

Mongolian Buddhist Clergy and its Mobility: Restricted, Prohibited and Forced

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Abstract

The adaptation of Buddhism significantly changed Mongolian society. The establishment of numerous Buddhist monasteries accommodating large monastic communities influenced, among others, the mode and range of mobility of the nomadic Mongolian people. Various types of legislation regulating the everyday life of the monasteries included rules which organised, restricted or forced the mobility of clergy in different ways. The present article provides examples of regulations regarding monastic mobility found in different normative legislative sources produced by the Mongolian Buddhist organisation itself, by the local Mongolian administration, and by the Qing and Russian imperial administration. It also juxtaposes this legislation with a letter written by the Buryat Bandido Khambo Lama to the abbot of the Atsagatskii datsan, in which some problems related to the monks' mobility are discussed. The latter document allows to assess the actual situation in the Mongolian Buddhist monasteries of Transbaikalia as regards the geographical movement of the clergy. It also demonstrates the ways in which the authorities tried to keep the order and make the people subordinate to them obey the law established by the legislation mentioned above.

Some Words on Mobility, Nomadism and Mongolian Coenobitic Monasticism

Over the previous two decades, the concept of mobility has attracted considerable scholarly attention and has been actively discussed, reconsidered and reintroduced to social studies in particular and humanities in general. Acknowledging the crucial role that mobility plays in the construction and maintenance of social networks and cultural forms, Urry stated that cultures “are themselves mobile as a result of the mobilities that sustain diverse patterns of sociality”.¹ Considering mobility “as socially produced motion” and defining it as both “part of the process of the social production of time and space” and itself “a necessary social production”, Cresswell noted that it is “more central to both the world and our understanding of it than ever before”.²

Investigating various aspects of the concept of mobility, scholars make extensive use of the terms nomad and nomadism, applying them metaphorically for mobility.³ Some note, however, that such metaphors are not quite adequate for the discussion of

¹ John Urry, *Sociology Beyond Societies. Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 49.

² Tim Cresswell, *On the Move. Mobility in the Modern Western World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 2–3, 5, 22.

³ Urry, *Sociology Beyond Societies*, 26–32.

those forms and aspects of mobility⁴ which many sociologists have enthusiastically engaged themselves in recent years in analysing. The fact is that this “mobility turn” in social studies has been developed by scholars whose main subject of observation is contemporary societies and the modern world, and who must confront its noticeable change “towards increasing levels of mobility”.⁵

Therefore, there is little justification for the nomadic metaphors for various forms of contemporary mobility because, as Bauman noted, “actual nomads in fact move from place to place in a strictly regular fashion”⁶ while currently studied mobilities of the modern and postmodern world may often be characterised as improvisational, opportunity-based, chaotic, occasional, accidental, or forced. Moreover, the physical mobility of actual nomads creates and firmly maintains the tradition, of which it is an inseparable part, in contrast to the so-called “postmodern nomads” whose lives are described as “anti-traditional and anti-conformist in character”.⁷ However, probably the most striking feature that should prevent the use of nomadic metaphors as references for the modern and postmodern forms of mobility is their social production, which in the case of the actual nomadic mobility is involved only to a rather moderate degree.

Many scholars agree that for the Mongols, whose Buddhist monastic culture is the focus of the present article, pastoral nomadism (or mobile pastoralism⁸) was the optimum adaptation to the natural conditions. Goldstein and Beal note that these were the characteristics of environment and the climate that determined the number of moves made by a nomad per year as well as their distance.⁹ Legrand defined Mongolian pastoralism as “an appropriation and management of natural conditions” which involves “the nomadization of small population groups living off herds which were also of limited size”.¹⁰ Thus, at least when referring to the mobility of the basic pastoral unit, i.e. a small herding group of one or a few families¹¹ (Khalkh-Mo. *ail*), the ecological determinants played the decisive role in the development of migration

⁴ Urry distinguishes the following five forms of mobility: physical travel of people, physical movement of objects, imaginative travel, virtual travel and communicative travel (Urry, *Sociology Beyond Societies*, 50–76; Jonas Larsen, John Urry and Kay Axhausen, *Mobilities, Networks, Geographies* (Hampshire, Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 47–49.

⁵ Cresswell, *On the Move*, 43.

⁶ Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics* (London: Routledge, 1993), 240.

⁷ Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations* (Houndmills et al.: Macmillan Education LTD), 103.

⁸ Caroline Humphrey and David Sneath, *The End of Nomadism? Society, State and the Environment in Inner Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 1.

⁹ Melvyn C. Goldstein and Cynthia M. Beal, *The Changing World of Mongolia's Nomads* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 18.

¹⁰ Jacques Legrand, “Mongol Nomadic Pastoralism: A Tradition between Nature and History”, in *The Silk Roads: Highways of Culture and Commerce*, ed. Vadime Elisseff (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, UNESCO Publishing, 2000), 306.

¹¹ Humphrey and Sneath, *The End of Nomadism?*, 15.

patterns, while the current political-economic framework exerted only limited influence¹².

It is quite true, however, that social factors began to have immediate and strong effects on the mobility of Inner Asian nomads, including Mongolian ones, as soon as they themselves consolidated the formation of more complex socio-political institutions (for example, the so-called empires of the steppes) or became subjected to similar foreign institutions such as, for instance, the Russian or Qing empires.

Scholars have repeatedly emphasized the large scale of changes that Buddhism brought to the Mongolian society. From the second half of the sixteenth century onwards, Buddhist institutions rapidly spread among the Mongols and swiftly grew in both number and power. As the fundamental structural unit of the Buddhist organisation since the earliest days of its existence in ancient India was a community of monks, the spread of Buddhism has always been related to the organisation of such communities, which also presupposed the establishment of permanent constructions intended to accommodate their members. In other words, the establishment of stationary monasteries was an essential if not a paramount condition for the adoption and practice of Buddhism. Bold noted that “the Buddhist monastery stood from the start in stark contrast to the nomadic way of life” and that nomadic society “in theory could not assimilate Buddhism within its mobile way of life”.¹³ History, however, proved the opposite. Although initially the Mongols attempted to adjust the Buddhist tradition to their lifestyle by setting up mobile yurt temples, this format rapidly exhausted itself and gave way to fixed monasteries. The number of such sedentary settlements and their inhabitants, as was recorded by the first half of the twentieth century, is astonishing if one considers that we still refer to traditional nomadic society.¹⁴ Although all the statistical calculations concerning the percentage of monastics in the entire Mongolian population are very approximate, even the most moderate figures of around 40 percent of all males for both Inner and Outer Mongolia, of which most probably only one third permanently stayed in the monasteries,¹⁵ still leave us with many tens of thousands of Mongols living sedentary lives.

Being complex cultural institutions, Buddhist monasteries located on Mongolian territories under Qing rule and in the Transbaikalia region under Russian jurisdiction

¹² Bat-Ochir Bold, *Mongolian Nomadic Society: A Reconstruction of the 'Medieval' History of Mongolia* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001), 51.

¹³ Bold, *Mongolian Nomadic Society*, 135.

¹⁴ According to different sources, the number of Buddhist monasteries and temples in Outer Mongolia in the first half of the twentieth century equalled 583, 771, or even 937, see Bold, *Mongolian Nomadic Society*, 138; Larry William Moses, *The Political Role of Mongol Buddhism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 125. For Inner Mongolia, various estimations range from 678 to 1166 monasteries and temples, see Robert James Miller, *Monasteries and Culture Change in Inner Mongolia* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1959), 30.

¹⁵ Miller, *Monasteries and Culture Change*, 27–28; I.M. Maiskii, *Mongoliya Nakanune Revolyutsii* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1959), 42–43, 247; A.D. Simukov, *Trudy o Mongolii i dlya Mongolii*, vol.1 (Osaka: The National Museum of Ethnology, 2007), 241–242.

required a fully-fledged administrative system regulating their internal everyday life and the relations with the outside world. This system came to be based on three main types of legislation: (a) internal, self-governing sets of the *Prātimokṣasūtra*'s canonical rules, monastic guidelines often patterned after Tibetan *bca' yigs* or the Tibetan originals themselves, and other internal organizational documents pertaining to particular cases; (b) external, local laws issued by the Mongolian secular administration, including customary law; and (c) the imperial (Russian and Manchu-Chinese) legislation.

The analysis of these three types of sources shows that, although the mobility of the monks seems to have been limited as a matter of course as soon as they joined the community and thereby agreed to live in a monastery, all types of documents listed above include regulations which further organise, restrict or force this mobility in different ways.

In the following part of the article I give examples of regulations regarding monastic mobility found in different normative legislative sources produced by the Mongolian Buddhist organisation itself, by the local Mongolian administration, and by the Qing and Russian imperial administration.¹⁶ I also juxtapose these regulations on mobility with a piece of “history from below” – a letter written by the Buryat Bandido Khambo Lama to the abbot of the Atsagatskii datsan, in which some problems related to the monks' mobility are discussed. This document provides the necessary basis for the assessment of the actual situation in the Mongolian Buddhist monasteries of Transbaikalia as regards the geographical movement of the clergy, simultaneously emphasizing the importance of such documents for the surveys which attempt to draw as complete a historical description as possible.

Self-Governing Regulations of the Buddhist Community

In Tibet and later in Mongolia, the Buddhist monastery became the major form of religious social institution, with hundreds established and maintained throughout the regions. Acting as religious, social, political, economic and educational organizations, Buddhist monasteries needed guidelines to specify concrete behavioural and organizational rules appropriate to the current time, place and circumstances. Such guidelines, often entitled with the term *bca' yig* (Tib.), are found in abundance among the works of Tibetan Buddhist scholars.¹⁷ Having borrowed this type of religious-

¹⁶ It should be specially emphasised that scholars have not yet fully answered the question of applicability and effectiveness of all the legislative documents I mention in this paper. The applicability of the *Qalqa jirum* code, for instance, is proved by the document called *Ulayan qačartu* which is a record of the precedent court cases decided according to the code (Bayanbaataryn Batbayar, Batsükhiin Bayarsaikhan and Baatarjavyn Lkhagvajav, *Mongolyn Shüün Taslakh Ajillagaany Tüükhen Survalj Bichigt Khiisen Suinjilgee: Ulaan Khatsart* (Ulaanbaatar, 2010)). On the other hand, we still lack any sources documenting the enforcement of, for example, the so-called “Eighteen steppe laws” collection.

¹⁷ The term *bca' yig* has not been reserved exclusively for naming monastic regulations. It has also been used in the titles of texts dealing with the aesthetics and punctuation of the Kanjur as well as in a secular context – naming law codes of various lay communities. On the other hand, the texts

legislative literature from Tibetans, Mongolian Buddhist authorities also introduced *bca'yigs* into the governing system of their monasteries, using original Tibetan texts or compiling their own guidelines in Tibetan or Mongolian.

The Collected Works of the third Mergen Gegen Blo bzang Bstan pa'i Rgyal mtshan (1717–1766), for example, include a *bca'yig*-like text entitled *Dotoγ-a-du ey-e ber tökegerekü jüil üng sanay-a kemen dürimlekü bičig*¹⁸ intended for the monastic community of the Mergen monastery. According to this statute, a monk may not travel outside the monastery without authorisation. When it is necessary to leave the monastery for less than three days, a monk should get permission from the person in charge of his *ayimay*; for less than seven days, from the *siregen* lamas and for less than fifteen days, from the head lama.¹⁹ If a monk is late for the agreed term, the days of delay are counted and he is given as many fives of lashes, or obliged to make as many hundreds of bows, as the days of delay he had. If he happens to miss the *pošadha* ceremony, he has to make one thousand bows.²⁰ If a monk wants to travel not to attend communal matters but about his own business for more than fifteen days, he has to first announce this to his colleague-monks and offer them tea during one gathering, to close his personal account and then leave. After his return he should again treat the monks with a “communal tea” and report his comeback, then pay a price of five *qián* (Chin.)²¹ to the monastery treasury and register himself back.²²

In his monograph on his journeys in Mongolia, Pozdnev presents a full translation of the monastic regulations he obtained from the *gebgüi* lama of the *Erdeni juu* monastery. According to the legend, this statute was edited by the fourth Jebtsundamba Khutugtu and was put in use in most of the monasteries belonging to this hierarch. The document states that if a *bandi* leaves a monastery to visit somebody without the permission of his teacher and a *gebgüi*, he is to be punished

containing regulations for monastic communities and closely resembling *bca'yigs*, as regards the content, were not necessarily called by this term (Berthe Jansen, *The Monastery Rules. Buddhist Monastic Organization in Pre-Modern Tibet* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018), 6–7, 15–16).

¹⁸ Lubsangdalbijalsan, *Včir Dhara Mergen Diyanči Blam-a-yn Gegen-ü 'Bum Jarliγ Kemegdekü Orosiba*, vol. 1, ed. Bayanbayatur (Öbör Mongγol-un Suryan Kümüjil-ün Keblel-ün Küriy-e, 2006), 53–76.

¹⁹ Mong. *Kerbe yabuqu kereg γarbasu γurban qonoγ-ača inaysi-yin soyurqal-i ayimay-un dayamal-ača abumui: doloγan qonoγ-ača inaysi-yin soyurqal-i siregen lamanar-ača abumui: arban tabun qonoγ-ača inaysi-yin soyurqal-i teregün lama-ača abumui* (Lubsangdalbijalsan, *Včir Dhara Mergen*, 56r).

²⁰ Mong. *Ker be öggügsen bolčiyān-ača qoγimdabasu: qonoγ toγolan tabun edlekü (sic) buyu tedün jaγun mörgöl: öberemiče sobačong-un čaytur dutabasu mingγan mörgöl üiledkemüi* (Lubsangdalbijalsan, *Včir Dhara Mergen*, 56v).

²¹ A traditional Chinese measure of weight used also as a currency denomination. It equalled one tenth of a *liāng*, i.e. around 3.5 g, F.A. Brokgauz” and I.A. Efron”, *Entsiklopedičeskii Slovar'*, vol. XVIII (St. Petersburg: Tipo-Litografiya I.A. Efrona, 1896), 247.

²² Mong. *Neyite-yin kereg-dür jarγydaqū terigüten ča (sic) busu öberün kereg-iyer arban tabun qonoγ ča (sic) ilegüi yabuqu bügesü nigen qural-un mangča ergüged quvaray-dur ayiladqaju nere dangsa-yi qayaju odumui: iregsen čaytur basa mangča ergüged ayiladqaju: tabun čin-u ün-e-yi yeke sang-dur ergüjü jiči bičigilümüi* (Lubsangdalbijalsan, *Včir Dhara Mergen*, 56v).

with twenty-five lashes. If his absence is permitted but he returns with a delay, he should be punished with as many fives lashes as the days of delay he had.²³

Continuing the tradition of Tibet and Mongolia proper, Buddhist monasteries located in the Transbaikalia region also used special internal regulations written in both Mongolian and Tibetan.²⁴ The *Religious statute of the Mongolian-Buryat clergy of Transbaikalia* (Russian: *Religioznyi ustav mongolo-buryatskogo dukhovenstva Zabaikal'ya*), also known as the “Kudunskii statute”, presents an interesting example of such a document. Its compilation was initiated in 1830 by the state official Schilling von Canstadt who requested for the task a gathering of senior monks of the Kudunskii datsan as well as members of local governing bodies.²⁵ Addressing the question of the mobility of monks studying at the monastic schools, the statute states that if there is a necessity to leave the monastery for the entire day, monks should ask their teachers for permission. If a monk does not return in time and his delay is justified by his own or somebody else’s disease, death or similar issues, he should send a note signed by a person who caused the delay. If a monk is late without any serious reason, for the first offence he should be put under arrest without any meal for one day, for the second offence for two days, and for the third time for three days.²⁶

Local or Customary Law

As soon as Buddhist monasteries began to be actively established on Mongolian territories and the number of monastics among the Mongolian populations began to grow, notably in the seventeenth century (the second half of the eighteenth century for Transbaikalia), articles regarding the treatment of Buddhist clergy, shrines and relics by the laity, as well as the standards of monastic behaviour, appeared in the codes of law compiled by Mongolian nobility and political leaders.

The collection of laws known as ‘The eighteen steppe laws’, which was issued in Khalkha Mongolia at the end of the sixteenth to the first third of the seventeenth century, includes several articles aimed at the protection of the clergy and Buddhist shrines as well as the granting of certain privileges to the members of the monastic community. The code clearly supports the mobility of the monks, given the provisions of the 1604 order to provide a lama travelling upon invitation with three carts, and a *bandi* in the same situation with two carts. If the latter happens to spend a night on the road, he is to be provided with one ration of food. Another set of provisions, devoted

²³ A.M. Pozdneevev, *Ocherki Byta Buddiiskikh Monastyrei i Buddiiskogo Dukhovenstva v Mongolii v Svyazi s Otnosheniyami Sego Poslednego k Narodu* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiya Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1887), 182–187.

²⁴ A.A. Bazarov, Ts.P. Vanchikova, M.V. Ayusheeva, E.O. Sobkovyakov, *Realii Monastyrskoi Zhizni v Buddizme Mongolii i Buryatii: Istochnikovedcheskii Analiz* (Ulan-Ude: Izdatel'stvo Buryatskogo Gosuniversiteta, 2017), 175–189.

²⁵ N.V. Tsyrempilov, *Buddizm i Imperiya. Buryatskaya Buddiiskaya Obshchina v Rossii (XVIII – nach. XX v.)* (Ulan-Ude: IMBT SO RAN, 2013), 107–108.

²⁶ Tsyrempilov, *Buddizm i Imperiya*, 251.

specially to the monastics, states that *toyins* are to be provided with two carts and two rations of food.²⁷

The content of the *Qalqa jirum* – a collection of laws issued at the assemblies of the Khalkha-Mongolian nobility between 1709 and 1770 – is much richer as regards the articles concerning Mongolian Buddhist organisation in Khalkha than the earlier local legislation. Regulating the mobility of monastics, the provision of 1726 states that a monk or a layman should not spend a night in a Chinese settlement, no matter from where he came. If he does so, he should be deprived of all the possessions he carries and his means of transport. He is also obliged to pay a fine.²⁸ The provision on the relations between the clergy and the laity of 1746 states that a person who has joined a monastery does not enjoy the right to abandon it by his own will. If a person abandons a monastery and breaks his vows, his original *noyon* will track him down and take him back. If a monk who came from the outside commits a serious transgression or a small misdeed, he will be sent back to where he came from.²⁹

Remarkably, the entire *Qalqa jirum* collection of laws opens with “The great statute of the three banners” of 1709, the first two articles of which are aimed at facilitating the mobility of the Jebtsundamba Khutugtu. The statute declares that wherever the Khutugtu travels, he should be provided with carts and victuals without limitation. The refusal to provide these things is punished severely by the confiscation of property or payment of high penalties.³⁰

The customary law of various Buryat groups, which was transcribed at the end of the eighteenth and during the nineteenth century, contains numerous articles pertaining to Buddhist clergy and also addresses the question of their mobility. Thus, the Khori Buryat code of 1823 states that the monastery monks and the students of the monastic schools should not study Buddhist doctrine in the countryside but should live in the monasteries at their own expenses. These monks must not abandon their monastery without informing their teacher, who may give them permission to leave if he considers it necessary. Another Khori code of 1851 states that monks have to permanently live in the monasteries studying Buddhist theory and mastering practice. If lay persons invite them to perform any services, they can go only with permission from the *siregetü* lama or *čorji* lama, after obtaining a special ticket from the latter. If local officials meet monks of any monastery travelling without such ticket, they should stop them and immediately send them back to where they belong.³¹ The Selenga Buryat ordinance of 1841 states that if a monk travels to the family of

²⁷ A.D. Nasilov, *Vosemnadsat' Stepnykh Zakonov. Pamyatnik Mongol'skogo Prava XVI-XVII vv.* (St. Petersburg: Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie, 2002), 27, 33, 41–42, 45–46, 52.

²⁸ Ts. Zh. Zhamtsarano and S.D. Dylykov, *Khalkha-Dzhirum. Pamyatnik Mongol'skogo Feodal'nogo Prava XVIII Veka* (Moscow: Glavnaya Redaktsiya Vostochnoi Literatury, 1965), 90.

²⁹ Zhamtsarano and Dylykov, *Khalkha-Dzhirum*, 66–68.

³⁰ Zhamtsarano and Dylykov, *Khalkha-Dzhirum*, 16.

³¹ B.D. Tsibikov, *Obychnoe Pravo Khorinskikh Buryat. Pamyatniki Staromongol'skoi Pis'mennosti* (Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1992), 61, 89.

a deceased person to perform a funeral ceremony, he has to return to his monastery by the term established by the head of the monastery. It also orders, that the monks, who broke their vows for the second time should be sent to a remote monastery. According to this document, *siregetü* lamas should not use public carts. If travelling on religious business, *čorji* lamas should obtain a special ticket allowing the use of the carts from the head *tayiša*. When the Khambo Lama travels to visit different Buddhist monasteries, he has to obtain a ticket allowing the use of the carts from the *noyon* of a banner.³²

Imperial Legislation for Buddhist Monks and Monasteries

Soon after the Khalkha nobility officially submitted to the Qing rule at the Dolonuur assembly in 1691, the first official code of laws for the Mongols, the so-called *Mongyol-un čayaĵin-u bičig* was compiled by one of the Lifanyuan's departments. The code, comprised of the various laws issued in regard to the Mongols under Manchu and Qing jurisdiction between late 1620s and 1690s, was published in the last decade of the 17th century.³³ The entire range of its articles addresses the Buddhist monasteries' management and the regulation of an individual monastic's life. Thus, the code's eleventh section, which comprises laws regarding Buddhist clergy, includes an article stating that if a monk leaves a monastery without permission and spends a night in a layman's yurt, he will be fined and taken by the *ĵasay*. A monk is also forbidden to spend a night in the yurt of an unmarried woman. The violation of this law is punished by defrocking and a hundred of lash hits for the monk. For the woman, if she comes from the outer banners, the code establishes similar punishment of a hundred lash hits. The woman from the inner banners has to be brought to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and fined. The code states that all the monks of inner and outer banners who travel to Mukden, *Siregetü küriy-e* or Hohhot for whatever reason should first inform the administration of their monastery as well as the *vangs* and *noyons* of the appropriate banners about their plans, and only then depart on the agreed date.³⁴

Although the incorporation of Transbaikalia in the Russian Empire was officially confirmed by the Chinese-Russian treaty of Kyakhta in 1727 and the first stationary Buddhist shrines were built on the territories inhabited by the Buryats in the 1750s, the first official legislative document regulating the Buddhist affairs in Transbaikalia and approved on the highest level was not issued until 1853 when emperor Nicolas I ratified the Statute of the Buddhist clergy of Eastern Siberia (Russian: *Ustav dlya rukovodstva lamaiskomu dukhovenstvu Vostochnoi Sibiri*).³⁵ Dealing with various

³² B.D. Tsibikov, *Obychnoe Pravo Selenginskikh Buryat* (Ulan-Ude: Buryatskoe Knizhnoe Izdatel'stvo, 1970), 77–78, 81, 279.

³³ D. Heuschert, *Die Gesetzgebung der Qing für die Mongolen im 17. Jahrhundert anhand des Mongolischen Gesetzbuches aus der Kangxi-Zeit (1662-1722)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998), 46–50.

³⁴ B. Bayarsaikhan, *Mongyol Čayaĵin-u Bičig (Textological Study)*, vol. I (Ulaanbaatar, 2004), 226.

³⁵ Tsyrempilov, *Buddizm i Imperiya*, 43–44, 67–72.

aspects of the activities of the Buddhist monasteries in Transbaikalia, the statute also includes paragraphs regarding the mobility of the Buddhist clergy.

Thus, according to paragraphs 13 and 19, the Khambo Lama has the duty to assign *siregetü* lamas, *gečüls* and *geliings* to particular datsans, in which they have to live and serve. Paragraph 40 of the document states that the Khambo Lama and the abbots of the monasteries should not leave the borders of their parishes without valid reason. In such cases they have to ask the military governor of the Transbaikalia district for permission. The next paragraph states that lamas may leave their monasteries only if invited by the laity to perform some services. They may travel only within the boundaries of their parish and with the permission of the abbot. After doing their work, they have to immediately return to their monastery and not remain in the countryside unnecessarily. Paragraph 42 concludes the topic of mobility covered by the statute, stating that those who would violate the two previous regulations should be unfrocked.³⁶

Instead of a Conclusion: The Rules to Follow or the Rules to Break

Corporeal mobility without doubt constitutes an important part of a common identity shared by the members of any community or social organization. The normative rules regulating mobility – moral, practical and judicial – become one of the important instruments of the social identity construction and preservation.

The above-described legislative documents treat most of the rules on monastic mobility very seriously and prescribe severe punishment for their violation, including high fines, physical punishment and expulsion from the community. Following these rules has, obviously, been considered a crucial element of monastic identity and, possibly, of maintaining order within the monastic community as a social institution. Establishing norms, however, these documents do not provide us with an insight into the actual situation and leave unanswered multiple questions, such as: How often did the monks of Mongolian Buddhist monasteries have to travel and implement these rules? Was taking permission to leave from the monastery's administration just a mere formality or was the administration reluctant to issue such permission? How often did the monks violate the rules on mobility and were such cases officially registered in any documentation? Were the strongest punishments, such as flogging and expulsion, always applied according to the law? etc.

A document of another type – a letter from the Buryat Khambo Lama *Marq-a-yin* to the abbot of the Atsagatskii datsan³⁷ – represents the kind of source which may shed light on the reality of monastic life and the efficiency and applicability of the laws for the Buddhist clergy under Russian jurisdiction.

The letter is dated September 3, 1873. It regards six different questions, two of which are connected directly to the monks' mobility.

³⁶ V. Vashkevich, *Lamaity v" Vostochnoi Sibiri* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiya Ministerstva Vnutrennikh Del, 1885), 133.

³⁷ GARB (The State Archive of The Republic of Buryatia), fonds 425, inventory 1, file 6, ff. 28-29.

As the second point of his message, the Khambo Lama discusses the problem of the distribution of monks between monasteries. He notes that, according to the Statute of the Buddhist clergy of Eastern Siberia, he is obliged to make decisions on sending monks to different monasteries, which has become troublesome for him as the lamas ask that they not be sent to the remote datsans and instead be allowed to stay and serve in their native places. He states that agreeing to this would mean breaking both the law of the Buddha and the Emperor, as the Buddha taught that a native place is like the jail of Mara and, according to the ordinance issued by the Emperor, the monks are useless in their native places and should serve in other regions determined for them. After that, the Khambo Lama strongly requires that the abbots properly explain these reasons to the monks and make them depart without regrets to any monastery immediately following the order to do so.³⁸

The next question raised by the Khambo Lama is the monastic school of the Gusinozerskii datsan, in which, according to the imperial decree, the future monks have to live and study. He notes that the school stays almost empty. The students reject the happy possibility granted to them by the highest decree to stay in the Gusinozersk monastic school and study Buddhist teachings. They return instead to their native places, where the local elders just like the abbots of the datsans disregard them, which is very upsetting. For this reason, he asks all the abbots to send those persons among their subjects, who have been selected to enter the school or have already been enrolled, back to school immediately. He mentions that in fact the students do not have the right to leave without permission from the Khambo Lama and the military governor, and should be expelled from the school and treated as legally faulty persons.³⁹

³⁸ Mong. *bandida mkhanpô anu blam-a-nar-un toytayal-un 19 doki jüül-ün yosuɣar blam-a-nar-i dačang-ud-tur jasaju selgükü ba yabuɣulqu uyal-a-tai aɣsan büged. ene inu nadur masi tübek-tei bolbai: ilerkeyilebesü . jarim blam-a-nar sedkil-ün üge-ber qola-yin dačang-dur ülü ilegekü-yi ɣuyuna aɣuɣu. tere blam-a anu yambar učir-ača öber-ün törögsen oron-dayan bayiɣu-yi küsedeg bolba. minu medeküi-dür biden-ü burqan ber öber-ün törögsen oron-i sinnus-un gindan metü kemen maɣusiyan nomlaysan ba. eɣen qaɣan anu štat-tur oroɣsan niɣur-ud-i öber-ün nutuɣ qabiy-a ügei. ali tere jiqaydaysan ɣajara alba kikü ber toytayal batulaysan bayinam. teyimü tula burqan qaɣan qoyaɣula-yin jarliy-i nige müsün uɣuruɣad. erke bisi öber-ün nutuɣ-tur bayiralaqu-yi küsegsen bolbasu ni tere kümün-ü sedkil-ün üge-yi ken ber kereglekü bui. teyimü-yin tula blam-a siregetü-ner-i kündü-tei ber ɣuyuqu minu. ene kü učir-i blam-a-nar-tur sayitur uqaɣulaɣu. ali dačang-dur odqu-yi jakiraydaysan čaɣ-a ɣasilang-dur üfel ügegüi-e. darui morduqu bolɣaju qayirlasai.:*

³⁹ Mong. *tede yeke degedü-yin jarliy-iyar gölönɣ nayurun dačang-un dergede bayiɣu yosutai blam-a-yin surɣayuli anu qoyosun busu-yin tedüi bayinam. [...] tede yeke degedü ber erke bisi gölönɣ nayurun dačang-ača ködögelel ügei. öber-ün šasin-u nom surču bayiɣu-yi jarliyɣan batulaysan ene yeke jol-i kele-ber tülkijü nutuɣ-du-tayan tenüjü yabuɣči tedeger-i. nada-yi uridlayči-nar bolon teden-ü bayiɣsan ɣajar-ud-un aqamad ba. ilaɣɣui-a dačang-ud-un anu siregetü-ner ken tegsi orkiɣsan-du minu sedkil masi ɣomodoqu bolbai. teyimü-eče blam-a siregetü-ner-e ɣuyuqu minu. öber-ün dačang-un qariy-a-tu-nar-ača blam-a-yin surɣayuli-dur oroɣulaydaysan ba. oroqu-yi kürgegedeged bayiɣsan niɣur-ud-i egün-i küliyegsen darui inayši ilegejü boloosai. surɣayuli-yin šabi-nar anu bandida mkhanpô ba. čereg-ün gubernator-un jüg-eče jöbsiyel ügei bodqol-iyar ködögelebesü. surɣayuli-ača ɣarɣaydayad. qauli-yin jim-e-dü oroɣulaydaqu aɣsan bolbaču ene bičilge-yin ür-e bolbasuraqu-yi aqur čaɣ-a küliiemüi.*

Such documents demonstrate the actual state of affairs and the ways in which the authorities tried to keep the order and make the people subordinate to them obey the law. As my research revealed, they are preserved in abundance in the archives of Buryatia and call for a detailed analysis. Hopefully, the present paper will also inspire the search for similar sources in the Mongolian and Chinese archives as their discovery and examination would immensely enrich our vision of Mongolian Buddhist monasticism under the Qing rule.

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