

political power and, more particularly, was a strategy to hedge against the potential fall of the Mongols. While this may partly explain Xie actions, some contemporary Uyghur *semuren* made fewer accommodations to Chinese norms. For example, some families did not adopt Chinese-language surnames. What explains the differences? Were geographic or political factors involved? The Xie's residence in the literati heartland of southern Jiangsu perhaps influenced their choices. Political alignments also may have played a role. The most prominent member of the fourth generation, Xie Zhedu, was appointed to high offices under the reformist Prime Minister Toghto (1340–44, 1349–55) but retired while the nativist Prime Minister Bayan was in power. What were the cultural strategies of Bayan's *semuren* followers? An additional chapter on other Uyghur families in the early fourteenth century might have allowed a finer analysis of variations in *semuren* identity.

Although Brose has not issued the final word about the Uyghurs in Yuan China, he has written a pathbreaking book that offers valuable insights into identity and power in the Mongol Empire. *Subjects and Masters* should be an essential addition to the libraries of all scholars interested in premodern Chinese and Inner Asian social, cultural and political history.

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When a Woman Becomes a Religious Dynasty: The Samding Dorje Phagmo of Tibet. By HILDEGARD DIEMBERGER. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. xx, 394 pp. \$49.50 (cloth).

doi:10.1017/S0021911809000369

A study of the most famous and most important female incarnation line of Tibet, the Dorje Phagmo lineage of Samding Monastery, *When a Woman Becomes a Religious Dynasty* is essential reading for anyone who is seriously interested in Tibetan history and religion, Buddhist biographies, and the role of women in Tibetan Buddhism.

The centerpiece of *When a Woman Becomes a Religious Dynasty* is the recently discovered biography of the first woman in the Dorje Phagmo reincarnation line, the fifteenth-century Chokyi Dronma, who was a royal princess of the Mangyul-Gunghang kingdom of southwestern Tibet. Around an eloquent and highly readable translation of her heretofore overlooked biography, Hildegard Diemberger successfully weaves a much larger story that stretches from the fall of the Tibetan empire straight through to the contemporary revival of Buddhism in twentieth-century Tibet. The book thus offers both a strong synchronic element—an analysis of the significance of Chokyi Dronma's life and biographical representation firmly situated in the social, religious, and political circumstances of her fifteenth-century era—and a diachronic element exploring the transformations of the Dorje Phagmo reincarnations over five centuries of

radical changes through the successive political regimes of the Phakmodrupa, Rinpung, Karmapa, Gelukpa, Qing dynasty, and, finally, the People's Republic of China.

In her introduction, Diemberger claims that the focus of her book, as well as the significance of Chokyi Dronma's life, far exceeds Chokyi Dronma's status as an extraordinary Tibetan woman against a historical backdrop that has consistently overlooked women's contributions (p. 16). There is ample analysis highlighting the gendered facets of Chokyi Dronma's life and legacy, such as her extraordinary status as a royal princess who received full-ordination *bhikṣuṇī* nun's vows, which many scholars have presumed never reached Tibet, as well as analysis of her status as a renowned *yoginī*. But additionally, Diemberger presents Chokyi Dronma's achievements as a patron of printing, monastery and nunnery restoration, and irrigation projects, as well as her accomplishments as an inveterate traveler and religious pilgrim.

Diemberger thus presents a broad swath of historical, religious, social, and political information situating the phenomena of the Dorje Phagmo reincarnation lineage. Her writing is well grounded in historical sources that effectively and at times intriguingly contextualize Chokyi Dronma's unsigned and undated biography, including, most notably, the biographies of Chokyi Dronma's main teachers, Thangtong Gyalpo (1361–1485) and Bodong Chogle Namgyal (1375–1451), as well as religious chronicles (*chos 'byung*) and royal chronicles, particularly the *Gung thang rgyal rabs*. Through these sources, Diemberger's account of Chokyi Dronma's world come alive with insights into the social dynamics of royal families such as that of Chokyi Dronma, whose father was king of Gung thang, including marriage customs between strategically linked kingdoms, interactions between the multiple wives and children of kings, and relations between royalty and their subjects. Diemberger elucidates the importance of royal patronage for the welfare of fifteenth-century Buddhist institutions and lineages, demonstrating Chokyi Dronma's unusual role as a princess who renounced her politically advantageous marriage to the prince of southern Lato in favor of living as a mendicant nun. Not only was royal patronage mutually strengthening for Buddhist institutions as well as royal houses, but Diemberger shows its essential role in the rise of print culture in Tibet with the publication of classics such as Tsangnyon Heruka's *The Life of Milarepa* emerging from the sponsorship of Chokyi Dronma's royal Gung thang family.

Beyond the book's strength in offering a social history of the Dorje Phagmo lineage, Diemberger also includes a chapter in which she provides interesting reflections on the nature of life writing in Tibet as seen through Chokyi Dronma's biography. Pondering the missing colophon of the biography, Diemberger hypothesizes that its author was one of her close disciples and that its date of writing was not long after her death. Diemberger engages theories of biographical writing to unpack what she terms the "multivocality" of the biography, or the multiple layers of subjectivity that make up the text, ranging from elements that seem to come from Chokyi Dronma's internal feelings to those of her close disciples such as the nun Deleg Chodron, to suggest that it is not only a single author whose perspectives shape the text, but rather the views of a whole

community (p. 83). Another element of “multivocality” Diemberger finds is the tension between the personal, human elements of Chokyi Dronma’s narrative representation and the idealized elements presenting her as a divine Buddhist exemplar. From this tension, Diemberger finds both a moving account of one woman’s life and an important source for the later ritualization of Chokyi Dronma’s persona as an incarnation of Dorje Phagmo.

Another strong point of *When a Woman Becomes a Religious Dynasty* is the way in which Diemberger analyzes the Tibetan phenomenon of reincarnation, demonstrating its significance as a familial and lineal transmission system and articulating the political circumstances that were crucial to the success of the Dorje Phagmo reincarnation lineage. She traces these political factors from those relating to royal patronage and lineage succession in Chokyi Dronma’s era to the dramatically changed circumstances of the current twelfth Dorje Phagmo incarnation, whose administrative role in the Chinese Communist government as a member of the China People’s Political Consulting Conference has earned her a controversial status inside and outside Tibet.

Though surrounded by meticulously researched and deeply insightful historical, social, and literary analysis, the true gem of Diemberger’s work is her nearly 100-page translation of Chokyi Dronma’s biography. If you can’t assign the entire book to your undergraduate students, I would highly recommend assigning Diemberger’s translation of Chokyi Dronma’s biography as an excellent primary source reading for any course covering Buddhist biography, women in Buddhism, or Tibetan religion and history.

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Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia. By ADEEB KHALID. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007. xii, 241 pp. \$60.00 (cloth); \$22.95 (paper).
doi:10.1017/S0021911809000370

In this volume, historian Adeb Khalid presents an overview of Islam’s changing relationship to the state in Central Asia, from the time of Russian colonization (nineteenth century) through the post-Soviet period. The question that animates this book is whether Central Asian Islam presents a political danger to states or to wider interests. The author’s answer is no. Khalid rejects essentialisms that posit Islam as a font of terrorism, but more specifically, he argues that due to Soviet repression of Islam’s formal institutions in Central Asia, Islam became a locus of cultural identity, unconnected to intellectual trends elsewhere that established Islamism as a political effort to create Islamic states.

Khalid introduces the reader to the major intellectual currents among Muslims in Central Asia before 1917, noting the important divide between modernizers (Jadids) and traditionalists. In discussing the Soviet period, Khalid

When a Woman Becomes a Religious Dynasty: The Samding Dorje Phagmo of Tibet [Diemberger Ph.D., Hildegard, Strathern, Marilyn] on Amazon.com. *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. When a Woman Becomes a Religious Dynasty: The Samding Dorje Phagmo of Tibet Paperback – Illustrated, June 10, 2014. by Hildegard Diemberger Ph.D. (Author), Marilyn Strathern (Foreword). Visit Amazon's Marilyn Strathern Page. About the Author. Hildegard Diemberger is director of the Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit and a fellow of Pembroke College at the University of Cambridge. She has published extensively on the anthropology of Tibet and the Himalayan regions and, with Pasang Wangdu, has coauthored the translations of the Shel dkar chos 'byung and the dBa' bzhed. Article contents. Abstract. When a Woman Becomes a Religious Dynasty: The Samding Dorje Phagmo of Tibet. By Hildegard Diemberger. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. xx, 394 pp. \$49.50 (cloth). Published online by Cambridge University Press: 27 January 2009. Sarah H. Jacoby. Show author details. Sarah H. Jacoby. Affiliation: Columbia University. Article. Today, the twelfth Samding Dorje Phagmo leads the Samding monastery and is a high government cadre in the Tibet Autonomous Region. Hildegard Diemberger builds her book around the translation of the first biography of Chokyi Dronma recorded by her disciples in the wake of her death. Hildegard Diemberger is director of the Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit and a fellow of Pembroke College at the University of Cambridge. She has published extensively on the anthropology of Tibet and the Himalayan regions and, with Pasang Wangdu, has coauthored the translations of the Shel dkar chos 'byung and the dBa' bzhed.