhapov, edited by Tsymzhit P. Vanchikova. Ulan-Ude: Izdatel'stvo Burjatskogo nauchnogo tsentra SO RAN, 2001. Facsimile of the text; 149–98. [MS B]

Page numbers in square brackets refer to the original pagination in the facsimiles, respectively.

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[MS A fol. 3v3–9] The root of the sublime teaching, the lord of the *dharmā*,^I is the Lama;^{II}

the head of the state, the mighty one of the world, is the ruler.

The law (Mo. *jasay*) of the true *dharmā* is indissoluble like a silken knot.

The law of the strict ruler is indestructible like a golden yoke.^{III}

The following brief guide is intended to give equal and flawless effect to these two true orders.

[MS A fol. 6v2–4] First of all, what is meant by the two orders? They are the order of the *dharmā*, *dhāraṇīs*,^{IV} and *sūtras*,^V and the order of the world, peace, and stability.

[MS B fol. 6v26–7v12] He who is responsible for and carries out the order of the world turns the golden wheel of a thousand teachings in the midst of the living beings who have lost their way in the dark night. He who enforces the law of the *dharmā*, the *dhāraṇīs*, and *sūtras*, each in its own right, is called “True, sublime *cakravartin* king.” He who puts on a hat made of *sal* [wood], a belt, clothes, and boots – he who, after being able to stand on a glass throne, without slipping and without support, rules the whole great nation continuously and majestically; and he who is able to put into practice the rule of the world, peace and stability, each in its own right, is called “king endowed with a true, sublime, strict rule.” [. . .] At the time when foreign enemies from outside set in motion their power, and a hostile rebellion easily arises, then he who collects his weapons with bow and arrow – and, after having defeated the alien enemy unhindered, is able to catch an arrow flying at him in flight – is called “lord-king of the mighty sublime gathering.”

[MS A fol. 11r8–11v1] In general, if you do not follow the two laws, you do not know the difference between meritorious and non-meritorious actions, white and black, heavy and light, truth and falsehood, good and bad, joy and suffering. Therefore, the two orders of the law of the true *dharmā*, which is indestructible like a silken knot, and the governance of the strict ruler, which is indestructible like a golden yoke, should be established without mixing, each separately.

[MS A fol. 13r7–13v6] Accordingly, if there is no law of the *dharmā*, living beings will fall into the hells. If there is no law of the ruler, the realms will decline. [. . .] If

I KKP: The Buddhist teaching.

II KKP: The personal spiritual teacher in Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism.

III KKP: In this conventional Tibetan comparison, the law of Buddhist doctrine is likened to a silken knot, and that of the worldly ruler to a heavy golden yoke. The yoke refers to one of the seven great mountains of Buddhist cosmology, which surround the world mountain Sumeru in concentric circles.

IV KKP: Ritual formulas, designed to store Buddhist teachings in one's memory.

V KKP: A text attributed to the Buddha.

one commits oneself to one's lama teacher, one will attain the bodhisattva path. If one commits oneself to the ruler, the peoples of the world will become suitably peaceful.

[MS A fol. 14v3–15r3 . . .] A compassionless ruler should be avoided. A ruthless official should be abandoned. [. . .] A monk without vows blows the true *dharma* to the wind. Ruling princes who do not know the law are harder than mountains [to climb]. [. . .] Therefore, the two orders should be established by bringing them into line with the rules of government. Those who put the law into practice in deviation from the rules are incapable of being the head of the state.

[MS A . . . fol. 17v7–18r1] If someone walks the path of the *dharma*, let him enter the path. If someone acts according to the true worldly rule, let him do great works. Accordingly, the essence of the true *dharma* is [like] the heart inside, and the rule of the strict ruler is like a black sword outside. Again, at each change of generation of heavenly rulers, those who were previously thrown into prisons should be released, and those who later reoffend should be thrown back into prison. Be that as it may, do not set them free. [. . .] By finding and employing sincere and wise people, the ruler's thoughts will be realised, and the people will be pacified. The rulers themselves become honoured great jewels. However, if bad people are appointed to high ranks, they will make the people suffer, and will destroy the ruler's works. They themselves will become shameless good-for-nothings. Therefore, you should think carefully, and bestow titles with deep understanding.