

The "Frontier Affair Lamas *Liaotung Pienwu Lama*" at Liaotung in the Late Ming

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Between 1600 and 1640, when the Great Ch'ing Empire (Daicing Gurun, Daičing Ulus) emerged, there were many central Tibetan priests and Tibetan Buddhist priests from Mongolia (usually called lam-a, lama, <bla-ma) in Mongolia and Chin (Aisin Gurun). They travelled in Liaotung and the North, accepting offers of provisions and handling politics, diplomacy, trade, and war. Leaders of Manchuria and Mongolia accorded them full respect and treated them with courtesy. For instance, Legdan Khan, Nurgaci, and Hongtaiji all built splendid temples and personally accorded them the most respectful ceremonies. Even in the Chinese Ming Dynasty, which had been unfamiliar with and quite prejudiced against Tibetan Buddhism, the emperors and courtiers, especially the military leaders on the northern battlefields, also respected and used lamas to assist in their northern operations.

At that time, there were large numbers of lamas in Mongolia and Chin, but only two of them were on the side of Ming. Both of these two lamas were invited by the Chinese military leaders in Liaotung to serve as *fu k'uan*. The lamas were Lama Wang (Wang lama, Sangs-rgyas Pa-sangs) and Lama Li (Lii lama, Bsod-nams Mtsho). Both of them were Chinese. Lama Wang came from the Hsuan-hua Ta-tung area and had previously engaged in negotiations with Mongolia there. His activities in Liaotung, still diplomatic work with Mongolia, were recorded from 1622 to 1629. From Liaotung to Hsuan-hua Ta-tung, he did very well in handling matters such as soothing, rewarding, contacting, negotiating peace, making oath of mutual devotion, and leading troops to battle. He not only earned trust in Mongolia, but was also commended by the Ming Dynasty as a real sage familiar with the Mongolian affairs. Lama Li originally lived at Mt. Wut'aishan. Because he had been well treated by Emperor Shen of the Ming Dynasty, he volunteered to work for the Ming at Liaotung when Nurgaci rose to power. He negotiated with the Chin and was active in this regard between 1626-1627. When Nurgaci passed away and Hongtaiji took the throne, he was sent by Yuan Ch'ung-huan to lead the diplomatic corps to Mukden. Although nominally the corps was to offer condolences and congratulations, its real mission was to obtain information. His actions achieved expected success and initiated negotiations

between Ming and Chin that were to last for a number of years. The process and results of these long years of negotiations had considerable impact on the rise and fall of the Ming Dynasty, Mongolia, and the Ch'ing.

This article carefully examines the behavior and activities of the Ming Dynasty lamas in Liaotung during that period of time (the T'ien-ch'i and Ch'ung-chen era, but not the Wan-li era). It reveals the following: 1. There were Chinese, Mongolians and Manchus in Liaotung and the North during this period, among the Ming Dynasty servicemen who negotiated with Mongolia and Chin. Many of them spoke both Chinese and Mongolian—a situation that probably began from the time the Mongols fled to the northern desert. 2. The Ming Dynasty, being aware of the reality and trying to adjust to it, successfully employed the lama. Yuan Ch'ung-huan was especially successful in this regard. He was one of the reasons why Lama Wang and Lama Li came to Liaotung to serve the Ming Dynasty. Yuan himself favored Zen Buddhism and was good at communicating with the Mongols through the use of Buddhism. 3. Lama Li was a Tibetan Buddhist priest and was familiar with Zen Buddhism—this was probably characteristic of Chinese lamas. 4. The most important thing to note is the activities of and roles played by these two lamas in the various nations and tribes. On the side of the Ming, they were officials without office. They were still priests. The government treated them like guests, at least on the surface. They were also treated like guests, but with more respect on the side of the Mongols and the Manchus. In status, they were seen as 'good men' (<Sain Niyalma, Sain Kumun) or Ming Dynasty 'aimay, aiman good men'. In this capacity, they served as mediators for the peace between the Ming and the North. Both sides trusted them. At that time, both Chin and Mongolia had 'aimay, aiman good men' who belonged to the aristocratic and wealthy class and were seen by the feudal lords as protectors. This dual role of the lamas fully reflected the difference between the social structure of the Ming Dynasty and the social structure of Chin and Mongolia. Finally, a few examples are given to also illustrate the cultural difference between the Ming Dynasty and Chin and Mongolia in the light of the different treatment they gave to the lamas. The lamas were treated better in Chin and Mongolia than in the Ming Dynasty.

The author is interested in the establishment of Tibetan Buddhism during the Ch'ing Dynasty and its relationship with the formation of the Great Ch'ing Empire. He aims at

carefully studying the world of Tibetan Buddhism, which emerged at the same time as the Ch'ing Empire in the long northwest frontier (dry Asia) of the Confucian world of East Asia, focusing on its integration, growth, and association with political entities, various ethnic groups, natural environment, and local customs and practices during its earliest stages. The author also keeps an eye on how Buddhism was able to impact human feelings in this vast area during this time. He is therefore especially interested in the activities of the lamas in Manchuria, Mongolia and the Ming Dynasty with Liaotung as the center stage in the seventeenth century as Manchuria rose to power. This article is one of a series of articles on this topic. It studies the activities and role of the lamas from the side of the Ming Dynasty.

The overall arrangement of this article is as follows: Two chapters on the activities of Lama Wang and Lama Li follow the preface. Chapter 3 lists the correspondence between Lama Li and Hongtaiji. It includes Manchurian characters for the important terms, explains their treatment of each other, and analyzes their objectives and their understanding and expectations regarding the role of 'lama'. Chapter 4 summarizes the activities of the two lamas into tables chronologically, giving the readers a summary. It also records matters regarding two other related lamas. Chapter 5 studies the similarities and differences in role and status of these two Ming lamas in their own country and in enemy countries. The last part of the article is a conclusion. The notes indicate the sources. Some notes also explain the broader background to show ethnic or cultural differences. They are supplementary to the text.

The Tibetan Buddhist activities concerning the rise of the Chin involved at least three 'countries' or blocs. Therefore, they left records in Chinese, Manchu, Mongolian, and Tibetan. In regard to the use of source materials, this article aims to exhaust basic historical source materials in the field, such as the contemporary records and reports of the Ming Dynasty and Korea, metal and/or stone inscriptions, archives in Manchu writing and Mongolian as well as traditional documents of Mongolia. Although Chinese source materials are the most numerous and must be used, care has been taken to avoid explanations' over-dependence on the materials from a single side or a single language. Source materials of all these writings have been gathered together for comprehensive consideration and comparative explanation. Special attention has been given to the

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narratives and interpretations on the Manchurian, Mongolian, and Tibetan sides in order to avoid Chinese-writing-centered or Chinese-centered views. Generally speaking, this article uses comprehensive materials and conduct detailed researches in order to show the realities of a broader background.

Keywords: Lama, good men, Liaotung, Ming Dynasty