
BOOK REVIEWS

Yang Haiying. *An Introduction to Altan Bičig*. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 1998, VI, 355 pp. — Senri Ethnological Reports, 7.

L. Qurčabayatur Solongyod. *Zum Cinggis-Qayan-Kult*. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 1999, IV, X, 316 pp., II, ill. — Senri Ethnological Reports, 11.

Taken together, these two books published by the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka offer a trove of information about the posthumous religious image of Genghis (Činggis) Khan, a figure regarded by many far from Oriental studies as one of the greatest men of the past millennium. The impact of the empire founded by this “world-conqueror” on the destinies of the peoples of Asia and Europe was immense; no lesser place has been occupied by his deified figure in the spiritual life of the Mongols.

This book by Yang Haiying, a native of the Ordos *ayimay* in Inner Mongolia, is a collection of texts forming the *Altan Bičig* (“Golden Book”) — a book that contains instructions for performing the rituals of worship of Genghis Khan's spirit and prayers to him. Two variants of the *Altan Bičig*, prefaced by a detailed introduction in Japanese, are published in the book.

The first, containing a facsimile of the original Mongolian text on pp. 163—207 and its romanisation on pp. 87—100, dates to 1722. However, the text published was copied not long ago: a person of the Darqad clan (hereditary priests who worshiped Genghis Khan) wrote it down, and a personal copy of the text was provided for publication by Mr. Oγonus (b. 1924), a resident of Inner Mongolia. It consists of thirteen smaller texts, prayers recited during the rituals of worshipping Genghis Khan, his wives and banners, as well as regulations concerning their proper performance; the fourteenth text is a short colophon.

The second variant, which provides facsimile of the original Mongolian text (pp. 211—312) and its romanisation (pp. 100—30), is a version of the *Altan Bičig* kept at the Mongolian National Library in Ulan Bator. It consists of twenty-four smaller texts, some of them ritual texts relating to Genghis Khan only indirectly. One of these texts (No. 6) was written by the well-known Buddhist author

Mergen Gegen Blo-bzang bstan-pa'i rgyal-mtshan (1717—1766), a native of the Urad *ayimay*. An appendix of personal names (pp. 136—41) found in both texts makes the book easy to use.

Apart from these, the book includes a small peculiar invocation in the “Heavenly language” (*Tngri-yin kele-ü dayulal*). A facsimile of the original Mongolian text on pp. 315—35 and its romanisation on pp. 130—5 are presented as well. Also included is a facsimile of an original Mongolian text (pp. 145—61) on the worship of Genghis Khan. It originates from the Genghis Khan temple in Bars Khota in the former Tüshiyetü Khan *ayimay* in Mongolia. The original was copied in 1926 and is now kept in the Mongolian National Library (Ulan Bator).

The second edition under review is a book by L. Qurčabayatur Solongyod. It presents a comprehensive study of Genghis Khan's cult as a religious, social, anthropological, and political phenomenon. It begins with a very helpful outline of earlier scholarly studies. There follows the author's investigation of various aspects of worshipping Genghis Khan: the social structure of the Darqad hereditary priests; sacred objects used in the ceremonies; the role of the black banner (*qara süilde*); and worship rituals performed at the “Eight White Yurts” (*Naiman cayan ger*). The research by Qurčabayatur is based on a variety of sources, including those obtained during his field work in Inner Mongolia. The analysis and conclusions the author suggests offer new approaches to traditional Mongolian cosmology, shamanistic practices and the development of the worship of Genghis Khan. Qurčabayatur observes different aspects and historical stages of this cult originating directly from the worship of Heaven. It is also shown that the later worship of Genghis Khan evolved from private rituals of the Borjigid clan and the most important state rituals of the Mongol empire to a “non-state national cult”.

In general, both books by these Inner Mongolian authors complement each other, containing at once important sources and new ideas which will undoubtedly stimulate further research both on the worship of Genghis Khan and traditional Mongolian beliefs.

V. Uspensky