

V. L. Uspensky. *Prince Yunli (1697—1738). Manchu Statesman and Tibetan Buddhist*. Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1997, VIII, 140 pp.

The book under review is the first to be entirely devoted to the activities of Prince Yunli, the seventeenth son of the Kangxi emperor, a high official at the court of the emperor Yongzhen. The book presents the Imperial prince as a Manchu statesman (chapter 1), a Tibetan Buddhist (chapter 2), as well as a bibliographer and publisher (chapter 3). In his preface, the author notifies that his publication is addressed to specialists (“is not supposed to be casually read but used by interested scholars”, p. VIII). The official positions of Prince Yunli and his role in relations of the Qing dynasty with Tibet are convincingly described in the first two chapters which are based on the Mongolian and Tibetan sources, supported by the English translations from different biographies of the Buddhist *lamas*. These texts clearly show, the author point out, “that the common struggle for power, influence, rank and titles among the Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs residing in Beijing was in full swing in the first half of the 18th century... To some extent, this struggle reflected the political and religious struggle in Tibet proper and other areas where Tibetan Buddhism was spread” (p. 18).

Prince Yunli himself was a devoted adept of Tibetan Buddhism. The important statement of the author is that “Yunli and his Buddhist associates maintained that the teachings of both the dGe-lugs-pa (the New School) and the rNyang-ma-pa (the Old School) were equally correct and had no superiority one over another. This doctrinal syncretism within Tibetan Buddhism is a forerunner of the 19th-century *ris-med* (‘impartial’; ‘universalistic’) movement. While in the 1730s a movement of that kind, especially when sup-

ported by a brother of the Emperor, could lead to changes in the balance of influence among different Tibetan Buddhist schools...” (p. 15).

Prince Yunli was notorious for his enormous library: he ordered translations of different Buddhist texts from Tibetan to Mongolian, many works in both languages were sponsored and initiated by him. After his death the library was sold out, and a big part of it was acquired by the Russian scholars and members of the Russian Ecclesiastic mission in Peking (now in the St. Petersburg State University Library, Oriental faculty). The author traces the tracks of the books from the Prince's library and describes the texts kept in Germany and England (pp. 32—3). But the emphasis is given to the Russian collections. Among these books are two works written in Mongolian by Prince Yunli himself. Dr. Uspensky is the first to introduce these texts to the scholarly world, publishing them in transliteration and facsimile (pp. 57—140). These works, are, as he puts it, “a valuable example of cultural diversity of the 18th century Qing Empire and show dexterity of the Manchu imperial family in Tibetan Buddhism” (p. 21).

It should be noted that though the author himself limits his reading public to specialists, his book could be recommended to all historians, Tibetologists, Sinologists and specialists in Buddhist studies as a thorough study of the Buddhist trends in Peking and their controversies at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The published texts can serve as a valuable source for the religious and linguistic studies. It is also worth noting that the book under review was published in the series of the Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa in Tokyo and could be only ordered from this Institute which sends the books on request.

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